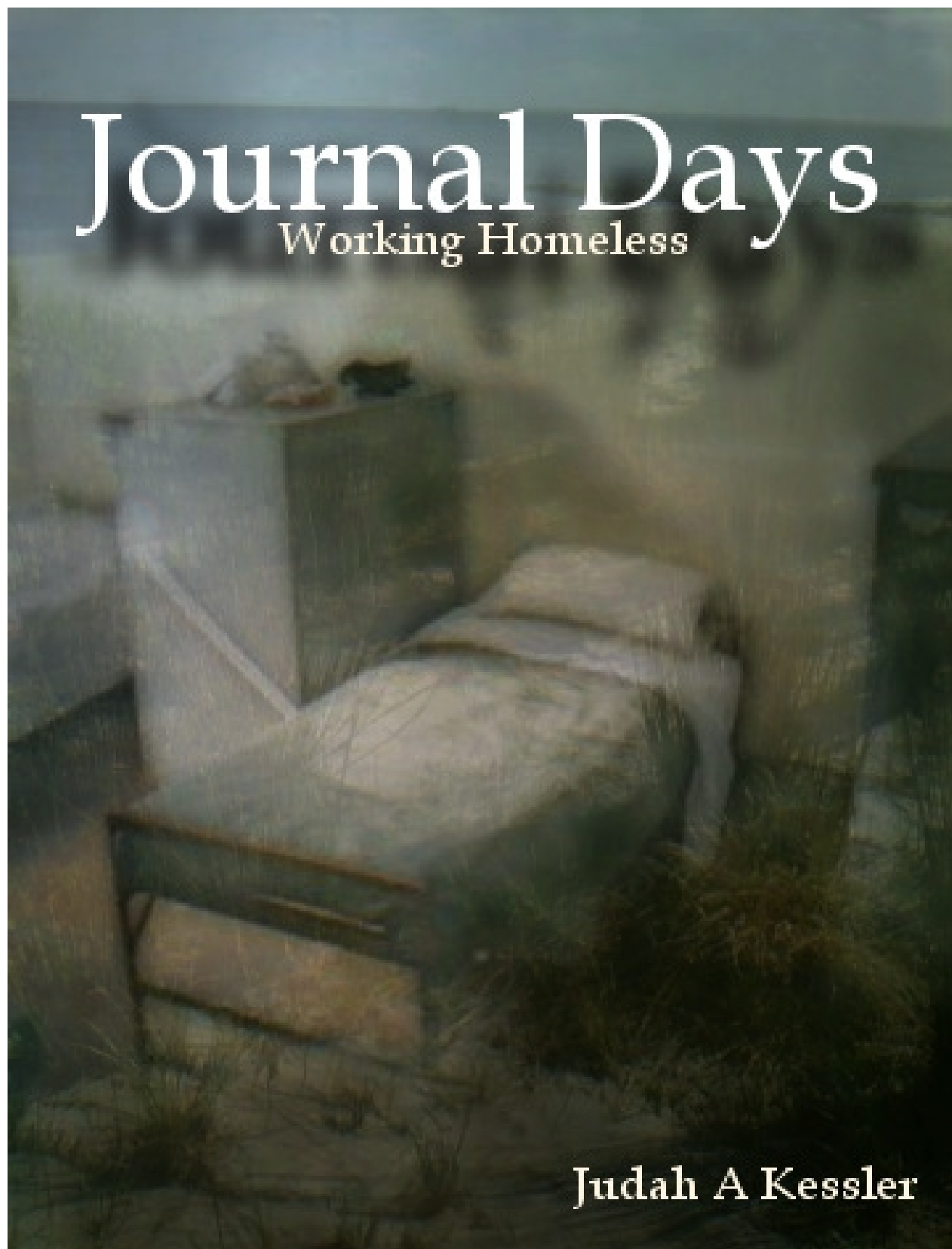




JOURNAL DAYS

WORKING HOMELESS

Judah A. Kessler

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On Monday I slept beneath the stars
under a London Plane.

On Tuesday I showered, fresh and clean
in the midst of a Winter rain.

On Wednesday I woke with a grumbling stomach
I hadn't eaten in days.

On Thursday my dinner - alfresco but canned,
swiped from a dumpster in starvation's haze.

By Friday my clothing was soiled and worn
my skin began sinking and hanging on bone.

On Saturday kids came - threw bottles at me
and the policemen kept yelling "Go HOME!".

Came the dawning of Sunday morning
and all took a turn for the best:

By Sunday evening
just shortly past sun-set

I'd laid down
closed my eyes
for my longed-for and yearned for

Peace...
in my final rest.

#2 Train Flatbush 18h 08.19.04

CONTENTS

5. A PROMISE KEPT	499. PART II: REVISITED
6. EDITED NOT CENSORED	503. June 2011
8. "WORKING HOMELESS" A DEFINITION	566. July 2011
10. THE COST OF HOMELESSNESS	628. August 2011
13. ALL SHELTERS ARE NOT EQUAL (NOR ARE ALL HOMELESS PERSONS)	667. HURRICANE IRENE - PARK AVENUE
21. NOTES	670. PARK AVENUE SHELTER - HELL!
22. FOREWARD	690. September 2011
27. PART I: THE JOURNAL & THE JOURNEY	741. October 2011
29. August 2008	773. POST SCRIPT
48. August 2008 THE END BEGINS	776. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
59. August 2008 THE PENINSULA DAYS	792. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCE
71. September 2008	793. THE CALLAHAN CONSENT DECREE 1981
109. September the Bellevue Days	802. NYC SUBWAY MAP - REFERENCE
115. September Bellevue	
168. October 2008 - Back To Work	
235. November 2008	
241. (BLACK NOTES) Tuesday 4 November	
301. December	
373. January 2009	
438. February 2009	
452. Heavy Metal In The Veins - The Lead Is In	
455. March 2009	
460. April 2009	
464. May 2009	
465. June 2009	
472. July 2009	
Rockaway Home	



A PROMISE KEPT



“You can write! You NEED to do something with this, man! This isn't just *your* story...this is *OUR* story! It's *ALL* of our stories! *Please!* Promise me you'll do something with this!”

(* One of my shelter-mates said this one evening when he saw me writing in my note-book. I promised. This is my promise... kept. Thank *YOU* for reading and learning “*OUR*” story.)

The Journal took 16 months to write, in note-books. It took well over 2 years to transcribe, as you will see.

It took almost 7 years to become what you are reading today. And over the course of all that time, I will tell you: the memories, good and bad are still vividly clear, and many of the wounds are still very open, raw and painful.

EDITED NOT CENSORED

“Edit but do not censor yourself. Your words are raw and harsh because that's what your life was at the time. If you soften anything, you deny your readers the privilege and the gift of actually knowing what it was like, what you experienced, and that would make the entire project worthless and a lie.”

It was once said, by a reader of the Journal entries that follow, that there are vulgarities in the original text that might prove offensive to some readers. Well, in this publication, I've retained most of them, simply because of the subject-matter. This is not a “child's book”. It's intended audience is broad, however, not necessarily minors. I hope that adults, young and older, will take a sincere interest in this and will, after having read, discuss the matter of Homelessness with their children. I sincerely hope too, that education professionals will likewise read, and discuss the issues with students... younger and older. I should most sincerely hope that Social Workers in every vocation will seriously read these words with particular care and attention because this is how they are perceived by their “clients”... those who turn to them in times of great human need.

To change the verbiage with which this Journal was composed would simply offend the subjects and the subject matter. Homelessness is not “art”, nor is it trite. Homelessness is not an ambition, goal or dream. And it is not a matter to be taken lightly, blithely, or in passing. Homelessness is an illness... of Society. That any human being, any-where on this planet should be denied shelter for any reason is an unforgivable crime... a sin, if you will. That Society allows, permits and enables this condition is nothing less than repulsive. While some sit comfortably with-in the walls of a building they call “home”, others huddle in cardboard boxes, or make-shift “tents” created with scraps of plastic tarps, old clothes and rags. As some climb into their beds, to lay on the latest fashion mattress, and cuddle and curl in and under cotton sheets and down duvets, laying their heads on poly-fill or down pillows, there are those who find protection against the cold by stuffing old newspapers and such into plastic sacks normally used to dispose of trash, and lay on earth... soil... dirt. (And I know this to be a fact because I was just such one who did the very thing.) To lay a path of rose petals, sparkle up with crystals of sugar is not only a blatant lie, but it is as repulsive as those who consciously choose to ignore the plight of Homelessness.

If your sensibilities are not of the calibre where-by you can read the truth, then this is not material that you will benefit from in any manner. It is presented rather straight-forward... as it very-well should and must be.

In this text, I've retained the "4-letter words" when they appear as direct quotes, and where the person having made the offending statement is identifiable. As for personal use, I have used the following: "f***", "f***ing", "sh**", and "BS", all of which can be interpreted as the *reader* wishes. The "translation" of each of these terms is entirely up to the reader at this juncture and I do not make nor imply any apologies for any offences taken or manifested by any reader.

These notes are the expression of despair, complete absence of hope, due to the realisation of having been so utterly and completely abandoned. And this is only a very small representation of the severity of a situation that, logically and rationally speaking, is not only avoidable, but completely un-necessary. The vocabulary is as the vocabulary was, not as a matter of sensationalism, nor as an unnecessary attempt to shock. Rather, on advice, I leave my notes as they were written, sometimes as I laid on my old, squeaking metal-frame, single bed, listening to the creaking of a plastic mattress and the wobbly, metal bed-frame, or, on a moving subway train or public bus, packed with the bodies of unknowing and unconcerned strangers (and other Homeless persons), sometimes under a tree in an abandoned park or under the beating sun on an open, empty beach or a bench.

Oh, and the sketches: They're from the original note-books. They were my "therapies". The images here aren't very good because I'd taken photos of the originals with a cell-phone, quickly, one day. What is here is all that I've left of them. The note books are ... gone.

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“Working Homeless” - A Definition:

I held a full-time job, as is described on these pages that follow. I resided in a “Shelter for the Homeless” with many others who did like-wise. Each and every morning we could be seen, often before the sun-rise, leaving the shelter to “go to work”. Each and every evening we could be seen returning to the “Shelter for the Homeless”, returning from our tax-paying jobs. We were financial clerks, waiters/waitresses, retail sales clerks, Home-Caregivers, “Certified Nurses Aides”... jobs in which we provided services and support to others who neither knew nor cared. Our meagre salaries were taxed, dutifully and legally, so we provided, and continue to provide support for all those professions and enterprises that taxes fund... including “Shelters for the Homeless”. I held a full-time job that provided a salary that was not even near to par with the incomprehensible cost of living and the harder and longer I worked, the greater my contribution to my society, employer... and taxes... The higher my “gross”, the lower my “net”.

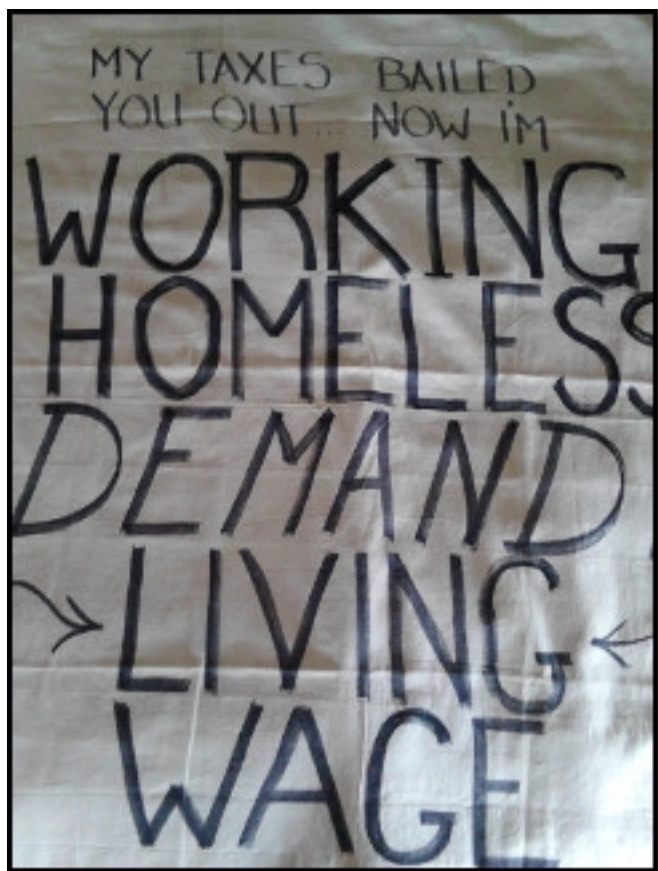
This situation has absolutely nothing to do with “minimum wages”... it has everything to do with...

“LIVING WAGES”.

Although to SOME extent, the pre-conceived notions about the Homeless are applicable, they are NOT to be broadly nor generally applied to all Homeless people and in this Journal-text, I intend to show and share the fact that indeed: ANYONE can, at any moment, find themselves... Homeless... even “Working Homeless”. One pay-cheque... maybe two can change a “Home” into a foreclosure or eviction. A sudden illness with the exorbitant expenses can, too often leave a patient with no place to be discharged to other than a “shelter”. And, more than most certainly, although there are those who do suffer from afflictions such as drug/alcohol addiction, mental illnesses of vast and varied conditions, not “all” Homeless people are in such circumstances. Those who are require and deserve shelter as much as any and every other person born into this world indeed. However, those who cannot provide for their shelter require help with their afflictions... those who are employed deserve respect first, and specific assistance since they are,

essentially, paying for the services that they are seeking from “Homeless Services” agencies. With this presentation of my own Journals, the transcription into digital format and this subsequent publishing, it is my most sincere hope that these words will provide an education not only to the reader but to those with whom the reader discusses the issues of and confronting the Homeless and, in particular, the “Working Homeless”. I hope these entries give reason for pause and serious consideration to the plights of both, the Homeless and the “Working Homeless” and that there will be a better understanding not only of the political aspects but of the *human* aspects. I hope that this volume will teach that, just as those who are considered to be “normal” members of any society have dreams, hopes, aspirations, feelings and emotions, so too, the Homeless in general share those same aspirations.

“Tuck in your shirt! You look like a Homeless person!”



MY CANVASS BANNER FROM PARTICIPATING
IN “OCCUPY WALL STREET”, ZUCOTTI PARK NYC

When disparaging remarks are made against the Homeless, they cause as much pain as they would when made against anyone, anywhere. These are very easy points to ignore and so often I've come to understand that disparaging remarks are not always made with a conscious attempt to injure. But again, I hope this brings an awareness to the fact that, even when said flippantly, the wound caused is deep and, as I write, I can say, irreparably damaging.

With any good fortune, there will come a kinder understanding of the plight of the current Homeless populations, and, eventually, actions taken to attend to those who are Homeless, and thwart the Homelessness of others in future.

THE COST OF HOMELESSNESS

"Where are you living these days?" asked the first.

"Here, in the city." replied the second.

"How great for you! But isn't it expensive to live in the city?"

"Not really. I was really lucky; I found a really reasonable, 1-bedroom for only 3500.00 dollars a month."

$(3500.00 \text{ dollars} / 4 \text{ weeks per month} = *875\$/\text{week}$

$40 \text{ hours per work-week} = *21.87\$/\text{hour}$

Consider then, the Shelter in which I stayed, only one of many in the city, provided 850 beds and often there were many more men in the building waiting to be assigned to other shelters or simply seeking refuge from the elements only for a brief while.

In closing, I ask that you ponder the following:

When I was in the shelter, I was told that funding, by tax-payers (including the "Working Homeless") amounted to 100\$ per day per "occupied bed". I was in a shelter that provided 850 beds:

$100.00\$ \times 850 \text{ beds} = 85,000.00\$ \text{ per day}$

$85,000.00\$ \times 7 \text{ days} = 595,000.00\$ \text{ per week}$

$85,000.00\$ \times 31 \text{ days} = 2,635,000.00 \text{ per 31-day month}$

$85,000.00 \times 365 \text{ days} = 31,025,000.00 \text{ per 365-day year}$

These figures are for ONE shelter. As of 2011, there were †2,352 shelters for the Homeless in New York City, each one providing for various numbers of Homeless residents.

For the first 6 months of 2015, the *average monthly* number of Homeless people in the New York City shelter system alone was ‡59,659. Almost 60,000 “registered” and assigned a bed. 60,000 people who had no “home”. Consider as well, that this number represents ONLY those who sought and received shelter, and that this does *not* include those who were on the streets, park benches, tucked away in alley-ways, in cars or any-where else they could find a place to lay their head or find protection against the elements.

59,659 persons x 100\$ = 5,965,900.00\$ per month

* Required NET/Take-Home pay to cover ONLY RENT and NOTHING more.)

†(<http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org>)

*Source: NYC Department of Homeless Services and Human Resources Administration and NYCStat shelter census reports ‡<http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/the-catastrophe-of-homelessness/facts-about-homelessness/>

*We take our meals
as the wheels roll beneath us
and mile after mile
of cold steel track passes by.*

*We are alone
but in a crowd
there are many around us
and
many more who surround us,
sit beside us
across from us
strangers, all
who stare at us
but will not speak with us.
We do not eat in comfort.
No table before us,
no proper chair beneath us.*

*We eat
quickly
not looking up.*

*We eat
rapidly
not tasting.*

*We eat
alone
surrounded
by strangers
crude strangers
who do not know us
and
who do not care.*

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ALL SHELTERS ARE NOT EQUAL (NEITHER ARE ALL HOMELESS PERSONS)

“When modern homelessness first emerged in the late 1970s, thousands of Homeless New Yorkers were forced to fend for themselves on the streets, and many died or suffered terrible injuries. In 1979 a lawyer named Robert Hayes, who co-founded Coalition for the Homeless, brought a class action lawsuit in New York State Supreme Court against the City and State called Callahan v. Carey, arguing that a constitutional right to shelter existed in New York. In particular, the lawsuit pointed to Article XVII of the New York State Constitution, which declares that “the aid, care and support of the needy are public concerns and shall be provided by the state and by such of its subdivisions....”

<http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/pages/the-callahan-legacy-callahan-v.-carey-and-the-legal-right-to-shelter> (I have included the complete text of this document at the end of this work and I strongly recommend, and urge that all agencies, groups and individuals who have any connection with the Homeless read it and continue further research on it.)

I do not consider myself to be “racist” in any manner at all and have, as a rule in my life, never pre-judged any-one, particularly based on skin colour, ancestry or origin. Comments and references in my Journal may appear to be completely contradictory to this statement. But I want the reader to know and to understand that the “name-calling” and derogatory references made were based solely on the actions and words of the individuals and had absolutely nothing to do with any pre-conceived ideas or notions about the people to whom I refer.

These following pages are my own Journal of 16 months' stay in only one of New York City's 2,352 (<http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org>) shelters for the Homeless. For a very brief while, due to storm threats, residents around the city were transferred to different shelters for the safety and welfare of all and I've noted in my journal, the very obvious differences between what was my “permanent” shelter and the one into which many of us were placed to weather-out the storm. I've also noted how we, the Homeless “residents” (or “clients” as we were referred to), were notified of the relocation, how little information was given concerning the relocation and the conflicting information that was given as a matter of comparison. But in the interest of having some, albeit limited information for some degree of comparison of conditions and situations at

other shelters, it's not uncommon to interact, even on a daily basis, with other Homeless residents who have, at some time in their past, been in one or more other shelters, and it's not uncommon to hear them compare conditions, services, personalities of staff and other residents from around the city. Therefore, every Homeless day is a learning experience in many different ways.

Although it certainly is an arguable and often denied point, there are some shelters where conditions are so deplorable that they are, for the most part, used quite similarly to “penal colonies”, places to which disrespectful, detrimental, and otherwise undesirable persons, as well as those who are classified under “Department of Homeless Services” protocol as “Non-Compliant”, can be and often are transferred. The mere mention of the names of these places was, all too often, enough to make some and grown men and “seasoned Homeless men” shiver and even break down and cry... the reputations were that horrible. One shelter was known to be so uncontrolled, the conditions so deplorable that apathy was the “rule” by which the place was run. There, it was said, a person could well expect to be assaulted or even murdered as he slept. In another, illicit and illegal drug and sexual trafficking was so common-place that not only was a blind eye and deaf ear turned, but it was as if this was perfectly normal, legal and acceptable. Still another, located on an island, was accessible only by 2 bridges over a river. One bridge allowed vehicular traffic, the other was strictly pedestrian. Both were closed over-night so, in effect, there was no way to get to or from the shelter during certain hours.† (It must be noted that the vehicular bridge was closed to pedestrian traffic over-night and was certainly available for use by emergency services vehicles. Unlike many other cities, so I've learned, New York IS quite responsible with respect to the safety of its Homeless population... to the best extent possible.)

But before I go any further, I must interject: Although these conditions and states are, indeed, quite deplorable, it must be acknowledged that they are so primarily, if not solely because of the calibre of person housed at those facilities.

Although, when I first entered into the “Homeless System”, my attitudes toward and my perception of the treatment of my fellow residents were rather radical, and, admittedly, quite over-sympathetic. All too often, I found the treatment of and approach to many of those whom I regarded as my “peers” as being little less than atrocities against human beings. Transfers were effected at 11:00pm as residents slept. These involved the gathering of belongings, thrown into

plastic bags, waiting for someone to provide one-way fare on public transport (subway or bus), and often travelling for an hour or longer to the new destination at night, regardless of weather conditions. At the next shelter, there were further delays involving paper-work, registration, and re-settlement. These transfers could, and often did occur on week-nights... a particular inconvenience to the "Working Homeless" who would have to report for work the following morning, most often, without sleep through the night, and still in the state of disarray from the relocation. Indeed, this was, in all likelihood, the worst scenario for any working person, but add to this the facts of being "Homeless", having been forced to relocate to unfamiliar surroundings and having been forced to relocate perhaps against one's own will and yes, it did appear then, and, to some extent still does, in my opinion, to be harsh and perhaps unnecessary. "Why?" I would often ask myself "can this not be handled with advanced notice or during day-light hours, or even on week-ends?" In some instances, I was given my answer.

As I say, not all shelters are equal and, neither are all Homeless persons. All too often, in my opinion based on observation and personal experience, the need to transfer someone from one location to another is essential to the proper and respectful operation of a particular shelter. What I was initially unaware of is that certain resident populations were assigned to particular locations based upon several criteria, which, I learned, may include a psychological and psycho-social evaluation. The shelter to which I found myself assigned was, as the rumours went, among the "best" in the system where services and general calibre of residents were concerned. And, I must add, we were "the hub", the "intake centre" for all shelters. In retrospect, and after thoroughly reading through my journal notes of those days, I must admit that, over-all, the rumours proved to be true. As I learned, again through direct, personal experience, "my" shelter was, in fact, run quite smoothly and generally with a great deal of respect and consideration, for the most part, when due, and in comparison with other shelters. So, for example, when a particular resident felt it his appointed duty to ensure chaos, to create disturbances, to threaten the welfare and health of other residents, to compromise the stability of the structure (by damaging the property for example: destroying lavatory fixtures, as was done - and I even have an entry about just that very thing) it was in the best interest of all persons in the building to remove the instigator as promptly as was possible. If this had to be effected in the middle of the night, then, it had to be done and was. And, since, in most cases, there were 3 or more residents in each "dorm" room, and in some as many as 15-18 persons, very often, the removal of the "problem resident" was a relief to the others who remained because, more often than not, the

instigator caused mayhem even with the dorm-mates. (I have given 2 personal accounts of such a situation in the journal entries that follow.)

Admittedly in some cases this was merely the result of frustration of having been offered assistance and services which were either not forth-coming or were delayed for extensive periods of time. I repeatedly heard complaints from my fellow residents that they'd been in the shelter for a number of years, waiting for the "promised" housing and the assistance they expected to be given when the housing was procured. Equally as frustrating was the constant, and most often unconscious tension and anxiety caused by never being certain of one's own safety. It wasn't until months later when I caught myself, one morning, coming to the realization that at any moment, someone could come along the hall, or into a room, and without warning or provocation, harm me or any one of my "dorm-mates". And, even with-in a dorm, none of us ever really knew what the other was capable of, or what the other person may be thinking at any given moment. It was a fact that there were many on parole, or who were facing the fate of ex-convicts: unable to get work because of some infraction against the law for which they had already served sentence but who would not be hired because of their history. Most were repentant, and quick to admit an error in judgement or having had committed a "crime of passion", of the moment. Some were not so humbled and some of those were still seeking some kind of revenge. All of these thoughts can cause disappointment to turn to anger, anger to hatred, hatred to deep-rooted bitterness. That bitterness can certainly become over-whelming and, at some point, can, and in fact did, manifest in someone lashing-out on some unsuspecting by-stander.

I always recalled, while I was in the shelter, having gone to the internet to research what I thought of as "life and times in a Homeless shelter" and what I'd found: "Kevin", a young man in his later 20's, had found himself Homeless. He'd gone to a shelter, I'm not certain which one he'd mentioned in his on-line account, but his story then, carries on even to the moment at hand. In that shelter, he was given a mat to put on the floor in one very large room. There were no partitions for privacy, there were no beds, no pillows. "Kevin" used his duffel bag for a pillow. As his account reads, one night, without provocation, as he slept, a man suddenly came to him and beat him so seriously that he, "Kevin", had to be hospitalised for a period of time. His assailant was, as was later discovered, suffering from some sort of mental illness and in his delusion, believed that "Kevin" had assaulted and robbed him previously. As I recall, "Kevin's" account mentioned that, in the darkness of the large room, he resembled his attacker's attacker. And that's

all it took. “Kevin” became an unwary victim, due to no fault of his own. This, I realized, could happen to anyone, me included. (I’ve since tried to find this account again, but in the world of digital technology, things change, data changes and, very much like Homeless people will disappear, unfortunately, so to it seems, “Kevin’s” accounts of his experience have as well. Sad... very sad indeed.)

Imagine then, if, as I’ve documented, this was the condition, the situation in a shelter that was considered one of the “best”, what it must be in the other shelters that struck fear simply by the mention of their name. I won’t mention the names of those shelters here and now. With the aid of the internet these days, the descriptions I’ve already provided are sufficient foundations for further exploration and research. And the purpose of this book is not to disparage any particular shelter, person or persons. So I leave it at that with the hope that those who read this will be prompted to conduct their own research in the interest of a better understanding of this issue.

I also must admit that much of how a person responds to the situation in a Homeless shelter depends to a great extent, on the individual’s own personality, perception of and approach toward those who offer aid. As I learned and would repeat to my fellow residents, the success in leaving the shelter, to changing one’s life and circumstances depends most on one’s own determination and resolve to help one’s self and to either pursue one’s own goals and ambitions alone or to use the meagre services available only to augment one’s own capabilities. But in no way and at no time should any one of us simply sit back and wait for what we thought were the solutions, to be delivered to us. That, I realized and professed, was certainly not going to happen.

As time progressed and I did get my own job, with long, tedious hours and all but unrealistic commuting times, I came to understand, amongst many other things: Not all Homeless people should be given housing, that there never will be a complete end to Homelessness. One of the most basic truths about Homelessness is that there will always be those who simply cannot and those who simply will not be able to have and maintain a place of their own. Some simply do not possess the physical or mental capabilities. Others have neither the interest nor the inspiration to do so. There will always be a need for a public shelter system for some. This is why, when I first turned to popular social media on the internet I was then and remain a staunch opponent of those who, all too often without any experience with a general population of the Homeless, cry out “We can and must bring an end to all Homelessness” and those who insist that “ALL

Homeless people must be given a “home”. This is not the reality. The reality is that there are those who, as we, the shelter residents would put it, “hit a bump in the road of Life” and there are those who simply fell hopelessly into a large pot-hole on that same road and are lost at the bottom of it. For the former, a “hand up” and the compassion needed to bring stability back is all that's necessary. For the latter, the best that can be done is to put something appropriate over the pot hole to provide some protection against the elements, keep them from harm, provide the basic essentials to life and accept that this is all that can be done for them... they are in that hole and in that hole they will remain... by their own choice.

As a bit of a post-script , I really must add an experience that followed the days of my Journal in New York. Appropriate to the title, indeed, not all shelters are equal nor are the laws concerning shelters, or the Homeless. It came as a repulsive shock when I investigated into the shelter provisions of the State of Vermont for example, and found that, unlike the legal provisions established in the city of New York, Vermont's perspective is, in the 21st Century, archaic, dreadfully out-dated and generally unsympathetic and dispassionate. From large “cities” to smaller towns and villages, the general shelter system is still based solely on the notion that those who do not have a home of their own can and will hold some form of employment at all times. It's almost taken for granted that all persons seeking the aid of a “Shelter” are experiencing a transient period of inability to provide basic shelter and that that period will be brief. As appalling as it could possibly be, in most cases, residents of Vermont shelters are put out each and every morning by 7:00am or 8:00am, regardless of weather or other circumstances and they are not permitted re-entry until some time between the hours of 5:00pm to 7:00pm. This holds true for the warm Summer months and the bitterest of cold Winter months. On rare occasions, some exceptions are made and hours are modified. But these occasions are extremely rare and the modifications can be changed or completely revoked at any time and without any notice. Likewise, even in the larger “cities”, there are no guarantees that even a bit of floor space will be available to those who seek a refuge from the elements of Nature. There are no provisions to lighten the burdens of the Homeless.

I experienced all of this when, one day, I found myself in need of temporary shelter when I first arrived in Vermont. Subsequently, in conversation with someone I met who had been in the State for some 20-plus years, this atrocity was supported. I give, simply and concisely, as reference, her story:

She and her husband had to leave their home when fire took it from them. The husband worked a night shift job and the wife did not work at the time. Prior to the fire, they both kept the same routine and schedule: he would come home from work in the morning, they would have breakfast together and both would go to sleep during the morning hours. In the evening, they would both wake and spend time together, just as day-shift working people would do... only in reverse. When they found themselves in the shelter however, this was not to be allowed, considering the curfew hours and those hours when residents were prohibited from being in the shelter. For the first weeks the couple were in the shelter, the husband was not allowed to come into the shelter to sleep after having worked all the night before. He was forced to sleep in his car, often parked on or close to the shelter property. And this too, is where his wife would sleep, having stayed awake all the night before, as she had done previously. As this story ends, they did, eventually manage to have some provisional concessions made with the shelter, and, on some days they were allowed to maintain their previous routine. "Some" days. Otherwise, they were told to vacate the shelter by 7:00am and there was no consideration given to the fact that they would be sleeping in a car, no matter what the weather conditions were. Thankfully, this situation didn't last for very long for them.

Likewise, upon my own arrival in the state, I learned, first-hand, the atrocities of the Homeless shelters and system in Vermont. I learned that there are astonishingly few shelters, that one is expected to give advance notice before entering some of the shelters. Personally, I was subjected to an "interview" and urine/drug test BEFORE being permitted to take residence in a shelter where I was told that I would NOT be allowed to return after my work-hours to change my clothes... and I would NOT be allowed back into the shelter after work until 2 or 3 hours after I'd finished. The doors to the shelter were locked each night at 9:30pm and no one was permitted entry nor exit after that hour. All residents (with some unexplained exceptions) were ejected daily by 7:30am (8:00am at the very latest), regardless of weather. And, unlike in New York, where residents are allowed days of rest on week-ends and holidays, these "regulations" remained in effect every day... EVERY day. As I put this manuscript to publication, this is sadly, still in effect.

Once again I say: Not all shelters are equal, and I add that not all cities nor States are compassionate.

† <http://www.nydailynews.com/archives/news/shelters-besieged-ex-cons-crisis-drugs-crime-article-1.482251>

† <http://www.nytimes.com/1986/10/31/nyregion/guards-held-in-2-shelter-killings.html>

† <http://citylimits.org/2012/10/16/the-men-who-ride-the-homeless-bus/>

Prison prepared him for life in the shelter.

"It's the same mentality," he said. "The only difference is that you can leave anytime you want."

"Those of us that want to get out we get up and we work,"



BELLEVUE MEN'S SHELTER

Brief Notes :

- What would other-wise be chapter titles are the manner in which the Journal progressed. I kept this format to stay as close to the original as possible.
- Numbers appearing at the beginning of a day's entries following dates as "Monday 1 January XXX/XXX":

The first is the number of days of Homelessness/The second is the number of days in the Shelter

- Italicized parentheticals have been added as additional descriptions or clarifications and are not necessarily in the original notes.
- In order to protect client and patient confidentiality, uppercase initials have been used to indicate certain people for whom I cared: HT, TG, etc.
- As a rule, when discussing or referencing the Shelter staff, names of personnel are intentionally indicated by rather non-specific names which may or may not have any correlation to the individual's actual name or even gender.
- Unless indicated by the letter "F" (Fahrenheit) following a number, temperatures are in degrees Celsius.
- References to the "Fort" and "Bakfort": In the earliest days of my Homelessness, my refuge was in an abandoned military fort, or installation. Long left to the course of Nature, it provided rudimentary protections from some of the elements. The name or exact location of the "Fort" is, for the purpose of this book, not necessary. - References to locations such as "T" followed by a number are building locations as were assigned by the military when the "Fort" was originally constructed and by which we knew each building.
- There are many references given for resources and more information on the subject matter and I encourage readers to check them, as well as using social media where there are many Homeless people communicating with each-other and the rest of the world. Yes, Homeless people have access to computers (thanks to local libraries) and phones these days. And social media is an excellent source of current information... and correspondence... and, should you ever be in need of support or direction (which I pray you never do), a great deal can be found, from the most reliable sources, on social media today.
- Spelling: I've written in "European English" so some words might appear to be misspelled... but they're not.

FOREWARD

It wasn't easy, this morning, waking up knowing that there was no way out. No money left and none coming in. The rent was so far behind that there wasn't a glimmer of hope that I might be able to stay even one day longer. I couldn't fight it. I was so far behind in every debt I owed and I had no ground to stand on, no bargaining leverage, I couldn't make any promises. The choice this morning was to wait until I was physically thrown into the streets or to simply walk away, leaving everything where it was. I couldn't even afford a place to store what little I had left in my life. I was over 50 years old, had worked all my life, sometimes at jobs I truly didn't like, for people I didn't like, but I worked... always worked for even the smallest things I had. To look at what surrounded me in my "home" wouldn't make an impression on most people. I didn't have rare and precious antiques or collectible pieces of art; I didn't have all the latest styles in clothing or anything with "designer" names. What I did have was all the necessary essentials, and a few little things that connected to memories, memories that brought me moments of wonder and happiness and peace.

Where I was going, which was something I wasn't even certain of yet, I couldn't bring anything with me other than the clothes on my back and a little more, just to be ready for changes in weather. I had no car to store anything in, nor to provide any sort of shelter. I had no cart to pull about with me. I had no luggage I could pack and roll about town. I had no choice this morning but to leave everything where it was and let whom-ever come along and either throw it all into the streets to be collected by the sanitation department or, if anybody wanted, to take something or all with them. Maybe the clothes would end up at a Goodwill or a church bazaar. Maybe the furnishings would end up at a Salvation Army. Hopefully, something would manage to find its way to somebody who needed and could use it. That could be my "legacy", to have donated something needed to someone who would appreciate it.

The silly things, the things connected only to my own experiences, my own memories, my own existence would probably be tossed into black plastic trash bags and somebody would curse me and them as they dragged it all out to the curb.

This morning, I went around, dusting, washing, putting everything in order as if the place was about to be photographed for some magazine spread with an article on “better living” or as if guests were soon to arrive. Why? Only so that I could be remembered for being considerate, neat, and so that the place wouldn't require a major over-haul as it was prepared for the next tenant. Yes, I thought about the strangeness to that all, putting the house in perfect order now, and when all was where it should be and settled, this morning I'd walk out the door, out to the streets and leave it all behind... forever. I'd never be back, never see this place I'd called “home” again, and never be near anything that was in it. But I couldn't very well just leave anything out of order. I even made the bed in a fashion and manner similar to a hotel: clean linens, neat folds, fluffed pillows. The place was “welcoming” and I was leaving it, forever. But somehow, instead of allowing the reality of the situation to dominate my thoughts, I shut my brain off, or it shut itself off, away from the brutality of being stripped of my history and home. Somehow, somewhere, my thoughts were all about “presentation”. Everything had to look good. I wouldn't be remembered as having been careless. Right to the very end, it was important to me to be “presentable”. That's the way I'd been raised, and now, even now at my age, I still believed that the way I lived was a direct reflection on the way my parents raised me, and I couldn't insult them, not even now.

When everything was where it should be, even down to the flat-ware put in order, the freshly washed tea towel folded and hung neatly at the sink, I stopped, looked about the place with a careful eye, making certain that all was as it should be. When I was satisfied that there was nothing more to be done in this house, I turned to the door as if just going out for the day, to shop, stop by somewhere to see somebody, not giving any further thought to the fact that once through that door, there was to be no “return”.

Out in the hall, I turned, locked the door (so that nobody could simply walk in and trash the place in my absence), knowing that the superintendent had a key, and quietly walked away, down the hall, down the stairs and out onto the street. It was... the end. My life and times were now gone, and I'd never have them back; no music, no art, no books. No seasonal clothes, no “good shoes” or every day shoes. No comfy blankets to cover me at night, no bed to lay on, no pillow for my head. Everything I'd worked for through my life-time... gone.



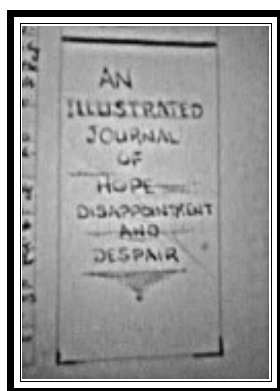
During the day I avoided all opportunities to think about what had happened this morning. I made certain that there was a place I should be, people with whom I should talk, things that I should accomplish. Everything and anything to keep my mind occupied. In the brief moments when my brain was invaded by the realities of my situation, I threw it all aside with rationale and justifications: This isn't unlike others who have their homes destroyed by sudden tornadoes, floods, fire, earthquakes; this isn't unlike victims of war who are forced to flee in the middle of the night, leaving everything but what they can carry. I'd always mourned for those people, cried when I saw the coverage on the news, or read the history books, or heard the first-hand stories of the "survivors". Today, I lived all of that and in my mind, because I had to, I justified my own misfortunes and in my own way, aligned myself with those people. Now, instead of being an inexperienced sympathiser, I was with them. It didn't make anything easier, but it gave me some logic and perspective. "Avoidance"? "Denial"? Whatever it was, whatever it took, this was all I had and as long as it served a purpose, it was fine with me. So all that day I held onto those thoughts when I had to, when I was confronted with the silence and solitude and the moments when harsh reality came to slam my head with the butt-end of it's weapon. And it served its purpose... for me... for the moment. Otherwise, I spent the day, finding people I knew, sitting and chatting with them about their lives, their problems, their experiences, their stories, their joys. To them, I was simply having a regular day, nothing noteworthy. I maintained my sense of humour, compassion, interests. It was, for all the world to see, nothing out of the ordinary.

It wasn't easy that night, that very first night. The day had come to an end and all the people with whom I'd chatted blithely all day were leaving. They had homes to go to, meals to prepare, chores to attend to, lives to live. They had showers to take and beds to lay down on, blankets to cover themselves with, normal, routine, mundane events that kept them in their own stabilities. As they walked away, got into their cars, disappeared into the distance, my world became increasingly more silent and alone. When at length, the last one had gone the reality of my situation became almost unbearably obvious: There I stood, solitary, just me and nothing at all. The sun was setting, the day-light was slipping away and I had absolutely nowhere to go to, no meal to prepare, no chair to relax in, and later, no bed to lie down on. Something inside me crawled deeper into my own mind and there, a story began to unfold. I began to walk, slowly, toward the rising night sky, into the darkness pondering and preparing for the long and empty night ahead. I'd have to find a place in which to hide tonight, someplace comfortable enough to fall asleep, undiscovered, unnoticed. This was MY situation and I wanted no one else involved

until I could sort it all out, come to terms with it. But I needed to rest. I could find my way into the subway system for the night, but riding along, through the tunnels, exposed to what-ever might come along wasn't an option I could accept tonight. News stories of people who had only dozed-off even for a moment, waking to find they'd been robbed or worse, stabbed or somehow otherwise injured popped in and out of my consciousness. No, that was not an option, not for tonight. Tonight I needed an opportunity to evaluate, to think of what tomorrow's day-break would offer. Tonight I need silence, and I needed to be able to rest enough so that tomorrow, should I survive through this night, to appear as if all was well with the world and to have the fortitude to continue my personal charade of "normalcy".

I continued to walk, slowly, just walk, forward, thinking, in the ever-darkening silence.

Moments would suddenly, and without warning, rush at me, slamming into me like opposing soldiers on a battle-field, heavy clubs and butt-ends of rifles smashing me in the head and face: the staunch reality of the situation would appear, not to kill me, but to inflict such horrendous suffering that my insides would actually wrench, my stomach would contract and it felt as if I would heave, grossly and grotesquely, everything inside my body, internal organs included. I rapidly diverted my attention away from that with the thoughts that this is "now", and in 5 minutes from "now", again, in the words of my Mother: "This too shall pass". And silently, I continued to walk... forward.



That night wasn't easy, but I did have one very important aspect on my side: It was Summer, a warm, dry, star-filled night and I was in one of the very few and rare spaces in New York City that would be empty, devoid of people, and gave no cause for anyone to be lingering or wandering about in the darkness. And then, I had a bed-sheet, I had a beach, I had a place to lay down, alone, in silence, where I could, if possible drift off and away, into sleep, for the night... if not... forever. And I walked, forward until I found a place, out of the way, into the darkness with no idea what was to come during this night or what was to come when the sun rose

tomorrow. And as I walked, in my own mind, I turned all of this, the situation, the reality, into some kind of adventure, a challenge, a new experience, a matter of curiosity: I'd sleep out in the open space, nothing to shelter or protect me, alone, tonight; this could prove to be some kind of

amazing! I found a place, a spot, on a dune, in the tall sea grasses, not far from the open Atlantic, I spread my sheet, put my back-pack down for a pillow, laid myself down and as I watched the stars above, glittering against a magnificently clear, deep blue-black sky, I listened only to the sound of the surf and finally, drifted away... to sleep.

Yes, prior to reaching this point, this day, I'd talked about the impending moment when this day might come. And yes, I did, without begging, talk lightly about the conditions that were leading to this moment. I knew people who could have opened a door, people who had the space to take in my few belongings for safe-keeping, people who could very well and comfortably provided even a corner of a room, space on a floor where I could put a blanket to lie on at night. But Life has a way of teaching us many lessons. I have always recalled the words of my Mother when I was rather young: "In the course of your lifetime, you will have many 'acquaintances', not all of them will be your 'friend'. But if, at the end of your life you can honestly say that you have even one 'friend', you'll be a very lucky person." Well, now I was being repeatedly slapped with the reality of those words and I was learning, through an excruciating lesson: I was now surrounded by "acquaintances", and "friends" were no-where to be found. Painful as it was, it was the fact, the reality and at this juncture, there really was nothing to do about it but accept, acquiesce, surrender to it and decide where to go from this point at which I stood... alone. Not a pleasant prospective. But, as each moment passes, things change, time changes. I'd always told people who'd lost loved ones to death: People who tell you "It'll get better." are liars. It never gets "better"... it gets "different". And, in general, in times of distress, my words of philosophical advice were always "Hang in there... things will get different." Now it was my turn to take that advice to heart and all I could do now was wait to see just what "different" would come... and to face it all... alone.



THE JOURNAL AND THE JOURNEY

What follows from this point is direct transcription of the notes written in 2 note-books: “Monogram” and “BlackNotes”. Each note-book was purchased at a “99-Cent Store” and the titles are given only as a reference to the description of the book itself in which the original notes were written.

The sketches included are from the original note books (which have, over time, sadly and irresponsibly been lost due to my ignorance and misplaced trust). They were quickly photographed using a rather old cell-phone and manipulated to the best of my abilities to present here-in. I include them because I believe they too, are part of the over-all story, lending insight to the emotions and psychological state at the time. The photographs are my own.

For the most part, the only editing on these notes has been for spelling, and clarification of some rather obscure references or lines. I've intentionally left the matter as it was written because, in its own format, it's more indicative of the emotional, mental and physical states in which the notes were written and I was advised, often, to present them just as they were intended, at the moment they were written.

Once again, I give a warning that the vocabulary may not be pleasant for some readers, the content may offend some people, the grammar may not be particularly professional, the formatting may not be as might be expected. But these are not short stories of phantasy, nor is this work a “romance novel”. This is an account of “life” in a men's Homeless Shelter in New York City, “... the most populous city in the United States and the centre of the New York metropolitan Area, one of the most populous urban agglomerations in the world.”

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City)

Please accept my most sincere gratitude for your interest in this work.



01.August 2008 - Monogram

FRIDAY 15 AUGUST 2008

I was awake almost the entire night, worried about paying the rent. At approximately 4:30am, I called for my available banque balance. 2.71\$! I hoped that payroll simply hadn't been posted yet but grew sick at the possibility it wouldn't be at all. There should be 2 weeks' pay there! It would cover the rent that's due and leave a little more for something to eat... a coffee at the very least. And all of this anxiety, this terror would be gone. But it's not there! It's not there! What has payroll done? What has Evelyn done? It makes no difference to any of them, really. THEY'RE all sleeping comfortably... I don't even exist. - So by 5:30am I began packing up, preparing for the hotel I'd come to call "home" to come take my belongings. Eviction at this point, was inevitable, and I honestly couldn't fight or argue

against it. I owed rent for the month, and, at this point, I had absolutely no way to pay it. They would evict and ethically, I had no recourse. - Again, at 6:30, I phoned the automated line... no payroll! Maybe not until 9:00? I prepared for death. The thought of losing what little I have made death so much better. From 3 rooms of furniture, clothing, kitchen-ware, essentials to daily life and existence, I have a few pieces of luggage, clothes enough for living day-to-day. At this point, I suppose I should thank my "sister" for having stolen all else. Leaving all of that behind would have placed a great deal of stress on others. Now, all that's needed to dispose of all that I have is a few trash bags. Imagine, my entire 50-some years... in a few trash bags. This is what we come to,



all that we amount to. As for death, well, I have all the pills I need - By 9:00, I left. Walked out of the little room where I was most comfortable, and made my "home". Down the old stairs, through the little lobby... Carlos was on the desk and doing something that apparently required his undivided attention. He didn't speak. I held the door for the young girl who was my neighbour on the 2nd floor. Carlos never even looked up. I left, silently walked out the door, holding onto a dim hope that at some point during the day, technology would snap, my salary would be posted to my account, I could run... RUN and pay my rent and all would be well again. Hope... very dim hope. - 9:30am. 2.71\$! I put 2\$ on my MetroCard so that I'd have, at the very least, bus fare, in case I needed to get any-where, and headed to the Fort. At least there, I could wait, in some semblance of sanity and serenity, pass the time chatting with Penelope, maybe have a coffee with her, an hope. - My god! How it RAINED! Lightning! Thunder! Beautiful! But it screwed me up and out of my plans for a quiet retreat to the dunes and death. Something is thwarting even my ultimate departure from this misery. I don't want to take the next breath, let alone, face the horrors of what's bound to come. Homeless. Empty. Hopeless. Empty. Finished. - At noon I swallowed 2 Oxycodone. 12:30, 2 more. 1.00pm, another. 12 is the max per day I learnt at the library (PDR) this morning. I was on my way. - 4:00pm. I took my "pills" silently. Nobody knows what's rushing through my body now. I spent the day with Penelope, chatting and waiting for the medications to start shutting things down in my body. Hoping that they would. Penelope left. It poured! I stayed in T7 with some guy who'd showed up during the course of the day waiting for Tommy to return at 8:00pm. Why, of all times, on all the days, did somebody else have to come to simply "hang"? I didn't want to be around anybody... not today. - A full storm raged, and passed. Tommy and Tony, then Geoff and Mary arrived. They rehearsed their "Improv" skit. I was STONED! and pissed. It was still raining and I didn't know where I'd spend the night in the rain. It didn't appear that this medication was going to be any swifter than "Life" itself. Ah... only more misery, just more misery. - Oddly enough, Mary and Geoff offered a lift to B116th Street tonight! How strange. In all the time we've known each-other, and never an offer before, today. There's nothing there for me to go to any more. I didn't want to face being told that I couldn't have access to my room. I couldn't face knowing that everything was already gone. I was in more than enough emotional pain right now. So no, I didn't need a lift. What I needed at that very moment was a place to lay down, close my eyes and drift off into non-existence. But I thanked them and just said "I'm good." - I think they all left approximately 11.30pm. It was drizzling. I went out, into the night, put on my rain poncho (from the 99-cent store) and started to the beach in the drizzle and darkness. If I could get close enough to the sea, maybe I could pass

out there, close enough to the tide. It would come in, lift me up, take me out. There's nothing between here and the South Pole, and a LOT of open sea. But as I turned the corner, away from the buildings... Hero Road gated! I turned back, went into the real darkness and relative wilderness of the Bakfort, perhaps to Harris East or West, huge old war bunkers that would give, at least, shelter from the rain, quiet and darkness. That's all I really wanted. A helicopter came by. The poncho is white! I could be spotted. I took a pee, went back to T7. Everybody gone. - All chairs and lounges on the front porch were soaked with rain! I put a plastic garbage bag and my poncho on the wooden settee, crunched my body on it and tried for sleep. - Heavy air traffic. Nervous about Parks Police. I didn't sleep well all night but, it didn't rain any more. - VERY cramped and uncomfortable.

Saturday 16 August



Woke at 3:00am, VERY, VERY COLD. I had a beach towel with me, so I put it over me for cover and tried for more sleep. 5:30, gave up. Laid awake until 6:30. Good timing. Parks Sanitation came up to get garbage! I got busy moving lounge cushions to appear as if I should be here to tidy up the place. - Thankfully, had left-over cold coffee from yesterday. A few sips. Penelope had given me some cigarettes yesterday. I lit one. - By 8:00 or so, Penelope arrived. She thought my presence unremarkable. There had been other mornings when I'd have met her there. We talked, about nothing in particular. She went for her usual morning walk along the beach. I sat and began to sketch... just to pass the time. - When she returned, I told her about being "un-domiciled". She asked how much would get me in. 180\$ I told her. She dropped the subject. - Apryl and her band arrived at approximately 10:00. They were there to practice for a coming show. Penelope and I moved things back to building T6 that were in T7 but needed to go for the coming entertainment season. - Ah... a telephone message from Nurse Nancy. She has as a patient for me on Monday. I told her can't take the case and why. Rosaria, the nurse on the last home-care case I had with the agency made serious trouble and accusations against me. The patient was, in fact, delusional, suffered from drug-abuse related dementia, but she, Rosaria, saw this as her personal opportunity to make a name for herself as "The Great Patient Advocate". The accusations against me bordered on "patient abuse". Instead of coming to question me about the case and situation, she actually

believed the elaborate stories from the patient. I was on “suspension” until further investigation by the agency. She, Nancy, agreed Rosaria isn’t professional and hoped I’d be available soon. - Penelope meanwhile, suggested I tell Geoff of my dilemma and ask to crash in T7 over-night. She thinks he’ll OK it. - While cleaning the fridge in T6, we popped a few slices of frozen pizza into the microwave. I’d bought it and put it there for the folks who came to the studio in the evenings. Penelope told me to set up the microwave. 3 slices. Said go to T7, get soda. I did. Heated and ate all 3 slices. “You must be absolutely starved! You poor thing!.” she said to me. She had no idea. I’d not eaten in the past couple of days, and, well, the medications of yesterday, and being out and awake all night the night before... in the rain, well. - When she left at 5:30pm, she left me in T6 to lock up. I said I was thinking of going for a swim, taking a shower (in back of T6). She agreed it was probably a good idea, suggested I leave back door open so that I could get back in. She offered a small “Dove” soap for my shower. Left me about 6 cigarettes too. - I did go to swim. Cold! The water temperature coupled with my fatigue... I can’t take cold any more. I’ve done too much of it, especially last night. Came back to T6. COLD SHOWER! But I’m showered. - It’s 7:08pm as I’m noting. The warm sun is setting. Cream-gold in the sky. A few clouds. Cool breeze. My bathing trunks drying on the porch rail. Nobody from the “Artists' Alliance” is here. Tommy said something about much music and drinking at 4:00pm. I’m just as glad to have this peaceful time. There are some people arriving for theatre at T4. I have access to T6 for the night. No place to sleep in there but it’s shelter. Can’t decide between sleep and death tonight. Either is a viable option. - Would like to curl-up and sleep right now. Don’t know if anybody’s coming to the RAA though. If I go into T6, it’s too dark to write/sketch. Can’t turn on lights. They’re visible to road. Need to figure where to sleep in there. Shelter beats waking through the night again because of cold. - And so, by 8:30 I’ve put a sheet on the old heavy wood work-table, my tallit (prayer shawl) in the Brighton canvass tote made a pillow and the sea sheet, the one that had washed up to shore on a wave, one day, a few days ago, made a comfy cover. The moon was FULL, rising beautifully over the soccer fields. Awesome! To be true. People were arriving for the theatre in T4. The Fort was in its glory. Heavy black clouds were coming from the main-land. The sun-set made them glow fiery hot red-orange! Hell was above me. Peace was inside me. I turned on no lights. There was more than enough from those in the parking lot. And the “Exit” signs in T6 glowed red. All was quiet as I climbed onto the hard table, put my head down and covered me with the sheet. Hey. I was warm, dry, sheltered. I needed no more from life at this point. Clean. Showered. Sheltered.

Sunday 17 August

I woke a few times during the night. I remember doing the same thing many times through my life. Nerves. Fright. Terror. Depression. I don't like it but it's my existence. - But I got off my table at approximately 6:00am and began cleaning the coffee maker. FILTHY! Grounds in the works and all. I'm just now watching the first pot of coffee coming through. Oh well. I'm not other-wise occupied. Mopped the floor down twice as best I can. I've got terrible cramps this morning. It's most fortunate I have access to the loo! I'm in dire need. - Yet, the sun is rising over a bucolic Ft. Tilden and into a sky of magnificent blue. Coffee's on. Fresh-brewed. 2 cigarettes left. Looks like a great day to go to the beach and die. Go, whilst the world is at peace. It's a comfort to me to know I have that choice. - Haven't brushed my teeth since Friday morning. Rinsed with hot salt water though. I wonder how long these clothes I'm wearing will hold. I wonder where all my other clothes are. Death on the beach. We'll see. The choice is there. I have choices. - 8:53 and I'm still alone. Allergies? Cold? Stress? Congested. Chest and nose. Just not feeling too well. Can't afford sickness. Unless it's my message: which choice to take. - 8:03 in the library of T6, at the desk... Penelope arrived about 10:00. I was relieved to see her for many reasons, not least of all, that I would have had to explain my presence here and had she not come, I ran the risk of being locked out. I'd have had to leave the building, lock the door, cover the fact that I'd been in there all night. And once out, I would have been locked out... until somebody came or until Penelope arrived. As it went, she spent the better part of her day cleaning a fridge in one of the back rooms of T7. I was her "company". I spent most of the day feeling miserable. Cold? Flu? Allergies? Exhaustion? All of the above, no doubt. (Even now, I'm sneezing. Nose dripping. Eyes all water! Feverish. Who knows?) She wanted (wants) me to ask Geoff for permission to stay here and I agree. But he came by briefly, he too feeling and looking ill. He was supposed to attend a wedding (on the beach) for one of the teachers from the Summer programme but was too sick. I didn't mention staying here because of his illness. Penelope agreed it was best not to right now. But, she told me of a woman who took residence on the porch of T7 without any permission. It presented a terrible problem for everybody. The Alliance rents the property from the Fort/Park, and the park is actually Federal property. This woman's presence every night was noticed and it did not settle well with the Fed. I assured her I'd do all possible to avoid all troubles. - This evening I went to the wedding with Penelope. I felt poorly dressed (jeans, T-shirt, corduroy shirt, flip flops). After the wedding we went to the reception at the picnic area here. Beautiful! Traditional Korean. Plenty of food. I ate well. Hopefully it will all settle well in my stomach. Although there was something on a platter that appeared to be a

roasted dog! I told Penelope, she had a look and said that it couldn't be. However, somebody in the wedding party got up to make a toast and after inviting us all to please eat well and enjoy, he also encouraged us all to at least "try Fido"! OK. I stopped eating at that point. I couldn't remember if I'd actually eaten some or not. OK. It's a matter of "culture", but my culture, well... Homeless or not... Dog? I don't think so. - Penelope and I came back to T6. She gave me some cigarettes for the night, suggested I have access to the library to read if I'd like, said she doubts anyone will come round for any reason tonight. Even mentioned turning on a light and the radio! I said I feel best not drawing ANY attention here. She agreed. - It's 8:20pm. 25,5° (Celsius) . I could use a shower but the one here is cold only. NOPE! NEED to brush my teeth and will soon need to shave. But right now, the day is finished and there's nothing I can do about anything until tomorrow so I just need to do what must be done to feel well enough to attack a Monday. I'd like to hear music, sketch, take a walk, WASH MY CLOTHES, BRUSH MY TEETH, settle in, watch TV. But my stomach is actually bubbling! I'll be happy if I can simply sleep through the night and wake trouble-free in the morning. - 8:35pm Cleaned my teeth with a "ScotchBrite" pad! Feeling cleaner! I think there's a full moon tonight. Beautiful out there over the Fort. But I just heard a car door close out front! Time to either make my presence appear "normal" or figure a way to conceal my presence completely so that I don't get thrown out of the only shelter I have.

Monday 18 August

(Writing at 6:31am on Tues. 19th at the 315 crosswalk to the beach!) A "typical" night of waking through-out. AT 5:00am, the sanitation trucks came by. At one point it appeared to me that they could see in through the window and see me on the table. But on further thought, I doubted it. So back to sleep until 6:30. I need a shower today. - I was on the porch at T7 when Penelope arrived. Working on sketches and working on making it appear that I'd only just arrived. That's my first concern; it should always appear that I arrived so early and never like I'd been here all along. - Feeling a little better this morning. The cold/flu symptoms are less today. - So Penelope seems happy to see me this morning and we get into our art. She, to her sculpting and I to my sketching and the day goes by. She tells me to heat the frozen pizza that's in the freezer. She's making certain that I eat. One slice left. At the end of the day, it would be all I'd eat (save a chocolate candy rabbit). - Geoff came by to tell her (Penelope) that the floor of T6 will be painted on Thursday during the day. She was concerned about her sculpture. I was/am concerned about the weather and where I will go for the day AND THE NIGHT! And then it hit me: THIS PAY-

CHEQUE DOES ME NO GOOD. AT THIS POINT, I CAN GET MY BELONGINGS BACK AND OUT OF THE ROOM, BUT I HAVE NO PLACE TO PUT THEM! I'M TRULY, ABSOLUTELY, COMPLETELY HOMELESS THIS ENTIRE WEEK-END AND THERE WILL BE NO CHEQUE THE FOLLOWING WEEK! - OK. It's coming to the end... That what it's doing. So? So... I'll do what I do at the time. I don't know what the weather will be on Thursday, so I don't know what I'll do. Penelope says I should ask G. about staying... sleeping... in T7. Thursday is the music until 2:00am on Friday. Friday is the Improv. Wednesday are classes. Alas. Alas. No room in the inn. We'll see what happens. - Meanwhile, the day comes to an end. Some guy (Frank) visits Penelope then latches on to me long after Penelope leaves. I wanted to shower before sunset! - As it turned out... The day closed with 2 voice mails: Sully from JCCRP (Jewish Community Centre of the Rockaway Peninsula): my application for Medicaid was declined. We'll need to change it somehow. (Imagine: I'm jobless and Homeless... and no eligible for Medicaid.) The other message was from somebody from the Ben Franklin Democrats (231st St. in The Bronx) (A YEAR OR MORE LATER) could I submit a proposal to re-build their entire web-site? It was a YEAR ago at least, when they'd first contacted me to do this work, and then told me that they'd have to get back to me on it... Right! A year later. Seriously? - I had to go to T9, the old foundry, to get a signal on the phone for the voice messages. Up the old stairs to the second storey, on the old boards. But, when that was done, I went back to T6 to shower. - TAH-DAH! FINALE! I'm drying in the bathroom of T6 and I hear the front door open! I step out of the loo. Geoff! I tell him the shower is post-beach. We schmooze about his recent not feeling well. He cleans a spoon. I continue to dry off. He leaves. I dress. I look over to T7 and there are 4 or 5 cars and G's truck! It will be an evening for them here. I CAME BACK TO MY DUNES on the beach beside the open Atlantic, with a 227g chocolate bunny for dinner, coffee for the morning and NO CIGARETTES! - Tried to find a place by bunker 220, under some trees but because of still air, the mosquitoes were thick. So? Back to the old place on the dunes, tried and true, 8:30pm to watch sun set and moon rise and darkness fall...

Tuesday 19 August

...at 7:16am on the beach after a night of sleeping in the grasses of the dunes. I've just finished recording yesterday's notes and event and the sun has come from orange to hazy pale yellow. The breeze is nice. The sun is warm. But there's a horrific PAIN in the right side of my groin! I want a cigarette. The elastic on my bottom teeth that pulls the space between them closed needs

replacing. I need to wash these clothes I've been wearing. I should go find out my status at RPH (the hotel that I've called "home" since I arrived here, the little room where I was so truly happy



to be, happy to have found, just so happy to "be") today and I think I'll have the runs at some point during the day. So I'm opening this day's entry with a bitch. Hey! 21 days and I finish 52 years and will be moving into 53 years of age. And, aside from the experience of sleeping on the beach, watching a full moon rise, seeing another magnificent sun-rise, my existence is WHAT!

TORTURE for the most part. HELL for another part. - 8:58am Porch, T7. The lawn/garden sprinklers are on, per Tommy's request. The sun is up and hot. The back door of T6 was not locked when I got here! I could have come here earlier and even last night. But, all said, living on the dunes was nicer. Still, this morning, I wonder if Geoff (and Tommy) know I'm homeless. Tommy asked "If you're here... on the days you're here early, would you turn on the sprinklers?" Geoff didn't seem at all surprised to see me in T6 last night. - 9:06am Penelope's arrived. I've got company and somebody to talk with today! - It's 7:31pm I'm under a tree on the bay side of the Cement Road. Somewhere by the corner of the Hero Road. There's bayberry and a little poison ivy to keep me hidden from view on the side and the branches above to block aerial. It's the aerial I've been most concerned about. Police helicopters. That would make this all the more interesting, since this area was a WWI and WWII military base, now turned Federal park. But, as I ponder it now, being busted might be a blessing. I'd have shelter and meals... that's a lot more than I have now. Tonight I have candy to eat and I'll be sleeping on soil, not sand under this little tree. Well. We'll see how it all ends up. This should be interesting after sun-down.

But for now, I'm reclined on an open black plastic trash bag for ground cover. Boots off. As comfortable as could be, considering. And all the while I'm remembering that I have all I need to simply drift out of all of it. I have the option. A bunch of pills and sleep... no waking. -

Meanwhile, the day. I must begin noting that I took a close look at my teeth, this morning and it was disgusting! They haven't been properly brushed since Friday morning! So I cleaned them with some sea grass which I used like floss. During the day, I scrubbed with salt on finger. But, yuck! To think that my teeth could be so filthy! - So Penelope arrives and she tells me that she brought me a baloney sandwich for lunch! I was so appreciative... Of course! I almost actually cried. When I asked her for a smoke, she said she'd remembered not leaving me any and was going to call me to apologise. But she didn't and I told her that that would have been silly. - The day went along fine. She wanted to know more about how Edlyne screwed me by not processing my time sheets. I gave her the full scoop and explained that I still don't know why or how she could get away with it. They owe me two weeks' pay. Had I gotten it when I was supposed to, I wouldn't be Homeless right now. - Sully came by for the first time in ages and told of squashes and pumpkins growing out in The Fort. Told me of some beach plums too. When he left, I borrowed a bike and brought back 2 large squashes so Penelope could see them. (She left them, by the way.) Went back for what I thought was pumpkin but turned out to be another kind of squash. I cooked it in the microwave. Rather good. But truth is: I'm SO hungry these days that just about anything hot would be gourmet. Left-overs are in T6 fridge. - 7:58pm I'm under my little tree, writing this in my note book but it's getting too dark to write much more because I'm under this tree. It's 25° (Celsius). Nice breeze. My stomach is a bit "off". It was gurgling last night and no BM all day today. I hope the stomach holds. But for now, before it gets too dark, time to make for some sleep. I've got a very tough 3 nights coming and no guarantee of income again come Friday. But I have my medications... my way out... my option. (7:37am on Wed.) To conclude: Tommy came out to the Fort and worked on the walls. He's putting up dry wall and the place is starting to look amazing! Then Janet came to say that they were judging submissions for the next exhibit coming in Sept.. that meant Penelope and I lost our calm day in T6. Then Geoff came to set-up for his evening class tonight. Ah! CLASS TONIGHT! I wouldn't have T6 (or RAA) at all! No choice in the matter. Tonight is out on the beach in The Fort! The thought actually made me sick to my stomach. I wanted to vomit. No shelter. Out in the cold with no-where to go. I kept getting nauseous every time I thought of it. But, I was gifted with a diversion in the way of being brought in to the panel of judges for the exhibit. My opinion was asked for and I got to judge about 5 entries. It was really very interesting and it did serve to distract me very well. I kept

hoping it would take a while and, as it turned out, it didn't end until about 5:30pm. - I'd wanted to shower today but never got to. What I need more is to wash my clothes. That never did happen either. But I got to stay with people and in shelter for the day. - Oh, Penelope's phone charger works on my phone too, so I charged it. The down side is, I've got only 6.50 dollars on it! I need to call the hotel. Hopefully they've just put my stuff into storage. I got a call from JCCRP saying the Medicaid application was declined. I need to go back there. And I need to call Edlyne to see when I'll get paid. I need to make calls. I have no time on the phone! - So, at about 6:00pm, everyone left. But of all the things to happen, as she was getting to the car, Penelope did something I'd have NEVER expected. She told me that the classes end at 10:00pm and that I'd need a way to get into the building, so, she gave me her key to T6! I thanked her, from and with my heart and told her that, as long as the weather was OK, I'd just stay away from RAA all night. She won't be back until Friday morning now. And on Thursday, the floor of T6 will be painted. So I really shouldn't be out here too early, so to avoid questions. But she gave me the key and some cigarettes for a while (5). She drove off and I headed to the beach. - There was enough daylight left to scout out a new place for the night. The dunes are beautiful but a) I don't want to keep to the very same spot for too long and b) I really want a place not visible to aerial surveillance. So, I took to the woods this evening. I was hoping for a little clearing under a thicket of bayberry. I looked over, under, in and through the area east of bunker 315, west of the Hero Road, south of the silos and north of the Cement Road and just in time, I found a smaller tree where there was a clearing beneath, bayberry around and very little poison ivy to consider. I can stand up, still concealed. I can lie down, stretched out. There's enough breeze to ward off most mosquitoes. No shelter from rain but I won't need to worry about waking before morning beach surveillance begins. Nor, do I need to worry about sanitation trucks or cars or even early beach goers. I can sleep as long as I can in the morning. I cleared away twigs, that might snap, should I move in my sleep. I opened the black plastic trash bag to make a liner/ground cover. A sheet over the plastic, a sheet over me and I was settled for the night - Now, at 8:18am this Wednesday morning, about the night...

Wednesday 18 August

8:18 I'm on the beach, warming up in a beautiful, bright sun.

This morning's air is so crisp.

So clean and clear that even the details of Sandy Hook NJ are quite visible from here.

Picture perfect weather. I just

need to raise my core

temperature a bit more. Last

night got to be so cold that I

had thoughts of just throwing

away all caution and going to

T6. Or, going to the hotel and literally begging to be let in. Yes. These are the August days: Hot

while the sun is up and cold through the night. September is coming (and I'm homeless, with

little-to-no salvation in sight) and the Autumn. I was asleep by complete sun-down last night

though. But when I woke through the night the moon dappled on the ground and on me,

through the leaves. All wasn't total darkness. Even in this misery, there is beauty to be

appreciated, and I DO appreciate it. - I woke about 5:00am and enjoyed the fact that I didn't have

to jump up and bolt into the world. I was concealed this morning. So, I opted for a while longer

on the ground to wait for full sun-rise... and warmth. It came at about 7:15. - Well, the white sheet

is filthy now, from the soil under the tree. But I rolled everything up, leaving nothing behind and

left through the bayberry and out into the world to a beautiful morning on an empty day. - On

the flip-side: my clothes need to be washed. I could do them at T6 and it would be a prefect line-

drying day. The sheet needs to be washed. I need to be washed! But horrible for the first time in

days, I need to take a dump! And as I sit here, writing, I'm surrounded by sand flies! Talk about

filth! I'm attracting flies. The tide is in. If it would get a bit warmer, I could go into the water,

maybe take a dump in the sea. There's a fisherman right where I am but I can move west on the

beach. I'm thinking that's what I'll do. Take a swim, dry out on the beach. Try for a shower at T6.

Maybe just go to the hotel today. So much to think about. - 10:10am This is almost too horrid, too

miserable to be real! SAND FLIES! 10:34am at T7: SWARMS! No matter where I went! Or what I

did! SWARMS! BITING! Nightmarish! Impossible to believe! Couldn't stay there! Couldn't sit!



Couldn't stand, lie, be still! Even here! On the porch! They're HERE TOO! Biting my feet! 2 of them on my knee! And, to add to it, somebody's on the back porch. I'm not alone. I can't help but think it's a message: I shouldn't be here today. Yes. There are things to be done... elsewhere. I was hoping to do them later. I was hoping to shower this morning. But it's becoming obvious that my hopes are to be dashed. But, at least, I took my dump ("emergency", in the shrubs, off of the Cement Road!) and my stomach is better. Not "all" is lost on this beautiful day. - 11:20am Geoff and Tommy came by. 3 girls are on the back porch "for the day". T6 is open (for them). I got the radio for me (on the front porch). But I wonder... Tommy noticed a blue tarp on Harris East and asked me what it is. Geoff immediately replied "That's his (my) house". What, and how much do they know about my days (and nights) here, in The Fort? - Meanwhile, the sand flies are killing me! - 1:38pm SHOWERED! T-shirt washed, by hand, in the little basin in the studio loo. I've accomplished nothing more. The flies were at me all day. I couldn't sit on the porch and draw. This day has been misery. But, I'm showered. 2 cigarettes left. It's only going to get worse from here. Maybe I should do my medications, go to the beach? Option. What a delightful way to "be", always remembering that there are options, and one of them is death. And, even showered, sitting in the sun and breeze, a fly won't let me be. Yes. I've died. This is Hell. - I rang the hotel. Rob answered. His affect is similar to that of someone who is on heavy medications or should be heavily medicated. I told him who was calling, I feigned a sudden on-set illness, told him I didn't abandon and that I'd be coming in to settle my account. He told me I've been "banned" for not paying rent or checking out when I was supposed to. I asked, "Can you tell me what was done with my belongings?" "No I can't. Ashley handles all of that. She won't be in until later." "OK. Can you tell me when she'll be in?" "Her plane lands in an hour." OK. What the Hell does that tell me? - I didn't call back this evening because I don't have the time on the phone to waste trying to get to her and I really don't want to hit her with this right when she comes back from holiday. Me... the "considerate" one. One of my admitted greater flaws. But I don't want to piss her off by being part of some BS that I know she'll be hit with anyway. But the time on the phone is even more of a concern to me. It was 6,50 dollars when I started my calling. - OK. Add to that, a call to Premier. Luz says Edlyne is in a meeting out of the office. I tell Luz I'm calling to see if my time sheets were put into payroll. "OK. I'll give her the message." - I called. I learnt nothing. Neither good nor bad news. Just nothing... neither more nor less. But it cost me time on the phone. - I washed my *Dor Chadash T-shirt and went back to the porch to try drawing. In spite of the general calm and quiet, I couldn't think of a thing and even as I tried, I couldn't concentrate long enough to come up with an idea. - Tommy came back this evening. Geoff too. Geoff didn't stay long but we

chatted about British and American humour. Tommy came after Geoff left. He and I put in some landscape solar-powered lights. He said he wants to power-wash the floor in T6 tomorrow. Will be at The Fort about 9am, left about 6pm. I was alone! - 7.30pm and the sun was getting low. I headed back to my little tree. Tonight I've got another plastic bag for ground cover and a large piece of black fabric that should be warm (found it in T7). Looks like a curtain of some kind. Heavy, black fabric curtain. There were people on the roads in The Fort so I had to be careful where I went. But, of course, at first, I couldn't recall where my spot was! A few mis-shots and finally! It was like coming "home"... a familiar place. How sad: a tree in an abandoned army base could make me so happy. I set right to putting down plastic (long enough for me to stretch complete), fabric, sheets and me. There was a bit of time to lie and look at the sky through the leaves and listen to some stragglers making noise on the Cement Road. - The last I recall, the time was 10:20pm and I rolled to my side for the night.

(*Dor Chadash is a network of Israeli and American Jewish young professionals who seek to create meaningful connections with Israel and each other through cultural, educational & social gatherings. - <http://www.israeliamerican.org/dorchadash>)

Thursday 19 August

It's 11:10am, front porch, T7. Lovely weather. Geoff's art class in progress in T6 since 10am. I've been here since about 7am. Watered the what-ever it is that gets watered. Finished the sketch I started yesterday. Am tired, hungry, in massive pain (upper back, maybe lungs) and have smoked 2 butts found on the ground here. I also am noticing that I'm beginning to develop an odour. Not disgusting but quite unpleasant. - Notes on last night: Slept generally well but woke quite cold just before midnight. The black fabric was a help but not a complete solution. - At one point, for no reason, sneezing and coughing uncontrollably! The cough tasted of blood. I didn't bother to check or look. I wouldn't have seen anything anyway... in the dark. It finally passed and I went back to sleep. If it's anything at all, I hope it does something damned soon! - Then, maybe around 1am or so, the air FILLED with the smell of burning wood! It happened Tuesday night also. I'd figured it to be idiots on the beach but THIS time it was HEAVY and annoying. A mystery. We'll see what tonight brings. - Then, this morning, as I was lying in the cold waiting for those first glimmers of morning sun-light to play on the leaves over my head, the sanitation trucks came along the Cement Road. That was interesting but, after they dumped the trash back at Sully's area, almost right beside my head, under the ground, I heard a sound like steel wheels

screeching on steel track! There's a bit of a mound surrounding the area where I sleep and it curves. I doubt there's any sort of tracks under the ground. But it does give me cause to think seriously. I don't think I'd drifted back to sleep and heard or mis-heard the sound. But, as strange as it (the noise, etc.) is, I'll just have to wonder. - And so, the sun came up and I got to RAA to begin the watering of the gardens. After all, mustn't let on about living ("living"? THIS is "living"? in The Fort. Must to look "purposeful". - Tommy and Geoff arrived in the late morning. Somebody on 139th Street donated yet another sofa for T7. I went with Geoff to get it. Lovely house with Mexican house-keeper... of course. I'm Homeless, living under a tree, right beside one of the most affluent neighbourhoods in New York City. Irony? But, as we drove to 149th, it hit me: I haven't been out of Fort Tilden in almost a full week! I've been in The Fort and in the woods all this time! What's making it a bit worse is I'm getting comfortable with it! My brain is coping with this as a some-what "long-term" situation. It's as if I'm slipping out of reality and into some sort of oblivion... and I'm not fighting against it. On some level, it's frightening. I need a haircut. I need a shave. I need clean clothes. I'm about to lose everything other than what I carry about. Maybe my brain has reached its end. Maybe I've finally snapped. I just don't know for certain. - Meanwhile in spite of pain in my back (kidney?), I helped get the sofa into the truck. - Tommy has supplied me with cigarettes all day and gave me money to get him 2 packs so we'd have all day. The odd incident of "compassion". I feel un-deserving though. - Got back to The Fort, un-loaded the sofa. Tommy asked me what I want for lunch! Now people are feeding me. I'm at the bottom. No-where to go but up and sideways. He and I walked over to Kate's, Roxbury. He got me a great sandwich! 5,99\$ and I got a little tour of Roxbury, a new perspective of The Fort. - The sandwich, potato salad and chips were perfect! Food! Food! Food! It's come to that. And my heart melts because of the help and sense of camaraderie. These people know so little of me yet, they offer what they can. I'm cursed by Creation and blessed by those around me. I don't know why. I don't understand it. It makes living easier. It makes living more difficult. I just continue existing. Nothing more. Nothing less. - This evening, I helped paint the floor in T6. The only clothes I have are what I'm wearing, yet, I'm painting. But it was a distraction and, in that, a joy. - Tonight was the music of Moon Stage concert. Tonight, I felt a part of everything. In fact, tonight I felt OK about helping myself to beer. And, as I stood in the crowd, I looked around in the darkness and thought to my-self: I'm the only ONE in the crowd who knows this place best. I know it in the daylight. I know it in the darkness. I'm not afraid of it at night. A little sense of pride which led to an unusual sense of security in the place where I've always been comfortable, but never felt I truly "belonged". Tonight, the others didn't really "belong". Me? I was part of this

place... I called it “home”, as indeed, it had become. - The concert was over. Mat and I sat alone, on the back porch of T7. We talked about being Gay in Rockaway. He’s 20 and born/raised BC. He told of getting into sorts of relationships with men who are emotionally unavailable. I listened. I tried to give inspiration. I’m an old Gay man “fathering” a new generation. He told me he wanted to try an over-night in the dunes. I was exhausted and looking forward to sleep. But I offered the chance and he accepted. It wasn’t an opportunity that I had any intention of taking advantage of, even though it would be rather easy, considering I do truly care for and about Mat. But he, in his youthful sort of amazement at the notion of sleeping on the dunes, and I being surprised that he’d never done and had been here all his life. Well, truly, I couldn’t see him doing such a thing alone. And with his friends, well, it probably would lead to some sort of trouble: noise, fires and the likes. With me, it would be a night of “Homelessness”... sleeping on the dunes not for the excitement and pleasure but out of the simple fact that that was all that was available... that was... “home”. By 2:30am on Friday morning, we were on the dunes... laying on a sheet, in a furrow, protected from drifting sands and such by tall sea grasses, with a clear night sky above, and the sound of the Atlantic Ocean’s surf pounding the beach beside us.

Friday 22 August



Up and awake by about 6am this morning to the sun-rise. A restless 3 hours on the dunes. It was chilly and damp and I, even in my half-sleep, worried that Mat would get cold. But Mat was up and walking the beach. I told him to stay until the sun had the chance to take away night’s dampness and chill. The sea grass and we were damp with dew. Autumn is rushing in. My nights out here should be severely numbered to the few. - We got to the porch at T7 and I dozed in a chair. Mat took the wooden settee. When I woke a about 8am, I put on the water for the gardens JUST

IN TIME! Geoff arrived about 8:30! Fate turned in my favour, Mat woke

on time too. - Geoff stayed a bit, we talked, he left. Penelope came! NORMALCY RETURNED! Mat left for home. I watched him walk to the gate. I wonder what he made of the night. Nothing happened. I wonder what he thinks of it. (We slept, my arm over him. It was warm for me for a change. But... Nothing of any interest happened. Ah well. Not that I wanted anything of any interest to happen. He’s sweet, too young to be my type to-date. Still, a very sweet impressionable young man. Enough said.) - Tommy came and occupied time. Liz (Albert’s wife) came this

morning and lingered... and lingered... and lingered. I didn't speak. She didn't either. She and Albert were at the concert last night and no words were spoken. They're the central reason that I'm where I am these days. He lied, Rosaria believed him, I'm suspended from work (although that doesn't give the agency the right to withhold my salary). But I'm relieved that they both had the better sense to leave ME alone and not start a public display of their insanity (even though most people at the concert, and most people around here are aware of it). So today, I simply cleaned the back yard of T6. Penelope had gone out to get coffee and a doughnut for herself and me. She offered to share her coffee with Liz and, of course, Liz accepted. Mooch! I grabbed my doughnut and finished it quickly, lest Liz grab it. Meanwhile, Tommy busied himself power-washing the front porch of T7. - WELL, AS IT WOULD GO TODAY, MY BALANCE IN THE PAYROLL ACCOUNT IS NEGATIVE TWENTY DOLLARS! HOW! I HAVE NO IDEA! FROM 71 CENTS TO NEGATIVE TWENTY DOLLARS! AND ON THE DAY WHEN I NEED THE MONEY! I FINALLY GOT IN TOUCH WITH EDLYNE AND SHE CLAIMS IT'S TROUBLE WITH THE BANQUE AND NOBODY GOT PAID. HSBC, SHE SAYS. I DON'T CARE. I WANT MY MONEY! NOW! So here I sit, looking forward to more time in the woods and closer still, to losing everything at the hotel. Little by little I go to nothing, nothing, nothing. - But, at about 3pm, I grabbed the shower out in the back of T6. It's now 4:31pm. I'm clean. My bowels are trying to clean me out. But I'm clean. - NEGATIVE TWENTY ONE DOLLARS AND TWENTY-NINE CENTS! At 4:32pm. And it's Friday! I just don't understand it.

Alone in the back of T6, broke, homeless, hungry. Is there a reason? No.

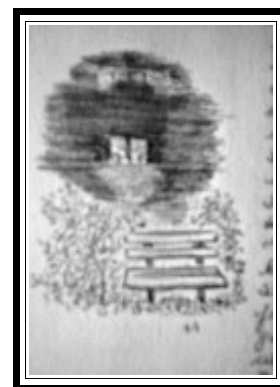
Not really. It just is and I have to handle it. But my horoscope says that my "time to shine" is coming. Death. And my art-work will be worth a fortune. That will be it. For now? To occupy some time before going to my little tree in the Bakfort for the night. I'm sketching on a blank page in my little pad. - (recording Sat. 6:54pm in T6) As I got up to close T6, Kristen and Matt came by en route to T7 where they were going to sit a while before going to the show at T4. I wasn't feeling like being alone and truly not looking forward to being in The Fort tonight so I went to



sit with them a while. As we sat, Tommy came with a case of wine, some sliced sausage, cheese and bread. The night began! Tony came to join. Albert's Liz invited herself. The talking went on and on into the night, through to the early hours of morning.

At peak, there were about 8 people talking about just anything and everything, and drinking wine. I even had some wine. As the night went on, people began leaving and some of us grew

exhausted. I have no idea what time it was when I covered Kristen on a settee on the back porch (she'd fallen asleep, poor girl) but that's when it was decided that the remainders of us would take a sofa for the night in T7. There are about 6 or 7 of them. Tommy put out the lights. Matt, Tommy and I each took a sofa for the night. I was thrilled to spend a night inside for a change. It was too late to go out to the Bakfort and I wasn't looking forward to being cold and wet in the dew again. - Frighteningly, I laid on the sofa, not at all comfortable. I actually WANTED to sleep out-doors! Being "confined" in a building bothered me! I couldn't see the sky for the roof. The walls around me were solid, my view was limited and it felt as if the walls and roof were blocking my air... I almost couldn't breathe! I'd been sleeping in the woods for a week and it seems I'm snapping and slipping away from civilisation! It terrifies me, even now as I journal this. But, I gave in to the anxiety and headed out into the back yard to the bench by T8, went to set up my blankets and such AND BROKE THE ZIP ON MY "BRIGHTON" TOTE in the dark! Now THINGS ARE TURLY BEGINNING TO FALL COMPLETELY APART! Still, I set the blankets up and tried for comfort. As I dozed off, the sound of a coon woke me.



She was at the bench. I lifted my head and said: Bleat-off you! I'm staying here tonight whether you like it or not!" and tried to drift off. Moments later, I was so bleating cold, I just got up, gathered my covers and went right back inside, fumbled in the dark to find an empty sofa and threw myself on one, terribly soft, uncomfortable sofa. But, I was chilled through, exhausted and in a warm building. I laid down and eventually went to sleep.

Saturday 23 August

It's 7:20pm. The clock shows 25° in here. I'm in T6, radio playing CBS-FM. I'm feeling like Hell. Headache. Fatigued. Unsettled stomach. Everything in and about me is hoping to be able to stay in here for the night. It's been a terrible day. - We all woke at about 7am this morning. I came over to T6 to make coffee. Geoff was already here. A group from the Mormons were due to arrive at 8am to do some work around the place for 3 hours. I was tired, fatigued, out of sorts, in no mood for much of anything. The sun was hot. But I just pushed myself through. Eventually Kristen went for Dunkin Donuts. (They ate them. I had a few "holes".) I cleaned the back yard of T6 and tried to fix the broken zip on the "Brighton" bag (and I've failed) for most of the day. Penelope came. There was a lot of noise all over the place! Penelope sculpting, the work crew

banging, people moving all around. I took Matt out to the Bakfort in search of beach plumbs. We found several little bushes out by the fresh water pond. Brought some back. - All I wanted to do is find a shady place in which to sleep, but, even though it was in the sun, I tried for the same bench I tried to sleep on last night. It was in too much sun. - 2pm and everybody (Tommy, Kristen, Matt and Tony) left for a day on the Dragon Boat. They'd eaten lunch on the front porch of T7. I wasn't invited. I didn't invite myself. So, when they left, I came in to T6 to sketch and be with Penelope. - I NEED to cut my hair! I NEED to wash my clothes (even though Penelope says I'm amazingly clean. You'd never know I'd been in these clothes, in the dunes, the woods, painting, etc. every day for a week! She even mentioned the fact that there's a neat crease in the jeans. I don't know HOW, but true... they are neatly creased.) I also NEED to wash the sheets I've been sleeping on. - So at about 5:00pm, Penelope took off, leaving me to lock up and "do what you do" as she put it. The breeze in the parking lot was chilly as she drove away, leaving me alone, again, in the fort. When I mentioned going out to the Bakfort, she said "Don't go back there tonight. You need to stay inside tonight. Stay right there. By now they all know your situation and I don't think anybody would say anything." I reminded her that the crew was out on the boat and would probably be back around 2am Sunday morning. She just said "So?" We left it at that. Now, at 7:44pm, the sun is setting, I ache. I'm trying to figure whether or not I should stay. I'm thinking that I could just tell the truth about not feeling well enough to traipse out to the woods, needing the loo, etc. After all, is there really any harm in being here? - NOTE: I'm sick about losing what was left at the hotel. I'm sick about not being able to get it because I have NO money. I can't call because I have no time on the phone. I've got ONE fare on my MetroCard. The coming week-end is Labour Day. I won't be able to find a room out here. I just have so much running through my head that's making me physically sick! - The rubber band on my bottom teeth needs replacing too now. - OF INTREST: This morning Tommy asked me how I am with talking to Albert's Liz. She and I spoke about The Fort last night. I said I have no intention of being friendly with her and he told me "She's a hole and if you fall into it you'll never get out! That whole family's no good." Emily, the daughter, did some work for RAA a while ago and tried to collect unemployment. When she couldn't, it went to the Labour Board. It cost RAA thousands! Lately, Apryl, the sister, has used T7 for band rehearsal, giving no notice, no fee, and has billed her band for some fete being held at RAA. Unilateral decisions. So, I'm being protected, in a sort of way, from being further injured by them. None of the others at the Fort know the entire story. I have no intention of telling. Best to just let it be. But... So maybe there will be some sympathy and compassion if I'm discovered here tonight. I don't know. Right now, as I write, I'm feeling so

awful, it'll be worth being discovered. It's a chilly night. The sky is a bit grey. It's 8:04pm. There are people going to T4. I just need to look "not too comfortable" if somebody comes during the night. But I'll make me as comfortable as possible other-wise. I just wish I knew if anybody will come in. When the day on the boat is done, they have to come back here. Tony's car is here. Somebody might want to use the loo. I could opt for trying to climb into T7 at some point. But that would have to be much later because there are people outside now... I don't want to "break in" any-where and ruin any trust I've earned... I'd have to climb out in the morning so as not to unlock any doors... I'd have to find a place to sleep other than a sofa... too involved. Best to stay here and risk what-ever.



01.1.August 2008 - The End Begins - Monogram

Sunday 24 August

6:44am A difficult night into a difficult morning. The sun is just rising over a bank of clouds. Finally! Light. I woke at 5:59am. The sound of car doors closing out side of T6, in the parking lot. I have no idea what's out there. - Last night, sleep by 8:20pm or so. Up at 10:59pm. Congested. Sneezing. Difficult breathing. Coughed. Cleared. Returned to the table to sleep. 1:57 this morning, more congestion and sneezing. But it was warm enough to sleep under a doubled sea-sheet comfortably. THAT was most important to me. (It's 24° as I write this.) But (But. But. But!) just now, feeling a bit clammy. Tired. Dirty. Have cleaned my teeth, had coffee, finished the half cigarette from last night. Just waiting for a "good" hour to turn the water on for the gardens. Then I'll know more of the out-side world. -

At approx. 6:20am, a woman dressed in red sweat-shirt, black slacks, sports bag on one shoulder,



J&R bag in hand walking across parking lot. Homeless too? I wondered, entertained the idea that she too, is Homeless and had spent the night in the Bakfort. I imagined her some-where out there in the brush and over-growth, and me, some-where else... in the same conditions. And as I thought, and watched her walk toward the gate, walk away and out of the Fort, the world became very empty thinking "Nobody cares." - 6h45 and a car out front. I don't know who or what it is, and I don't know whether to go and look, bolt out the back door or just sit here and hope for the best. - 7:20am The gardens are being watered. I'm just throwing

all caution to the wind. I'm tired of all the BS. When I got out to the front of the building, the parking lot was EMPTY! The RAA/Dragon Boat crew had come and gone as I slept. There. It's done. At least I slept in some shelter last night. - NOTE for this morning: I need to bathe today: arm pits. It was bound to happen eventually. - (7:50am) It occurred to me over-night that this would have been my check-out week-end, had I been at the hotel. I would have had to be out on

Friday morning until Monday morning. Isn't that just a bleat in the ear? (6:27pm - T6) Simply given up on all the formalities of hiding, opened the back door, turned the radio on. Come what may. I went out to turn the water on for the gardens at about 8am and - never mind. I got that "empty parking lot" in. I can't even keep track any more of what I've written and what I haven't. What I learnt much later in the day is that they'd all left at 9:30 last night. They came, took their cars and were gone as I dozed! My existence is constant torture. Just constant torture. I can't really know if/when somebody will decide to drop by, for what reason, for how long. And even though Geoff and Tommy have been in dire straights in their own lives, I don't know that they'd be compassionate, kind, understanding about providing a bit of shelter for the night... even tonight when the forecast is RAIN! (I shouldn't complain about rain tonight. I've had a clear week all along. Rain is due. Rain is the match for my existence!) On that venue, I'm in and out of just staying here and if somebody comes in, I'm considering simply being boldly honest about needing to go to JCCRP in the morning and needing a sheltered night's sleep tonight. I asked Penelope what might happen if I'm "discovered". She said "I just don't want you in a position to be told not to ever do that again." Neither do I, but, for now, it's a risk I'll have to take. As it is, my lungs are filling with mucous. I've slept in cold and wet. Rain will only make me ill, not dead. I'll just have to do this and give it a try. Worse comes to worst? I still have my arsenal... my way out of it all. - So the day: Very calm. Very relaxed for the most part. The guys came to get some sound equipment for a concert at Riis Park this evening. Penelope and I took a walk over at 4pm and stayed a bit. She was going to leave me there and I reminded her that I'd left my belongings in T6. Ah. So we left together and walked back. As she was leaving, she gave me cigarettes for the night and said "Just in case... you CAN'T stay out all night." The key... she gave me her key to the door. She IS an aware person with genuine good feelings and intentions. I just wonder: As much as she professes to love Tommy, she didn't offer a space in her home when he was in need. (Though I'm to understand that her entire house is as it was when she lost her family. It's a shrine to them.) For me, she brings coffee and some food. But she won't intervene or offer shelter. Well. She has her reasons and I'm certain that she does what she can. - So it's 7:05pm. I've no idea when the concert will end. I've no idea if the crew will find cause to hang out after, use the loo, what-ever. I don't WANT the confrontation but tonight it's important to get a sheltered sleep. So? So. - One note! I hate coughing in here! It's empty. It echoes. It's not sound-proof. My coughs can probably be heard in the parking lot! - I'm going out back for a while. A smoke. A sketch. It's windy out there! It's 25,5° in here. (6:57am Mon. T7 porch) I stood in the window of T6, looking out on the parking lot of T4 for the longest while, uneasy, watching the RTC cars leave, watching

other cars come and go. Uneasy tonight. I knew the concert crew had to return and would probably stop at T6 for some reason. I KNEW! I WAS RIGHT! With the remaining sun-light I moved a chair to the window to sketch. At about 8:20, the door flew open! It was Tommy. I waved. He didn't come in. He asked "When are you leaving?" "I don't know. I'm just finishing this sketch." He left. I couldn't sketch. Uneasy. I took to standing at the window again, trying to work out where to go and what to bring, even for a few hours into the night. At about 9:20, I went out to back door to check on T7. Lights on. Apryl and Jan were sitting on the back porch! If I headed into the Bakfort now, I'd been seen. If I stayed in T6 and they came in I'd be nailed. I chanced staying a while longer, not knowing when the rains could come, not really knowing which way to go. I just waited, standing at the window. - Everybody at T4 was leaving. I thought I should go to Kristen, ask her to phone Tommy to ask for some permission to stay. As I thought, she left. The parking lot was empty. Again, I ventured out, this time with the Brighton bag and an open garbage bag for some ground cover. T7 was dark and empty. I tried laying on a bench in the back yard, thinking I should stay there until at least midnight. It was relatively warm, a soft breeze, clear skies. I could stay on the bench for now and then go back to T6. I'd left the back door open. Then I thought about that woman this morning. What if she's here and tries the door? If she goes in, what then? I went back in. it was well after 9:00pm by now. I put the sheets on the work table and decided to leave all of it to Fate... On cue, Fate rolled in on 18 wheels at top speed! I was just drifting off when the front door flew open, the lights flashed blaringly! Tommy walked in and then back out. Kristen came in. I'd jumped from the table. "We were just talking about you." Kristen said to me. "Talking about me?" I asked. "I asked if you finally left that old woman you were staying with." And she walked out too. Well. Here it was: Honesty and Sincerity time. I walked out the door. It was 10:10pm. No sign of rain. Tommy was on the phone, in front of T7. Kristen was on a bleacher. I went out, into a situation of complete uncertainty. My head reeled with options and alternatives but wouldn't stop at one long enough to come to any decision. There was a preying mantis at the door. I encouraged it out of the building then went over to Tommy to unload my truths about tonight and tomorrow. He looked burning angry but was calm. "If you'd been caught in there, by anybody other than Geoff or me, it would be bad for you and Penelope. Her heart's in the right place but she let you stay there after she left. Other people have the key to that building. If it had been John who walked in, it would have been his life. If Jan or Apryl caught you in there..." Then he said "You should've said something when I saw you in there earlier." I told him I hadn't decided to stay at that point and assured him that Penelope had nothing to do with it. I stressed that point. He and Kristen went into T7 and I went into T6 to

sketch and wait. A moment later, the door opened. “Yo.” I got up. Tommy said “I’m locking you in here for the night. Look. If this gets out, it will hurt Penelope. Please don’t hurt Penelope.” I assured him I wouldn’t do anything to harm her. He shook my hand and said: “You’re good for the night.” I thanked him saying that this was more important to me than life. He replied “Life is more important.” And went back to T7. - I did the only thing that made any sense at that point: I went back to the table to sleep. I’ll need my strength tomorrow. I’ve only got a one-way fare (and money for the phone) and it’s a long walk to Mott, even when it’s fair weather. Tomorrow threatens RAIN!

MEMO: Kristen has offered to bring me some scrubs tomorrow night. With those, I can return to work at the very least! Here I go again with my BS optimism, headed full-speed into Hell.)

Monday 25 August

7:57am 22,5° CLOUDY. I’m at T7 on the front porch already. I woke at 6:00am and sketched the rest of the time to 6:30. I slept right through the entire night last night! NO COUGHS! NO SNEEZES! NO PAIN! Just a DREAM:



I attended services at Beth-El synagogue here, in Belle Harbor. Evening services. There were a great many people. I wore *tallit (which was, in the dream, the table cloth I’d bought at Conway’s a LONG while ago and used as my blanket when I moved out here and into the hotel... that I just left behind). Suddenly, I was at Riverdale Temple. I’d gotten to services a bit late and noticed I was wearing tallit to evening services (which in the dream, was something not done). But I was told that it was fine and it was a good idea because it was a bit chilly anyway. - That dream was a bit of fact and a bit of nonsense. But I wonder what brought it on last night. My mind trying for some semblance of sanity? Quite possibly... quite possibly. - Well... The sprinklers are on. It’s peaceful. A prelude to some sort of disappointment or disaster to come, I’ve no doubt. No help from JCCRP. no doubt. Penelope said she’d be here between 8:30 and 9am. I doubt it. But the only way to know is to wait and see. - I’ve been sitting here since 6:57am. A moment ago, I got up to move the sprinkler just as the Parks Police came by! The timing was impeccable. - I wonder if I have money in my account today. (I doubt it.) No matter what, I’m going to try for some sort of housing today. The days are getting too, too short and the nights are getting too, too cold and wet. But if nothing comes of it today, this week, on a pleasant day, my art-work will become valuable and that “time to shine” mentioned in my horoscope will arrive. It’s “Obit Week”. This is enough! 5 days to 53 years of age: 53 damned years on this Earth,

to come to this. Time to check-out. Time to go, depart, to leave. Time to exit, get out, escape. Time to rest, relax, to sleep. Time to finish, to end, to close. Time to die. - It's 8:11am. I'm going to sketch a bit. More art-work for the vultures to pick on when I'm gone. - 4:14pm Under the tree. Yes. 4:14pm and under the tree already. The sky is clouding with only small breaks of sun. Penelope says the weather reports claim that the big storm that was expected has "passed us by" and "blown out to sea". I think maybe she's blown out to sea. - My kind and considerate days are done. My days of compassion are over. - BUT... I got SOME pay today. 117\$! 22\$ was put on the phone. 8.50\$ cigarettes. Gone! 15 dollar MetroCard. Shot to hell. I DID go to JCCRP about shelter. Srully actually made some phone calls! Jacquie, who's been so "kind and sweet" all along won't see me until Wednesday. As it stands right now, I can go to E. 30th Street and 1st Avenue for some sort of "intake" into the Homeless system, spend the night on the subway, spend the night in the Bakfort. How kind. How thoughtful. How considerate of the world. (I'm soaked with sweat right now. Sitting on the black plastic trash bags, shoes off, trying not to cough, considering my "option" of the pills.) But, all said, I thank Leetha for finding the address for the Homeless Coalition (she told me she'd been there and they helped her tremendously) and I thank Srully for taking the time to make those calls. It wasn't enough. But it was more than a "come back Wednesday". (4:27pm Three helicopters just flew by in the direction of 116th Street. Great! They'll be up and down the beach all bleating night now if some one of those idiots who come out here to swim has drown.) - So, meanwhile, nothing was mentioned to me about last night. I told Penelope that I stressed that she had nothing to do with it. But while I was gone, the tongues wagged like lace in a hurricane. "They" (Tommy and Geoff) are "upset" with her because she didn't lock up. How many times was I there, alone, and Geoff said I could hang out and lock up?!? So the blame goes to Penelope. And to me she says I "should make (myself) scarce around here." During the day is OK. But not after she leaves. Says Penelope: "My ass is on the line and that upsets me." Well my dear Penelope, MY ass is living alone, under a tree, on and under trash bags while several people are very much aware of the fact and nobody's offered a hand up and out of this situation and that upsets ME. How about that? So, it might be cutting my own nose off to spite my face, but I've had enough of these childish pranks at the RAA. They've done nothing to "promote" anybody but themselves. They throw tantrums because they're chaotic, undisciplined. They blame one another and each other for misgivings and wrong-doings. (I'm being hovered over by a helicopter at 4:41pm!) And, in this event, they're pitting Penelope against me. I simply told her that I've had enough and today, I say "Good-bye". She said that she understands that I'm upset about today but that I should come back. "We'll be here for you." Right. Like you've been

here for me all along. I packed my things and came out to the tree. - I rang Edlyne and Nancy to say I'm available. Edlyne was distant. Nancy said we'll keep in touch. Kristen said she'd bring scrubs at 7:30 tonight. Unless I get hit with intelligence between now and 7:00pm and take my "Option", I'll go to T4 at 7pm, gather the scrubs and ride the subway until the "99-cent Limit" opens tomorrow. Toothbrush, toothpaste, coffee and deodorant (and shampoo). How I'll schlep it all is beyond me. What I'll do about the things at RockPark Hotel is beyond me too. But "essentials" are needed. - 4:50pm and one military helicopter is just leaving after hovering at about 169th Street all this while. Now. Maybe I can nap until 7pm? I'm exhausted. Thought of going to the building behind Battery Kessler but I'm too tired for all that walking. Temperature has gone from 27 to 16 but it's muggy. I believe my plan to go to T4 and the subway is best for now. 12 hours on the subway and a day at Brighton Beach. OK. - 6:20pm and I'm on the beach at Hero Road. 4 other people here. The ocean is absolutely swimmable! Delightful waves and so inviting! I'm thirsty. Penelope phoned at 5:01pm. Kristen brought the scrubs. They're in T6! "Please call me." Says Penelope Why bother? Say I. - Overcast to the open sea. The sun is breaking through to the west. A breeze but the sun is hot. I rested under the tree for a little. Sand flies are coming. Where will I go for the night tonight? Bakfort or subway or the Homeless shelter. I fear the shelter. Theft. Fighting. Having to leave in the middle of the night. I'm thirsty. Maybe I'll just go to the Fort restrooms for water then decide. My feet hurt. 5 more people have arrived. It would be nice to pass the night on the dunes. I'd like to be outside. Why? I'm slipping into Homelessness. I'm so thirsty. And I'm tired. The scrubs will be heavy. More to carry. Maybe tonight, on the dunes, my "Option". - (On Tue. at 7:28am on the beach, in the sun. 19°.) I got my water. A long, slow walk. I'm slowing down now. Saw Tony and Tommy heading into T6. There was nobody outside T4. I went to T6. Tony came out. "What's up man?" he called. "You seen Kristen?" "No. Not yet." Some talk about 7:30pm and he went inside. It was 7:16. I had a cigarette. Other RAA people began to arrive. They were having a meeting this evening. By about 7:25 I headed back to the tree for the night. There was no sense being there. There were no scrubs and if there was to be a meeting in T6, I needed to be out and away from ALL of the RAA buildings... soon! By darkness, I was down for the night. It was very warm and the doubled black cloth was very, very warm. I was set.

(*tallit: a Jewish prayer shawl worn over the outer clothes during the morning prayers (Shacharit) and worn during all prayers on Yom Kippur.)

Tuesday 26 August

7:38am 19°: The black cloth doubled did keep me quite comfortable through the night. When I woke at about 1:18 this morning, it was something around 16°. I was a little chilly but able to go back to sleep, in spite of my panic when the sky looked overcast. It looked like rain was coming. But soon, I saw 2 stars and dozed off again. - Somebody was racing and screeching tyres in the parking lot at about 1:30 or so. Loud. I was glad to be in the Bakfort and not at T6 this time.... in case of a crash. But, I went back to sleep. - I'm thinking the temperature must have been down to near 10° during the night. It's getting too cold for being out all night. The thought of a shelter scares the HELL out of me. But it doesn't seem to be much of a choice. Funny: sleeping on the ground, in the shrubs, under a tree feels safer than indoors in a protected shelter. But today, I'm going to give "the shelter system" a try. If they start confiscating things, it's done. No shelter! Yesterday, Srully said I should be eligible for inexpensive housing. Again! The "should be" but no direction, instruction, information on how to get there. It's always half-assed. Well? - The entire zip part of the Brighton bag is now off. Ripped as I packed-up this morning. "All" is beginning to fall apart. I'm beginning to look soiled. I'm beginning to smell homeless. - On my way out to the beach this morning I thought: The whole Summer could be seen as an exciting story. One pay-cheque and into a hotel. Working on the peninsula. Being with artists on a defunct military base. Dropping into Homelessness. Sleeping on the dunes and on the ground under the tree. Ah, to spin this into a play! - There just might be something to that. - This morning I saw what's been rumbling in my chest this week past. It's thick, green, almost ball-like globs of heavy mucous. I coughed it up, spat it out and it drops to the ground, almost keeping some form. From the nose, all is clear. From the lungs there's signs of infection. - Well. 8:11am and we're up to 20,5°. I've been alone on this beach. It's wonderful here. I don't want to leave... not to a shelter... not to move... not to leave. So much I've hoped to accomplish here. Look. I'm at the complete opposite end! What happened? What the bleating bleat happened? - At about 9am I left the beach, walked out past T6 and T4 to the gate and boarded the Q35 to Brooklyn. I was going to my 99-cent store no matter what this or the next day holds! And, I was going to see Brighton again... no matter what! And so I did. I got coffee, shampoo, a deodorant spray, toothbrush and toothpaste. Why? Because I'm an idiot. That's why. No place to shower, need a damned home and work, but I've got my little toiletries. Oh well. (By the way, it's 1:54am on Wednesday as I write this from the bed in Peninsula Hospital. THAT story



is coming right along... shortly.) So. with toiletries in bag and bags weighing me down to the point of pain, on to the 68 bus to Brighton Beach and for rubber bands for my teeth. I haven't brushed my teeth in 12 days and the band on the teeth is stretched. So I need to scrub the teeth and change the band. What a pain in the arse! those little rubber bands. BUT I found CLEAR at "NY Apteka" (2.59 dollars for 75). ("Apteka" of course, it being in Brighton... "Little Odessa", Brooklyn, NYC... Russian.) Great! I can be found dead on the beach with no tell-tale rubber band on my teeth. Lovely! Super! Just brilliant! Right. Off to "the boards", as we of Rockaway know the boardwalk, to FINALLY make coffee at the Ocean Parkway water fountains. Tepid water from a boardwalk water fountain, to make instant coffee in a re-used paper cup. Yes, very good. Sat on the bench, looking across the water, across Jamaica Bay to Rockaway, the very calm, quiet water to Breezy, Rock Point, Roxbury and, of course, Ft. Tilden. The distance from Brighton to Breezy is almost negligible. The bay is so small and the water at Brighton truly is calm, compared to Tilden. It was a happy time to return to Brighton this morning. I'm still quite comfortable here. But it was almost sad to see the little beach and the little water, so calm, so docile. I remembered when Brighton was "ocean" to me. - (8:02am Wednesday PENINSULA ROOM 308) I remembered when I thought of Brighton as "Home" because in Brighton, I had peace. This morning, again, in Brighton I had peace. But so much has changed. - I turned on the cell-phone for a bit. Another message from Penelope, using Tommy's phone! I sat at Seaside Park, in the shade then decided to go back to T6, get scrubs (since Kristen was sweet enough to bring them, and I could decided what else to do with my existence from there. Of course now, with the stuff from the 99-cent store and the fact that the sun was up full, carrying the backpack and Brighton bag became almost impossible! It actually hurt to bear the weight. And my lungs wouldn't take in any oxygen. I felt I was being crushed just waiting for the bus. I prayed I could simply crumble to the ground. Coney Island Hospital: home for the night. But, no such luck and all the bus connections were almost instant. By about 2pm or so, I was walking (slowly) back through the gates of Tilden, angry, pissed-off, tired, exhausted! I got the scrubs. Took 2 sets actually (blue and teal). Spoke with the people there as nicely as I could (considering the events of Sunday and Monday). I asked Tommy, directly, about being "scarce". He said "Maybe that's the way SHE feels. You're a member. You're an artist. You're just not an artist-in-residence." So, there we have it. I jotted a Thank You note to Kristen, put it into the bag with the remaining scrubs and was going to leave all in T6 but she was in T4. I opted to bring the bag and thank her



in person. - Meanwhile, figuring I'd head to the intake centre for the Homeless and didn't want to schlep so bleating much any more, I broke down all that I had and separated what I needed only to sleep in the Fort, put that all in a black garbage bag, put the bag in a tool-shed behind T6 and, with considerably less to weigh me down, with a cold and crude "Be well" from Penelope (she truly is spaced... just as clueless as she can be and yet breathe, she has no idea, just as all of the others, what Hell I'm existing in these days... weeks), I left out the back gate of T6, strolled heavily to T4, gave the remaining scrubs and thanks to Kristen, spoke briefly then left with little more than "Ciao". It's not so much a feeling of uneasiness around them now because I see them as rather childish, infantile, sophomoric (from P, through G. and T. et al) but today, somehow, I TRULY DID NOT have ANY energy left in my body for any more anything. The coughing fits and hot flashes all night. Then the bleating cold and wet. These people all around me just letting it all go, letting me drift off into my Homelessness and not caring. It's the "not caring" that truly causes the most pain... not caring at all. Meanwhile, hearing them all pledge "love" and "friendship" freely, as if neither term required any effort on their part, like rote "I love you." said out of some "obligation" or simply a common salutation. Empty. Then, the weight of my backpack and the weight of the world all just CRUSHED ME! I walked out the gate of Tilden, boarded the Q22 and, en route to yet undecided destination, decided to at least find out what the hell is going on with this body (and maybe push Medicaid even harder?) and so, on the bus, B116th passed, B67 passed and there was the sign: "EMERGENCY". Peninsula Hospital, here I am. I've heard horrors about the place. But the Benjamins, to whom I gave home care previously (it seemed now, to have been life-times ago) didn't seem to mind it. What's the worst that can happen? They find nothing and toss me out in the middle of the night. I'll be on the A train until dawn. OK. Let's go. I pulled the cord, heard the "ding". The bus rolled to the next stop. When the door opened, I simply, blindly, devoid of thought and emotion at this point, I stepped out and as if being guided, walked, walked... walked to the entrance of the "Emergency" ward. I had no "emergency". I didn't truly care. It was more "curiosity". How much more is there waiting to slam me, harder, and harder and harder still? - In the door of the ER at 16h04. My list of "Why are you here today?" Chest pain, SOB, no energy. I was on a stretcher by about 16h30, for, of course, blood work, hep lock. The questions about my residence. (158 B 116) and insurance (they didn't like "Medicaid pending" so I threw in a might possible 1199. The attitude changed. "Union" coverage. The *me* on the stretcher meant nothing. The potential



money meant all.) Then wait and wait and wait in the ER until... The labs came. Imagine THIS: PLATELETS S/B BET. 150 AND 400. MINE? 50! NO SH**. NO CLOT. POTENTIAL BLEEDER HERE AND OF ALL THE THINGS IN THE WORLD TO BE DIAGNOSED WITH? THROMBOCYTOPENIA!!!! I USED TO LUV THAT WORD AND NOW? BINGO! I'VE GOT IT! Dr. Makkar (indeed, his name) and I got a bit of a chuckle about it and then he said that he'd like to admit me, at least over-night, monitor the chest pains and confirm the THROMBOCYTOPENIA. Hey! I'd be "Inside" for the night. Blessing or curse? Time would tell, but the thought of not having to run, hide, jump, worry about rain, worry about cold, worry about waking in the morning soaked with dew, it all seemed quite nice for a change. I didn't complain nor decline. I'd try it and see. "Curiosity" once again, more than anything else, including "survival". I didn't care about survival at this point. I was already praying silently: If there is any mercy in Creation, let me "go" here and have done with it all. - And then came the next doctor to examine me (Russian) who asked a lot of personal questions INCLUDING sexual orientation (I've none for approx. 20 years) but EXCLUDED religion. Because of the preliminary diagnosis of *"Thrombocytopenia", the prevalent questions were related to alcohol. Really? I'm Homeless, jobless, no income, essentially living and residing under a tree and you believe I have access to enough alcohol to alter my blood? Not that I've anything to hide but I just found it intrusive. I can understand they might need to know a lot of such things, but between him NOT identifying himself and most of the staff doing the same, I just needed a little control over my failing body and the situation around me. - To make matters worse, if possible, somebody decided that the diagnosis was probably an error so they wanted to re-run the tests, which required MORE blood to be drawn. Hell, do I care at this point? Drain it ALL, and do everybody the favour. Oh, they did, and shortly after returned. My blood-work was rather quite "normal", save for an elevated white cell count which indicated some sort of infection some-where. Imagine that! So quick to toss me into the bin with the rest of their "regular and expected" patients. I expected as much, and there we had it. But at least the "boozer" reputation was shot. One point, my favour. - Well, I kept looking at the clock. I'm used to being asleep at sundown! The ER became loud. Even the staff. At 10pm I tried for a snooze. Nope. More blood. Then tags and such and off to the 3rd floor for the night - Well Penelope? You got your demand for a while. I'm a long way from your precious RAA now. I'm making myself "scarce" there and your ass is no longer on the line... and you can like that.



Here, nightly, I laid my sheet, protected from sight by the tall sea grasses. I furrowed my body into the soft sands and laid my head on my back-pack. Covered some times, with nothing but the night sky, other times with an old bit of black felt, I watched the stars glitter and gleam above me, and listened to the Atlantic just beyond the dune until sleep came to rescue me from the realities that had been the day...

A



and in the morning, as the night sky turned to early morning, there was the sand, and in front of me when I sat up, a berm of bayberry. The tide was either “in” or “out”, “high” or “low”, but neither mattered because, just as it was to lull me away into sleep, the Atlantic was there, exactly where it had been all night... watching me... and guiding my dreams, and another day began... alone.

01.2 August 2008 - The Peninsula Days - Monogram

Wednesday 27 August

9:53am: Peninsula Hospital Room 308. Not much sleep last night. In the room by about 1 or 2am for Proventil/O2 at 5am followed by Heparin IM (injection). I have to note though, if the



primary diagnosis of Thrombocytopenia had any fact to it, I would be considered a “bleeder” and Heparin is a blood thinner. Indeed, I was and remain suspicious. Anyway... Sun-rise. Breakfast. Housekeeping. Me-keeping. I slept in my jeans and socks with the “Johnny-gown” over the top of me. I’m nodding as I write this here. I’m cleanish. Used the 99-cent stuff. Brushed my teeth! But I see I’m dehydrated. Face and arms very dry. Well, well. No shower Monday, Tuesday, now Wednesday. Washed but not showered and looking none the worse. - Breakfast is a “Cardiac” menu. Low salt, low fat. Decaf coffee. I ate everything. I ATE!!! FOOD!!!

PREPARED FOOD!!! Clean and presented, and I sat and ate, again, like a human being. To so many, this might seem trite, but, considering recent times, this was enough to bring me almost to frank tears. “Life” has come to this. - But at this moment I do need to nap. Soon enough I’ll need to talk with a Social Worker to discuss where I’ll be discharged to and when. - 1:28pm Have finished lunch. The most sensitive female Russian doctor came in to examine me this morning. (Kleymenova) Compassionate. Kind. Attentive. She got me Ensure, 3 times daily, to help bring my strength and weight back. I look a right mess. She had a student with her. A Muslim woman. During the examination, the student told me that the Thrombocytopenia was ruled out and the diagnosis is (as with my Mother... MAMA?) EMPHYSEMA! When she asked if I had any immediate problems I told her I was used to being asleep early, the admission was late and the activities during the night have left me exhausted. As she left the room she looked back and whispered “Sleep”. Soon, a cardiologist came in. More heavy breathing with stethoscope to chest

and back . He's ruling out coronary and recommending a Nuclear Stress Test, out-patient. - 1:53pm and I'm off telemetry. The nurse who took me off asked me if I know why I'm being taken off. I said it's because of the diagnosis of Emphysema. She mentioned something about insurance and COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) being used to get paid. Apparently, with that diagnosis, it takes precious little to prove and the insurance companies are quicker to pay-out. She also said something about me having no complaints since I got here. I told her, honestly, that I'm not the type to make a fuss over very much. I don't want to become a burden, nor do I want the staff to think me a "difficult" patient or a "whiner". Meanwhile, my head SPINS when I cough, my limbs are achy, my eyes focus as if through fever. And the man across the hall keeps yelling for a nurse and Jesus Christ. And I told her that I'd asked to speak with a Rabbi and all that was done was messages were left. I see me freezing on the subway tonight. It's already too late to get to Jacquie at JCCRP for any help. - Meanwhile, half of this staff should know even half the pain I'm lying here quietly enduring. Even just the physical pain... - So I got IV antibiotics, a dose of Advair. I'll probably be out right after sun-set. Sun-SET. Ah well. 53 years old, minus 33 (1933) is 20 years. 2008 minus 1988 is 20 years. These people keep telling me I'm 52. Maybe I have to wait until Saturday to get out of this "life". 3 more days. Can I manage? I don't know. I just don't know. - 2:37pm I want, so much, to close my eyes and rest. But I'm afraid I'll be awakened by being shoved out the door. (8:06pm) Just woke. Sweating. A bit hungry. Right arm pit smells of "arm pit" and that deodorant/body spray I got at the 99-cent store. It's unpleasant. I need to wash again. I just need to wash all of me: clothes and the whole thing. - Nurse Rose came in earlier to give me IV medications. She said I'll have an echo-cardiogram tomorrow just to make sure the pulmonary has nothing to do with the cardio. They're thinking CHF (Congestive Heart Failure). Mom had a touch before her diagnosis of cancer. Anyway. I'm here for another night. - Two NAs (Nurse Aides) came in for vitals. One noticed my journal and the writing. People are amazed by the size of the writing. This led into my sketch-book. Believe it or not, I now have one person who wants a reproduction, in paint, of the Ann Murray photo of Ft. Tilden. The yellow sun-set! Another one wants another large painting. (Me? I want a cigarette.) At one point, there were 3 NAs in here. One asked where I'm from. She noticed "You have an English Canadian accent." How odd. After all these years. - So my temperature was down to 97,6. Why the sweats and chills then? I've washed the foul odours away and am back in bed. Tired? Depressed? Hungry. Yes. It's 8:59pm. I'm less congested. Discharge on a holiday week-end to go... I must talk with a Social Worker tomorrow. Immediately! (I just thought: Midnight is 24 hours here. One whole day. Or: 4:00pm was the first 24 hours. I came in only yesterday.) - I've a view

out the back of the building, toward the ocean. I can't see the ocean, but I can see the elevated rail that runs along the coast. Watching the Far Rock "A" train going by makes me think: I'll be living on it before too long. I can't get over the frequency of them, even at this hour! Where do they all disappear to? When one waits in The City, it's an eternity between trains. Outside the window here, it's only moments. - OK. I'm feeling weak. A nap, perhaps. - (By the way: A funny. I've been swallowing half cigarettes. today and the tobacco is coming through in my stool. If this place wants a sample, how odd will they find that? - This Nurse, Tommy, is on the mark. He's withholding the Heparin injections since it makes no sense for a "Rule-out Thrombocytopenia" (bleeder?) to get Heparin. (He's also good for the eyes, ear and only 51. Handsome, compassionate, a comfort and delight.) Most important, he's caring, concerned, compassionate. A real mensch! - I lucked out tonight. The Respiratory Therapist was really down to earth. She saw a sketch of mine and said "That's beautiful! You're as good as me!" and she smiled. We had a fun chat while I had the Proventil. Good people on the shift this time. - Tommy tells me that with the Solumedrol they're giving me now, I have to be on it for a couple of days and then put on Prednisone before treatment stops. I wonder if that's how it will go or will I be a "test patient" and simply tossed when their "learning service" is done with me. Does it matter? No. Not in the least. If what they do to me here causes more pain, I'm happy to go at the age of 53.

Thursday 28 August

5:47 20 YEARS AGO ALREADY. 20 YEARS... (No, in my dazes of recent times, the dates are off. It was 20 years ago on the 22nd. But... Mama died on the 22nd, and today I wonder...) If I just lay back and close my eyes, will you come for me this morning? Or is all of that simply more BS we're fed over the span of our lives? Lives! Lives? What exactly is "Living"? Some miserable joke to punish those of us who are cursed with it and by it. - The sky is becoming a morning lavender. There are 4 ships on the horizon facing the east, as if waiting to head right into the rising sun. 5:58am Dawn is coming. It's 22° in this room. Would it really make any difference if I didn't occupy this bed? Will it make any difference if I no longer occupy this space in this world? No. Not at all. - An A train passed. It took on the colour of the morning sky. - I don't want to be in here today. I want to be out on the dunes or under my tree. I don't want to be cold tonight. I don't want to be cold and shivering. Never again. But I don't want to be in here... or in anywhere, today. I want to be back out "there" to just be out "there". 6:04am It goes from peaceful to painful here. Silence to "God help me!" The sky is becoming quite beautiful. The lights on the ships

sparkle. "God help me" indeed. There is no God to help any of us. Why do you suppose you're in here now? "God help me". How can anybody be so stupid? I'm tired. Was still awake at 11:00 last night. A little shut eye. Let's see how that works. - Nope. Respiratory. Good thing it's the nice one from last night. Good people on a bad day. - 10:01am Echo-cardio this morning followed by a breakfast and a sponge-down in the loo which I do my-self. Pulmonologist came by. Med student. Cindi is the Nurse du jour. She's SDA (Seventh Day Adventist) and loves talking religion. - The NA let me make my own bed this morning. They're impressed with the job I've done. I'm given a few moments to smile with others today. Mom would like it that I can make others smile. She probably did the same. - 10:18am Cardiologist stops in the room, comes almost to the bed and calls: "What are you still doing here?" Check the breathing. Don't notice IV medications attached. - Time to think: Discharge. What next? It's Thursday. JCCRP won't be of any help tomorrow and I doubt Jacquie will be of any immediate help. So, it's really quite simple: Out the door and into the shelter. - Perfect timing. Dr. just confirmed: DISCHARGE TOMORROW MORNING! FRIDAY! HOLIDAY! WEEK-END! OK. So, if not shelter, then subway. But for how long? Subway isn't long-term. And, what about bathing? This is the end of Summer baths on the boards, water fountains, public loos. "Labour Day" shuts everything down as far as waters are concerned. Even at this juncture, a social worker here won't get me anywhere other than the public shelter system. So? No hope again today. It's up and out and that's all. Well. Maybe on Saturday I'll have lovely beach weather and can sit out on the dunes and say... GOOD-BYE! My birthday gift to me. - 11:01am I called the Social Work office myself on the hospital phone. Let's see how long it will take this time. The hospital might as well know the whole truth no matter what. - 12:03pm Some woman from Accounts came. 1199 Insurance doesn't come up with my number. Imagine that. I told her it should be Medicaid. They don't want to hear that. Dr. LARISA KLEYMENOVA (the female Russian doctor) said discharge will be tomorrow morning. I heard the woman from Accounts talking in the hall right after they left here. Somebody said "You HAD to ask..." the woman from Accounts mumbled something and another voice said "You can see right through them. Right?" So. As of now, no lunch has come. It's later than lunch is served so, me? I'm preparing to be launched out of here at any moment. Though, chances are, it won't be until it's dark (and cold) out. If that's the case, it'll be subway tonight, try JCCRP tomorrow followed by Shelter Intake or tomorrow, Homeless Coalition, the JCCRP. All I know is that I'm not looking forward to any of it and I don't know why I'm even considering any of it. Just give me a good beach day and my place in the dunes. GOOD-BYE! - 2:14pm I have a 243lb. roommate now. Good sense of humour and looking to rest. Hopefully I won't disturb him with my

coffee. - WHAT THE BLEAT? Coffee? COUGHING! OK. Let's move on... I just called the Social Workers' office. Mary Ann (?) Is out of the building! Well, why the bleat did she tell me she'd be back in an hour? I'm a bit pissed at this. But hey! Everyone else has been fantastic (or pretty damned close). And Dr. Russian-Iyor in the ER didn't note anything derogatory in the records. So? I'm good. For now? I'm packed for tomorrow but certainly not prepared. Tomorrow, Fate gets another chance to kick me in the face. Do I dodge? How? Let's see... - 6:43pm Marianne, the Social Worker DID come back. She took the matter in all seriousness and sincerity. Most of all, she was non-judgemental and didn't promise anything more that she could offer. When I told her how much that meant to me, she blushed and said I was going to have her crying. She said she wished she could tell me of a studio flat immediately. She said she will call JCCRP in the morning and work with them and her own resources. She told me she will do all that she can and make no promises. Imagine? Another mensch. She admired my art work. Told me I have a wonderful sense of humour. Told me I'm handling the whole situation exceptionally well. I told her the truth: People like her help people like me cope. She sat with me for a very healthy hour, talking WITH me, like a human-being. No telling what to expect from this but it just made my burden a little lighter, now that somebody outside the milieu knows the facts. - As I wrote this, a clergy man came into the room to say a prayer over my room-mate. Mr. Bailey! I put in 3 requests for a Rabbi and get nothing. But the Christian support is there, on the spot. It's rather interesting. Though I must admit: Marianne came after I called directly. I requested the Rabbi via the staff. - So, here it is 7:14pm AND MY NECK IS SHAVED! Cyndi (Nurse) got me a razor (not the newer, but the old model, in white plastic). My neck bled like crazy. Thank goodness I haven't taken Heparin in a while. But I can't find my nail file! Oh well. All this travel. Something had to go missing (beside my sanity). - It's been a very quiet day today. I'm hoping for sleep tonight to be ready to hit where-ever tomorrow morning. Ah... for a cigarette and non-decaf coffee! My hopes are simple. - And so, 9:13pm. No medications. No "treatment". Nothing. Cindi brought be ONE aspirin and ONE multivitamin. So this is "discharging". Cut it all abruptly and out. (Gee, I wonder what ever happened to the steroids and other medications that require titre-down. Ah, I'm not a "perfectly insured" nor "independently wealthy" patient. I'm just another "Homeless bum". If there are any harmful reactions, it doesn't matter to this staff.) Well, I'm only upset about it because I could be trying for sleep. But I did another small sketch from a cell-phone picture. Anyway, I'm nervous as all hell about tomorrow. No-where in particular to go. 86 dollars in the banque (at least I believe it's that much), no idea what the weather is going to be for the week-end. No certainties other than all of the uncertainties and me in the centre of them all. -

Now I know there's no life after this one. My Mama would never have allowed all of this to come to this point. I still have my "Option". I'm thinking Saturday... Happy Birthday to me! - But for now, 9:20pm, time to try for some rest. Mr. B. has been sleeping soundly and flatulating all evening. May he continue his sleep through the night.

Friday 29 August

6:40am A night of almost NO SLEEP AT ALL to make being discharged to Homelessness more attractive than staying here even another day. The guy across the hall yelled and hollered. My Mr. B. got up to pee, slamming into everything. He turned the air conditioner off completely. I slept in such a sweat that I actually HAD to wash-down this morning! (Though, from the odour in my socks, you wouldn't know I've bathed. But I'll hopefully take care of that today...) - It's rather off: I have no idea what the current weather is because the drape between the beds is drawn and the blind on the window pulled. I have no idea what weather is to come. And weather is about the most important thing I need to know... especially now. But, if I think about it, it (the weather) really doesn't matter. It will be as it will no matter what. I just need to get out of here, clean my clothes, sleep in peace somewhere, wake to coffee and cigarette - I'm not ungrateful for everything these people do. I'm just felling better and it's time to go. - 1:15pm I was reviewing the discharge medications with Cynthia when Marianne came back into the room saying we needed to put the breaks on the discharge talk. Seems there's a law: I came in via ER and was admitted. Since the hospital knows that I'm homeless, it cannot, by law, release me. Marianne must now file a shelter application for me. I said I don't want to sponge off the hospital. She assured me that I'm not. When I asked her what she would do in my place she said: "Unpack your pencils." Then added "You've got a guaranteed roof for the next couple of days." There isn't anything I could do for Saturday, Sunday and Monday anyway. I don't particularly LIKE this situation because I'm now trapped INSIDE (not OUTSIDE like all along) for the duration. I can't go outside the building! Mr. B. has the a/c off and blinds pulled. It's hot in here. Not comfy. But, on the other hand, no concerns about rain or cold night. I have wasted 25 dollars on a MetroCard (I'll see if anybody else can use it and give it to them). But I won't have to ride the rails, through the tunnels, screeching wheels, loud brat children. I won't have to roam about, plotting where to lay down at night and I won't be hanging around RAA property. Penelope gets her demand: I'm scarce. Still, strangely, there's a part of me that wants and needs to get OUT. I think the Homeless thing kicked-in. Now I know why homeless people stay that way and reject shelters. In any event, when everybody left the room, I put my head on the pillow, closed my eyes and from very deep

inside, I sobbed... I wept my gratitude to and for Marianne. And nobody knows. - 1:32pm I could fallback to sleep now. I don't want to. Don't want to appear lazy. Truthfully, there's nothing I can do around here. Not under the law. Still, sitting or lying about isn't going to get it. Especially for 3,5 more days (at least). I'll need to work on a routine. I just wish I knew if they were moving me off the Telemetry Unit. I could wash my socks and undies if not. - Well, I no sooner got that line down and it all came round. Dinner arrived (PORK!!!) and the guy from Transport. I'm off to 2North (as if that means anything to me. So, I got to finish eating (yes, even the pork... "food" at this point, even if it makes me a little ill, is food, and food is something I need... if only to dodge the constant hunger pangs) and the next thing, I'm out in the hall. The farewell at the Nurses' station wasn't as friendly as the atmosphere had been all along. When Dr. Kleymenova came in to check on Mr. Bailey, she walked past me. "Hello." (blunt). On her way out she made a point of stopping to mention, to my face, "You have no place to go." How lovely for her to be in a position in MY country of origin, to be so opinionated. Enough said. Cynthia told me she got me a room with somebody nice. I just wonder why/if these people take this personally. Seems Marianne is the only one who has a clue. - Bed 257A I think. Room-mate was out on dialysis when I arrived at approx. 4:00pm or so. The room? Typical Med/Surg: clean but not meant for comfort. Small closet. I have no bed table. But, I have a bed, walls, ceiling, floor. I'm not wondering where to go for dry and warm. I'm not hiding from helicopters or pompous artists. I may be an out-cast but I'm not an out-law (yet?). And, I'm thankful for this much. - When I went down the hall to get a bed-gown, a young woman greeted me: "How are you doing, my friend?" As she gave me the gown she said "You'll be OK here until they find someplace nice for you." I asked how many knew. "I'm you Nurse, Sasha. I got the information in the report. But nobody knows your business." We'll see. But she's sweet and I hope we'll get on well. No matter what, her tone, addressing me with dignity... I SO am in need of that much... dignity. - So, I'm not in a mood to settle-in. But I did manage to wash, under shorts. Believe it or not, even after being worn 15 days, they're almost perfectly clean! Item one done. Socks next. Little steps in some direction. - There's a woman down the hall who just moans with every aspiration. Of course, there must be some Hell to all of this. The staff is generally loud. I can see me trying to sleep my way through all of this. - Room-mate came in. I don't know what time. I was in "trying to sleep" mode. Young, well-spoken, Black (the TV was on Ch.13 when I got here so I can pretty much believe that he's not simply a slouch... watching PBS) I dozed in and out, on and off.

Saturday 30 August

7:45am IT'S RAINING THIS MORNING. EXPECTED TO RAIN ALL DAY. I WOULD HAVE BEEN OUT THERE LAST NIGHT, THIS MORNING. THIS IS STRANGE. BUT I'M NOT FORGETTING MY "OPTION". - MEANWHILE... restless sleep last night. DID wash my socks this morning. Brushed my teeth too. Need to file my nails. Need to wash my clothes. Nothing can be done for 3 days now, it being a "holiday week-end". A blessing and a curse. - I'm antsy. Want out. Right now the only reason I'm staying is because of the kindness of Marianne. - RAIN. ALL THOSE FAIR WEATHER DAYS AS I SLEPT THE BAKFORT. Imagine? - 11:40am Mary Beth from the Hospital Social Services office came by this morning to ask questions. She's completing the shelter application. A bit of news that comes as no surprise to me: When work comes and I take it, I leave here to go to work and I'm out, OUT of here. No coming back. And, it will, most likely be filed as "AMA" (Against Medical Advice). No further responsibility. Completely on my own. Let's face it, This situation is horrible right now, but where will you be going at night? This was discussed because I assured Ms. Socialworker that I HAD been working, and that I WILL be returning to work. - Now, come to find out, my room-mate's housing is hanging by a thread! He's on eviction from the Hammels (city low-income housing project here)! So, it looks like we've been slapped together by the fates, to, if nothing more or less, give some sort of support to each other. I wish I had the energy to give support. But, no matter what, I figure I'll provide something, somehow because it's what I do. - 12:25pm Jackson's (my room-mate) MD is in. They're talking surgery and J. wants it done at Mt. Sinai, in The City. And he wants to be out of here by Monday. BUT he's being treated for some infection (in the blood stream). Why am I noting this? I don't know, really. What I'd like to do is have a cigarette, a walk, a breath of fresh air. Some freedom, liberty, dignity. What I need to do is carefully weigh the situation as it is, for what it is, what it has to offer and most seriously, weigh alternatives. It's not easy now, but is this a gift? THE chance to stop the falling? Is it temporary relief? Is it a reprieve, a respite? Is it a moment to regroup, get strength to head back out there? I've always told my patients that, if they've spent their lives doing for others and never allowing others to do for them, life can come along, slap them down, and here, in a hospital bed, is how they're forced into taking time to relax. It's difficult, but I'm trying to accept my own advice. Will I succeed? I don't know. Will I try? Yes. If not for me, for Marianne. She's taken a leap. I can't throw away her efforts. - So, meanwhile, there's going to be a psychiatric evaluation coming! Oh! La! What fun! Let's see what bias is brought into this session, what prejudice, what nonsense. I just keep in mind the fact that I most certainly can pick up a pen and write it all to a complete halt at any moment of my choosing. But,

I'll have to spend serious time considering the results. For now, lunch is done (1:10pm). Sasha brought it in, with a smile. "Hello my friend." The good part of her addressing me the way she does is that she knows my situation and she's treating me as a fellow human-being. It does me good. A semblance of my human dignity. It gives me a strength that I haven't had, that I'd lost amongst the lies... in the bushes, under the tree. - So, this is my 53rd birthday: in a hospital bed, homeless, booking into the shambles of a public shelter away from where I'd been so happy to have reached (Rockaway). Bouncing from one run-down shelter to another, on what? A daily basis? Yes, there's a lot of serious thinking to be done. A LOT of SERIOUS thinking to be done and NOT a LOT of TIME in which to conclude. - I've got 4 cigarettes left. I'd truly luv to smoke one, at my leisure, but I can't. It's been, let's see, almost 4 days since my last smoke. You know? I'll chew half to celebrate my birthday. Then, perhaps, a nap. Then, more thinking, pondering... - Note: No calls from Penelope or Tommy. I left them on Tuesday afternoon. No word since. Nice to know I'm being thought of. - 5:32pm The day is almost done. Dinner came and went. My last "Happy 53rd Birthday" note. Today's trays came with little "notes" of "Happy Birthday". The "birthday" is over. Jackson over-heard me asking for an emery board and called his wife to ask her to bring one from home. Then he apologized for eaves-dropping on me! Hey. Earlier, he needed 25 cents for his TV payment and I had it. I gave it. Why not? After dinner, he offered Entenmanns's donuts. His wife (I think) is here. I should give them time together. They have each-other. - My jeans truly and seriously need to be washed. - I'm having my half cigarette. Just mixing with saliva. I tear a half off, put it under my tongue or tuck it under my lips. I wish I could smoke just one. - I've been steady damp, sweating all day. I need to bathe. - 5:42pm I had the phone on for 10 minutes. No signal but I get time and date. 3-bar charge. No messages. I very well could be dead. But I'm not. Not in a manner of speaking. - A thought came to mind earlier. Maybe it's worth a jot here: My mom Loved her children. She worked hard to make sure they had the best of what she could give. She protected her children. Me? For as long as she could and for as long as she had to. Is it an injustice if I let the rest of the world destroy me? Must I survive because she did? - One thing I'm looking forward to is dumping a lot of the past into the lap of the psychiatrist coming for the consult. Maybe even ALL of it. I'm 53. I've been shoved into being here. It's time to get rid of the bags and see what happens. - Oddly, I'm missing the dunes something awful! I'm actually home-sick for the tree. I've sketched it twice. I'm missing every bit of those days except the cold. If I could figure out how to dodge that, I know I'd go back. It's interesting... I guess this is how the permanently Homeless become that: You get it into your life, you learn, you adjust, you fall into it, it becomes you, you become it. The mystery and intrigue

are gone. You see that you CAN live in basics and you see that it has its beauty and it's not so horrible. Meanwhile, here you lie, on this bed, 24 hours, no breeze, no sun, no surf, no sand, no air. People coming and going and commenting and talking and, like tonight's nurse comes in, sees me lying on the bed in my jeans and wants to know why I'm dressed and where I'm going. Hey! Let me out the door for 10 minutes a day THEN ask me questions. Stop my sweating, then talk. I only take up a bed. I don't present any more work for anybody. I do all my own. If I could, I'd do more. So? So. It's time for me to calm down if I'm going to see this through. The major point to keep in mind? I can pull out at any moment. I just need to remember the circumstances in any event. - I wonder what the Rock Park Hotel has done with my clothes, books, etc. it hurts to think about it. I'll have to ask a Social Worker here to contact them. - Weather forecast for the coming week: clear and hot. Rain on my birthday. Last year I was at B60. This year? B50. - I'm going to try to snooze a bit while the floor is relatively calm. - The calm didn't last. I didn't snooze. Spoke for quite a while with Jackson. It was a good, interesting talk. As he points out "You've probably done things for others in your life. Now you can sit here, rest, relax. Meals are prepared and served. You have a bed and fresh linens. I sometimes think of it as a little vacation." He's absolutely right. I should focus on what I AM receiving and not on what I've lost. Creature comforts are provided. Yes, there are problems. But, thinking perfection? Even Bakfort has the trouble with cold and wet. So, here or there, there's trouble. But here? Meals are hot, cooked, delivered. The bed is raised, mattress, clean sheets. No need to worry about the weather or police. It's a matter of perspective. Meanwhile, I'm still sweating all the time. Jackson doesn't want air conditioning and he's closest to it so... it'll get stuffy in here but I'll "live" with it. - *Happy 53rd Birthday... to me.*

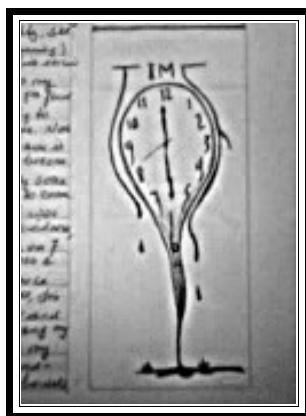


Sunday 31 August

9:19am It was a miserable night. The woman next door, the moaner, was non-stop. I don't hold it against her. The poor sweet-heart is tangled in a horrible fashion and must be in pain. But her pain management is poorly unsatisfactory. - Jackson too, was having a rough night, restless. It was a difficult night to keep my calm. Then, at about 4am, the nurse comes in to put a new, blue ID band on my wrist as I slept! She didn't even bother to let me know that that's what she was

about to do, didn't wake me. Just came in, in the darkness, strolled over to the bed and took my arm! SO much for "Human Dignity"! - But right now, I'm actually SHOWERED! I had to beg for permission which had to be approved by a doctor and then I had to wait for the approval to be documented! I don't recall EVER having to go through all of this nonsense.. especially for "ambulatory" patients. But, this is an experience and an education I'll not soon forget. - Breakfast was a joke. I'm tired. The weather is just gorgeous. I'm exhausted. And the experience with that "blue band" I suppose has set my mood a little "off". - 5:03pm Dinner's done. I've been in here 5 days and I still look forward to a cigarette! FIVE bleating days and I still want a smoke. Ah well. I'm showered, in hot water, soap, body wash. Showered! Yay! Arm pits are already a little in need of another wash. But it's good to feel clean. And J's wife brought the emery boards, he gave me 6. I used one and MY NAILS ARE DONE!!! HANDS AND TOES!!! All that's left between me and total humanity is hair and beard. - The jeans are taking a urine odour. They need to be washed VERY SOON. - Meanwhile they came in to test for tuberculosis! I refused. Brenda, the Nurse, runs a Home Care Agency and understood why I refused. I tested false-positive once in my life-time. I've tested negative ever since. And, in my "compromised" condition right now I don't trust them or it. I know it's for the shelter referral but enough is enough! - 7:50pm I'd no sooner noted that when I had to move my bowels. First time today. No sooner am I in the loo and going and they're yelling for me. Chest X-ray! It took me a moment to wipe and when I came out of the loo, nobody was waiting. Moments later, the Tech and machine arrive. I told the Tech I'd had an X-ray on Wed. You know they don't care. They're programmed only to respond to the bigger voice. Mine doesn't matter. So we take another X-ray, In the bed. Off goes the Tech. Moments later? I need to go down to X-ray. They didn't get enough on the shot. So? So I figure this will take an eternity. I'll lie down. I did. That was during day-light hours. It's dark now. And I have to note here, along with all else: Hospitals are noisy and mostly inhuman and inconsiderate. I've got Roomie here, slamming doors and windows. I've got NAs and the likes, in the halls, yelling to one another. TV blasting. Vocalisations simply for the purpose of making noise. Dropping crap in waste bins. Noise... for the sake of noise. No reason. No purpose. It's difficult to keep in mind that it's not intentional. It's even more difficult to accept inconsideration. It becomes almost impossible to simply get up and go. But, the truth of all is this is in what I've heard and been told and have come to know actually is the truth of the situation: I've spent my life doing for others, I've worked and worked and worked no matter what. Even volunteering. I've managed to not be idle. I've worked and paid into a system of taxation that's failed me. This is as good as it will get for a while. What I need to do is learn to use this situation, this condition,

to the best possible opportunity. It's not that I have to be awake at a certain hour. I don't have to be some-where at a certain time. I can actually sleep on and off, nap when-ever. In return, I have this bed and no concern about weather. Food? Yes. The quantity is diminishing (and I notice how the portions are smaller and smaller with each "meal") and I spend every waking hour hungry. I figure they send only the absolute minimum required caloric intake to keep me from breaking down ill. It's painful. But, I need to hold on. Why? Why not? Playing this to the end will be interesting. And it's not a public shelter. Yes, I'm sure the staff will begin to wonder what the bleat I'm doing here. I'm certain some already know. But, as I say... it's not a city shelter. All I need to do is save what's at the hotel. If that goes, I go. So, there's always the "out". And, as for the chest x-rays? Retaliation because I refused the injection for the tuberculosis test. - So, 8:44pm and I'm still waiting to go to X-ray. The floor is calming down. Channel 13 on TV. I've had to pee since I started writing. - 9:33pm Went to pee. Haven't been to X-ray. Checked the phone for messages. NOTHING. NONE. So much for RAA. Right? So much for "friends" and people who "care". I'm thinking that if I last through this, maybe I could go to Louisiana after Hurricane Gustav. But bottom line for now, for the night? I'M SO HUNGRY THAT I'M ACTUALLY IN PHYSICAL PAIN! MUSCLES. HEAD. EVERYTHING! There's an idiot out in the hall making sneaker noises, squeaking them against the floor. A nurse, a group of staff, doing the chat-thing. Jackson's getting his medications. Hopefully, pain medications are included. Hopefully everyone entitled will get their medications. The house is calm at the moment. Jackson's restless, closing windows and such. Well, I'll hope this settles in due course and all will be at some semblance of peace.



02. September 2008 - Monogram

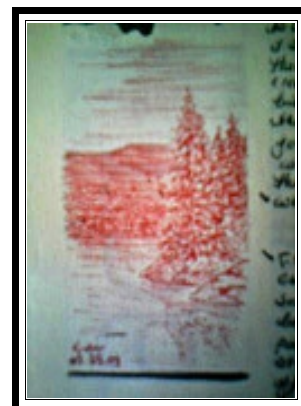
Monday 1 September:

1:39am Jackson's having a bad night. Poor guy. Like Mr. Bailey said, you always hear men crying in hospital, the women cry and complain less. Well, what can be done? The nurse is bringing medications but, just now, as J's in the loo, the NA comes in with a contraption, stands right outside the loo and yells "Where are you?" So, I've lost it. I've spoken. "He's in the damned loo! You stand there yelling like he's half way down the road. JCAH (Joint Commission on Accredited Hospitals) should be here for this." - So I'm soaked with sweat from fatigue. Eyes burning. Head throbbing. Hope. I'm not going to be able to ride this one through. Not at this rate. No sleep. Always hungry. Thinking of work? At this rate I'll be completely burnt in no time. Even now the moaning drags on in here. J's in pain. Not on the rest of the floor. No. It's quiet out there. It's only in here. No pain management. No patient respect. THIS is "Health Care"? I see me back out on the streets in no time. But, before that happens, I'll get in a hair-cut and beard trim. It's time to just ride this for what I need for as long as I can. - Odd. I want a bleating cigarette now! I've got 3. I'll be eating half of one to-night. - Got it. Half a smoke. I've got 2 patches (14mg) but at the rate I sweat, they'll be wasted. If I trusted these "doctors", I'd go for tranquilizers. Hey! I still have a psych consult coming! By then? I should be a "case". - Meanwhile, it's 2:03am. J's moaning, pfutzing in the bed, dropping things on the floor, anxiety attack. - 2:56am Jackson's hyperventilating. A patient in room 259 fell. It's taking the entire floor staff almost 10 minutes to get him/her up. I loved the discussion in the room. Talk. Talk. No action. So now we have TWO situations and ALL staff in one room. Me? My head is pounding. I'm hungry. Tired. Nauseous. And the Nurse asks the fallen patient "Do you have pain?" - I wonder when they'll try to confiscate this book because of what's in it. - Somebody's asking if the Dr. has been called. Somebody's taking the patient's vitals, snapping "Relax!" at the patient. Jackson's become a bit calmer. The window in here is open. Fresh air. Feels good. I wish I could enjoy it. It's pleasantly

cool in here. Probably just too cool outside. But outside is beginning to look very good. No wonder the Homeless take to the streets. - 3:10am "OK GET YOUR THINGS TOGETHER. YOU'RE GOING TO ANOTHER ROOM." The order just came, out of no-where, by some stranger... and was snapped at me! I didn't move a muscle and the command just dropped. But, Jackson decided to play the drama to the best. I tried to help him and his breathing but he wouldn't help himself at all! So I took to my bed and the sketch of my tree. How I miss my corner of The Bakfort! He had respiratory and X-ray in there. I finally went to the Nurses' Station and the DOC (Doctor On Call) had told the staff to relocate me. So, at 5:01 in the morning, I'm in room 252, alone, TV working but CBS-FM (the "oldies" radio station) is playing. Not a scenic room. But I'm alone. The air conditioner is on. I have the window bed. I think there was some kind of precaution in here. There's a gown in the waste bin. The bed is old, not so comfy. Again, I have to be cut short of some things. But hell. It's my 3rd bed since admit. If anybody comes looking for me, they'll never find me. Right now, I'd like something to help me sleep. I'd like to get some sleep. I hope I'll be able to catch some during the day! - September! Sh**! Summer is gone! And here I am, in the Rockaways where I wanted to be... but Homeless. Just what the bleat happened? - As Jackson put on the act, I thought back to Albert Green. Thanks to my caring, I'm here. J. could be another mistake. It's best I'm not where I could help. He (J) has been kind but A.G. was too. Look where kind people get you. Look where "kind" people have gotten me... here. - 8:28am Got some sleep. Some. Sound. Now there's a magnificent breeze blowing through the window, across my back and out the door into a hallway of idiots. Save Linda, my little spark o'hope. I woke knowing they'd lost me. They did. I'm brushing my teeth in the loo, a knock on the door. "Who's in there?" The NAs come into the room and leave. They look. No comment. Now I learn, no breakfast. A "nurse" from last night comes int. "Good morning. How are you?" I'm in no mood. That's how are I! I recount the events of this morning. She says "I know. I know you from last night." Well? LAST NIGHT I asked for a Tylenol. This morning, I haven't gotten it yet. "Would you like a Tylenol?" (8:36am) Lillian comes in. "Mr. Kessler! You have a headache?" - I have to work on this comedy. Friday night RAA. Homeless in Peninsula Motor Lodge. I mean, most seriously, this IS a comedy act. Toss me out of bed in the middle of the night; move me down and across the hall into another room and bed, alone; I'm not well and you ask me if I'd like something for the head-ache; I tell you that I would... and that's it until the morning, several hours later... and then somebody asks "You have a headache?" Oh... this HAS to be scripted! It's not "funny" but, if approached with a sardonic sense of humour, it could well be. - JACKSON'S INTUBATED AND OFF TO ICU (Intensive Care)! HE'S SEDATED. MY "BUDDY". THIS IS

UNREAL! I need to think, plot, plan, get the bleat out of this disaster! And I need to do it like now. A day of serious planning ahead. - 10:46am Kleymenova strolls in. "Good morning. I gave you Tylenol. Did you get it?" TEN BLEATING HOURS AFTER I ASKED AND THEY'RE FIXATED ON TYLENOL! She waltzes in. She waltzes out. She's very different. Not so compassionate. - So, this morning, we have been subjected to chest X-ray and blood work. - 11:25am New pen from Nurse Brenda (?) who just gave me the "You're so talented." sh** along with a pen because the one I've been using is running low on ink (go figure). I'd told her how easy it is to judge others knowing nothing about them. The staff here see me as a "Homeless" person, something of a "failure", an "undesirable". Nobody knows who I am, what I have accomplished, what I've done for others. I told her of my years of Nursing, home-care. She backed off, told me to come to New Haven Home Care Agency, register for work. She's focused on me finding a home. I'm telling her I know why the Homeless go back to homelessness. She can't understand it. I don't suppose any of them can. But I've got Tuesday and Wednesday on my steroids. Thursday? Back to the open air? If not sooner. By the way: Jackson: "Pulmonary oedema". They finally discovered why he's been having such trouble breathing. Finally. - 6:27pm It's been too quiet on the floor all day. I don't dare ponder the night. Right now it looks to be very difficult for me. One thing, and this worries me terribly: I KEEP VISUALISING ME IN ELLENVILLE GENERAL! IN MY MIND, ROUTE 209 IS RIGHT OUT-SIDE THE WINDOW, KERHONKSON IS JUST DOWN THE ROAD. FOR BRIEF MOMENTS, I WAIT FOR BIRDIE, LOU, JULIE TO COME OR CALL. AND THEN THE REALITY SNAPS IN AND THE ANXIETY PAINS ARE INTENSE. TRULY PAINFUL. FOR A FEW MOMENTS EARLIER I WAS SO CONSUMED WITH HATE FOR C.M. (my two-faced, lying, conniving, back-stabbing sister who, just some years ago invited me into her home, only to remove me suddenly, under the guise of going out to breakfast one sunny Sunday morning while her husband AND my own brother removed my entire life-time of home furnishings and the rest of my belongings to a storage bin, told me that SHE would attend to the expense and then, mere months later, simply wrote it all off by NOT paying and then pissed the incident off with an e-mail that opened with "I'm so sorry...". 50 years of my life... gone. And she's "sorry".) THE THOUGHT OF LOSING EVERYTHING TIGHTENS MY THROAT. SO I SNAPPED BACK TO ELLENVILLE. - I NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE... JUST FOR A FEW MOMENTS. I NEED TO GET OUT!!!! I NEED TO HOLD ON FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER TO SEE WHERE THIS GOES. I MIGHT GET SOME PLACE IN A BOARDING HOUSE OUT HERE. I WON'T KNOW IF I SCREW IT ALL AT THIS POINT. AND IF NOT? THERE'S ANOTHER OPTION ALWAYS THERE AND SOME NICE WEATHER IN THE FORECAST. A

QUIET DAY ON THE BEACH, SITTING PEACEFULLY, GUT FULL OF MEDICATIONS, TO FALL ASLEEP... AND NEVER WAKE AGAIN. - The last does of steroids is Wednesday morning. That's tonight, tomorrow, tomorrow night, Wednesday morning. - 7:40pm and I'm cleaned and tucked and very ready to end this day. 7:43 and I need to find a place for the night. Not at 8:20pm any more. The night is falling this early already. Soon, all will be dark at 5:00pm! Soon there will be a solution to this mess. Very soon. It won't go on like this too much longer. One solution or another. It's stopping. Meanwhile, planes are coming by so low! It's actually beautiful against the sun-set. I can see them through the window. Being close to JFK airport has its benefits, I suppose. The floor is good. Brenda(?) stopped at the door to call in "Good-night Mr. Kessler!" I told her to stop calling me "Mr. Kessler". "Sorry Judah." She's Jewish too. A nice note. One small comfort. I hope she'll be here when all the sh** hits the fan tomorrow. I keep thinking, the first thing I did on admission was ask to speak with a Rabbi. It still hasn't happened. Actually, the only questions I have yet to be answered is "Why is it so important to come out of this a survivor?" I don't see the need. But, for now, I'm just waiting for the taking of last vitals. I need to try for some sleep tonight. I know I'll be needing it. And listening to CBS-FM is approaching danger: too many deep memories that shouldn't surface now are rising. Dorothy, Donna, Aunt Sis, Jamesway, Kerhonkson, Lou, Marc... too many. Not good right now. The songs bring memories. I haven't listened to music in such a long while because my heart can't take the pain of the memories. But here is the music, the songs, the tunes, the melodies, the lyrics... the memories... and the pain. So... 8:19pm and Bob Dylan just sang "Like A Rolling Stone"... "How does it feel?" I know now. I know how it feels... "to be on your own... like a rolling stone." (P.S. I'm SO HUNGRY).



Tuesday 2 September

7:22am It's 21° in this room! Lovely! A little breeze blowing in through the window. The sky is blue. I've WASHED in the loo. Shampoo etc. Thorough. Clean "gowns", jeans (still not clean), underwear. Ready for the massive BS that I know is to come with this day. More opinions (negative), more suggestions and recommendations, more judgements. But no actions. Nothing to actually MOVE me forward or up. Just a lot of opinionated, ill-informed CO2 spewing out of mouths that have enjoyed their meals, spoken with friends and loved-ones, and are quick to fire

verbal jabs at me, especially now when I'm down. So? I'm ready for it... more or less. Tomorrow is the last Prednisone dose. I can leave then. Will it be difficult? Probably. But it won't be difficult forever. - I'm starting a list, to weigh which is better: to stay and work through this or to take off and escape. The list is fair. - NOTE: IN PRISON, PRISONERS ARE GIVEN TIME OUT OF DOORS ROUTINELY. HERE, I AM CONFINED, WORSE THAN IF SENTENCED FOR SOME HEINOUS CRIME. LEAVING HERE HAS BECOME MORE A MATTER OF ESCAPE THAN MUCH ELSE. - 7:42am They, the staff, cackle in the halls, banging all sorts of carts and equipment. I woke this morning, quietly. No one around. I went to the loo to bathe. Bang, bang, bang on the door. "OK. Just checking." They return to yelling down the halls, giggling and cackling like school children and old hens. (I have headache now.) HEY! As of today, I've been in here a week. I haven't smoked a cigarette. BUT WOW! DO I EVER WANT ONE RIGHT NOW!!!! at 7:56am. - 12:17pm About 15 minutes ago, a woman walks in the room. Social Worker. No more Marianne. I'm not on "her" floor! So, the recounting of the tale begins again. I tell. Mrs. Somebody-Who-Never-Introduced-Herself and has no I.D. on her, listens. She asks if I've ever heard of "Chabad" (a sect of Jews who claim that they're all about "love and dignity and compassion" for Jews and all others). I tell her I have. She asks me if I still want to complete the application for the shelter. WHAT? What are my options? What alternatives? "I've heard terrible things about shelter" says Mrs. I tell her that I can't be here, like this, any longer. I stress that I need to go to work. I need to be presentable. She says I look terrific. I stress the importance of trimming beard and moustache. That comment drops to the floor. Dead. I tell her I feel imprisoned. She doesn't get it. (Of course not. She's a Social Worker. Even looks the part. From personal, direct experience, they're in a world of their own. Unicorns and rainbows and bleeding hearts.) She mentioned something about being discharged. Discharged? To Where? When? I thought they couldn't discharge the Homeless. See how realities bend? I told her that Peninsula put me on the steroids, I've one more dose, I'm back to the streets. I'm not going to risk coming off the steroids while on the streets and being brought back here in an ambulance. Besides, I want to be healthy enough to go back to work! Well. Words fall on the floor and die. She's off to call Chabad in Cedarhurst, a few towns away. We already know that that's going to get us a lot of exactly what I've got now... nothing. I've had experience with them in the past and they all but tossed me out the door with a recommendation to enquire with "Catholic Charities". OK. Indeed. Well then. - 12:57pm Lunch done. I've begun getting everything together for tomorrow. 10am medications and me out the door. I'll go to check my chart at the Nurses' station this evening... for "Schitzengiggles" See about discharge. However... One thing I will make sure of and that is

that I do not sign out “AMA”. If it gets documented that way, the hospital assumes NO responsibility for anything that might happen to me once I’m out the door. And although there are some quite wonderful people on the staff here, I’ll not let the entire institution off free. - (How, I wonder, do other people accept a situation like this with ease? How could anybody just take this bed, this room, take the services and not feel some obligation? I hear of people who have been Homeless for years, come into hospital time and again. Yes, I’ve paid my debt to society - from conception! - and so, and deserving of this shelter here. But from the system, not the people. And, of course, I want to work my way along. I take nothing for granted. But how, I wonder, do others just take and ride this?) - It’s not “AMA”. It’s to retain some human dignity. - The sky is still a silver-blue and the breeze coming in the window is warm. - Where will I go tomorrow night? - 8:24pm I got a roomie this evening. So far, quiet. I’m being nice me, considerate me. No reason not to be. Even as I’m being screwed yet again by Fate, Life, Creation. The social worker came back, said she’d phone Chabad, the Rabbi was in a meeting. She left the room, disappeared into the hall. End of that story. Then, I went to tell the Nurse that I want to see my chart this evening when the floor gets quiet. Can’t, unless the primary MD is present! BLEAT THAT! I’m in “Out of here at 10am medications” mode. I want to see my diagnosis, treatment history, Social Services notes, discharge plan. I want to know about Medicaid. I’d like to see the “Homeless” comments. Meanwhile, at 8:39pm, the floor is alive with all sorts of cacklings; outside, planes are taking off on last night’s arrival route which could have been so beautiful to watch if I could have darkened the room tonight. But more-so? I want a bleating cigarette! I want to take a walk down the street! I want to go to Ft. Tilden! I NEEDED TO GET OUT OF HERE! My chest feels as if it’s collapsed. I can feel my pulse in my nose. More? I don’t think so. I just figure I’ll leave here, head to the subway for a MetroCard to Far Rock. Go tell Srully the latest, listen to Jacquie give me some line about not having any resources for emergency housing and being sent out to public shelters and other such BS. Then? The Fort for my nail file and check my “bed clothes”. Into The City to the Coalition, if there’s time. If not? 30th Street Homeless System Intake. Alternate? JCCRP to hear of their failures then to Bakfort to bask in the sun and finish all of this BS. All said, all written, all done, I’m fed-up, burnt-out, at then end, no more. It’s 9:04pm, I’ve got the TV on since probably 7pm. I’ll pass the control to the new guy and try to get some sleep for tomorrow. It might be my last “bleating sun-rise”, but I’ve been through enough, enough, ENOUGH! This isn’t life. It’s not living. But I will not be tired tomorrow along with all else.

Wednesday 3 September

7:40pm: Not exactly a restful night. But, lets face it: there's much on the agenda today and I didn't exactly end yesterday in peace. What, with the BS about the chart and being dumped by a social worker. So now, I'm sitting here, on the bed, waiting to shower. At 6:48am I brought a note, neatly penned on a paper towel, to the Nurses' Station: "Pt. 252B WED. SEPT. 6:48AM REMINDER: PT. WANTS TO VIEW HIS CHART TODAY. PLEASE NOTIFY PRIMARY MD AND OBTAIN PERMISSION." My chest feels more like a closing steel cage. My head is just a mass of pain set on my shoulders. It's a bit overcast this morning but warm. I'm in the mood to just do/behave the way I've been treated: primarily ignored. Just to ignore the rest of them, do what I must, use the phone, watch TV. That sort of thing. That's the early part of the plan. Next? Medications. Shower. Dress. Leave. Let's see how the day turns out and where I'll journal the day's events this evening. - One major comment I want to include here is how there's NO consideration for patients. The yelling, banging, screaming, talking, etc.. Almost unbelievable. - OK. Vitals have been taken. The day begins. Let the screwing begin. - 2 NAs and a Nurse trainee have come in, pass the time, make merry in the morning. The RN trainee doesn't want me to leave today because she'll have to take an admission. She's on until 7pm this evening! We'll see. I'd like to be nice and kind. - 10:01am Just came out of the loo. HAD TO DO A DIGITAL TO MOVE MY BOWELS! Yes, I had to "pull" the sh** out of my own bowels! Could not pass the stool! Yet another reason to get up and out of here... constipation. - It's 10:00am. Time to start bugging folks: shower, chart, housing, discharge, etc. - 3:35pm I got my shower AND I got to go OUT-SIDE FOR ABOUT 15-20 MINUTES. Thanks to the social worker, Nursing Supervisor and an Aide! It was a delight. I even smoked my last cigarette in the parking area. Humanity! But it wasn't to last. Lunch was pork. I didn't eat it. No big deal. I rested for a while and then... About 2:40pm I used the phone. Called Edlyne to see about work. She hounded me about proof of address!!!! No assignments coming with-out it. I've been Homeless for so long (and thanks, in most part, to her). I've no "address" and even if I tried to use one, I have no "proof". SO, AS A MATTER OF TECHNICALITY, I'M OUT OF WORK NOW! THE HOLE IS DEEPER AND DARKER. I'M LOSING THE LIGHT! I RANG NURSE NANCY. CALLER ID GAVE HER THE HOSPITAL ID! BLEATED! I was honest. Told her I'm here as a patient. Told her that Premier (the Home-Care agency in Queens who dumped me in the first place... thank you Edlyne) isn't giving me any work. She said she'll find me private duty. I don't trust her anymore. I have no cause to trust anybody... especially when I went to Kleymenova and asked for permission to see my chart and she OUT-RIGHT, BLATANTLY, DIRECTLY SAID "NO." NO? WHY? "I DON'T

KNOW. BECAUSE IT'S ILLEGAL." WHAT'S "ILLEGAL" IS THAT THIS RUSKY IDIOT IS ALLOWED TO HOLD A POSITION WHERE-BY SHE CAN WRITE WHAT SHE WANTS IN A CHART AND HIDE IT FROM A PERSON. SO I ASKED HER WHAT SHE'S HIDING, WHAT SHE DOESN'T WANT ME TO KNOW. NO REPLY. SHE JUST FLIPPED THROUGH THE PAGES, CALLED FOR MY SOCIAL WORKER. WHEN THE SOCIAL WORKER CALLED BACK, KLEYMENOVA ASKED ABOUT THE SHELTER APPLICATION. "TWO WEEKS." SHE CALLED TO ME ACROSS THE NURSES' STATION. "THAT'S NOT ALL I WANTED TO LOOK AT. BUT SINCE YOU OBVIOUSLY HAVE SOMETHING IN THERE TO HIDE, I NO LONGER TRUST YOU. STAY AWAY FROM ME." - I've called for the social worker. I was dressed and ready to leave. But not yet. Not that easy. As I told the social worker today: Peninsula gets paid while I'm here. My presence makes the staff's job easier because I do ALL of my own work, such as cleaning the room, changing bed linens, and often have attended patients. I didn't get into this situation intentionally. But let's both face the fact: as long as I'm in here, the hospital will bill and be paid... even if only by the city and the state. They'll get paid. - 3:53pm Kleymenova is outside the door talking with someone. Ah, she's talking about another patient at the moment. But I wouldn't put it past her to try some BS to either get me to leave or to put me on psychiatric evaluation because of my comment about not trusting her. I DON'T TRUST HER AT ALL! Why would she want to harm me? I don't know. What has she already documented? I don't know. But I want to record that, with every bit of my humanity, I beg all of Creation that Larisa Kleymenova experiences, personally, directly, first-hand, having no home to go to, no one to turn to, no help to be found, and nothing but empty cold to look forward to at the end of the day. First-hand experience of just what she holds, judgmentally, against me.- So, I'm in bed gowns and jeans. 4:00pm. In 3 hours it will be night. No sense bombing out the door for that. There's one more hot meal to come (maybe) and one more night to sleep in a bed (maybe). A sit-tight and wait for a "Patient Representative" (who probably won't come either). If I have to wait through dinner and dinner comes, I eat.. If I have to wait past sun-down, I sleep. Tomorrow? Back out to nothing... well... Homeless Coalition and Shelter Intake. - 4:08pm Kleym and Co. (she, Madame Doctor, usually comes round with a little entourage or at least some little "companion"... a "trainee" as it were) came by. Apparently, it's "hospital policy" that patients can't see their chart! Right. Also, Kleym makes a point of telling me that St. John's Hospital will discharge out to the streets! Imagine? So Kleym comes in all "sweet-sweet". Like I trust either her or a Social Worker now. And word from Chabad? They don't deal with housing. Fuknuts. My list of possibilities is in the "Notes" column. I'll ponder... I wonder where Jocelyn is through this.

She's been AMAZING! Supportive. Kind. Compassionate. More "family" than my actual. Sweeter than just about anybody else. She's an NA... and she's my "Confidante" of late. SHE's the one who accompanies me for my strolls out-side. She came on and came in like a buddy. Of course, I've nothing to say to anybody around here any more. - 4:34pm The dinner trays are here... I wonder... If none for me, I can go, be free! Food stamps and a heavy, non-restricted... oops... the tray has arrived. Dinner. Imagine that! - For a moment, I thought my portions were being reduced. Unless the guy in the other bed is in the same situation, this is the "Cardiac" diet. Designed to starve a person to death. They don't give him any additional, but the dear Jocelyn is trying to keep us fed by getting a sandwich up to either go with the dinner or for us to have later. I have one. She said to call for 2 tonight. If one comes for me, I'll take it. BLEAT ALL! I'm thinking of just walking anyway. May as well enjoy what I can. But I wonder: Why do I even bother? I just can't figure it. I just can't. 6:34pm and the sun is dropping from the sky. The temperatures will drop into the teens. Heavy rains on Saturday. Will I be at Tilden in the rain? Should I just duck out and head south toward Louisiana? Will being Homeless in the South be better? So much to think about. The only thing I know for certain is: Tomorrow won't be any better.

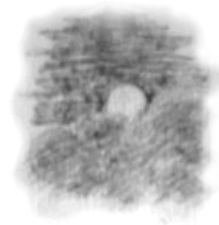
Thursday 4 September

6:03am: Three weeks now and here comes the depression with the day-break. A grey-blue sky hangs over Peninsula Hospital this morning. A shroud of misery hangs over me. The male Nurse on duty came into the room last night, looked at me, grunted something, left. He's been quite attentive to the guy in the other bed here. Lengthy chats about good health, etc. Not that I mind, particularly. Not that I mind at all, really. - I don't understand why I have to pee so often. I'm not drinking much. - It's stupid of me, really, but I don't want to go to use the loo in case Stanic (roomie's name, I think) needs it. But right now, I'm holding urine and he's in for the second time in the past 10 minutes. I'll have to get a urinal today. I wonder why BOTH of us appear to need to pee often. I'm not getting any additional medications. Very suspect, I might say. - 6:34am I've peed! I noted last night's dreams then went to the loo. - I'd like a cigarette now. I'd like a real coffee. I'd like a walk along the beach. I'd like to go to work! Depression. I need to sort this all out. It no longer is real. My defences are all up and my brain isn't accepting the realities any more. I KNOW about this situation. I TRY to work through it but I keep hitting dead-ends. - I MUST GET OUT OF THIS HOSPITAL! I MUST FIND WORK. WORK HAS A PAY DELAY OF 2

WEEKS IN ANY EVENT. NO HOUSING FOR 2 WEEKS. WHEN I GET WORK I CAN'T STAY HERE. - GOOD/PERFECT SOLUTION? A LIVE-IN! THE ONLY WAY THAT MIGHT HAPPEN? EXTRA-CARE OR NANCY. I NO LONGER TRUST NANCY AND DON'T DEPEND ON HER SO I HAVE TO FIGURE A WAY TO DO THIS ON MY OWN. (I still don't know why my survival sh** is fighting. It would be so much better to die. It's an option. It should be the only option. - Nurse Elizabeth is back on this morning. I like seeing her. She's the one who told me I must sit tight and get what I deserve, that life is a struggle and the winnings don't go to the swiftest but to the one who endures. I don't want to endure! So why am I still here writing? HOPE? DEFIANCE? STUPIDITY? - 6:50am I'm ready for a nap already. I'm sitting here, on the bed, nodding off. - It's supposed to be a scorcher today. - "Medications" this morning? Aspirin (so as not to get any blood clots from "inactivity", MultiVitamin, stomach antacid to avoid stomach "distress" from not enough food to combat the pills which aren't necessary treatment but must be given to justify my presence and the salaries of the staff who administer them, and so a doctor can be paid for prescribing them and putting the order in a chart. No more real "medications"! (And do I know the routine? Or what? They think me "stupid". Indeed. - 1:23pm I gave a letter to the nurse to drop in the box down-stairs. The letter is to Ashley about my belongings. She (the Nurse) comes to tell me "I gave it to the guy." "The guy"? What "guy"? No reply. People have no sense of responsibility to anything or anybody! These, the ones I've met here, who are like that, I wouldn't raise to the level of dick-head. I trust absolutely NONE of them. Not even the sweet and kind. - Meanwhile, I've passed the day sketching in this journal, speaking only when I feel it necessary (about my letter), being ignored, trying to escape into sleep, wishing I could go sit somewhere QUIET, have a cigarette. But the blue skies are going grey. It's quite hot and a bit humid. Too late to head to the Coalition for the Homeless in The City. Weather doesn't look good for pills on the beach. So we'll give it another evening and see how disappointing these idiots can be. I can't fathom that there's no place for a single, White, healthy, working man to go before dropping right off the face of the world. But that's the way it is. Were I a bit of slug-sh**, the world would be open to me and service would come dressed in silver and gold. But I'm ambitious, I WANT to work at a job, I WANT to be clean and presentable. I NEED a little help... but help does not come to those who are appreciative of the help, and those who want to work to earn the help. The world today, this is what it's come to. - There's a cloud coming off the ocean. A storm to follow? And me, in-side? - I didn't even brush my teeth yet today! And who the bleat notices? Who the bleat cares? I had the phone on earlier. No messages. Not even RAA. Just proves a lot. I walked out of the gate having said by "good-bye" and all the "We're your friends" folk? Never

notice my absence. Thanks. Really... thanks. - NICE! MR. S. IS FARTING AWAY THERE AND THE STENCH IS COMING AT ME! DISGUSTING SH**! Well, when I decide to put on the air conditioner, I'll remember this consideration... Air is on. I'm going to... I don't know... wait for the rain? - 6:08pm No rain. Not even more clouds. Just another day. Quiet. Keeping to myself. Trying to sleep this night-mare away. No such luck. Then, after dinner, THE HA-HA happened. PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION!!! I can't be certain if it was for the shelter application or an order from Dr. Melanoma [sic]. But it was brief. The nice psychiatrist admired my art-work and left for the most part. He didn't tell me who he was (of course) nor why he was there. Just came in as if an old friend, or somebody "concerned" about me. I smiled much. And then HE let it slip: "I don't know why I had to come in here. You're fine." I told him why I thought Kleym ordered the evaluation and he told me that that's no grounds for an evaluation, my reaction was quite normal. Well!!! I wonder if he'll be back after reading my chart. No sense being preoccupied. What will happen, will happen. (BLEAT! I want a cigarette!) (OK. That written...) - Phone's on. No messages. I've been in here for NINE days (9 "Supper" lists) and no call from Tommy, Penelope, nobody. Wow! What an impact I've had on peoples' lives. So this all proves: I die. I'm dead. That's it. That's all. I can walk out of a door, into the streets, into the world, assume another life or simply lose this one and end everything. No matter what happens, it won't be noticed. Another lesson on another day. Thank you and good-night. (Not yet. Too early.)

(Now, nobody truly knows why we dream or why we dream the things we do. Over the course of human history, people have always put some sort of importance on our dreams. Everything from "scientific" to "phantasy", dreams have held some importance to many. I, myself, studied the "science" of "dream interpretation" in university classes related to Psychology, analysing and deconstructing my own dreams and those of others. I do agree that dreams are part of our psyche, a representation of what our inner selves are occupied with. Often there are great similarities to events of that very day, at other times they relate to the past. Sometimes we find that a dream of today will become a reality of tomorrow. What all of this means is something to ponder perhaps, but for here, and now, I include notes on my dreams because these dreams are the thoughts in my mind when I sleep, and in my sleep, am not busy trying to dodge any realities. What, if any, their significance is to what I am experiencing is a bit of a mystery to me. But in some dreams, I escape to better times while in others, I seem to fall deeper into an abyss of utter hopelessness. Always, they remain a part of this experience and are noted so that one day, maybe, I'll understand them, and me, a little better.)



3 DREAMS:



In the first, I was trimming my hair and beard. I was in a wooded area, alone, and it was raining all the while. Cloudy, chilly, and wet. But I continued to trim.

In the second, I went to visit Zuri. (I haven't seen him in many years, and today, he's dead.) We were out walking about The City, having a good time, enjoying each-other's company, laughing and talking about generalities of no particular import. Needing some shelter from the weather, we walked into a very nice, rather business-like lobby. Oh, he was so happy. As I stood, enjoying the warmth and dryness, he went looking for a place to smoke some weed. And as he looked and I stood, two young men and a young woman came into the building and went directly up the stairs, paying no attention to any-one else. As they did, Zuri commented on how he "hates it when non-residents get into the building". Well, neither of us was a resident either. And the third dream: Penelope is in Oma's house (my Grand-mother's actual house. My Grand-mother has been, in reality, dead for many years and I've not been in her house in almost as many years.) We're packing her belongings. She is leaving and I will stay on after she's gone. I have to close the house. I'm Homeless. When this work is done, I'll have to leave here with no place else to go. She knows this but won't let me stay here, in what is her house in this dream, while she's gone. . My siblings come by to bring things out. They too know I'm Homeless but make it clear that they're not offering a place. I tell Penelope not to worry about things in the house, I'm close by and can get what might be needed. A woman comes by. She talks to Penelope through the pantry window. She comments on her many achievements. Penelope tells her how intelligent she is. Time for Penelope to leave. It's night. It's raining. I get her to the car. She leaves. I'm relieved because tonight, I have shelter in the rain... but no home.

(In the original journals, I made notes to myself, most of which were either errands or chores that I could or should attend to, some were simply additional thoughts. These notes were, in the margins of the pages so that as I wrote, as I kept this journal, I would be reminded of hopes or plans for the future, or simply, memos to myself of additional thoughts on the present. More often than not, this "Notes" column contained the illustrations I made. The illustrations were past-times, but expressions of sentiments, thoughts I couldn't explain or describe in words. I'm including the notes and some of the sketches through-out this account because they are, in and of themselves, relative to the entirety of this work. They express much of what went through my mind as time went by. They express the moments of hope and the moments of despair.)

NOTES:

- Home base - Catholic Charities
- Homeless Coalition
- Shelter Intake
- JCCRP
- OR-
- Stick it out here for 2 more weeks!

?

-OR-

“OPT-OUT”

?

-OR-

-Louisiana

Why do I continue this? Isn't the world... ALL of Creation, telling me that it's time to end it? Creation is pushing me out and I'm just not complying. Truly. It's time to stop shoving back. It's time to go...

HOPE?

DEFIANCE?

STUPIDITY?

**Friday 5 September**

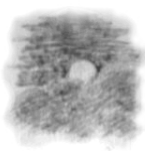
7:35am Uneventful evening last night. The bleating radio was on all night. Of course, he gets medications to help *him* sleep! But the blame isn't his, it's that moron Nurse who turned it (the volume) up. SHE decided that he needed to have the volume turned up higher, came into the room, grabbed the control and did so, with no consideration that I am in the room as well. - I'm having great difficulty focusing my eyes this morning. The general reading glasses are failing. It's been coming for a while. My vision is rather failing. I wonder: could it be from the stress, or my age or lack of proper nourishment? I don't know, but it's been coming and this morning it seems worse than most other time. - Last night, I thought: MY SUIT, GOOD SHIRTS, SWEATERS, GONE, GONE, GONE, GONE, GONE, GONE, GONE. COLD WEATHER CLOTHES, GONE!!!! Why can't I just throw a grand stroke and die? I'm so stupid. I don't need the stroke. I've got my

keys to “out of here”. But the weather is supposed to be a bit on the rugged side this evening and all day tomorrow. So, it’s a matter of patience. As it is, a mist must have come through the slightly opened window last night. The bed-table top, air conditioner and window sills were wet with a mist. Had I been out last night, I’d have been quite wet this morning. And too, this morning, the sky is grey, no sun, even now at 8am. I’d have been quite uncomfortable. So, it is good that I managed to stay here and not leave on Wednesday. Even Jocelyn said, again, last evening “You just get comfortable. You have a roof for a few more days.” And the Nurse I like so much: “You just sit right here until they find some place nice for you!” I’m trying. It’s just too much like a jail! I can’t say how much I appreciate the compassion of the few truly caring people here. I feel useless enough as it is, and down so far, a beggar of sorts. I do have a “roof”, but the price is the freedom to get up and walk about, out-side, in the sun (or rain), under an open sky. But, I do have a “roof” and I woke this morning under it, and not under that open sky, wet from the night’s dew.

- The Aide who brought me out the other day is on today. She’s ever so pleasant and I’m doing my best to be the happy-go-lucky one. (The radio plays “Brandy”. My heart goes to Dennis Nixon. My chest collapses into itself. it happens every time.) The staff are truly wonderful for the most part. Supportive. I just need to get my own part of this misery together... one way or another. I do have kind people around me now, strangers who are more compassionate than “friends” and MUCH more compassionate than “family”. They are a blessing, like “angels” of lore. They are, they truly are more supportive than “friends” and “family” and they do treat me with respect, kindness and dignity. Strangers... better than “friends” and “family”. - It occurred to me: If the psychiatrist was here last night as part of the shelter application, the application hasn’t gone as yet! If what the social worker says is true, it takes TWO weeks to hear back! I CANNOT DO THIS HOSPITAL-THING FOR TWO MORE WEEKS! Not only because of my agitation but because I’m actually beginning to feel like a leech, a no-account. I know that I’m not simply feeling “entitled” and some of the people around me know that as well. But It is approaching that, in general, and I cannot continue this way. I do keep the room neat and clean, I get my own linens and change the bed when necessary, I get my own meal trays, I don’t ask for anything more than what’s given, and I most certainly don’t make a sound unless spoken to. I try to pull as much of my own weight as policy and protocol will allow. But it’s never enough... to or for me. Two ore weeks? I’d rather not. I’d rather not be in the shelter... but I’d rather not be here, taking advantage. And I KNOW that there are people here who would rather not see me... here or anywhere else. - OK. So one more note on the morning: My blood pressure was a steady 100/70. It’s not a steady 90/60 as has always been my “normal”. As of yesterday, I’ll take the vitamin C but

nothing more. The other pills are only aspirin and an antacid anyway. I should be drinking more water but don't feel like running to pee all the time. HOWEVER, I don't want to have to pull stool again. THAT was an experience I hope I'll never have again in my life-time. It's about my comfort now. Things to ponder as I waste away everything. - Last night I had another dream. I'm dreaming again at least which means either my mental health is improving or I'm truly breaking down. But I'm also remembering the dreams when I wake. And so, I'm keeping notes of them.

Last night's



DREAM: As I arrived at RPH to get my belongings, even though I had no money. the manager (a guy... Kevin Dick, my best friend from elementary school!) was handling my letter to the hotel and some paper-work. He told me they got my letter just in time! As I'm listening to the manager Cyndi (my sister) appears with Tony (her husband)! I'm livid and ask what she's doing here. "To help you! I couldn't let you lose everything!" (The great act). "It never bothered you before!" I snapped at her. She and Tony played the caring ones to the hilt. I just got increasingly angry. Somehow, I got C and T to pay for redemption and continued storage. But I got to yell at both of them. *(It was these two who, whilst my sister took me away from their house where I'd been residing on her invitation, under the pretence of going out for breakfast, just the two of us, so we could talk, my brother and brother-in-law put all of my belongings of my 50-some years on this earth, into a U-haul and put them all into storage. She, knowing that I couldn't afford the storage expense, told me that she was taking care of that, and that she too would be using the space. When, some months later, I told her that I needed access to the storage to retrieve Winter clothing, coldly replied via e-mail, opening her diatribe with the words "I am so sorry". She hadn't paid the storage, hadn't used it herself and simply let it all go to auction. I'd never been notified of the situation and at that point, everything I'd ever had, including clothing and furniture, books and my own art-works were gone... forever. And now, in this dream... after having not truly given thought to the matter, the event, mingled with the present, returned.)*

Today, now, I can't help but wonder: does this dream tell me that my letter WILL get to Ashley and all is NOT lost? - 9:53am Sink bath. Clean bed. Painful memories of Dennis Nixon, Dennis Pearl, Joe Contarino, Joe Corkedale. People who meant much to me in my rather distant past, my "younger days". Painful. Painful. Painful. Why are they coming to mind now? - 3:07pm Stancil, my "room-mate", has been discharged. I'm alone in the room again. I'm worried about what's to come. The social worker came in earlier. She told Stancil that they need the bed for "sick" people. She spoke with him and listened to him at length. She ignored the fact that I was in the room! So,

the doctor and social worker are avoiding and ignoring me. Stamina! That's what I need now. - There's a rather interesting man in the room across the hall. We've exchanged quick glances. He's tall, slender, shaved head, grey beard, long fingers, no ring. I'll eventually strike a chat... unless they pull him or I get some sort of night-mare room-mate. - For now, I'm just waiting for an opportunity to call the Benjamins to see what's there. I wonder if Walter returned home and they got another Aide from Premier, the agency that put me into this predicament in the first place. If so, I'll have to see what can be done to change that! If not, there's something for my mind to work with. - Jocelyn's on this evening! Stancil's bed needs stripping. I'm sketching and the past keeps stabbing me in the heart, deeply. The radio is off. No more reminders! I can't listen to the music any more. Each song brings memories of times that I miss so strongly and the pain is intolerable. - 5:35pm The guy across the hall came into sit in the sun because his room becomes rather dark at this time of day and to use my other reading glasses. He's got a Wet Indian accent. A little hard of hearing. But he's doing the crossword in the paper so there must be something OK there. He's doing a crossword, that takes some degree of thought there. Not that it's going to make any difference much longer. - Dr. K. came in, very sweet: Any new problems?" she asked me. We talked. She judged, I could tell by her visage. I must get back to work and into a place of my own. She confided that she was a Dr. in Russia. Came here with husband and daughter. Husband divorced her. She went to school on LOANS!!! for immigrants. How nice for her to have the LOANS option. How convenient that loans be available to immigrants and yet, those of us born here have such limited resources. Indeed, how convenient for her. - Next line? Jocelyn is joining the band. In one breath I must go find work, get out of here. Same breath: the hospital must find me a place, locally, because there's a lot of health-care work out here. Once again, they're all so ready with useless advice, but not ONE of any of them will DO anything... like make a referral, ask to submit my CV, make a phone call, give me a job. They see my competence. They see my willingness to work. (Brenda? New Haven Home Care? She tells me to "put in an application" when I get out of here, but that's as far as it all goes. If I could know that I could walk out of here with a job, I could certainly handle the rest of the particulars. Not to mention that she has the opportunity to find "live-in" situations where I could re-start my "life". But, it's easier to make judgemental statements and have done with it. My situation is not theirs and they're employed... thanks, in part, to my presence here. So we leave it at that.) So, as of now, I'm thinking: There's a hurricane due tomorrow. I'll wait it out here since I can. Sunday is supposed to be fine. Tuesday's forecast is for another rain. Wednesday's high in the 70's! So the cold is coming and I've got a day and a half to make drastic changes. NOT ONE BLEATING SOUL is

going to help me out of this! What-ever is done will have to be of my own, solo, volition. So I'll leave on Monday morning, first thing. Hey. I still have my "Option" and a nice day on the beach.

- FRIENDS? WHAT THE BLEATING HELL? - I've since learnt that "Haynes" is the guy across the hall. - 8:01pm Well! Haynes is now my room-mate. Smells terribly of urine. Interesting guy though. Jamaican. Jackson, my previous room-mate, has returned to the floor and is in Hayne's previous room. Jackson is as if nothing happened AND he knows Haynes. So we're a little posse of sorts. Only trouble now is the matter of windows. Haynes is moaning that it's chilly in here (22° Celsius). I want the wind to blow out the door (from sh** to piss the odours go) so that means that the window needs to be open, a bit at the very least. I'll need to figure this out somehow. Meanwhile, it should prove interesting all round. Jackson's back and that will give me a little more stamina to buck this system, I believe. He's been "inspirational" to say the very least. He's a bit more "street wise" than I am and knows this "system" much better. He gives me advice, some strength and courage. Hey! Sh**, it's said, happens for a reason. Let's see what this manages to accomplish. - 8:47pm and I'm ready for sleep. Evon (Haynes) has his magazine to read, TWO blankets. (I got him a second one from the trolley in the hall. I didn't ask for it, nor did he. But I'd like the window open a bit and he's chilly. Getting the extra blanket was a favour... to both of us.) Jocelyn just came in to check on us. (She'll be 65 years old in 8 days. Bless her. And still pulling all of this responsibility.) Jackson's across the hall. And I can't imagine how this new social circle happened but of ALL things in ALL places, now I'm part of this "3 guys of 2 North" thing. Maybe it's intervention because I was feeling a bit alone and getting ready to bolt. Maybe it will turn out to be the cause for my bolting, maybe it will be my salvation of sorts. One thing for certain, I've met 2 guys from "The Rock" (Rockaway) with whom I might or might not keep in touch but will always know if our paths ever cross again. (How funny that Evon should wind up in this room! To think I'd had my little phantasy and here it is... almost. Ah well, he's got the wife so, as usual, it remains my little joke... on me. Life remains constant: Hateful!) I'm going to try for some sleep.

Saturday 6 September

8:51am Breakfast done. Cloudy day. I "slept-in" until 8:15am. "Slept-in", as if my existence has any meaning or purpose. The night was OK. Quiet enough. I've got a bit of head-ache this morning. Evon is very neat and tidy and a fussy. First comment this morning: "This room is only a tad warmer than Alaska." Earlier this morning I woke in a sweat. - OK. So fine. - Why do I still crave a cigarette? It's all just bleated-up. - I just wish I could know what to do on Monday. Is it better to

go alone? Or will something better come of staying here and going through this BS? I wish I knew. - No call-back from the Benjamins. But it's Shabbat, the sabbath, and they are, they say, observant. Maybe tomorrow. But the ROOM PHONE rang last night. I wonder... They wouldn't have that number, and I left my cell number with them. That's enough wondering for today. My heart is pounding, my chest is closing, my heart is throbbing. Anxieties. All's normal. All's well... enough. - Oh jolly, bleating Hell! I've been homeless for TWENTY-BLEATING-THREE DAYS! OVER THREE WEEKS! AND STILL, THERE'S NO RELIEF IN SIGHT. NOBODY AROUND TO HELP. NOBODY WANTS TO UNDERSTAND. MAYBE THIS IS MY ANSWER... JUMP! AND WORRY ABOUT IT AFTER.



THERE'S ALWAYS GOOD WEATHER COMING AND A NICE PLACE ON THE BEACH... -

1:09pm Lunch done. Feeling rather like sh**. Tired. Achy. Slept on and off from just after breakfast. Brian (Jackson) came over talking with Evon as I tried to nap. Nurses yelling. It's quite something how there's no consideration for anyone. Still, I've learnt some about Evon: fisherman, drinker, a bit on the irresponsible side, husband and parent. Alas. - Meanwhile, I'm pondering and considering Monday. My heart is still pounding. My chest still feels as though it's collapsed in on itself and nobody is aware of it and of course, I say nothing to any-one about it. Best luck scenario would be to take a mortal heart-attack. I can only hope. And my HATRED of siblings, Edlyne Bellanton, the Albert Green family and almost the world, grows to extremes causing such pain that it's almost audible and visible around me, although it's a sensation inside me. When I go from this world, I will go in a grand explosion of pure, distilled, basic elemental essence of HATE. - I wonder if these people think me quite the loon: quite homeless, drawing landscapes, writing in my note-book. Hey hey hey. The one who's walking life's tight-rope. Tee hee hee. Oh well. It truly doesn't matter anyway. - 7:11pm It rained a bit today. It's raining a bit now. No major storm. Although the report from yesterday said the rains were to come between 8:00 and 12:00 tonight. I haven't had the TV or radio on all day. I tried to sleep it away. Did, for a while. The sketch for today is horrible. I forced myself to draw. Mountain cliffs. It was a waste. I didn't feel well. I didn't feel like drawing with-out reference. I had a headache and not one bleating somebody asked me how I was... all day! - Brian and Evon get into a "Who gives a bleat about you anyway?" today between themselves. Evon's been here for 3 days. No-one's called or come looking for him. Some neighbour actually saw him being taken away in the ambulance too! It got me thinking: I've been here for 11 "suppers". (I count the menus from the meal trays:

breakfast, lunch supper is one day. I have 11 sets.) When I left T4 I said I'd probably come to Peninsula Hospital. I said I wasn't feeling well. So? From being on the Fort, even back to the days of just being with Penelope every day, every day, to not being there at all, and not being missed? This tells me everything I need to know about the RAA and "friends". Am I disappointed? Yes. Am I crushed? No. And, as I've pointed out already, Tommy, Penelope, Geoff, Kristen, Matt... they've know about me sleeping in the Fort. Tommy offered shelter in the old bus that's been parked out behind the gallery building. Tommy was the only one who offered shelter from the rain. So now that I'm not there, all is perfectly fine for them... perfectly fine. I'm not there and that's all that truly matters. I won't be "appearing" any-where, out of the blue. And with this time away, I learn that I can go, enjoy a sit on the porch at T7 or T6 and I DON'T HAVE to do sh** for ANY of them. What's more, I don't need membership in RAA to enjoy The Fort or the buildings. It's all Federal! So long as I abide by the rules and regulations of a Federal park, I can go, sit quietly if I wish, and owe nobody anything. If I make it through all of this alive (I make no promises), MUCH is going to be horribly different. - It's only 9:14pm and I feel as though it's 12:14am! It's still raining, but there's no indication of any terrible storm. I've eaten my little sandwich and banana. The Ensure that I'd had at bed-side and was taken, was never replaced. Evon has been chatting-up a whirl-wind (I wish he'd wash... I've had enough of this with dear Bradshaw). And now, the place is as a hospital should be, relatively quiet... and I'm just about ready to take advantage of it and try for some sleep before the night gnats come for "vitals". - Well, it's raining. it was blustery. I'd have had to find shelter in a battery in the Bakfort tonight (if not Tommy's bus). But here I am, on a bed, finished a sandwich, ready to get under the covers. I need to focus on that.

NOTES:



NOFS SOLO ALONE 1 PLUS 0 I - JUMP! ALONE - Y MUST I SURVIVE

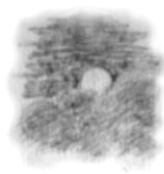
HOSPITAL POLICE PROHIBITS DISCHARGING THE HOMELESS. SO HERE I AM. - IF YOUR SOCIAL WORKER WAS WORTH HER WAGES I'D BE GONE BY NOW. - 11 DAYS NO CALL FROM THE RAA... - TOMMY OFFERED THE BUS FOR SHELTER. - IF I SIGN OUT "AMA"... (1) SHELTER PAPERS CEASE (2) NO HOSPITAL LIABILITY FOR ANY HEALTH ISSUE (3) PROBABLY WON'T BE ADMITTED AGAIN TOO SOON.

Sunday 7 September

6:26am The day is beginning again. Clear skies on this 12th day of captivity, 24th day of Homelessness. It's quiet in this room. It's quiet on the floor. I slept rather well through the night. How unfortunate that my sleep had to be ruined by my waking this morning. Ah, but one day, soon. I won't disturb my slumber ever again. For now, I have head-ache, nausea. I need a haircut, shave, brush my teeth. I'll try for basin wash at some point. For now? It's a lovely morning, I'm awake and very sorry about it. - 7:35am I've tried about 4 sketches in the space on this page. Erased them all. I can't focus on any subject long enough to come through with a sketch. It's 7:35am on a clear day and I'm in bed! This is bleating bleated up! And, quite frankly, I'm getting fed-up with all the West Indian and Guyanese and assorted other accents around here. I'm trapped in a 3rd World! - I'm actually rotting away in here. Rotting away. My brain is going dim. How to get out. How to begin the cycle of escape. That's all I need to figure. Where to begin! - 10:23am Washed... basin washed. Window open. Nice breeze coming in. At 8:00am this morning, the temperature was 68° Fahrenheit. I wonder what the days and nights to come will bring. My mind just will NOT grasp this Homelessness. This pen won't even write the word. The ink skipped as I tried to write it. I can't seem to figure what to do when I walk out the door of this hospital because mentally, I can't seem to get past: out the door, go for cigarettes and a jumble of JCCRP, the Coalition, Intake, laundry, food. Nothing long-term. No long-term solution. It's a new experience, having NO SHELTER! I've had a car in the past. Now I don't even have that! But this hospital thing has got to stop, stop soon, just stop! - 8:20pm The sun is gone from the sky. I've finished my turkey sandwich and Ensure. My teeth and gums, upper left, are sore. Evon is whining about being cold. The breeze coming in the window is almost warm! Another night lost in here. I could be, or should be out there in weather like this! Brian and I were talking about it earlier. A tent and sleeping bag. That's all it takes. The tent to protect from wet. The bag to protect from cold. All I need is the money to get them. I'd even go back to the Bakfort, find a little place. I already know of some places that would offer perfect enclosures, away from the world, the people, the hateful, spiteful, liars and those for whom I have enough respect to simply not be seen by. I no longer even think of being helped out of this situation. - Meanwhile, my eyes won't focus well tonight. I'm wearing the stronger glasses too. Not good. - I had the cell phone on for a while. No messages. People aren't worth caring for or about. - I'm antsy about getting out of here. I wish I could figure the logistics. But Brian does have a point when he tells me to ride it out and ride it though. Tomorrow's yet another day. STRENGTH AND COURAGE! - I have to wonder about Evon though. There are moments when one would believe that he and I are some

kind of an item. A look. A glance. After all, he did come to his door to wave that day. When I talk with Brian, he's obviously displeased and will demand speaking time, breaking into a conversation as if he's jealous of the attention not being given to him. This evening, he pulled back the curtain between the beds to talk. Brian said we could pass for brothers. We're equally tall and built. How funny is that? But I do need to stop for the night. I'm tired. - I was writing, I was doodling. I looked up. Evon, lying on his side, staring at me, in silence. Is there something I'm not getting? Or something I'm fabricating? Oh, what difference would it make anyway? None. I'm a dead-end road. He's 57 and wants more life. Not working. (Time for sleep now Bonzo!)

DREAMS SUN-MON: 7-8



(1)I am driving a new car over back roads that were undeveloped, rough dirt roads. Around the area that used to be very wooded and rural many, many new homes had been built! I was driving fast! John (my actual brother) was in the car with me yelling at me to slow down. We got to his house. He was preparing to go to some cook-out some-where else. He knew I had no place to live, no place to go to but he would NOT even let me stay in his house for the day.

(2)I am working at Peninsula Hospital. It's my first day on the job and I had Evon as my patient. I got no help or support from Nursing staff with my work. They were busy helping each-other though. It was very early in the morning (dark out-side). Evon wanted to know the time. There were no clocks any-where. He wanted to bathe and have a cigarette. I told him I'd get bathing supplies, but NO cigarettes! I had to take bed out of room into hall for some reason and Evon went to arrange his shower as I went to get supplies. I could barely fit into the room for supplies! I managed to get soaps at last... I am outside, still working. There are many Nurses working, having in-service meeting and they're smoking! on the grounds of the hospital. I asked how this was possible and I'm told by one Nurse "Depends on who you know around here." I merely continued to work and said nothing more to anybody.

(3)I'm washing clothes... in "Zip-lock" bags, small bags, filled with water and soap. I'm washing my clothes by putting them into the bags with the water and soap and tilting the bags back and forth. But when I'm done with the washing of clothes, I empty them and wash the bags to save them.

Monday 8 September

8:05am That was TWO DREAMS last night. Woke this morning, most uneasy about being here. Just not quite comfortable. Anticipating some turmoil. Anxiety! Terrible anxiety! - Beautiful weather out there this morning how-ever. - Evon is down for echo-cardiogram already. I wonder if they'll discharge him soon. - I'm thinking about the fact that my Homelessness is getting into my dreams! But no solution to the situation from any of the dreams... Unless there's some element I'm over-looking. I'll work on that. It's what I do with dreams and why I record them as I do. Analysis. I spent time in "university" learning how to do that. Imagine. All that study, all those years... certainly did me a lot of good... right. But today, I'll call JCCRP. See what Jacquie has to offer. (8:12am and 65° F.) It was cold last night. I actually got up and put the heat on. It's time to seriously think about where to go! I still can't quite grasp the fact that this hospital room is all I've got left. It just can't be like this! It just can't! 13 DAYS IN HOSPITAL. 25 DAYS HOMELESS! - I'm just growing increasingly HATEFUL! - 7:25pm And the sun is gone already. Day is done. It was wasted. It was interesting. It wasn't worth being here for. - Kleymentova has shown her nastiness with Evon (proper spelling) by coming in and telling him that his primary physician doesn't ... no... *won't* see him because of his drinking. And she told him this in the room so I heard it! It pissed him off! Rightfully. Then she came to me and mentioned the Social Worker. So I told her how this one stopped the shelter process for what-ever reason. She didn't understand me completely. But I don't expect her to. I really don't even care anymore. She isn't worth my time. - So I got one sketch done today. It's getting easier to sketch but more difficult to come up with ideas. Although, in my mind, I tend to keep going back to the Shawangunk mountains up-state. I don't know if I should drop this dream of Rockaway and go back to those mountains to die. Or should I live-out my end at Gaston, on the beach. No matter which, there's no place out there in the World for me to call "Home" and being here isn't an option much longer. I can't take much more of this imprisonment. - On top of all of this, Evon seems to have a rather slipped nut. Hallucinations. No, more like paranoid delusions. He described a scenario where-by he was constricted by some ex-girl's boyfriend who tried drugging him with a syringe. Threatened to hack him to pieces, etc. Today he claims that he came to the ER because he escaped BUT that his tormentor followed him in ! OK. Of course there's something terribly wrong with him... I find (found?) him some-what, some-how attractive from across the hall. That says it all. Still, if the situation presented... - Well. My armpits are disgusting.



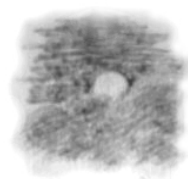
A shower tomorrow. It's supposed to rain. I'll stay the day. No sense busting out in the rain. For tonight? The air outside is gently moving. There's a cricket outside the window. A new group of evening staff. Quite the ugly bunch. Evon is reading "Time" magazine. I'm hungry, even after my sandwich. I NEED TO FIGURE OUT WHERE TO GO TO GET THE BLEATING HELL OUT OF HERE REALLY PRONTO SOON!!!! - Oh, I wrote a "Hate" letter about the siblings, in-laws, Margot and Edlyne. It's written, done and in a jar addressed to that bleat-off at 19 CTN, ready to be tossed to sea (or simply placed beside my dead carcass on the beach). At least the guilty bleaters have been recorded. Bleating murdering morons, OK. End of day.

DREAM: Liz (C.) and I are attending some benefit "do" in some high society. I am spending most of my time moving about trying to avoid her. There is a woman there who has been giving me food. I'm not grateful to her because she's only given food and not another thing. I need a home. I'm Homeless. But I feel I must thank her for the food and do so by way of telling her that people are making compliments on my weight gain, complimenting her by way of "sharing" the compliment given to me. (This woman looks like Mrs. Farnaby from "Mulberry" but is Margot, the one to whom I gave almost 2 years of my life to, taking care of her, making certain that she was safe, watching her health after a terrible automobile accident, residing, as it were, on her sofa, with nothing more to myself than a suitcase of clothes which I kept out of the way, under that sofa. She ultimately turned the situation round, became verbally abusive, accused me of many atrocities against her and essentially ruined both my reputation and my life for a while. It was because of her that I came to Rockaway... which was the only "good" thing I have to say about her.). In order to avoid Liz and this woman, I see an opportunity to leave and I bolt for the door to get back to the train station. Some women are talking about "the old rail line" and the schedule and cost of tickets, the frequency of trains then, the infrequency of trains now, and the rise in cost of fares. I'm very glad to see these people. I run, RUN down the dirt road (Route 17k from my earliest child-hood) toward the sun-set. There are translucent stones along the way (stones that resemble translucent stones found on the Rockaway beach). A woman yells to me "You can carry your back-pack too, at no extra charge!" We laugh. I see the sun-set, stop running and yell "Why am I not here? Why am I not there?" I'm sobbing, horribly and painfully sobbing.

Tuesday 9 September

6:53am Clouds in the sky (lyrics to remind me of the bleating BS misery caused by my useless sister! First bleating thing in the bleating morning! A tune from happier times, by Dorothy Morrison... "Rain". A song from safer, happier times in the distant, so distant past.) but they're breaking up a bit. It got cold last night. It was damp in here this morning. It's supposed to rain today. Evon will be discharged, though I can't see how, since he has no clothes. He'd come in wearing boxer shorts and a t-shirt. The hospital gave him, of course, a gown and that's all. That's all he has. Imagine. He has nothing but under-wear... I have nothing but the clothes I had on when I arrived here. At least I have jeans and a shirt... and a corduroy work-shirt to wear over that for a little added warmth. He has... under-wear. I'm humbled now, thinking of my "riches". Here is some-one with considerably less. - My gums are swollen. Painful. I brush my teeth but need the good brush. - This morning's dreams woke me trying to catch my breath. I'm breaking-down. My chest has collapsed. First thing in the morning. Anxiety! I'm breaking down and there's STILL no one to talk to, no one to advise me, no one to HELP ME! BLEAT YOU ALL! What I need to do is decide on a destination and jump. Just get up, shower, dress, GO. Eliminate all the details. Focus on me. GO! If I don't do this now, I'll break-down and seriously become one of those insane Homeless. Bad? I'm no so sure. But dead would be better, and can be done.

In the dream:



I WAS RUNNING, WET, ON A DIRT 17K, HEADED TOWARD THE SHAWANGUNK MOUNTAINS. I SOBBED: "WHY AM I NOT HERE? WHY AM I NOT HERE? WHY AM I NOT HERE? WHY AM I NOT THERE?" I was home-sick for Shawangunk. I missed Rockaway. Split. Torn. Shredded. I sobbed. Now,

awake, I need to go. But I don't know where to go. I just don't know which way to go. FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME IN MY ENTIRE LIFE I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO ONE TO TURN TO AND ABSOLUTELY NO WHERE TO GO. I'M SIMPLY VOID. - 7:14am The clouds are coming in again. I need a shower today. Soon, I'll need to wash the scrubs I've been wearing. I had one of the set with me in a bag when I arrived. I changed into them so that I could get out of my dirty jeans and t-shirt. But now they too are getting a little "worn" and in need of washing... and I'm in a hospital... there are no "laundry services" here. The best I could do is wash them in the sink in the loo. But not knowing when I'll be tossed out the door, I can't very well wash them now. What if I wash them and get tossed? I'll be on the streets carrying wet clothing. Not only will it be heavy, weight I can't really carry these days, but in short order, they'll become stale, perhaps mildewed and worthless. I'm really quiet stuck now. - But the floor is quiet. Soon it will be

“vitals”, breakfast, “medications”, opinions, judgements, questions, no help, no help, no help. Where can I go on cold, rainy nights? I’m thinking Norwood. No Pookie any more. Probably no Nick. No Janice. No Rita. No Jack. No Jim. Nobody I knew is left any more, any-where. I want to vomit. I wish I could. Schrader Bridge? There are Homeless people under there. I could join them but... I doubt it. I want to vomit. I wish I could. - DRAW! SKETCH! AVOID? YES! AVOID! It’s my ONLY HELP! Like Marianne (the Social Worker) said: “Un-pack your pencils...” - 11:43am STORM! RAIN! - I’m showered. - A Social Worker came into the room, no introduction. Jumped into Evon. Suggested discharge to an “Alcohol Treatment Programme”! She was curt, apathetic, rather nasty in her tone. I commented to her about giving no proper introduction, no greeting to anybody. She’d done the very same to me previously. “I know what I’m doing.” Was her reply. “I don’t think so. I’m still here.” I snapped back at her, with reference to her previous chat with me in which she told me that she was preparing the paper-work for me to go to a “medical shelter” because “it’s nicer there than the regular shelters”. “And YOU know the shelter system.” she sarcastically snapped at me and pulled the privacy curtain between the beds. Honestly! A curtain. She continued to berate Evon, as if the curtain blocked me from hearing her. - 8:43pm A truly ridiculous day. Kleyменова wouldn’t let Brian come across the hall to this room. When I went over to his room, an NA came to throw me out. We were treated like children! It seems the staff don’t like us socialising because we’re too friendly with each-other and we talk about the maltreatment and the un-professionalism of the staff. The Social Worker avoided me. Evon yelled at Kleyym because of an X-ray of a hand that Kleyym said he was too drunk to recall. I simply pointed-out: You come to the ER complaining of chest pain. Why would they X-ray your hand? Well. When it came down to the bottom line, that was the point that settled the matter. But the “damage” was done. We 3 were questioning authority and authority doesn’t like it. So, somewhere along the line it was done that Evon will be discharged tomorrow. That was before he told the Social idiot his tale of terror. Now we’ll see if somebody doesn’t call a psych consult. Even now he’s insisting that something is planted in his knee brace where-by the guy can play music in his ear. In one respect, I hope they keep him here, in this room, a bit longer. He’s bleating nuts and I know it. But, in another respect, it will be fine if he goes. If he goes off one night, what the hell will happen? Anyway... my teeth are killing me and I have no salt nor my iodine! - MESSAGE AT 3:15pm TODAY: TOMMY. HAVEN’T SEEN YOU AROUND IN A WHILE. JUST CALLING TO CHECK IN WITH YOU. GIVE ME A CALL. It was exactly TWO weeks ago today, 14 days that I’ve been in this hole and only now do I get the call. Oh well. It came. It won’t be returned. I don’t have the money on the phone and what little I have I need to

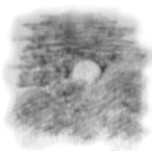
find work. - So, what I need, still, to decide is where I'm going when I walk out of here. I don't know that I'll make it to the "shelter" bit. I'm either going to Gaston or Shawangunk at this point. Which one? Time will tell. - It's 9:16pm. Nice breeze coming in the windows, a few planes leaving in clear skies. A bit chilly in here but that might be partly due to the pain in my teeth/mouth and head. Evon is watching TV. I have to pee and try for sleep. I'm hoping to see Jocelyn at some point this evening. I'm hoping Marianne is OK. I've no doubt they're reprimanding her for being too kind, caring, compassionate with me. I'm wishing I could make my mind up as to where I'll go when I leave here! The truth of the matter? My mind just will NOT accept being Homeless! My efforts now? Getting my self to simply deal with non-existence. The end. - 3 more sketches and I'll have 55 for the book. I do want 55 of them. It's the year in which I was born... and the age at which Mama died. I'd like to leave that behind... when I'm gone. Creating those sketches... I think that will dictate when I leave here.

Wednesday 10 September

7:13am The woman across the hall is moaning that gurgling moan/whine already. Non-stop! This morning I want to go over and yell at her to shut the bleating Hell up! The staff is strolling the halls, laughing and just having a jolly time of it. Brian is on the phone, discussing his pending surgery to have one sub-clavian removed and another inserted. There are complications involved. He's annoyed. Evon woke in a demanding sort of mood. Went down the hall to shower. He's planning on leaving this morning. The Social Cow told him she'd get him a set of scrubs to wear when he leaves. He has no shoes. - TV shows 59° F. Night bring seriously cool temperatures. I've got to figure this out! - My gums are sore. My right groin hurts. My heart throbs. My eyes burn. And that woman across the hall is STILL gurgling/whining/moaning relentlessly! More rain in the forecast. A couple of chilly nights to come. I scan my brain and areas from Ulster to The City. I can't think of where to GO! I've GOT to find SOME where to GO TO! - It was just past 8:00am. A man walks into the room, comes up to the bed. "Good morning. How are you?" he says rather emptily. He's carrying a small tote of tubes and syringes. I can't see his ID. "It depends... What's all that for?" I ask nicely. "Your doctor ordered blood-work." "No." I refused. (A) Who in bleating Hell are you? (B) No doctor discussed ANY "work" with me. (C) Kleyim isn't even speaking to me on general terms. (D) I'm not in the mood to be poked with needles. "Are you refusing?" he asks curtly. "I am." I reply equally. He packs his little tote and leaves the room - Meanwhile, breakfast is done. My armpits are going bad again. I need to take a dump and I NEED

TO FIGURE WHERE I'M GOING WHEN I WALK OUT THE DOOR! - 1:49pm I did the blood-work because it was (allegedly) requested by the shelter system. This draw hurt like hell and left quite the lump! Intentionally, no doubt. And I spoke with Kleym, who is being a bit nicer today. That led to a chat with the Social Cow who is also being quite sweet. She says she's hoping for some word by Friday. Me? I'm at a point where I don't much care any longer. (Evon was showered and ready to go by about 8:00 this morning. He's just leaving! Somebody gave him disposable scrubs and 5 dollars from the hospital. No shoes though. Ah, it's a good thing we're in Rockaway where bare-foot isn't an issue and the weather is still OK for such attire here. Meanwhile, it's gone quiet. In a sense, I'm glad he's gone. He's pig-headed and can be inexplicably nasty. B. says it's the booze. It was getting to the point where I was losing my patience with him. But now? There's an empty bed. A connection with the outside is gone. I don't know what kind of Hell they'll put in this room with me. That bothers me the most. Hopefully I'll be granted at least 2 days' reprieve and 2 night's sleep with fresh air and peace. But I'm not counting on it. I know better. Meanwhile, My sketches are bringing me to Shawangunk now. The memories are so painful! SO painful. I find myself lying back in the bed and actually saying "Oh my god!" But I've got 2 more sketches to bring all to a total of 55. Then, hopefully, I can leave here, go to The Fort, put the 55 sketches into book form: a little hard/cloth cover. That'll be a day's work, plus getting the materials from a 99-cent store. 2 day's work at most. After that? The beach... the end. I've had enough of all of this. And to be thrown away into the shelter system is like just so much recycled trash. As I understand it, it's only for the night. At a certain hour one must leave for the day. Yes, I can fill a day. But what I want to do is fill my day with work, my evening with relaxation, my night with sleep. I don't see that EVER coming... especially not now, not with these memories and hate and sadness. Best choice: a couple of cool nights out, back under my tree, while working on the sketch book. One fine day on the beach somewhere and just go. It won't make any difference to anybody anyway. - I asked, again, to speak with the Rabbi here. I'm not sure why or what I'll say, but I actually feel the "getting older" and it's time to stop it. I'm getting older and more useless. - I think of Zuri. He too, felt he had no one. Little did he know... he had me. Now? Neither of us has the other. So? Now I can go look him up... his way... "out there", "beyond" all of this. I hope it will be a great re-union! - It's 2:22pm The sun is shining. A few clouds on the western horizon. Soon, the sun will gush in through the window. Brian is off the floor some-where. I'm solo, alone, solitary. Alone. Alone. Alone... - 8:32pm Evon finally left, well after lunch. He truly didn't want to go but his attitude made his departure a relief. But the loneliness set in and even now, there's that hole in my gut. I've done with my

evening sandwich and a piece of pound cake that Evon brought me when he came back this evening. He'd had a nice visit with Brian for a while, just sitting in his room, talking, until Brian's wife came. I'm trying to fill time. I feel I have to fill time now. I'm not thinking of leaving here to a shelter or other housing. It's a matter of a day at the beach, out to sea, to my Shawangunks and anywhere else in Creation that I decide to go. It's my 54th sketch. - One thing I have to note is that I'm going to miss this room something awful! The view of landing jets, departing jets... MAGNIFICENT! It's almost like bird-watching: different air-lines, different colours, different size, place. All, so wonderful! Sometimes I am as excited as a little kid. So, I did say I wanted to live in Rockaway. (These planes are STUPENDOUS! Shadows. HUGE shadows with little lights, floating in the night sky!) I guess I should have specified the conditions. Well, for now, I get to be here, in Rockaway, enjoying the air traffic, hope for peace in this hospital and wait for my moment of walking out into the world, making my book and taking it to sketch 54. - 9:17pm TV on. I want a smoke. My gums are sore. It's a cool night. I'll be out, alone, in the cool night, soon... - For now... last night's dream...



DREAM: I was in a rather up-scale apartment on the ocean shore. All of the walls were ceiling-to-floor windows with unobstructed views of the beach. The time was almost dusk, as is usual for the darkness of most of my dreams. There was a crew of some sort, filming an advert for some product I was familiar with, and I was watching them as they took a break from filming, mulling about in the water on some sort of bay area. Cows. They were using cows, in ocean water. I was amazed at the aspect: cows and the sea. 2 cows broke from the herd and were frolicking like playful dogs. I went out to the terrace to have a cigarette and watch. - Rather suddenly, in the apartment, a breach of security. A Homeless woman had stowed away in an under-the-floor area where the air conditioning units were located. I knew the area because I'd been at the apartment during its construction. - (Same dream, switch) Staying at someone's home. Run-down. Dirty. Cyndi's, I recall. A stray dog was there. The poor thing was hungry and dirty and I take it in, feed and bathe it. Cyndi is angry with me because of the dog. She sees it suffer and doesn't care. - I'm lying down, not feeling well. She comes in, sweeping the floor. Kitty litter all over the floor. She sweeps a large amount across the floor directly at me and then stands, just staring at me. I look at her. Nothing is spoken. I understand that she wants me to leave. I have no place to go but I get up in silence and the dog and I leave.

Thursday 11 September

7:08am Overcast this morning. 7 years since the World Trade Centre atrocity. How I can still recall it so vividly. How my web-site with photos and such are gone. I'd put SO much work into that, with photos taken from the roof of the flat on the Rochambeau, the list of all the companies that were in all of the buildings, the list of those who died. SO MUCH WORK... gone, like everything else from my life-time. Nothing left except memories... painful, painful memories. How my life, my past, my existence is gone. Nothing from before remains. Nothing; nothing at all. Penelope said that I could re-invent myself out here in Rockaway. I suppose I've done that: a free-loading indigent, useless, friendless, ready to die, in silence, alone. What ever happened to the happy guy who took 3 rooms for 700 dollars a month in 3150? That guy who built a business from nothing and, for a while, actually "lived". Wow! How he got wiped out of existence! And in his stead, here I am. Alone in a hospital room. - Why did I grow so hateful of the old German man in my dream last night/this morning? Why the German? Why did the dream end with cuttings of philodendron being rooted in vases? WHY, IN THIS DREAM, AM I NOT HOMELESS? A CHANGE INDEED. OF LATE, I'M HOMELESS IN ALL OF MY DREAM. I'M SHARING THE ROOM WITH 2 OTHERS: BLACK AND LATINO. BUT I'M NOT HOMELESS. Why so angry with the German? Things to work through today. - It's overcast. This room is empty. The floor is quiet. May it stay this way while I try to figure out what to do next. - One more sketch for my book of 55. I wonder how the book will end. Then I have to get out of here to compile it, to put it together, to go and get out of all of this... ALL of this! - 7:25pm The sun is setting. Night comes again; another night... another... night. But out of this day came a touch of humanity... the clouds cleared, Brian went to surgery and I was alone for the day. 54 sketches for the book. The index is done to number 54. As I sat, having a snooze, I thought to go to Rachel, my Nurse for the day, to check on permission to go outside. She told me that she had no problem with letting me leave the floor to go outside. At that moment, I didn't want to go but wanted to know if I could when I had cigarettes. So. I can. Next? I asked Brian (before he'd gone to surgery) if his wife would get me a pack of cigarettes and of course, I'll pay her (with the little money I have left which, at the rate things are going, I'll soon have no use for anyway). She did! (Ultra-lights, but they're cigarettes!) OK? I'm sitting quietly, having dinner and Rachel comes in, asks me why I'm not getting kosher meals! She's Orthodox! She arranged to change my meals to kosher! We talk about "looking Jewish". She doesn't. I don't. We talk more. To top it all off, Jocelyn's on tonight. She's back! SHE took me out for a walk (and 2 cigarettes) around the hospital parking lot and into the Nursing Home behind the hospital building. She knows

somebody in Home Health work and she's going to try to hook me up with a live-in! No promises but a try! And, I come back to the room and there's another tray: Kosher! Containers of egg salad, potato salad, apple sauce, apple juice! Food! More food! So, for an evening, for a night, I get to be human. I got to talk about my feelings with Jocelyn. She keeps encouraging me to hold on. She knows... and it seems that she understands... at least MUCH more than others are even trying to understand. She gives me the gift of "Humanity"... I'm a human-being when I talk with her. It's my only remnant of dignity now. Oh, and the Social Worker claims: she called JCCRP twice and left messages on their voice mail, and she put in a call to the hospital rabbi, and that all the paper-work for the shelter is in. Do I believe her? Hell no. But I'm allowing her little game and being "thankful". There's no sense in voicing my opinions and observations with her. If she cared about me and my thoughts, she'd probably be insulted. But she doesn't. I know this. She's made it more than abundantly clear. - Fun note for the day? Brian and Jocelyn were telling me how they luv watching the planes out here! I'm not the only one! - 8:59pm Stevie Nicks on the radio and my entire body aches with the pain of melancholy! It even hurts in my feet. Such a wonderful evening. But you know? This is the "good" I do deserve before I go to the beach, the sea, my mountains. Yes, it's a great day and good times. But it's truly time to finish my little sketch book and leave. One more sketch. One more sketch.

DREAM: I managed to return to Rockaway Park Hotel, room number 2. It had a kitchen, and 2 rooms. I was preparing a meal before going to work. A Black man came in, just came into the room and went to the front closet. He was looking for his clothes that he always kept in there. I didn't know him, but I assumed he was a previous tenant and so I said it was OK with me. I went to the bedroom to dress for work. Clock radio was giving the news. I didn't catch any of it. Returned to kitchen to find a young Latino in there with all sorts of groceries. Apparently he too had access to the place (3 of us). I knew I couldn't say anything because I had to be OK with being allowed to return in the first place. This kid was preparing a meal for his girl-friend! Hungry, I went into the next room where 2 old people were sitting having breakfast. It was a hospital tray breakfast. I went back to the kitchen for some food for me and the kid was listening to music and spraying water everywhere with the sink hose! I fixed that, returned to the other room. The old lady offered me her left-overs to eat. She'd drooled into every-thing! She smiled at me. I let it pass. The old man, a German, offered me food. He handed me empty cups! I was so angry at him. I told him he was an insult to all Germans, that he is a great part of the reason the world hated us

and that he should go to Hell. He said, backing against the wall, "THIS IS HELL!" So I said "You should never die and stay right here for eternity!" I went to the kitchen to find food. Nothing! Just cuttings from a philodendron in some glass vases. I cleaned the kitchen. I was hungry.



Friday 12 September

7:18am Overcast. The floor is dead silent. It's strange: almost a full house yet no one is moaning... not even the staff. - I had a terribly restless night. I'm exhausted. I don't believe I actually got much more than a few moments' sleep all night. No dreams. Just no rest. - I've brushed my teeth, had a BM, washed my arm-pits and well, that's the extent of it. I don't much care about the rest. The door is closed. I could go back to sleep. I don't want to. I'm growing very anxious to get out of here. Very anxious. And there's an intro to the sketch book to write, and I'd like something scathing. I want people (if any) to know how painful these sketches have been! I want people to know why there was so much pain and who caused it! Nobody cares about it now. Nobody will really care about it ever. But I just won't go in a little veil of silence. So this day opened, off to doing nothing again, except waiting for this new day to end. - 12:06pm Evon came round about 11:30 this morning. Said he had to go to Medical Records. Brought me a package of 2 little banana-nut muffins and a can of Mountain Dew. I'm wondering where it came from and why he brings it to me. Hell! It would be better if he'd stop bringing stuff and instead, offer a place to stay. From what I hear him and Brian talking, his block (63) is tough. But I wanted to live on 67. So? Anyway, it's sweet of him to even think of me at all. - Breakfast this morning was Kosher! The eggs, scrambled, microwaved to the point of being rubber. Really disgusting. It's as if we're being punished for being kosher. Sometimes I wonder. - I'm ever so tired today. But it's day-time, not sleep time. I could benefit from a shower but truly? I don't have the care, concern or ambition to go down the hall. - My life is slowly moving into non-existence. Perhaps this is good. Perhaps these are the days I have been awarded to obliterate my mark, my remnants, my "footprint" in Creation so that I can leave and all of my space will be available for some-body else. I'll be forgotten even before I'm gone. How 'bout that? - One thought: I've been in Peninsula for 17 days. I've asked to speak with a rabbi 3 or 4 times. The Social Worker told me that she put in a call twice. I've seen no rabbi. Just a thought to note. - 8:10pm Dark. Raining. The room is empty, save for me. They took the other bed out earlier to replace another down the hall.

It's made this room feel huge and empty. And it couldn't happen at a worse time. I'm about to slip a mental cog here right about now. But to recap the day's events: At about 1:30pm, Joyce (NA) took me down-stairs where I had two cigarettes and got to stand out in a light drizzle. Somehow, I got the feeling that I can handle just walking out of here. Little did I know. But it was a surprisingly refreshing delight to stand, out in the open, with my face up, into the light drizzle that fell on me. It felt as if my soul was being set free to just float, UN-tethered, un-fettered, just float, away... away... away. And it was WONDERFUL! And I got back up to the room feeling sure enough about getting out of here with no place to go to. But, little did I know. - Next thing I know... Janet McGowan, Nursing supervisor comes in, introduces herself, sits at the window and starts schmoozing. She asks if Rozann (the social worker) is helpful. I told her how uncertain I am about everything because I'm getting partial information and it's vague at that. Janet went for my chart. She explained that I could not just glance through it but if I had a specific item of interest, she'd go through with me. I wanted to know how I was going to be eligible for a "medical" shelter instead of a general and what's the difference. Come to find out, Rozann actually found the COPD diagnosis and is trying to ride that to a "Medical" shelter. Why? Because she thinks it should be better than a regular shelter. Interestingly enough, these people are familiar with sending folks to shelters, but they can't tell anybody anything about them! It's another Margot Baldinger, "You can go to a shelter" situation! They're all completely clueless, but they keep throwing people into shelters. Well, Janet was good enough to take the time to come by. I appreciated that. She left and I tried to do some drawing but I'm empty these days. Nothing in the way of art. OH! She (Janet) asked me if I was familiar with the RAA! As if anything there would do me any good. As if it's done me any good so far? She and I discussed the sense of community here, in the Rockaways but as we see, it does me not one bit of anything. - So, I'm sitting here in the room alone. Outside, the rain is coming steadily. Rozann walks in to hand me a list of "Walk-In-Drop-In" shelters! She tells me that Kleymenova told her that I'm free to go now and that I don't need a medical shelter! But Rozann gave me the option of staying until Monday to see if any word comes in on the medical shelter. KLEYMENOVA WOULD TOSS ME OUT OF HERE AT 4:00pm ON A RAINING FRIDAY!!!! NO PLACE TO GO! THE HOSPITAL CENSUS ISN'T AT 100% SO THEY DON'T NEED THE BED! I thanked Rozann for the option, said I'll hold steady for Monday and told her how Kleym's attitude toward me changed as soon as she learned I'm Homeless. Rozann told me that Kleym and her little side-kick are giving her a hard time and are being quite miserable and rude toward her. I keep thinking of how I'll luv reporting this to the media. This "Russian", this alleged "doctor" has no troubles making her biases and

prejudices known to people who come into a hospital seeking help and she and her hatefulness are forced upon them. We, the patients, are compromised in so many ways when we arrive and are then terrorised by this selfish, self-serving hypocrite. Rozann is trying to do the humane thing while the “doctor” is trying to throw me out at the end of the work-week, in the rain! Well, the good thing is that Rozann and I have made amends. Although I told her about “Home Base”, a programme I’ve heard about that’s supposed to actually help the Homeless with finding a place other than a public shelter, in the hope she’d try them while I’m here, I don’t think she will. I’m giving her leads to networking. She’s not picking-up on them. Oh well. More leg work for me when I get out of here. And, as I think of it: more of HER work that *I’m* doing. Typical. - Next: dinner comes. Kosher. Horrible. Meagre. And no sandwich for later! Breakfast was disgusting. Lunch was a sorry joke. Dinner was a curse. But just as I was finishing with dinner, THE RABBI CAME!!!! We schmoozed about the question “Why?” He spoke on why we cover our eyes for the “Sh’ma” (“Hear O Israel”... recited daily by observant Jews), why we schuckle (rock or sway during prayers). We *touched* on my Homelessness. He made it obvious that he wasn’t concerned about that, in any manner, never mind “humanitarian”. I asked him “Why do people put such importance on ‘survival’? Why are we not free to end, to go, when *we* feel we’ve had enough? His rather insincere reply was: It’s built into our very cell structure. Even when we cut ourselves, our body responds with new cells, to replace the ones that have been lost or damaged. Our cells are programmed to survive, therefore, we are programmed to do the same thing. When he’d finished his diatribe, he had to leave. Everyone’s right there to lend a helpless hand. Even the rabbi. Still, he was quite nice enough for the moment. It was just such a great relief to be able to sit with a rabbi. I’ve only waited 17 days? - Rabbi leaves, Brian comes in. We get to talking about me being tossed. He insists that I just hold tight until they actually throw me out of here. Seems he’s hanging on for some reasons too. Mortgage difficulties that can be way-laid while he’s in hospital. We’re “in it” almost together. But he knows something about the system. Seems Fate put me here for shelter from the cold and rain, and put Jackson and I together for much-needed moral support and an education! I’ll have to see about keeping in touch with him after... if there is any “after”. He’s worried about losing his entire house. Meanwhile, he’s got family living there who won’t help. Familiar? “Family”... it and they mean nothing more than a word. - I’ve got another note to Ashley ready to go. I was hoping to get it into the letter-box down-stairs tonight (and have a smoke) but the day-shift Nurses left, the evening shift NAs came on (none of them are very kind-hearted) and it got to the hour where the front door is locked for the night. I suppose I could try hanging out my window for the smoke but... it’s not worth the possibility of

being tossed immediately. It's 9:43pm now. Planes are flying but the clouds are thick and low. I can hear them but can't see. It's a light drizzle again and I'm exhausted from almost no sleep last night. And, that male Nurse with the attitude difficulty is on. So? I NEED a shower but I NEED SLEEP! Over the week-end I'll finish the 55th sketch and introduction to the book. I'll plan my day of discharge and that night. I'll have me prepared for the worst. AND I'LL HAVE ME PREPARED FOR MY OPTION TO COMPLETELY OPT-OUT.

NOTES:

Grey's Anatomy: (*I wish I could recall the exact statement from that show, but I can't. But generally, it had something to do with people in times of great stress.*) Don't ask why some people go mad... Ask why they don't. When things are at their very worst and all is lost and seems gone forever, what is it that holds people, holds us, hold it together?

According to the Rabbi: Always ask "Why?" It's what makes us Jews. There won't always be an answer but that doesn't mean that we should stop asking. - Survival is something even our cells do. Most people don't throw in the towel. (Ah. But will I?)

Kleymenova wants to put me out at 4:00pm on a Friday, in the RAIN!

4 dollars bus fare at subway station

Post Office

JCCRP

Rockaway Home Care

(Change for phone?)

LAUNDRY!!! (Wear teal scrubs)

HOME BASE

NIGHT:

42 Beaver St. NYC

39-40 Bond St. BK



Saturday 13 September

6:42am It's 21° in the room. 65°F. outside. Slight cloudiness in the sky. I'm up, after a night of utter anxiety attacks. I'll have nothing to wear in this cooler weather if everything at the hotel is gone AND even if it isn't, I can't afford to pay to get it out AND I have no place to put it if I do! So, this morning I'll be finishing the sketch book 55. I'll hope like hell to find some work space at RAA to put it together this week coming. Tomorrow is the opening reception for ART SPLASH

2008. I just hope I can get my little sketch book done. And then? A quiet day on the beach into a peaceful night into Eternity. It's time to go. I've done all I can and all I should. What's more, I've done my best. I'm alone now and nobody cares. I'm alone now and the race is all finished. I'm alone now and whether I'm alive or dead makes no difference at all. I came from my mother's womb alone. I came into this world alone. It's time to leave it all... alone. I've done my best. There's nothing more. - 9:22pm THE PARTS OF THE SKETCH BOOK ARE COMPLETE. 55 SKETCHES, INDEX AND LETTRE. DONE. COMPLETE. NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS GET IT ASSEMBLED. THEN? GASTON. WE GO HOME. WE GO HOME. - Stancil is back. How strange is that? Olga, an NA, took me down to the letter box this morning. I dropped another note to Ashley to make certain they know I've not abandoned my belongings. I had a smoke. Olga said I'm not supposed to have a cigarette when I go out. I'm wondering if that's why Kleymenova is so determined to dump me... insubordination. She says don't smoke, gives me a diagnosis of emphysema and I smoke. An affront to the doctor. No doubt. Ah well. So she shoves me out into no-where. Thank you dear Ms. Kleymenova. - Jocelyn took me for a walk this evening She tells me of a Black girl down the hall who comes in here and stays, sometimes for months, because she has no home and simply refuses to leave. The claim here is: Kleym has cleared me medically. I can walk out at any time I choose. Once I do, absolutely everything that's been done as far as shelters, etc. is completely wiped-out. And Peninsula has no responsibility for me. I've walked on my own, of my own accord. On the flip side, I'm still covered by the law that prohibits the hospital from discharging me to no-where. IF I can tolerate the looks, the attitudes, the generally nasty demeanour of Kleymenova and her Kleymenettes, I can actually keep this going. The good of that? Shelter, food, bed, shower. Bad? Never getting to work because I can't leave. Trapped. Confined. Imprisoned. What do I want right now? Finish the 55 Book, go HOME! So, I'll see what comes Monday. We work from there. - 10:28pm Jocelyn got Stancil some cookies. She's on until 7:00 tomorrow morning. She offered to get me something. I declined the offer. I appreciate that she takes me out for a while. She never came through with the connection to "Al" who works at Peninsula and a Home Care agency. She's suggested I apply for work here via Rozann. Well, what the bleating Hell? Maybe I will. Schitzengigglez. Right now? Bottom line: It really is time to go home. - Let's see if there are dreams tonight.. I've hung the Kabbalah sefirot ("Tree of Life") that I drew on a paper towel, over my bed. A pencil sketch with a paper towel "frame". - Time for the 11:00pm news. Night shift on. Sleep?

NOTES:

PH-RPH 9h MON

55 SKETCHES

WE GO HOME

HOMELESS:

Hurricane, flood, fire, tornado

NOTHING REMAINS

31!/19!

**Sunday 14 September**

7:00am and 71°F Over-cast. The air conditioner and bed table were wet this morning. The dew, the ocean dew is now coming in through the window at night. The same dew that not too long ago, settled on my as I laid on the ground, under the tree, in the bayberry and poison ivy thicket. Weather report calling for 84°F. Today is the opening reception for “Art Splash” at the Fort. Today is “Broadway On Broadway” in the Theatre District. Today there are functions that I used to attend and be a part of. Today I have only the clothes I've slept in for two weeks. Today I am in this prison waiting to die. That's what it's come to... I'm just waiting to die. My clothes are at the hotel. Maybe they're not. I've no place to go at night, when it's cold. No offers of employment, even from those who could employ me. No employment, no income - no income, no home - no home, no clothing - no... I need a shave, a haircut, a bread trim, deodorant. The calluses are coming back on my feet. That's interesting because I haven't worn shoes in 19 days! My own body hates this and me. I want to make the book of 55 sketches and leave, just leave all of this behind. None of this is worth the effort. - I was up at 5:27am with the yelling of the staff in the halls. They have absolutely no consideration, no sense of anything or anybody but themselves. Yelling to each-other up and down the halls. I got up to pee and came back to bed. Back to bed. That's all I ever do... back to bed. - Well, this miserable day has begun. I have no urge, no inspiration to draw anything. No inspiration to write prose. Nights are now dreamless. Days are simply a burden. Tomorrow I've been homeless for 32 days and in here 20. Other people get out of this. How do I? - Gaston. - 7:50am I came out here to Rockaway to separate from the world, get away from everything and every body. I came here to leave the BS and heart-aches behind me,

to be new, different. How strange: I'm in this hospital room, alone... no friends, no family, no one to turn to... severed from everything and everybody. Now, the decision to make is: IS THIS A BEGINNING? OR IS THIS THE END? AM I EXPECTED TO RE-START OR SIMPLY STOP? Is it time to think? - Rachel is on this morning. She tells me that Brenda too is Orthodox! In her words: "This hospital is infested" with Orthodox Nurses. Then she says "Maybe this is why god put you in the hospital" (to come back to religion). "We'll make a rabbi out of you..." - I just want a cigarette, a shower, a long walk, a bus ride, out of here, out of this. - 4:24 and I've just come from a shower and, may I report, a "Battery Kessler". The sun is coming into the window as well as heat and humidity. A very hot day indeed. Joyce took me down-stairs for 2 cigarettes at about 1:00pm or so. It was more like July than September. But, come Wednesday, the night temps will be dropping, so claim the reports. I probably will be as well. - The day has been one of sleeping on and off. Avoidance. - Rachel is now calling me "Rabbi Kessler" and she and Brenda got into the "only" Jew is and Orthodox Jew bit. How cute. The Orthodoxy... believing that they alone are the "all". But Rachel asked if I have "tsitsis" (the "fringes" worn by the Orthodoxy). I told her no, but I have my tallit (prayer shawl). "Katan?" (small) "No. Gadol. (full/large)" She's encouraging me to wear my kippa (yarmulke) all the time. Honestly? It's fun. I'm Conservative and happy with that. I've no desire to join their "club". And even if I did, they'd never truly "accept" me into it anyway. But being able to talk with them about commonalities is a relief, a reprieve, a respite from the Hell of my existence. - Now to the dirt: the ghetto woman in 57 got caught today. Seems she had a Black man with her in bed all night. A White man came to bring her something, caught her with the other one, got pissed. I didn't hear any hollering or such, but security was sent for. Meanwhile, I hear that she has been discharged in the past, to shelters and such, in The Bronx, and will come all the way back to Peninsula because here, she can get away with going to smoke, or, as is suspected, leave the building to get her drugs and come back in! She's been known to stay for MONTHS while suitable shelter is sought for her. MONTHS! And so, I've been unofficially instructed to bear in my mind that: I will leave when she leaves. This is what the compassionate staff have decided. Do I want to stay here? Oh hell NO! But until I can actually figure how to leave and not fall on my face, it appears that this is where I'll be. Besides, I'm looking quite forward to the END of all this BS that some folks call "life". A comfy day on the beach and, as I wrote yesterday... We go home. - So, it's past 5:00pm. Dinner is here and gone and was terrible. Same as yesterday, I believe. Microwaved to DEATH! Kosher? Punishment. - Jocelyn's been floated over to Pediatrics. I'm going to have to see if I can't get Judith, another NA, to take me down for the few moments. I'm also going to have to see if there's an ATM about in case I'm

here through this pack of cigarettes. Hey! I don't know about my decisions from one moment to the next! Right now, I'll go see about an "escort" to the door. Dinner trays are being picked-up. It's visiting hours. Maybe? - 6:30pm Jocelyn came in with a styro-plate, Salisbury steak, potatoes, chocolate milk, apple juice. I enjoyed the milk. Then I enjoyed the steak. OK. It's not Kosher. But food is more important. Especially now when I'm looking at being Homeless and out in the world again... soon. I asked her if she'd walk me down. She said she'd be back in an hour. The sun is setting and as much as I like being out in the dark, I'd rather go during some daylight. Judith hasn't returned to the floor yet. I might be able to find a sympathetic Nurse (Rachel? Elaine? Maybe. Brenda? Lecture! Especially from the "Orthodoxy"! but, I'll wait to see if Judith or Jocelyn will come through. If not? I'll expect that. - Finished my roll and Ensure. Would like another smoke but Judith took me out earlier today and well, there won't be another tonight. - I'm not looking forward to tomorrow at all! 20 bleating days in here! 10 days short of a bleating month! As I think about it, I'm breaking a sweat. I really need to get out of here whether these buffoons help or not. Sh**! Time to just GO. - The bit about wearing a kippa? Maybe Rachel is right. Maybe coming here has a "greater reason." I'm just thinking. - Meanwhile, Stancil and I have been watching TV. My stomach is bad. I'm having horrible chest pains. It doesn't look like a good night for sleep because of anxiety. Another day of exhaustion to come.



NOTES:

Legal Aid at Peninsula-Premier Agency Negligent

32/20

_Where to shower? _Income won't begin for about 3 weeks _Housing no affordable for 6-8 weeks (October) _Warm clothes?

Homeless. Homeless... Moonlight sleeping on a midnight lake...

Mama 5748

No SENSE IN SURVIVAL

02.1 September 2008 - The Bellevue Days

Here-after, is the actual account of what is, most likely until now, the un-known daily existence in only one public shelter for far too many who have been discarded by “friends”, “family” and society as a whole. It's neither romanticized nor dramatized. The information is not exaggerated, nor is it embellished. It is “edited” and only slightly modified so as to maintain the severity of the situation, but to present it in a more “palatable” fashion for a broader readership. In it's original format, already made available to those who are familiar with the environment, the “clients”, the brutalities of this subject-matter, indeed, there was no censorship. However, the mission and purpose of this edition is to bring to the attention of a broader-based populace, facts that are either un-known or misrepresented. The hope of this work is to bring a halt to the misconceptions of the “un-domiciled” and “non-domiciled”... the “Homeless” who, each and every day, struggle, even at times, for their very next breath.

There are those whom we see almost daily, sitting on side-walks, in parks, at traffic intersections, holding fast or leaning with signs that read “Help” in some fashion or another. There are those who we see, filthy, “crusty”, blackened skin, open sores, foul odour, rotting teeth, begging for “spare change” or a dollar. For the most part, it is these people who come to mind when one thinks “Homeless”. All too often, in an attempt to console ourselves, we tend toward the rumours, the misrepresentations of these people and convince ourselves that they are “indigents”, people who will not work, people who lack a sense of responsibility for themselves, their lot in life, others. For the greater part, the media portrays ALL Homeless persons to be lazy, with a sense of “entitlement”, mentally ill, chemically addicted (to everything from medications to alcohol and all in between). And it's this media presentation that soothes the general population into a false belief that these vagabonds, hobos, indigents, refuse are merely reaping the benefits of the lives they have chosen for themselves. And, in the reverie of having shed ourselves of any further responsibility toward the person whom we find offensive, too many simply scoff and walk away, others deride, ridicule and scold these people, these human beings who are already suffering from loss of self-esteem, self-worth, these people who have already been abandoned by others who called themselves “friend”, “family”, “caring neighbour”.

Those whom we do NOT see... the waiter or waitress at our favourite coffee shop or restaurant, the sales-lady or sales-man at our local store, the young gal or guy at the supermarket, the teller at the banque... the care-giver who attends to our compromised loved ones with bathing, meals, exercise and medications... those who we see working at jobs in the community we live and work in... those next to whom we work, these are the Homeless we might never see. Yes, surprisingly to too many, there are employed Homeless people and there are volunteers in our communities who are Homeless. These "Working Homeless" are over-looked, seldom if ever acknowledged and very well might never be known because they don't fit into the stereotypes that society has of the "Homeless". The "Working Homeless" present themselves with clean clothes, bathed, pleasant, productive by day, and at the end of their employment hours, each and every night, instead of going to a personally furnished flat, apartment, house, they turn to an existence that is described in the next pages here.

Even sadder, there are many Homeless who attend "family functions" with relatives, neighbours and "friends" and even then go un-noticed or un-discovered. There are others who attend religious services in our churches and synagogues... and there is no stereotypical indicators of their "homeless-life". But it's the "friends" and "family" who DO know... and DO nothing to help that make for the most difficult times and situations.

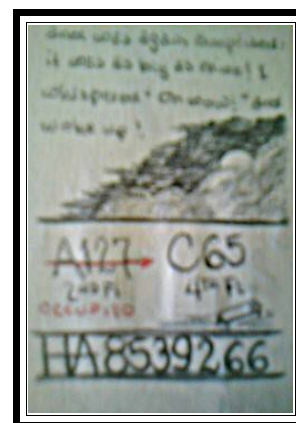
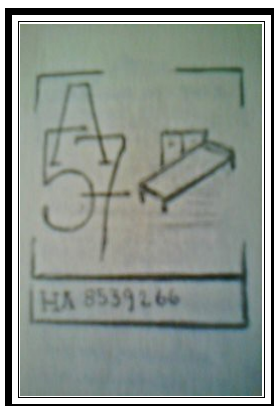
I do NOT, in any manner, profess to support the theory that "every Homeless person deserves to be given a place of shelter that s/he can call 'home'". Those who truly have a sense of "entitlement", and there are many, do not deserve to be "given" a place. Rather, they NEED to be educated, inspired, encouraged, and even "trained" to invest in such a place, to appreciate a place, to "work" for and with such a place for, indeed, those with such a sense, those who believe that they are owed a proper life-style do not live only off the labours of the "domiciled" but, they benefit from the toils of their fellow Homeless... particularly the "Working Homeless". The "Working Homeless" maintain jobs and earn salaries which are taxed just as all salaries are taxed. Those taxes help provide services such as medical insurance and food for persons in need, and very often, the salaries of the "Working Homeless" preclude them from participation in these programmes. However, it does NOT preclude the "entitled" from benefiting. Therefore, as I say, when at all possible, those who believe themselves to be "entitled" to shelter and services need to be redirected, instructed and brought to where they earn such necessities, just as others earn them.

Those with mental and/or physical disabilities indeed MUST be cared for, provided the shelter and services they so need. Those with addictions need to be attended accordingly and properly so ensure recovery and,

where and when possible, be assisted with a return to a society in which they participate in gainful employment where-by they can contribute to and support their society... and those programmes that help others who are in need.

I am not particularly a "Socialist", but I am, in this respect, a "Humanist". I am no better, nor any worse than any other person. I am a "person", a person of "ethics".

My Homelessness was the result of my "ethics": I knew that I could not pay my rent, pay my way because my salary became such that it wasn't possible for me to do so and augmentation of my salary did not come in a time where it could immediately benefit me. Being unable to pay my way, I simply "went my way". I had worked, and, as is seen here, continued to work, to pay taxes which helped support the services to which I availed myself in my time of desperation. "Ethics". There were "friends" and "family" who knew that I was Homeless and some did all that they could, some did as little as was possible to console themselves in the belief that they were "doing something for" me. I did not "beg"... I "suggested" my needs, but I did not force the issue, allowing each to respond as s/he felt appropriate. Ultimately, I availed myself of the services into which I'd essentially paid and even then, from those services, I took no more and no less than what I truly needed... no more... and no less. I did not "beg", I accepted what was offered. Was it "all" that I needed? Most certainly not. But I worked with what I had, what I received and from there, I added what I could to achieve my goal: becoming RE-domiciled, ending my Homelessness. And this is the ideal I support: that all capable Homeless persons do likewise... earn the services they receive, not depend on those services and never develop the belief that they are "entitled" to those services.



Bellevue - Monogram



Oh I never tell people that I'm in the shelter! When they ask me where I am these days I tell them "In the city."

"Really!" they'll say. "Where?"

"On the East Side. Mid-town."

"NICE!" they'll say with bold grin. "Where?"

"Well, truthfully, I found a nice one-room not far from the University hospital, in a 24-hour security building."

Some-what shocked they'll say "That's GOT to be incredibly expensive!"

"Not really." I politely reply, "I found a place that's relatively reasonable."

And I leave it at that. No lies. All truth.

Welcome, dear reader! If you are seeking information on the Homeless Shelter System of New York City and have come to these pages, you're on the right track. This journal has been composed by an actual resident of that very system.

If what you need is some general information, quickly, then please allow me to enlighten you:

The system is set so as to bring each and every person involved (or exposed) to complete and utter chaos. The system of information and intake, the system of general applications is the complete and utter antithesis of logic. There is no rationale. There is no rationality. There is no sense to or in anything that transpires in any average day, at any average, given moment.

The shelters are comprised of a complete cross-section of each and every type of humanity imaginable and unimaginable. There are those who reap the benefits of a roof over their head, a hot meal provided thrice daily (at no charge or expense), a bed (metal frame, of no consequence or description), clean linens weekly. There are limited services in Social Work and Medical. But

even these defy description to the intelligent or even mildly intelligent.

The “residents” vary from those who are appreciative of the basic elements of daily existence to those for whom absolutely nothing will suffice. There are those who will follow along with anything and everything that may happen to them at any given moment, undeterred and unfettered. Meanwhile, there are those who will, at each turn, at each tick of the clock, protest, audibly and vulgarly, disrespecting even the very basics of human dignity.

This behaviour is not limited to those who reside in the shelter system. It continues on to those who have been provided employment (gainful employment) in the system in positions of what are known as “Operations”, “Security” and general “Staff”. One is diligently attacked on a most regular basis by those who are known to be “Case Workers”, “Social Workers”, “Security” and general “Staff”. Comments the likes of “Why are YOU in here?” and “Just what made you Homeless in the first place?” and a particularly personal comment (received with-in the first hour of my “intake”): “You don’t belong here. Jews have a lot of money, you know. They control the government. There’s no reason you should be in here. You’re a Jew and Jews don’t belong in the shelter.” These are common-place attacks on one’s intelligence and personal dignity.

There are those who will steal from you, even as you lay sleeping (half-sleeping, if you’re bright enough to realize the need to remain alert at all times) in your bed, immediately beside your personal locker. There are those “residents” who make a career of doing such things. Most of these are known as “Over-nighters”, or, those who will come in for one night only, lurk about the building and rooms, looking for an open locker and an unwitting victim. Once found, they take what they like and disappear out the door. They may wait a few days before returning to the shelter to scoff-up more booty or, there are those who make it a nightly venture, having neither fear nor shame. Again, this activity is not limited to the “residents” as there are those who don the “blue shirts” of the “Security” staff and will, in the middle of the night, feign a “bed-check” and, finding some item placed on top of a locker, under a bed or even ON the bed, will remove the item (simply because it is there for them) and continue on with their nightly rounds. General “Staff” is particularly adept at this, having access to the open and empty dorms between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm, Monday through Friday when all “Residents” are to be removed from the premises.

I encourage you to read this “blog” in its entirety. However, if what you are seeking is specific to the New York City Homeless Shelter System, then please begin with the entry “The Bellevue Days”.

Responses and replies to these pages are always welcome. They were originally composed over a period of 16 months, transcribed into digital format over a period of 2 years and finally compiled into this manuscript over a period of approximately 5 years.

There is word that the shelter receives funding in the amount of 100 dollars per day per resident. Statistics show that full capacity at just one shelter is 850 beds. Should these items be factual, then the following is true:

850 beds x 100 dollars per day:

85,000.00 (eighty-five thousand) dollars per day

595,00.00 (five hundred ninety-five thousand) dollars per week

2,550,000.00 (two million five-hundred fifty thousand) dollars per 30-day month

31,025,000.00 (thirty-one million twenty-five thousand) dollars per 365-day year

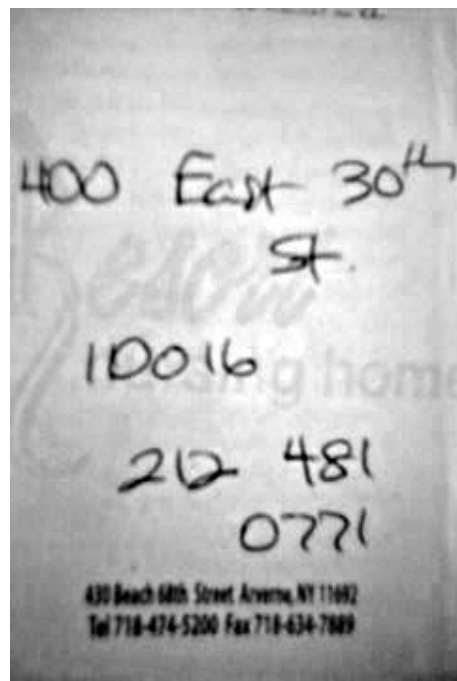
The fact is: It is NOT in the best interest of the “Case-Workers”, NOR, for that matter, ANY of the employees of the Shelter System to ensure the successful exit of ANY “Resident” at ANY time. Each Resident brings the above-listed funding into the Shelter. Lose a resident, lose funding! Lose funding, lose salaries. Lose salaries and employees lose their jobs... and experience the risk of becoming... Homeless.



2.2 September Bellevue - Monogram

MONDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2008

6:30am THIS is going to be a difficult day! There's a truly beautiful breeze blowing directly in through the window. A warm, strong breeze. I was awake at 4:40am to a magnificent full moon shining in against a blue-black sky and I was gifted with the chance to catch 2 seagulls, way up in the air, flying by the moon! I just need to figure the little details of hygiene and such and I need to get out of here... not soon, but now. The hole I'm in is still getting deeper. I've got the "55 Book" of sketches to complete. Then a lovely day on the beach... the beach... the beach... - But for now, Stencil is lying there quietly, his bed-sheet moving slowly and silently in a rather "suspicious" manner. I've noticed him doing it before as well. No matter. To think he'll be discharged today. - The night shift is leaving. Day shift is on. The yelling in the hall is ridiculous. The staff, yelling in the halls! And here I sit with nothing to do, no-where to go, no reason to be awake... no reason to be wake... no reason to be awake. - Today is going to be a difficult day, They're going to pressure me to leave. It's been, today is 20 days here! 32 days of being Homeless. Perhaps today is enough. It's not getting any better and I'm no closer to figuring anything out. The sky is clearing. Warm breeze blowing, and I'm awake for no reason. - 7:05am The sun is just rising. The day staff is on the floor. And I'm still awake for and with no answers and no reason. - 10:46am IT BEGINS: LITTLE D.O. (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine as opposed to an M.D.) COMES ALONG THE HALL THIS MORNING AND SCREAMS INTO THE ROOM FROM THE HALL: "MR. KESSLER! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? I THOUGHT THEY TOLD YOU YOU COULD GO ON FRIDAY!" - So I rather invited her into the room and asked: "How would you feel if somebody handed YOU a list of shelters on a Friday at 4:00pm and told YOU that you could leave in the rain?" The answer? "I would be happy that somebody was giving me information to find a place to go." Of course you would. No empathy. No sympathy. No concern. But, she said she's worried that I might contract



something from a room-mate. Yeah. Right. Me too. So, I politely pointed out that it's difficult enough that it's my Mom's yartzeit today (the anniversary of her death) and I've no-where to go to say Kaddish (prayer for the dead), and with the fact that I'm being thrown out on one side and told that there's more being done on the other side (Rozann giving me the choice to wait for word today) that I'm about ready for a psychotic break. As she left, I closed with "I'll just finish this by mentioning 257." which is the room with the broad who takes full advantage of this place and is down-right abusive and gets away with it. - It's going to take all of my strength to remain calm in here today. Meanwhile, Debra, my NA du jour, is clowning about in the hall. I asked her earlier to take me downstairs and she said she would when she had the time Well? - Rachel is trying to figure a way to get a minyan (a group of 10 men needed) to recite Kaddish for Mama. - Wednesday is supposed to be the coolest night this week. The weather is supposed to be good. Perfect for sitting on the beach... - Kleym came by. Told me my "labs" are perfect, my x-rays only show the COPD (from cigarettes, of course. Not the subway or anything like that, of course). (It's 12:09pm) We talked a little about my situation. I told her of my apprehension of walking out of here without direction and my anxiety attacks. She said "I would have anxiety too if I were you." The loveliest thing I could hear. Maybe she meant it. I doubt it. But it was nice to hear. Meanwhile, I've been reading Tanach (the Bible) all day. The weather is beautiful. No one has come by to take me downstairs. The floor is quiet. Brian is in respiratory distress and scheduled for dialysis. I'll be on the floor alone. ALONE! Oh, but Kleym asked AGAIN if I don't have friends or family. Again, I told her that I wouldn't be here if I did and asked if she or any of the other staff had noticed any-one in to visit me or call about me. My Mother didn't raise a beggar nor an abuser. But... I'm ALONE, ALONE, ALONE, AGAIN. - 2:19pm Rozann ("Roz", the Social Worker who consistently fails to introduce herself when she approaches patients) came in all cheery. "We found a place for you." She hands me a post-note. On it is the address for the Shelter Intake Centre on E.30th. I could have gone there on my own but Rozann says "Arlene" is the person who confirmed this. As I write, she, Rozann, is going to get me a Metro Card (fare on public transport) to get into The City. I'm looking at a night on the subway. It's too late to go to Tilden. It would do me no good right now anyway. I'll take a shower then go. Rozann gave me a 4-dollar card and 2 dollars "for coffee."

BEACH! GASTON! END

6:05pm On the boards (board-walk along the open shore of the Atlantic Ocean) at 121st. The weather? Hot. A breeze. I could rally take a pee. How odd is this? I'm preoccupied with saying Kaddish for Mama. The sun will be completely gone by the time I get out of services. I'll have to

use the 2 dollars left on the MetroCard to get into The City. But, here I am. Sitting on the boardwalk as if the world is fine, no signs of the turmoil in my mind and heart and soul. I'm numb. Just numb. In some fashion, I can't believe I'm out here, empty, alone. For some reason I keep thinking "Bradshaw". What keeps me from going to him? Pride? Guilt? Fear? Why him? When I left Peninsula, I went down 54th Street. Plenty of places to hide-out for the night. Do I dare? I don't know. I just don't know. I tossed my letter to Cyndi, in the jar, into the waves. I BEGGED the heavens for help. Is Bradshaw the answer? Why? - No. - Don't ask that question. - One bar of power on the phone and 22 dollars in time. If I had the battery-power, I have the time to call some-one. But who? I took the bus here from 54th Street to 121st. I sat on the bus in some numb, dead silence. My brain has left me. It won't accept this. Clouds are coming in from the west. The beach is almost empty. A Lufthansa plane just banked out over the ocean heading east. What am I going to do? The world has gone so closed-in and yet so wide open. Ships on the horizon. Why couldn't I be on one of them? I'm not "afraid" right now. Numb. Sick to my stomach. It's so very quiet. The sun is burning a bright strip at the water's edge. It's actually quite beautiful. Maybe, if I'm honest about all of this at service there will be some glimmer of hope. Why do I even think of hope any more? I'm wearing my kippa (yarmulke). Rachel says it will bring me luck. Another Lufthansa. And on the ocean, the waves are only whispering. People are strolling by. Hey. My arms are still rather tan. So? As of now, I'll mention my situation at service. If nothing... The city shelter. If good. OK. If not? Tilden tomorrow. Buy a charger for the phone. Maybe I'll actually try B. What the Hell? There's nothing left to lose anymore. Even rejection can't be bad any more. - Recapping on Tuesday: Never got to do that so I'm recapping on Wednesday, the 17th at 12:27pm at Tribute Park: So, I made it to Mincha/Maariv (evening) services and the prayers were said in such a low voice that I could barely follow. But Kaddish was said for Mama. I am relieved, happy and proud. May it be the one to bring Mama the glory she so deserves. Service was over and done with such rapidity that it felt like a train-wreck. And no rabbi. But before service, I spoke with an older man who was born and raised in the Catskills! Ferndale! We spoke of Sullivan County of old. It was a delight. And after, the cantor (?) came to say "It's good to see you." She should only know the pain in my heart at that moment. My new congregation! I'm being torn away! Well, there was no hope to be found there this evening so, quite hopelessly, I walked to B116th Street, boarded the shuttle train for The City. The sun was just below the horizon and the sky-line over the bay was brilliant red-



orange. I left a note on the train “begging” god’s help. In my stunned silence on the shuttle, my heart screamed to be taken out of this misery, for intervention, to stop the Hell! It didn’t do me any good. I took the A train to Broadway Junction where I realized I can take the L train to Union Square for the 6 train to 28th Street! Standing on the L platform at Broadway Junction, I was treated to a glorious full moon! But too, a full moon and I was heading for the shelter! I got on the L train, caught the Nr.6 train and walked across 24th Street, past Zuri’s. How strange. I lived there once upon a time. Now, I live no-where and reside every-where. Some-where on my walk I shut down mentally. The protection my mind has developed from so many years of terror and abuse. Admitting to myself what I was about to do would have proven horrible terror. My brain blocked all but the fact that I was in The City. I just walked in the darkness of night, blindly, silently, forward. And there it was! A narrow walk-way between a grand old brick building and a construction site. A dark, fenced-in, wooden walk-way, leading to the back of the brick building. More darkness, inside me and around me now, incredible darkness. I focused on nothing and kept walking... just kept walking... just kept walking. A court yard. Men. Smoking. Casually dressed. Guards, dim lights. But the men, mostly Black and Latino, weren’t fighting. It wasn’t at all violent. It most certainly wasn’t welcoming, but I didn’t sense any danger. I walked in through the smaller door to the side of the main entrance. Inside, it was stark, dirty, in need of fresh paint. A sign: “**Welcome to the E.30th Street Men’s Shelter. NYC DHS (Department of Homeless Services)**”. It was to become “official” now. I’m “*Homeless*”! And I’m heading into the “*Shelter System*”! I was confused. But I was also under the impression that someone named “Arlene” would have noted my impending arrival, maybe it would be a little more pleasant, once inside. And, I thought, if it’s truly a horror, I’ll just walk out and head for the A train and maybe the beach. I didn’t *have* to stay. I didn’t *have* to be pulled into this. I was still free to choose. I walked through the metal detector. It alarmed. I continued. Back-pack and hooded sweat-shirt through the x-ray. Wand over front. Turn. Wand over back. The “Go ahead”. To where? Down the hall to the lady at the desk... the distance of a block away. Turn left. Down the cavernous hall to the desk at the end of the hall. I was told to sign the sheet, last 4 digits of my social security number. She, the lady at the desk, handed me a flimsy black trash bag. In it were two small brown paper bags. Each, I found, contained: an apple, pint of milk, plastic container of orange juice, small snack-size white cheddar popcorn, baked cheese crackers (fish) and turkey on hamburger roll. I was directed down another hall to a room where while I sat waiting, I drank both juices, and ate the popcorn and cheese fish and I watched the other men toss the milk into a galvanized garbage can! The waste! Food! Disgusting! There were 6 of us in the waiting area. BUT, BEFORE getting to the

waiting area, the lady at the desk, pleasantly instructed me to go down a set of granite steps to what resembled a hotel check-in desk, information kiosk and perhaps a Nurses' station.. The man there politely asked for photo ID and social security card. I was comforted by the request. It was more "controlled" than simply letting people wander in. He filled-in some form, handed me a purple index card, time stamped, on which he wrote my name, social security number and something that looks like "14RMS" "Upstairs to room 42". What? "Up the stairs, to the left. Wait in the room. Somebody will call your name." "Thank you. I've never done this before." Again, 5 of us in the room. Me? The only "White" and I was still wearing my kippa. A young, Black kid who said he'd come in from Long Island. An older man with dreads. A well-dressed man with 2 pieces of brand new luggage. A well-spoken man who was referred by "Re-hab". A man who seemed to know the system. I looked at my card: 9:11pm was stamped on it. I'd officially entered the "Homeless System" at... 9:11. We waited. We waited a bit longer. Then, we waited a bit more. Finally! Called. A squat little Black man with an Africanish accent instructs me to follow him. I do, wondering if my "file" is there already. "Sit." He says. Not "please". Not "Mr. Kessler". Simply "Sit." (2:05pm and continuing my Journal at the Seaside Library, back in Rockaway) His name is "Shockeye". Fitting. Ill-tempered and blatantly anti-Semitic. "Jews run the government with all their money" said the man who typed the comment about me being homeless, jobless and looking for a place to "leave" (instead of "live"). "Yes," I replied, "And all Black people are on Welfare." "Your last address." As I spoke, he typed, one finger with delayed hunt-and-peck. House number: 158 Beach, street name: 116th Street, city: Manhattan. "I believe it should read 'Beach 116th Street' and 'Queens'" I offered when the computer screen clearly indicated a difficulty registering the address as it had been typed. "I will ask the questions and you will answer." I simply shut down and shut up. The address was rejected as not found. I said nothing. Next, across the room. Finger-print and photo. I'm a file now. But NOTHING about or from Peninsula Hospital and no "Arlene". Click. Flash. Photo. Back to Shockeye who had to find someone to correct some errors he had made on some hand-written forms! Imbecile! Oh, and by the way: Father's last name: Kessler. Father's first name: David. Penelope said to re-invent me. OK. I will. Half-steps. David Kessler would have been a better spouse and parent. But David's Hebrew nick-name simply fits: Dudu (or, in English: doodoo). "Thank you for your patience." says Shockeye. I say nothing. It wasn't a question. He repeats the statement. I repeat my silence. You will ask the questions and I will give the answers. I am returned to the waiting area. It's almost midnight. There are more men waiting.

Suddenly, another roll call. 3 men out for moments. They return with yellow forms. They're going to Ward's Island! I don't want to go to Ward's Island! A Black man is telling dread-locks that he's hoping for E. 3rd Street. Dreadlocks doesn't quite grasp "Ward's Island". The E.3rd says "Island. A body of land surrounded by water." It breaks the ice. The 3 going to Ward's are gone. Dreads gets called. I should be next. So I am. I'm given, by Shockeye, a yellow form. A bed, for the night, right there! No travelling! OK. Bed number A57. "Second floor." says Shockeye. I am dismissed with form. It reads "One night". It gives a combination for a lock. It does not tell me how to find the bed and it does not tell me how to get to the second floor in this huge maze. After asking anybody I saw in the halls how to get to my assigned bed, I found myself walking up huge, old granite stairs. On the second floor I find a lone desk. In the caverns, by the stairs, a lone Black woman at a lone desk in what may have been quite beautiful surroundings at one time (for moments following construction). Pleasantly, she directed me. I was relieved and appreciative of her kindness. Onward, still thinking "At any moment I can still go for the beach." The room. Closed door. Solid, no window. I open it. Dreads is in there! sh**! The bed number is written on the wall above the metal-frame-and-spring bed. Plastic mattress. Plastic pillow. The locker is the size of a chest of drawers. One large compartment on the right. 3 shelves on the left. A bag of linens and a little white plastic bag of toiletries inside. The "gift bag" cinched my appreciation of the farce. I made the bed. I put the pillow case on the pillow and put me on the mattress, fully dressed. No removal of clothing. I might need to bolt during the night. - Through the night we were joined by a young, quiet, Black man and a pierced, rather strung-out White guy who, immediately upon entering, moved his locker! There were, in this room, 4 beds and 4 "people" to occupy them. (9:20pm at the shelter... waiting again). BANG! went the locker into the wall. It didn't last for long. But the guy made me a bit nervous. I half-slept, on and off, all through the night, in my clothes, kippa included. - Right or wrong, my heart beats a simple prayer: Those who turned away from me and those who led me to here, should suffer 10 years for every moment I suffer through this. Amen.

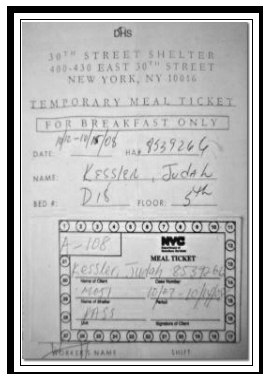
NOTES:

As I drew (this) at 7:46pm on Sunday at 4.10pm, it came to me: Being in the batteries of Tilden, alone, was my preparation for being in this shelter!

The souls of the tortured wander these halls. 400 E 30th.



Tuesday 16 September



Recapping on Wednesday, the 17th at 9:30pm at the Shelter. 7th floor.

Waiting. Woke at about 6:30 this morning, burning eyes. All was relatively quiet in the room. But in the hall, the place was alive, busy, kicking and yelling. I watched my roommates in silence as they stripped their bed, put the linens into the bag in which they came. I could have showered but was in no mood. I wanted out. OUT! As I write this, I can't recall how I learned it, but I knew I needed to be back by 10:00pm. OK. Out the door! Just out!

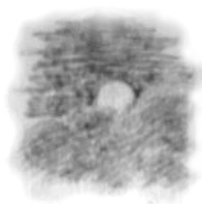
No cigarettes. But Dreads needed a light. I swapped. He gave me a broken Marlboro menthol. I took it and left the building. I stopped at Duane Reade on 28th. A pack of Camel Lights at LONG last! COPD? Emphysema? Good. Kill me! At the corner I stopped to enjoy a smoke... ENJOY a smoke! - My back pack is so heavy these days. My legs don't want to hold me and it. I descended the steps to the subway, wobbling. Feet, ankles, calves, thighs all painful. But I wanted to get out to The Peninsula. I wanted to get to Tilden. I wanted to work on my sketch-book. I wanted to get back to The Peninsula! I put 4 dollars on the MetroCard and I was on the rails: 6 to L to A to AIR and OCEAN! - I don't want to be seen on 116th Street so I took the A to Gaston. Arrived about 10:30am and when I got to B67th Street, it was so calm, so quiet! It was life itself. I actually wanted to drop and kiss the side-walk! Truly! Didn't, of course. But I headed to the bus stop. The sky was hazy. So was I. (Continuing at 1:32pm on Thursday the 18th from Bed 108 in a SINGLE BED/ROOM! at the Shelter) The sun was hot when it broke through. I got the Q22 bus and rode along through the village I've come to think of as home. It was nothing less than pure delight to be back. Funny. I'd only been gone over-night but it felt like an eternity. I was just here last evening before leaving for the shelter, but it felt, in my heart and mind, like an eternity away. My emotions tossed between wanting to go to the beach... forever... and wanting to fight through everything to come back huge. I still can't quite figure it out in my head or my heart. (From the beach at Brighton/Ocean Parkway on Thursday the 18th at 8:55am - These entries are being made when and where I have the time, the place, the ability to write and tend to skip from place to place, day to day, time to time. I'm blown about the World now, like a bit of trash paper, not wanted, not noticed.) - When I got to Tilden, I had some trepidation about how I might be received. There was no telling. Almost 3 weeks have passed since I walked out that gate and in that time, only one phone call. But I resolved to tell the truth, bluntly, and little more. It would be quite telling, the attitude I'd face. Yet, this was Fort Tilden, the place in which I'd "resided" for two weeks, all day and all night. I know this place better than all of them and I had

more right to be here than the rest. If the reception was to be miserable, then so be it. I was in no mood to play stupid with anyone. I headed toward T6 where Penelope's car was parked and the door was open. - I walked in. All was set-up for the exhibit (the one I'd been asked to help "judge"). Radio on. Nobody in sight. Suddenly, from behind me I hear: "You're not welcome here." Penelope had been in the library and saw me walk in. She stood in the door-way with a big smile. She was joking. I wasn't quite sure. "How are you?" she asked, walking toward me. "Come here." And she opened her arms, came closer and gave me a hug. I hugged, half-heartedly. Here was a person who, although I knew in my heart, had done all she could for me, to help me to the extent of her ability, in the long-run, stood by and watched me drop to the depths I'd reached. Five weeks and I'd actually grown bitter, even toward her. "Not good." Is all I could open with. Truth. Nothing more. I told her the gist of the past 3 weeks. She listened. I said I could use a coffee. She offered to share her de-caf but when I said I'd rather a "real" coffee, she got out the machine and gave me run of the place as had been usual. I asked if T7 was open. She gave me the key. She told me of an installation behind T7 that I should see. I made coffee, went to T7 to get fixative for my sketches. She asked for more details about the past 3 weeks. I gave them, digest/summary. She gave me the latest on Fred, the old "steady" and "fixture" around the place and other such. She told me that Albert Green had come to the "Art Splash" reception on Sunday, took a fall, cut his arm. His mother implied that the floor was wet and caused the fall. I told Penelope to be very careful, they were probably looking for a law-suite. She agreed. I volunteered: as his Home Care-giver, I'm in a position to be of great benefit to RAA in a law-suit. Albert was very unsteady on his legs and should not have been about un-guarded. She agreed. I told her that I would welcome the opportunity to be part of a prosecution against Albert, considering how instrumental he and his family are in my current situation. Indeed, I'm actually hoping they try something. It would be my reparation. - Time went along and the conversation flowed as if there'd been no break in the previous and other-wise routine of me being there. Penelope brought me up to date and I, she. - Tommy and Tony arrived as I was finishing spraying fixative on my sketches. (Phase I of "55" completed.) A hand-shake and enquiry about the 3 weeks. He asked about my work. I simply summed it into "They (the Greens) essentially got me fired." I'll leave it at that. We'll see how this affects their views and reception of the Greens. I don't expect allegiances to me. But, I'll give them the rope. They'll either swing or hang with it. - As the day passed, Penelope and I talked. She told me of her experiences and events with Jose, a Ranger who expresses an "interest" in her and whose "affections" she willingly accepts... like a little girl, all agog and giggly. We got to me again. I read her my blurb for "Sketch 55". It actually

gave here goose-bumps. She encouraged me to learn to abandon the inferiority I feel due to my child-hood. She encouraged me to always remember: Living well is the best revenge. She told me that, no matter what I might think, I have great talents, well worth selling. She made me think: My mother invested a great part of her life to ensuring the survival of her children. Destroying myself would be a direct insult to her, her efforts and her memory. I don't need to come out of this simply for my own, but to show the world my Mother's success in raising a child of talent and an adult whom many in the world happen to like and admire. And it's quite true. She promised to nag me about it constantly. - It got to be 4:00pm. As usual, she drove me only to the gate of the Fort and left me at the bus stop. I don't suppose her kindness will ever extend further than that. But, in her heart, she means well. She does what she feels she can. No more. No less. We agreed we'd see each-other on Friday. She drove away as she always had, but today, I could physically feel some part of me being taken away. Our days of sitting together in sTudio6, on the flat, open Fort, alone for the most part, watching the snows blowing in off the ocean, having hot coffee, listening to "soft jazz" from the radio... gone, and would never happen again. Every dynamic of our relationship had been changed, forever. - Before leaving the peninsula, I took the bus over to the hospital. Brian was glad to see me. Jocelyn had the day off. Brian and I talked about last night and I summed up the lot of it by saying: "They lied to get me out" and I pointed out how they manipulated it at a time when my social support (he and Jocelyn) were off the floor. He agreed. As we spoke I couldn't help but think of how difficult he and I are but how we get along. In some strange twist, we've become "Friends". "Friends". All quite simply. As I got ready to leave, he went to his wallet, sorted-out some bills, folded them and handed them to me. "It's not much, but at least you'll have a little something in your pocket." I didn't count it then, but it turned-out to be a five and five singles. Here's a man with medical and financial problems of his own, extending a kindness that surpasses the world. Meanwhile, those of better means with-hold. Life. Existence. Creation. The lesson. The education. "Friends". I accepted his kindness graciously and gratefully. I was, horribly for me, in need now... and humble, gratefully humble. As I left him this evening, my heart was a bit stronger. This had been a day of intense moral support. - I walked up to the B59th Street A train station. The sun was, again, just below the horizon and there was the usual blaze of brilliant red-orange blazing into the coming night sky. I hated leaving The Peninsula even more tonight. But my heart was stronger and my determination to succeed and pass through this all the stronger still. As the train crossed the Jamaica Bay I recalled how the sculpture behind T7 had moved me to sit on the back steps and silently weep: A sheet, a dress, 2 burnt logs, some feathers, hundreds of shells. The elements of "my home" in my

Homelessness. The elements of the place I call “Home” from which I’ve been ripped and to which I will return in better times. I have purpose and determination. I have “Friends” here. - Came... THE NIGHTMARE: I was back at the shelter by 9:00pm. In the “holding tank”, as we refer to “the lounge” on the 7th floor, I finally got to chat with the little fellow who reminds me so much of Schmulik, (someone from a truly happy point in a past that now seems so far removed and gone in this present of such darkness)! What a charm! A delight. I didn’t catch his first name. Something of Indian or Pakistani origins. Family name sounds like “Maddy”. He’s lived in Florida, had a condo in Tampa, had run his own business, then lost his work there, came back to NY thinking he’d find work. What a familiar scenario. So many people believe that this is the place to be for employment... especially people who don't now and those who never have actually lived here. He said he’s thinking of journalling his experiences at the shelter. I showed him these, my notes, this, my journal. He seemed rather impressed and encouraged to keep his own journal now. All the while we spoke, I couldn’t help but think of how much I was drawn to him. How could I not be? Schmulik! I have no idea if there could even be a deeper “camaraderie” and I doubt there will be. But, I got the chance to talk with him. When bed assignments came, he got the 7th floor, I got the 2nd. Separation. Alas. Perhaps we’ll meet at some other juncture. In fact, we did, in passing, as the night went along. - I was assigned A127. As Fate would have it, a room with 5 beds and lo! The bed that I was assigned to was occupied! And, by some beast of a White man: big build, long hair, hair on back and shoulders. Nothing I wanted as my enemy! I want NO enemies in this place! So, back to the 7th floor for re-assignment. It was already almost midnight by now. I was exhausted from lack of sleep last night. My back-pack seemed to cut into my shoulders. My feet and legs ached terribly. The guy who assigned me to this bed actually admitted to having made the mistake. I waited for re-assignment which came in a matter of moments: The 4th floor, C65. Five beds. One room-mate. My combination for the locker worked. His did not. I tried all the locks. His combination was useless, but he took it in stride. I’d been instructed to go to “Operations” and get a set of bed linens for the night. I did so and when I opened the bed-side locker, there was another set there. So, I gave my room-mate the extra set of linens. He thanked me. Told me that he’d had an argument with the Mrs., left her at home to come to the shelter for the night. He had to be in class by 9:00am tomorrow. He’s an adult student. He was wearing a suit and black, silk shirt. Ah, the cross-section of the Homeless. - Tonight, I made the bed, removed my shirt and shoes, got “comfortable” or, at least, as “comfortable” as one might get in such surroundings. Second night. I was falling into place. I removed my kippa, preparing for sleep. - We were joined by 3others before lights were put out.

At “lights out”, which we got to decide, the room went dark and quiet. We were all exhausted. It must have been close to 1:00am by now, and we have to be out of the place by 8:00am tomorrow. - Tonight I slept... and dreamt!



DREAM: Daniel G. and I were at a club, drinking and dancing. It wasn't a Gay club, but it wasn't quite straight. I was sitting on a wall of sorts when he came over and sat on my lap, facing away from me! Playfully, I leaned back, bending, and as I did, he leaned forward and somehow opened my pants! It took me by surprise and I sat up as he too, sat up, smiling. He leaned back, essentially lying on top of me. I whispered “Oh wow!” and woke up. (Now I wonder what events brought such a dream, such thoughts that I didn't have before. And, I ask: Why now? Here? What is my mind trying to reconcile with such a dream?)

NOTES:

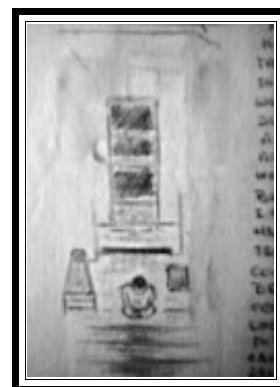
GREAT TALENTS - WORTH SELLING - LIVING WELL IS THE GREATEST REVENGE
A127 (2nd Fl. Occupied) - C65 (4th Fl.)

Wednesday 17 September

(It's 10:42am on Thursday. 18. September. I'm on the boards at Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn. I've just finished the recap for Tuesday. The sun is up in a slightly hazy blue sky. A beautiful breeze blowing. It's calm here. I so need the calm. A container-ship is pulling into the New York harbour. Ah, memories of my first “Financial District”/Wall Street District job: Containership Agency. Inc. 1 Western Union Plaza. Remo Borst and Elliot, AnnRay and Peggy. it was the very early 1970's. The World Trade Centre hadn't been quite complete and Battery Park City was being started as “capped land-fill”. From my desk I could watch as the bulldozers moved and packed soil in preparation for the new “community” that would be built there. It was really rather exciting: the job, the new towers, the “New” York City. Ah... But right now I have catching up with this journal, so... WHAT A DAY leading into WHAT A NIGHT! - This morning, a SHOWER (how wonderful to be able to take a shower... a HOT shower at that) and out the door into that strange world of expensive East 30's. It strikes me how we, the Homeless, reside amidst the affluence of Kips Bay, with it's extremely expensive real estate, prominent hospital, professionals. - This morning, a direct route to the post office and the back “Home” on the Peninsula. The mail box

wasn't very full, but the mail in there was all from Beth El, my little "congregation" on the peninsula where I was once a part, where once I called it "home" and it was. I'm absolutely on the membership roster now. A little more to make me feel good about myself. Remembering a comment made by Brian yesterday (You have to invest in yourself). I got a 5 dollar money-order and 2 envelopes. I've requested my Polio test results. I'll need them for further job-seeking. I'm "Investing in myself" now. - Off to the Seaside library to catch-up on this journal, check the internet "community boards" and some e-mails. There was a birthday posting to my Newburgh board on my birthday. How dare they!?! I'm NOT flattered in the least! No e-mails though. Indeed, those very people who, in my time of need, found it so simple and easy to "dismiss" me, as a person and one would have the audacity to publicly post a birthday message. I merely shows just how feeble-minded some people actually can be. Dick-heads. Self-serving sh**s that they are. Anyway, the morning passed. - I made a trip the Waldbaum's supermarket for "lunch". HEY! I'm still getting food stamps! I had lunch in Tribute Park and there's still a rather substantial amount left for more food. I can EAT again! I wasn't doing that under the tree, and I haven't been doing much since this "Homelessness" began. - As I was passing Wendy's on BC Drive, a horn tooted at me. I turned to see, of all people, David, the physical therapist I'd met whilst working at the home-care. He was at the drive-through window! I stopped to chat. He's just returning from his honeymoon. He asked how I'm doing. I simply put my situation off to "time-off for a while", told him I'd given-up on Premier and asked if he still had Albert Green as a client. Well! Seems Green's insurance dumped him! No aide. No therapy. I didn't say much more on the matter lest my anger and bitterness came out, I reiterated my availability for private duty and continued on to lunch. - As I say, then to the library and at about 3:30pm, I was on the bus (from 120th Street and not the usual 116th) to PHC (the hospital). Brian was in dialysis but I was told I could visit him there. I did. He was having a bad day. Pains in the shoulder-blades, difficulty breathing. (Continuing this journal on Thursday at 10:02pm in bed number A108) He was experiencing complications. I don't like it. No word on his MRI either. I try to keep his spirits up. He's happy to see me when I visit and this evening, before I left, he gave me a half of a tuna salad sandwich he had left over. He looks after me. "Friend". - At about 7:00pm I grabbed the Q22 bus to 59th for the trains back to the shelter. It kills me to have to leave the Peninsula. My brain still goes numb when I do. I just can't handle this yet. Not the reality of it. I just can't handle any of this and my brain, my heart, my soul, all go numb... just numb. - Tonight was another night of complete farce. COMPLETE FARCE! I arrived back at the shelter at 9:00pm, passed through "Security" and the metal detector and headed up to the 7th floor sign-in area. I headed down the hall to the

“holding room” to wait. Lots more guys tonight. No Maddy. But another guy whom I’ve seen about came over and sat beside me to talk. I never did get his name so I’ll refer to him as “N” (Nameless?). He’s getting fed-up with the way things are handled around here. But we all get that way, I imagine. Me? I admit, my brain is in denial. I just roll along with it all. There’s nothing else to do. Speak and you cause resentment. Get that and somebody’s going to put the screws to you. I’d rather roll by knowing I have my “options”... out there. Anyway, in the course of our talking, he took a look at the sketches I do in my written journal and proposed that he and I collaborate on a comic strip for the news papers. He liked the art-work until I told him I’m not so good at drawing people. That’s when he got a little too critical: he didn’t like the order in which things were drawn, picked-out things in the sketches that he didn’t care for. Me? I let it all go. I know how, why, what is in those sketches. That’s enough for me. My sketches serve my personal purpose and that’s all that need be. So we continued talking until roll-call. That’s when the evening took off: His name wasn’t on the sign-in list. Mine was though. I got my bed assignment and came to see. 2nd floor. A108. I OPEN THE DOOR TO THE ROOM, IT’S A SINGLE BED! SINGLE ROOM! BUT THERE’S A GUY ALREADY IN IT! I’VE BEEN ASSIGNED AN OCCUPIED BED AGAIN! I TELL THE SECURITY GUARD ON THE FLOOR AND THE DRAMA COMMENCES... She says I have to get the guy out. I should tell the security guard in the area... I tell her that it happened last night and I’ll take another assignment. She insists the guy needs to go. I tell her he’s got his books and such in the room and he’s sitting on the floor. No good. It has to escalate. I have to go to the administration to have the guy removed. I don’t want to go that route. I don’t want a confrontation. I don’t want animosity. Just re-assign me like they did last night. SO I WENT BACK TO THE 7TH FLOOR TO TELL THE TEAM OF 3 (2 WOMEN, ONE MAN, ALL AFRIKAN) ABOUT THE SITUATION. ONE WOMAN BELTS OUT “SEND THE CLIENT UP HERE!” RIGHT. LIKE I HAVE THAT AUTHORITY! Well... I end up being BROUGHT to the first floor, to the administration desk... to “Operations”. A third DHS cop (the police/Peace Officers specific to the Department of Homeless Services) gets involved. He tells the Africans (and indeed, that is what they are... right down to the language and accents) on duty and ONE OF THEM SAYS THAT I NEED TO GO INTO THE ROOM, REMOVE THE GUY’S STUFF, RE-MAKE THE BED WITH MY LINENS AND MOVE IN. THE DHS COP DOESN’T LIKE THAT BECAUSE IT WILL LEAD TO AN ALTERCATION THAT THEY WILL HAVE TO BREAK-UP. THE AFRIKANS DON’T



CARE. SO, DOWN AT THE “ADMINISTRATION” DESK, THE DHS COP NOTIFIES THE DHS SERGEANT WHO SAYS TO SEND THE ADMIN UP-STAIRS FOR A CONFRONTATION. ADMIN TELLS THE COP TO SEND THE SGT. DOWN! A VERBAL BATTLE COMMENCES VIA MESSENGER AND RADIO. THE NEXT THING I KNOW, THE GUY FROM A108 IS STANDING IN THE HALL WITH HIS JACKET ON AND HIS LUGGAGE! HE’S OUT OF THE ROOM. THE COP WHO WAS TRYING TO HELP ME TAKES MY MEAL TICKET/ASSIGNMENT, TELLS ANOTHER COP TO STAY WITH ME AND DISAPPEARS UP-STAIRS! NOW, I’M WITHOUT MY MEAL TICKET WHICH MEANS I’M NO-WHERE AT ALL! THOSE “MEAL TICKETS” ARE PERMISSION TO BE IN THE SHELTER. WITH-OUT THAT, THERE’S NO RECORD OF ME. I’VE LEARNT THAT MUCH THIS QUICKLY. AND IF I’M STOPPED AND INTERROGATED, RATHER THAN RESEARCH ME (THEY HAVE MY PHOTO ON FILE), I’LL BE OUT THE DOOR AND FORCED TO START THE ENTIRE PROCESS OF GETTING IN... FROM THE BEGINNING! WELL, I LOOK UP AND THERE STANDS “N”! SEEMS HE TOO GOT ASSIGNED TO AN OCCUPIED BED BUT WHEN HE TRIED TO FIX IT, AN ADMINISTRATOR TORE-UP HIS TICKET AND MADE HIM START ALL OVER AGAIN! THE PLACE HAD GONE INSANE! MEANWHILE (Here, it’s 1:28pm and I’m back at T6) ALL I WANTED TO DO IS GET A BED, GET SOME SLEEP. THE DHS COPS WERE IN A BATTLE WITH THE DESK CLERKS. ONE GUARD WAS ASSIGNED TO WATCH ME. I COULDN’T GO ANY-WHERE BECAUSE ANOTHER DHS COP HAD TAKEN MY MEAL TICKET. “N” WAS PISSED OFF. SUDDENLY, A CHANGE OF SHIFT. THE STAFF WHO STARTED THIS CRAP LEFT AND A NEW “ADMINISTRATION” WAS TAKING OVER. A TALL, BLACK WOMAN TAKES THE DESK. EVERYTHING CHANGES. SHE TAKES CONTROL, GETS ON THE PHONE. I’M CALLED TO THE DESK. I’M GIVEN THE BED A108. SHE’S GOING TO FIND ANOTHER BED FOR THE PREVIOUS OCCUPANT. SHE CHECKS A LIST, GIVES ME THE COMBINATION TO THE LOCKER. IT’S DONE IN UNDER 5 MINUTES. THE PREVIOUS A108 COMES TO ME TO ASK: WOULD I BE WILLING TO SWAP BEDS WITH HIM SO HE CAN RETURN. HE’S ON MEDICATIONS. THEY WERE CHANGED TODAY. HE FELL ASLEEP AND MISSED SIGN-IN. A SECURITY GUARD HEARD HIS REQUEST AND HAD TO TELL HIM SEVERAL TIMES THAT NO, NO SWAPPING. I TRULY DIDN’T WANT TO ANYWAY. - ISSUE SETTLED, I WENT TO MY BED. IT WASN’T 10 MINUTES, PREVIOUS A108 COMES WALKING INTO THE ROOM! “DID I LEAVE ANY NIK-NAKS?” NO. THE ROOM IS CLEAR. “OK. SORRY TO BOTHER YOU.” HE LEAVES. I TRY TO SETTLE-IN. ABOUT 20 MINUTES LATER, HE’S BACK! AGAIN, WITH THE NIK-NAKS STORY. AT THIS POINT I’M BUGGED

AND THINKING HE'LL BE AT THIS SHIT ALL NIGHT. I FIRMLY TELL HIM THIS IS THE SECOND TIME HE'S COME IN, I'M TRYING TO GET SOME SLEEP. HE APOLOGISES. HIS NAME IS CARLOS. HE WANTS TO BE FRIENDS. HE'S HARMLESS, DOCILE. I DON'T WANT TO BE "FRIENDS" BUT I DON'T WANT TO BE ENEMIES. CARLOS LEAVES, I PUT ON A SET OF SCRUBS TO SLEEP IN. THE DAY IS DONE. I GO TO BED... HOPEFULLY, TO SLEEP A WHILE. IT'S ALMOST 2:00am! - At some point during all this mayhem, I met Mike, the fellow in the next room. That room too is "Private", a single occupancy room. He tells me that I'm now in the "Permanent Wing". This should be my bed for the duration. I just MUST make sure to sign-in ON TIME, ALL THE TIME! One mistake and I begin again. Oh. I've seen how that goes. That's what got me here in the first place: "Carlos" failed to "sign in" and BANG! Lost the room, the bed, his place and will now drop to the bottom of a separate roster and wait...

Thursday 18 September

(I'm still at T6) Construction in the lot next door to the shelter is a perfect alarm. 5:30am, they begin. I slept the few hours and would have liked to sleep and additional few, but I still don't know when THEY decide we must vacate. So, I threw an instant coffee together in my water bottle and headed across the hall to the shower! What a joy to shower! Bolt back to the room, dress and run for the exit. Today? Brighton to Jackie's Department Store for a 99-cent shirt if possible. To the 99-cent Store for laundry soap. (10:00pm on Friday, bed A108 as I wait for a shower) Unfortunately, there were no "shirts" but I got 2 white T-shirts at Jackie's. 99-cents each. Caught the B68 bus to the 99-cent Store. Got a pillow case to use as the cover for the "55 Sketches" so it will be "cloth", 3 pairs of white socks and a package of disposable razors for tomorrow's haircut. On the B36 and off to Rockaway. I managed to get into the hospital to visit Brian. Kleymentova saw me in the hall and wanted to know why I was there! The way she asked was rude in tone and arrogant in attitude but now, I am in as a visitor, with the rights of a visitor, and I owe her nothing, but I simply and firmly replied: "To visit a friend!" As if it was any of her damned business. As I visited, Rachel came by to give me the addresses for Chabad in Rockaway AND the main office on Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn. She says I'll enjoy the one on Eastern Pkwy. They always have something going on there. OK. But the one (possibly two) in Rockaway? Maybe they'll be able to connect me to some work! I'm hoping... not strongly, but I'm hoping. I don't know why and I don't know where this "hope" is coming from at this point. I'm actually on the verge of actual despair right now, but these little "hopes" keep coming. - I'd gone to

Waldbaum's for my lunch before going to the hospital and I'd had a peaceful little lunch in Tribute Park, and I brought 2 boxes of "Drakes Cakes" for Brian. As I told him, I have no money but I have Food Stamps. I "gift" with food. - Jocelyn wasn't on this evening again. I'm sorry. I'm waiting for her reaction to my having been tossed out. I wonder if she knows already. - I left at about 6:15pm this evening and arrived back at the shelter at about 8:00pm. Tonight I finally got to talk with Dennis, a really pleasant Black guy from, of all places, Castle Hill! A Bronxite! Another Bronxite! He'd been sleeping on the Pelham train (The number 6 subway train) for a while before coming to the shelter. He told me that he'd been having trouble with the administrators too, but only the Africans. Well, come to learn, Shockeye gave him sh** too, as do the ones in the main office. Personally, when I get out of here, I'd like to see them all deported. They're just bleating miserable. - So, it turned into a rather other-wise early night. But Mike, next door, got tossed somehow! My connection to answers for my questions in here is gone now. I have to wing it! - Oh. Before I close today: I met a guy from the "A127" room (where I was assigned to an occupied bed this week). Jewish. Mike. It's the kippa that's starting conversations. Some are fascinated because a "Jew" is in a "Homeless shelter". Others are fascinated by the fact that somebody could manage to hold onto any "beliefs" while being subjected to this misery. - While waiting for sign-in this evening I heard Maddy extolling the beauty of Indian women... and how he DID go on about it. - Tonight the Puerto Ricans in the next room (2 of them in there and LOUD) were arguing in the hall. Trash! They should be sent back instead of being given space that could be other-wise occupied by people who appreciate it here. This might not be a "Hilton" hotel, but we need to appreciate being in-side and not out on the streets... especially these days when the nights get so chilled. - AH... THE **BIG NEWS?** THIS MORNING I NOTICED A FLOOR PLAN ON THE WALL. "**PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL**"!!!! THIS IS THE OLD *BELLEVEUE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL*! SHIT! IT EXPLAINS A WHOLE LOT ABOUT WHY IT LOOKS LIKE A PSYCH HOSPITAL. THE STARKNESS OF THE HALLS, THE MAZE-LIKE LAY-OUT, AND THESE ROOMS WERE PROBABLY LOCK-DOWN AT ONE TIME. GIVES ME THE ICKS! AND MY PERSPECTIVE OF WHERE I AM GIVES ME THE MOST HORRID FEELINGS IN MY GUT! (Now to try for Friday's entry... on Friday night!)

Friday 19 September

10:32pm I'm still waiting to take a shower. They gave me fresh linens today and they're brand new! And I got a pillow! I'd made one with the extra linens I'd found in the locker and what little I

managed to “acquire” along the way, but now, tonight, I have a pillow! A flat, plastic-covered pillow, but a pillow. Figures. I don’t know if I’ll have this room tomorrow. With my Fate? I’ll probably end up in a dorm room of 7 beds. They have them here. Oh well. I need to get out of here quickly anyway. - Well, so, today, this morning... The day begins at 5:00 with “Security” banging on the doors all along the echoing hall to wake us all for breakfast. Some Ubangi came to my door, pulled it open and yelled what sounded like “BREAD FOX!”. “Bread fox?” What in actual Hell is THAT supposed to be or mean? Eventually, after I heard him yell it a few times, I figured it out. “BREAKFAST!” Really! I had no intention of going to or for “Bread fox” nor “breakfast” so I rolled over and tried to go back to sleep. Finally, after several attempts I realised that I couldn’t. so, up, out of the bed and out to the shower. (It’s about 11.00pm and they just did a bed-check! They do that at about this hour to see who is and who is not in his assigned bed. Good thing I’m NOT in the shower! Sh**! Whew! But the timing is great: The sh**s next door have been smoking. I can smell it through the wall or in the window. Toss ‘em! Smoking in this building is forbidden. There are signs all over the place and if I am respecting that, well then, so too must they!) Anyway. AS I WAS GETTING READY TO LEAVE THIS MORNING, THE WOMAN WHO WAS ON THE DESK WEDNESDAY NIGHT WAS HERE ON THE FLOOR AND WHEN I WENT TO THANK HER FOR HER HELP SHE SAID “GOOD-MORNING. HOW ARE YOU MR. KESSLER?” SHE REMEMBERED MY NAME! I WANT TO GET HER NAME AND WRITE TO THE NEWS PAPERS TO THANK HER! She’ll never know how much it means to me. It’s the little remnant of being “human” that I have left! It did, truly, clear so much darkness from my mind and my spirit. - Ah, I learn that an “inspection” of some sort is due today so we had to strip the bed. Explains the good linens... Somebody will come in to “inspect”, see that the linens are fresh and crisp and all will appear delightful Oh well. So be it. But I was on the number 6 train by 7:30am and off to the Rock! - What a joy. What a pleasure to go back there each day. I don’t know what I’m going to do when I have no more car-fare to get back. I’ll need to start pan-handling this week-end! - Got the train to 116th Street and went to Waldbaum’s for my lunch. Got a *Fage* Greek yoghurt for me and one for Penelope too. Why not? Eh? This fellow named “George” was there at the market today! We chatted, laughingly, about smoking the various herbs in the spice aisle. It was a pure delight to talk with him. It’s a delight to talk with “people”. It’s a moment’s comfort to talk with people who are connections to my “better days” when I was a “human being”, not merely a “Homeless person”. I left him and took my groceries to the 53 bus and out to The Fort. - Indeed, Penelope was there. It began as a pleasure to see her but she somehow turned into her ridiculously stupid side, telling me what’s wrong with my life, how,

with my talents and intelligence I should be very gainfully employed, making judgemental statements without knowing facts or even taking the time to listen to them when I tried to tell her! We finally stopped talking (thankfully) and I set-up in the loo and, with a small pair of craft scissors and a little hand-held mirror, I took a HARICUT AND BEARD TRIM AND SHAVE!!! It did the job well enough! I felt a step closer yet to being a functioning human member of society. - For “lunch”, which, these days is pretty much my only meal, I microwaved some cheese on a roll. It passed as a “hot meal”. With it, my yoghurt, 2 little puddings and a coffee. Not much, but not bad. And much better than nothing at all. There are meals at the shelter but I don't know what they are and seriously, if I'm getting Food Stamps, I'd rather not take food that would better serve those who have no other food available. - 11:13pm I GOT MY SHOWER! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN... I CAN'T RECALL HOW LONG, I GOT TO BED CLEAN! THE FLOOR'S GONE QUIET. I WISH I COULD HAVE A SMOKE. I'M HAPPY AS SHIT THAT I HAVE AN EXTRA BLANKET. IT'S 23,5°C IN HERE BUT I WAS CHILLED AFTER THE SHOWER. A SHOWER! NOW, LET'S HOPE FOR SLEEP THROUGH THE NIGHT. - To finish a journal-entry for today: Shirl came by The Fort to work on her sculpture today. We talked very nicely indeed. She missed me Sunday at the “Art Splash” exhibit. We talked about becoming famous for our art and how wonderful that could be. Then she said something most kind: “You’ve already lost more... (Nope... not day, Thurs. This is Friday. Oh, right. So is this. I’m trying to catch-up with this at 10:15am on Saturday at T6. I’m too pre-occupied or tired or what-ever. More and more, my mind seems to be slipping away. Trying to remember the day of the week, never mind the time of day. Thankfully, a little travel alarm and thermometer was salvaged from all that I've lost over time. That's the only way I know the time and temperature... and the current date and day. My brains are boiling in my skull with all of what's happening to me these days. I'm learning how the Homeless can slip into insanity. It's easier under these conditions.) So, let me go on to Saturday. But just to close Friday: WHAT A MAGNIFICENT NIGHT'S SLEEP! I was starving. But, I slept.

Saturday 20 September

10:17am and I'm at T6: Thirty-seven days of Homelessness and day six at the shelter. This morning I noticed that the sign on the door at the shelter says that we must be out of the room MONDAY THRU FRIDAY FROM 8:00am TO 4:00pm. It says nothing about Saturday and Sunday. But it was so unusually quiet there this morning. I've risked making the bed and leaving the “essentials” (my clothes and the few toiletries I now have to my name) in the locker. “Ms.

Pax”, my “CaseWorker”, said I can meet with her today after 4:00pm so I’ll be back well before sign-in and what-ever else comes with the day and evening, but right now I have one plastic bag in tow. My entire life... in one black plastic trash bag. From comfortable home furnishings and kitchen-ware, clothes, books, music, art to one black plastic trash bag - The trains are running horribly! 37 minutes between L trains! I’ll be leaving here to give my-self enough time to get back as promptly as is possible. - Stopped at KeyFood in Rockaway Park for some lunch: cheese and rolls. I also picked-up 2 frozen, 9-slice pizzas to leave in the T6 freezer for the folks. Food stamps, if not for them it would be starvation or certain. - Penelope’s in a snit some-how, sweeping and pretty much ignoring me. She didn’t eat the yoghurt I bought for her yesterday. It’s still in the fridge. Oh well. Perhaps it’s carried over from the evening I got “discovered” in here, or perhaps it’s something else. But if she’s not speaking, I don’t know and honestly, with all else I’m dealing with these days, I can’t honestly say that I care. She has no idea what’s going on in my life, and as for her’s, well, as I see it, she has her home, her car, her comforts. If that one incident is all it takes for her to be silent with me, then let it be. - 10:58am I helped here, a very little, with the cleaning, by moving a table and chairs with Geoff. He was pleasant, but, a comment mad on his way out the door: “I’ll be back to talk with you in a little while...” has me troubled, considering Penelope set up her sculpting and left about 30 minutes ago. She’s blatantly not speaking to or with me today. I wonder, I wonder what’s coming now. I’m sitting here, alone. - 1:58pm Time to go. The sky is beautifully blue. The sun is wonderfully warm. The slightest breeze. A perfect Rockaway day... cut short. And I’ve been ignored through it all. But I got my Brighton tote and re-inked it. I re-drew the design with another ball-pint pen and sprayed it with 3 coats of fixative. So? - 2 cheese sandwiches. 2 puddings. I’m bringing 2 PopTarts back. It’s going to be some kind of evening... I fear. Well. Madame Atheros gets her Monday alone come next week. I NEED TO GET MOVING AND GET MY LIFE! - 9:11pm in my little room, A108: I left T6 through the back door and out the back gate, silently, walked behind T4 and out the gate to the bus, un-noticed. That’s it. That’s all. In silence. I had nothing to say to



anybody. Geoff never did come back to talk. I'm just as glad. I had nothing to say anyway. (Damned Ricans are at it again. Yelling in the hall-way.) So the 22 bus driver was familiar. Nice guy. We talked about the "other end" of the line. At the Tilden end of the run, all is quiet, calm, bucolic while at "the other end", it's in the middle of Far Rockaway, with stores, crowded streets and every moment holds the potential for violence. It's so different from one end of this peninsula to the other, and in between, the differences are actually obvious... good to worst, as it is. But the conversation with the driver made for a good trip. When I got off at B67th I heard a big "Hello!" Debra! The HHA from Premier whom I'd met on this very bus, months ago! We got to talking. I told her the truth about my present situation. She gave me her home number and told me that if it gets really bad and I consider going back to the beach, I should call her. "I have a big apartment and you can sleep on a spot on the floor before you go back to the beach." Imagine? Hey! Maybe she does and maybe she doesn't mean it. But she didn't have to give me her number! I was in need of good people after the brush-off at RAA. - I actually dozed on the trains back to the shelter. It was hot on the A and I was a bit sweaty. Something I can't afford. I don't have clothes to change into, should these get sweaty and dirty. But I've got my flip-flops (green) and bathing trunks with me, just in case I ever get the chance to get back into the Atlantic for a swim (and, at this point in my "life", true "bathing"). I re-inked the Brighton bag, something I've wanted to do for a while now since the original design was fading from being in the sun on the beach and the exposure to the weather in general as I resided out-of-doors. - So, a "laundry day" is coming! I really have to think about that. Where and how to get the soap, and where and how to get to a washer and dryer. - As it is, I got back to the shelter at 5:00pm. I'd cut out of RAA at 2:30pm. No queue to speak of getting into the shelter when I arrived. Sometimes it meanders out the door, around the side of the building and out to the street! When I got in, I went directly up to the 7th floor to find my case-worker. Well! There's a reason her name is "Pax". Ms. "Pax" indeed! When I got to sit with her at her desk, she listened to me. She spoke with me. She respected me. She preserved my dignity. She told me that she didn't take her job here for the money but because, if she can help even one person's life, it makes her happy and that's why she's come. She told me stories of previous clients. She's a God-fearing woman. She suggested trying for porters' jobs, maintenance work, in Jewish schools and such. When she asked how I became homeless, I told her. Then I told her that the agency told me that they won't assign me cases because I have no permanent address. She was taken a-back and truly was compassionately annoyed. "It's their fault to begin with! You see? No responsibility." When she asked what my pay was, I told her. She was actually angered. "They abuse you! How can they do that and get away

with it? You are worth so much more! They are abusing you!" Dignity. All about dignity. She was another God-send, and with what came after the Intake interview, Debra and Pax were necessary. - By the way... A108 has become my "Permanent" bed. Of course, that doesn't mean much, as I've learnt. - THEY SHIPPED DENNIS OUT TO BROOKLYN THIS EVENING! As I was leaving Ms. Pax and walking past "the lounge" I heard "JUDAH!" Dennis called me. (Oh, and while I was sitting in Mrs. Pax's office, Maddy came past. "I'm looking for the Jewish missionary's office." he said in a most humorous tone. I joked back with him in a Yiddish accent. It was a break in the stress and tension that we, and others are under in here.) Anyway, when my interview was done, I went into the lounge. I was still carrying my back-pack and such. Dennis reaches out, shakes my hand and tells me that he'd gone out this morning and when he returned, there was a note on his bed telling him to report to "Operations". He was being transferred immediately! When he commented on it, they told him that he only had 21 days to be here, at this shelter anyway. When he said he'd only been here about 8 (I think) they just told him that they found him something else, else-where, quicker than the 21 days. SHOVED OUT. LAST MINUTE. ON A SATURDAY! Ah, like PHC (Peninsula Hospital)! We're not "people". We're just some sh** they get to play with! So, I heard this, told him to give me a moment, came down to put my pack away, have a smoke and a much-needed drink of water. When I got back up to the 7th floor, he was on his way out! "Forbell Street" was where they were sending him... out on the border of Brooklyn and Queens. I knew where because it was on the A train line... the one I rode to get to and from Rockaway. He'd have to take the A to the Grant St. station! Out to the Queens border! Close to Rockaway! He asked me to walk with him to the Nr.6 train. I gave him my directions to Queens (the trains I take are 6-l-A) instead of what they'd given him (6-4/5-A or something like that, which was a MUCH longer and more involved trip). On the way to his train, he gave me a cigarette, told me he'd had some really miserable notions about Jews until meeting me. (It looks like I'm becoming the goodwill ambassador for world Jewry here!) Rachel had said "Wear the kippa. It will bring you good luck." Well, I don't know about the luck but it's certainly changing attitudes.) I gave him a swipe on my MetroCard so he didn't have to use the fare on his. He gave me his cell number. I gave him mine. He said he'll keep in touch and as the train pulled in, we shook hands and he said, with tears in his eyes and a crack in his voice: "I'm gonna miss you brother." One of the things he wants out of life is to win the Lottery, buy a building and use it for a shelter for homeless men like us. I pray he gets his dream. He said he'll call to let me know how Forbell is. I'm going to give him a call tomorrow on my way to Rockaway. Maybe I can meet him, we'll stop at Waldbaum's and I'll take him to Tilden for "lunch". How bleating "chic". - Well, it's 10:01pm. I've showered.

This journal is up to date. I'm going to try for some sleep tonight. Ah... if only I had clean clothes at this point. Well, more motivation to get a "life" and stop this "existence". - 10:20pm The door to the room opens. The door closes. "Bed check" to make certain that I didn't sign in and then leave the building. Bleating Puerto Ricans slamming doors and making noise in the halls! Trash bastards. I'm going for lights out and TRY to get some rest!

NOTES

Dimensions of the room:

Door: 92×40

Old door window: 17,5×5

Bed: 74×47

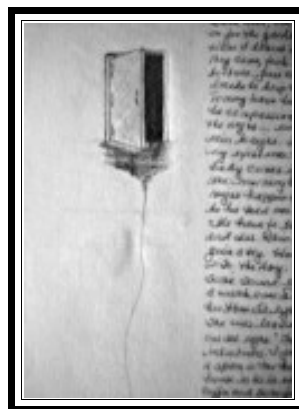
Room: 12ft deep x 7,5 ft. wide

Locker:

36 wide x 48 high x 25 deep

L: 17inches wide x 45 inches high

R: 17×16,5/12/16 (sections)



Sunday 21 September

About 11:00am and I'm in the backyard at T7 (back in Tilden). Last night, I'm happy to note, I got a good night's sleep. This morning I got up, showered and got out! I rang Dennis. No answer. I left a message. Got the train. Rang him at Broadway Junction which is in the neighbourhood he's in now. I wanted to bring him out to the Fort, show him where I "lived" before coming to the shelter, bring him to a place of some calmness and quiet, away from the mayhem and havoc of the shelter. I'm a bit disappointed. But, maybe there's a good reason why we didn't connect. I just hope he's not back "living" on the trains. Last night he told me that, if it was "that bad" at the new place, he'd just leave and go back to the Nr.6 train where he was before. (No matter how bad it might be, trying to "live" on the subways, when it becomes familiar and we "adjust", it remains a place of familiarity... and comfort... just as with me, on the ground, under a tree. - Today, at the Fort, Penelope and Geoff are being "civil". No indication of animosity. - I ate a cheese sandwich and 2 puddings. My "meal" for the day. - The sun feels good. The breeze is great. I need to wash my clothes. - 9:30pm JUST WHEN YOU BELIEVE ALL HELL HAS BROKEN LOOSE, ALONG COMES EVEN MORE!!! W. BENJAMIN (my previous Home-care assignment) IS IN HOSPICE. CANCER OF THE SPINE! MY ADP/PAYROLL ACCOUNT WON'T BUY A PACK OF

CIGARETTES TONIGHT! MY METROCARD EXPIRES TUESDAY! A HUGE BLISTER ON MY LEFT FOOT BROKE JUST NOW WHILE I WAS IN THE SHOWER! Oh, Dennis never called. OK? OK then. But I met Debra at the “20/20 Market” on 59th Street today. What a charmer she is. Hugs and all. She offered to wait for me to come out of the market to make sure I got in and out OK because she's concerned... it's the neighbourhood where things begin to really change for the worse and there are people out there who'll be violent simply for the sake of being violent. ADDING TO THE HELL THOUGH, ONE OF MY BOTTOM-FRONT TEETH IS A BIT BAD, PAINFUL. I'm exhausted. - On my stop at the hospital to visit today, I went to x-ray with Brain and when he was finished, I brought him back to his room! Had I not done, chances are, he'd still be sitting there waiting for somebody from “Transportation” to come get him. “Humanity” is dead and very much gone, and these days it seems that the people around us are so lacking “dignity” that they make it their best effort to rob us of any that we might have left. - It's warm in here tonight. It's noisy in the hall. I noticed that the wall by the bed is a sub-divide, board-not-plaster, just some thin board, and the scum in the room next are smoking in there. I can smell it. Tough times are here again. 9:42pm, the scum next door are yelling and slamming doors and such. My eyes burn. My foot burns. The wall is moving, bowing and buckling because of the sh** next door! I need sleep! I truly do. And at these moments, I so miss the silence of my tree.

Monday 22 September

7:02am Waiting for the shower. Miserable sleep last night. Woke at about midnight and couldn't fall back to sleep all night. I was actually drenched from sweat at one point. Just anxiety and panic. No money. No travel. My PPD results will come in the mail and I won't be able to get them! I'm here in Manhattan and my mail is out in Rockaway! Job? How? It all just keeps compounding! I can't walk great distances now because of my blistered foot, other-wise I'd even try to walk out to Rockaway to get the mail. I've got a 5\$ US and a 5\$ Canadian bill. 60-cents in change. Clothes are filthy! Blood on the sheets from mosquito bites. This room FILLS with them at night and all through the night they bite, and eat... me... as if my blood is any good... as if THEY need it more than I do. I've become “insect food”, nothing more, nothing less... insect food. If I can't get to RAA and Penelope, I can't charge the cell phone. I wonder what evil I've committed to be so deserving of this situation. Well, one thing is for certain: kippa or no, religiosity and ethics or not, it's my survival first! From now on. The Hebrew people fought, destroyed, killed, lied for survival. Today? MY TURN! - 6:15pm on the shuttle train at B116th

Street, Rockaway. A heavy day. A very heavy day. I stopped at Waldbaum's this morning. 2 yoghurts, Starbuck's tinned coffee and a box of Ring Dings for Brian. Off to The Fort for a silent treatment from Penelope and empty donation jars from the exhibits! OK. I asked Penelope if she was pissed with me. "100 per-cent." was her reply and all because she detected an attitude from me yesterday about my having made coffee! WHAT? I made coffee! Seriously, WHAT is the situation here now? Coffee? Either the rest of the world is gone mad or I have. Anymore, I can't be certain. - 9:11pm at A108 and dead tired. The day has gotten to me. The shelter is getting to me. But! I'm showered before bed (the only normalcy - shower before bed - in my existence). So I should focus on that first step to a "Return"... either to the life I came from or... to where I was before conception. One or the other. Meanwhile... I spoke with Penelope on the matter of her attitude an the coffee and I told her that, of all the people I have in my life these days, I don't want to lose her to some argument that can be settled. Truth though, as I see it? Well, if it's so friggin easy for her to get pissed and shut me out, I don't need HER either. But for now, just for now, I'll try to keep some peace. I don't need animosity or enemies either. So, that settled, I had my breakfast there... in a lot of silence. - I ALMOST FORGOT TO NOTE: THE PPD'S ARRIVED THIS MORNING! FOR SCHITZENGIGGLES I STOPPED AT THE POST OFFICE AND THERE THEY WERE! POST MARKED THE 19TH! NOW I CAN GO TO EVERY AGENCY AND NURSING HOME ON THE PENINSULA... NOW I NEED CARFARE! BUT I'VE GOT "MY PAPERS" NOW! - OK! - So Tommy comes by T6 and leaves. By noon I left too. But not before grabbing 4 cigarettes from Penelope's pack. Hey! I was going to go for the whole pack. I'm still not THAT miserable yet though where I believe that the WORLD is MINE so long as I can grab it and run. I headed to 148th to find Chabad. Why? I figured I'll tell them I'm available to work. Maybe they can and maybe they can't help. Well, they don't have an actual centre. The Rebbe (rabbi), Osbo... OK... Osdoba, a young man, directs Belle Harbor Torah Institute and has "Chabad" in his home. I was most warmly welcomed. We talked. He asked if I'm looking to rent (and suggested a basement). Of course I said I'm interested but the 600 dollars base rent that I said I could afford at present didn't set well with him. He suggested almost double that! Oh well. Too bad. However, he did invite me to services at the "stiebel" (little substitute synagogue that smaller congregations use... usually somebody's living-room or the likes) on 137th. So... So whatever. - I politely left there to continue on my day... with nothing less than I'd started with, and only more in the way of this new knowledge about "Chabad" and they're "helping" people... oh yeah right sure. It was still rather early so I decided to bring my PPD report to the "Extra Care" agency just up the boulevard. TIMING!!! The Nurse-Director was there! She signed-off on my

file! A Ms. Thomas gave me the W4 to complete. She wanted me to return with a photo (the HHA's supply their own photo for ID. Cheap-ass agency, but I gave her one of my passport photos. My ID is done! The paper work is done! I'm "employed" by Extra Care now! They even took the RPH address! I'm on my way BACK already. SLOWLY. Sure. But what the Hell? Eh? (9:33pm and the scum next door is at it, pounding, yelling. Reasons to get the Hell out of here!) - Moving along... it was too late to hit Far Rock at this point and the sky was clouding so I opted for my stop-over at PHC. THAT as a down-hill slide... Brian was in dialysis HAVING A NEW LINE INSERTED so I wasn't allowed in. I went up to Hospice on the 3rd floor to visit W. Benjamin. No name on room 337! The Nurse told me he died this morning! Unexpectedly! So now, Benjamin is no longer viable, Zami is in Brooklyn, my private duties are gone! I have nothing appropriate to wear to a shiva (funeral) call. Life shows me my sh** worth again. If this is Karma, I REALLY want to know what I've done to deserve THIS sh**! But the Nurse was kind and we chatted and I'm thinking of trying for a spot on the Hospice unit. PHC is thinking of turning 2N (of ALL units!) to Hospice. What the Hell? When I get the chance, I'll give it a try. Or even before, for Schitzengigglez. I went back down to see Brian. Kleyменова won't let up on the nosey BS. "What's going on?" she asked when I got to the floor. "Visiting." I said without stopping. And literally, with-out stopping to even glance in her direction. I can't be certain if it's "interest", "curiosity" or simply arrogant bitchiness on her part, but no matter; she treated me like sh** on the sole of her shoe and although, once upon a time I would have let it go, I no longer have that capacity. I won't confront her... I'll simply dismiss her. And so, I spent about an hour with Brian. He dozed for most of the time so I left. He'd be on dialysis until 7:00pm anyway. It was about 4:00pm at that point. - The Q22 to 119th. Library! Internet! Barbara! Old times. Familiar faces. Familiar surroundings. All from a time when I was a "human being". With the time and computer access, I got EVERY e-mail account and EVERY "voy" internet community board checked. Interestingly enough, not one e-mail or post to or about me. *I am dead. Gone. Forgotten. Finished.* And Pax thinks I'm "empty" without people, that I should re-connect with others from the past, hold fast to those of the present and seek more for the future. Ah-hah. Well! So what? I hit it all and left at the end of my computer time. Barbara had left with-out a word, while I was on-line. - To Waldbaum's. (Oh, 3,60 dollars left to my name on the ADP card! I'm bleating broke now!) 2 packages of some 70-cent turkey, a "PMR" roll (that's what the sign on the box read), a box of PopTarts (I just finished the last package of them as I journal), chocolate milk and a quite "dinner" in Tribute Park. (I tear the roll in half, stuff the turkey into it and that's my sandwich, washed down with the chocolate milk which is followed by PopTarts for dessert...

“dinner”). I hope I can have another tomorrow evening since my MetroCard expires tomorrow and that means no more Rockaway for a while unless this shelter can do something for me in the way of providing some transport fares. We’ll see. I won’t expect it. I put in a last call to Dennis: again, no answer and I wonder... is he back on the trains? - Before the horizon went red from sunset, I left for the shuttle. The day was done. - As I came in here to the shelter this evening (I got the 15 bus from 14th and 1st. It didn’t save time but it dropped me off almost at the entrance to this asylum which means MUCH LESS WALKING, and truthfully, I need that now), the guard yelled “Meal ticket and ID” at us. I come in, put my ticket and ID on the x-ray, back-pack and sweat-shirt in to scan, position for metal detection and one security guard, Black male moron says to me: “Where’s your ticket and ID sir?” as I’m being “wanded”. I reach to the x-ray machine to hand them to him and he barks “They don’t do me no good over there!” I didn’t dignify it with a reaction. He took his time looking at the documents. I believe I disappointed him by not even blinking. Useless dreg (like the “spics” in the hall-way now at 10:06pm). Some of them behave as if they truly believe that they’re so much “better”, more valuable than we, the Homeless little slobs are. They have a “uniform” which makes them “superior” some-how, and gives them permission to deride and degrade us. And too often it seems they try to instigate confrontation, probably for their amusement. Ah... me? I’ve got my own matters to settle. Let them be amused... with and by somebody else. I’m really too busy for “amused” right now. - So, I speak with no-one lately. - I notice: This room seems to be sucking cigarette smoke from some-where all the time. That, and mosquitoes. - My major concern is laundry and having no jacket. It’s getting chilly these days and I’ve nothing but a t-shirt, cotton work-shirt, the corduroy work shirt and a light-weight hooded sweat-shirt... and THAT is actually ALL. But right now, in spite of the Ricansh** conference in the hall, I’m going to try for SOME sleep now.

Tuesday 23 September

9:34pm and back at A108. I’m tired. I want a shower. I want a smoke. I want to get to sleep. I can’t. I’m waiting for Pax to come off her break. I spent over an hour looking for her from 8-9:00pm. Couldn’t find her. When she finally appeared, at 9:30pm she tells me she’s on break! I want carfare for tomorrow! Rockaway Health took my application papers today, will do finger-prints and orientation tomorrow. I need to be there by 1:00pm. I’ve learnt that I’m entitled to carfare and damn it, I want it! I haven’t eaten anything here. I’ve used 3 sets of linens and some toiletries. I’ve been of no particular consequence. So, I want the carfare! I actually NEED it! - I was on the

train already this morning at 8:00am, stopped at T6 and offered to buy a pack of cigarettes from Penelope for 5 dollars since she pays only 2,75 plus shipping. She wouldn't do it. Rather, she chose to offer me cigarettes from her pack and to tell me that I owe her a carton. How charming is she? How typical. Anyway, I left there at about 10:30am and went out to JCCRP. Leetha made 4 copies of my PPD report... FREE! So I have them for further job applications. We spoke about the shelter and such. She said she was doing well. I said I was doing better with each day. I suppose, in some respects, I truly am. I spoke with Srully about the anti-Semitism here in the shelter. I left, armed with my PPD report and went to Rockaway Home Care. - Carol Haynes, Recruitment Mgr, took me in, gave me some forms, took copies of what I had (certificates, passport, etc.), a photo, and the next thing I know, I'm to report tomorrow for orientation! Hey! Of course, I have to come up with 3 references again. I have to do that before the orientation. And right now I'm exhausted and it's 9:57pm. Time to go back up to the 7th floor. - 10:28pm I got the voucher for carfare! I have to get the MetroCard in the morning at 7:00am. Pax wasn't very friendly but she did encourage me to keep going for more money from new jobs. Well, of course I will. - As I waited for her to "appear" (from the office across the hall from where she should have been) some young guy showed up looking for her. He was sweet and took a place behind me to wait. BUT "Miss Pax" said that HE had come to her before I did and so she took him before me. Truth? I'd been looking for her since 8:00pm but no sense in arguing. The mentality around here makes it futile. Suffice, I'll get carfare to "home" tomorrow. PLEASE! Let very LUCRATIVE WORK FOLLOW IMMEDIATELY. - I'm not going to shower now. Too damned tired! (Wednesday on the A train at Euclid Ave. en route to Far Rockaway) After the agency I went walking to find Brenda's agency on New Haven Street. Unless there's something I missed, New Haven only goes down to 19th St. and the address is 15-26 on the ave. SO I got on the 22 bus to PHC. Arrived about 2:00pm or so. Brian was in better spirits and condition. I was in the teal scrubs from Kristen and learned that precious few pay attention and look past the scrubs when I walk into this hospital. I got away with bringing Brian back to his room. They pay so little attention that I pass as an employee in scrubs. His room-mate spilled water, I cleaned it up! We joked about me being on the payroll for all the work I do there. It's not really funny at all. - I got to chat with Rozann for a moment. Told her of the miseries of being in the shelter. She feigned some kind of compassion but it was obvious she has none. Her's is a job... nothing more. - When I told Brian that I'm hoping to get carfare for tomorrow from the shelter, he gave me 5 singles, 4 quarters. Again, he said "We never know when it could be us and when we can, we should help." I owe HIM more than anyone can imagine. I WORKED for Margot and had to beg and gravel for everything. Now,

I'm meeting people who do, as I've always done, simply because they can. This is the world. - Leaving Rockaway today was painful. Not knowing when I'll return or how. It actually hurts. My bitterness increases terribly. - I spoke, on the phone, with Dennis as I crossed 28th Street this evening. He suggested we get together on Saturday in Rockaway. I need to get the carfare for it! I deserve to have a good day away with somebody "real". RAA is sh**. Geoff and Penelope were talking about a guy who was interested in joining this month. 25 dollars "membership dues" until December and another 25 dollars in January. The "annual" is the calendar year. Geoff said "Even if you're on Welfare, that 25 dollars isn't going to break you! And if it's that much to you, we don't need you as a member." No. They don't need ME as a member. But while I am, and paid-in-full, they can deal with me shoving my realities at them. Let them face me, my situation, the people I'm meeting now. Self-serving, delusional dick-heads who believe "RAA" is actually important. Nepotistic idiots. A day with Dennis will be a delight. - I move along here...

NOTES:

OPEN THE DOOR WITH
HOPE...
NOTHING BUT DARKNESS
WITHIN
AN ILLUSTRATED JOURNAL OF
HOPE
DISAPPOINTMENT
AND
DESPAIR



Wednesday 24 September

11:22am "A TRAIN" AT GASTON! At the shore! Rockaway! I got on the Nr.6 at 28th at 10:06am. Hazy sun-shine on the sea. It's so good to be HOME this morning! It's best that I'm away from the shelter and The City. But, I'm starving! Good that I have time to grab something somewhere to eat. I just need to find a place to eat it out in Far Rock. (12:45pm at Rockaway Home Care agency) Spent about 45 minutes on-line at the Far Rock library! Must remember that they give more time there. Didn't get to eat and worse, could use a BM. But I've made it for orientation...

early. Good. Good. - Meanwhile, this morning's events: Didn't want to get out of bed. So tired. But by 6:30am, was showered and ready to toll. 7:00am at the "office" where we sign-in in the evening. That's the time and place I was told to be by Pax. At 8:30am I was STILL there! At about 8:45am I got in and the nice lady told me to go down the hall to the office noted "Carfare". Down the hall to a truly soft-spoken, delightful woman who took my voucher and handed me four dollars in cash. It was well after 9:00am by then. I bolted to my room, grabbed back-pack and Brighton bag and all but ran down the stairs. Daniel (so is the name of the guy who'd gotten his papers torn-up the evening I got A108) was standing in the court-yard. We got to talking and walking. He walked me to the train. From him I learned: There will be a physical and psych examination which take one day each. I need to get to Pax by Friday to keep my bed. He's waiting for re-assignment and housing. He's a Veteran. He gave me a cigarette too! Says he'll drop by my room tonight after 10:00pm. At the rate I'm fading, I'll be asleep by then. Maybe he'll be too. Right now it's an effort to keep my eyes open. Ah, to sleep under the stars again... to SLEEP... SLEEP! SLEEP! Not yet. Not now. Soon. But for now, I hope they'll get on with orient..... I have no idea idea about him... I have no idea what I was just writing. I'm dozing off sitting here and there there are 3 others come in. Must wake up! It's already 1:08pm. (Continuing at approximately 4:45pm at the A train station at Mott

Avenue) Orientation and finger printing done. In-service tomorrow 9:00am-1:00pm! I was going to try for the medical and psych at the shelter tomorrow! But a job is much more important AND Rockaway has LIVE-IN! I could get out of the shelter that much sooner and on with the general life. I just need to get my car-fare tonight. If so, I'll go for In-service tomorrow morning. I'll have to be on the train by 7:00am though. I can do that... some-how... ANY how! - Not taking time to eat. PopTarts in the room at this point. But I have my cigarettes now. The little things matter so much. - Orientation was truly informative. I give them that. - I notice that I'm smelling "Homeless". That dusty odour from un-washed clothes. I need to attend to that. If only I had the confidence to ask Pax. Then again, I MUST see her this evening for car-fare again. We'll see. Too bad I probably won't make it to dinner at the shelter. It would be a new experience. - People are boarding the train. Let's get this over with. I need sleep. - (10:26pm A108) Blue scrubs bottoms washed and hanging in the window. I shredded a plastic bag, twisted it and put it across the window. Tenement sh** that I am now. A pair of socks and the hospital socks are hanging on the bed frame. Laundry. I'm in my bathing trunks, indeed. When I came in this evening, Mike, my first or second room-mate (2nd I believe. He's the one who came in wearing a suit. His combination didn't work.) told me that there's a basin in the shower room on the 6th floor and

he's been doing his laundry there. Told me I should come up to do mine. When I finally do my jeans that's where I'll go. I just need a place to hang the wash to dry. - So I got back about 6:00pm and saw Pax. She was a delight this evening. Very chatty and engaging. Real or psychotic? No telling. But appreciated. I came to the room, finished off 8 PopTarts, went back upstairs... nope... washed the scrubs bottoms, hung them in the locker then went out for a smoke and upstairs to sign-in. Car-fare at 9:30pm. Back down-stairs to wash socks. Back up-stairs to a pleasant Mr. Brown. 4 dollars car-fare! I'm going to try for In-service tomorrow. No sense bleating around at this point. Back down-stairs to hang the scrubs in the window. - No sign of Daniel. I'm glad. - I'm developing a cough. That tickle-in-the-throat cough. I need sleep! - The guard on the 2nd floor this evening is Greek! She and I spoke a bit. It's comforting to be able to speak with people... especially people I don't have to lie to and hide from. - 2 Haitians on the 7th floor were speaking French. - Mike passed me up-stairs. He put his hand on my shoulder as he passed. Even that much brings a sense of "humanity". Other people won't even come near, let alone, touch and Homeless person. - It's good to know people... for many reason. But I've met more wonderful people in here. Truly. - 10:42pm Time for lights- out. No shower tonight. I'm exhausted! - (Continuing at 9:59pm on Thursday) Twice during the night somebody came by, opened the door and let it slam. One of them might have been Daniel. I needed to get my sleep so I didn't budge.

Thursday 25 September

10:02pm I really need to get some sleep tonight! It's RAINING! And I hear it's supposed to rain all through the week-end! So much for hanging with Dennis. Isn't life just strange? I was looking forward to meeting with and talking with and just hanging about with him. Well, once again: there's a reason. As it is, I'm showered, extra blanket on the bed, socks, under-shorts and a T-shirt washed and hanging in the window. The hall is quiet. I've got nothing to complain about... I suppose. As for the day? It began at 5:30am. I didn't want to get up but the in-service out in Rockaway was being given. I went! Quick shower and out the door. On the 6 train by 6:50am and at Mott Avenue by 8:30am! Figures. Early. So I went to Associated supermarket for a large jar of "Bustello" instant coffee (yay!), a bag of rolls, jar of peanut butter, bottle of honey, box of PopTarts and some "Little Debbie" pastries. 19 dollars! My Food Stamps are down to 81 dollars until the 10th of October. But I won't need coffee for a while. - The In-service was tedious, boring and covered 2 topics I just did in April for my certification. But it turns out for the very best:

RHAS scheduled my physical for today! Once that's passed, I'm eligible for work! Here's hoping for a nice live-in spot... immediately... in Belle Harbor or Neponsit. Although Seagirt at B20th Street is very lovely too. Anyway, on the break during In-service, I stopped up at JCCRP to tell Leetha (I think that's her name) the news about RHAS. She was working in the food pantry but took a few moments to talk with me. And she gave me a little bag of lotions, soaps, shampoo, etc. Somebody gave them to the pantry. They're from Hampton Inn, Biltmore, etc. Great stuff! Smells so clean! She also handed me a little pamphlet on the "word of God" and Jesus. (It only just hit me now, at 10:21pm: Jesus? At JCCRP? The "Jewish Community Centre of Rockaway Peninsula". Oh well.) And so, I returned to the tedium of In-service... almost nodding off from the sheer and utter exhaustion of... everything. - That done, the walk down B.20 to Seagirt to the clinic for urine and blood tests for my physical. Oh, and a general physical where the doctor told me my BP is 90/60 (which is what it was almost every day at PHC), my weight is 163 (hey! I've GAINED WEIGHT some-how) and I have asthma (left lung, lower) so they say. Duh. Off I go, back up B.20 (admiring the area: Russian and Hebrew and a LOT of Blacks) to the Far Rock library. A couple of postings to the Newburgh voy, a cross reference to a posting on my "1955Brokenwaves" prose "blog", Google search for me, one for this shelter (Somebody under the name "Argile Sox" wrote about it in a book in 2006. I want to read that book!). No e-mails at all. Dead or not, I'm dead. "JK is dead an living in Kips Bay" (after the old book "Sheila Levine Is Dead and Living In NY", a book Mum had me read SO MANY YEARS ago)... in a shelter for Homeless people like me who now call the old Bellevue Psych lock-down their home. OK. I'm dead. I get the point. Time to move on, move along. Yes, I am alone. - Back on the A at Mott. How I hate to see that zero balance on the MetroCard when I swipe it! It was about 4:00pm or so. The wind was coming up, cloudy sky, beautiful crashing waves out on the open Atlantic Ocean! I do so miss Rockaway! - While I had a signal, I phoned ADP to get the routing number for the



ADP card for direct deposit at RHAS. It should arrive in 7 days. - On the train, I ate 4 PopTarts. I'd finished the Little Debbies during the day. Living on sugar again! - 10:38pm I'm hoping for sleep. The "trash" (the nightly gang who gather to yell, scream, holler and create enough disturbance to keep us all from sleep) is in the hall now. Worthless sh**. At this hour! - (Continuing on Friday morning, the 26th, 10:28am at the Midtown Manhattan Library) RAIN! This morning I forced a small BM and right now, as I sit calmly, my bowels are struggling to clear themselves. I don't want to "go" because I've only just settled at the end of an

empty table by the window, away from any and everybody else. My 99-cent poncho is on the chair beside me, wet. I'd rather not carry it about until it's dry. But, life and existence being what they are, what I'd prefer, doesn't matter. Let's see how long I can hold out. - I'm noticing that I didn't finish yesterday's entry. For the sake of continuity, I'll do that now and then get to the farce that is today: (So, for the events of last evening...) I got back to the shelter at approximately 6:00pm. Could have been a bit earlier but I'm not certain. Time there is irrelevant. Went to A108 to drop my back-pack and shove 2 PopTarts down my throat and up to the 7th floor for car-fare for tomorrow. I've no place to be tomorrow but if they're going to give me cash, I can use it or, I can certainly travel at some point. Not to mention, I might need it to get to work immediately. Best to have it when needed. Little did I know how smart this decision was to become. Pax was in but had a client there. I waited. When I got to see her, only some moments later, she seemed pleased to see me but said I'd have to come back for car-fare because she had an "intake" to complete. .. OK. So I was kind and pleasant, thanked her for her continued support and kindness, went down-stairs to make a wash. About an hour later I was back on the 7th floor, using the New Haven Agency as my destination for car-fare. She was a bit supportive of my job search efforts but stressed the need for more money... says she knows Home Attendants receiving 12-dollars an hour. Well, I'm looking forward to being another of them. I left with the voucher and headed back to A108 to make a make-shift clothes line in the window to hang my laundry. I used the cloth medical tape. Not perfect but it serves my purpose. I also took the time to throw together 2 peanut butter-and-honey sandwiches. In spite of not being able to properly move my bowels I'm constantly hungry. But I mustn't get caught with food in the room. There are signs about, somewhere, that prohibit it. I can understand why. We have men in here who can't make a bed or keep the shower clean. SO, I got a few moments to lie down before heading BACK up to the 7th floor to sign in for the night. Useless moments for actual rest. But a lie-down none-the-less. - 8:00pm and BACK on the 7th floor. Mr. Brown made the announcement about needing to have our meal ticket in hand or it's back to the end of the queue, and THEN came the crack in the head: NO CAR-FARE would be distributed tonight! It was a horror and a relief to me. I wanted to get the matter settled now but I wanted to shower before bed too. So, without car-fare available, I could simply go back to A108, shower and try for a full night's sleep. OK. - As I was getting ready for my shower, Angelo, from A109 came in to visit. We talked, laughed. He told me about his health troubles: plastic body parts, rehab., daughter, etc. Mike, from A109 came too. It's nice to be known by people in here, but not too much. I tell them that I get up in the morning and GO. My feeling is: the longer I'm in or around the building, the greater my chances of falling victim to

something. Besides, I'm certain that there are those who don't want Jews around. Best to keep moving, keep busy, keep away. - I did pass a guy from down the hall who reminded me of the coming high holy days. I have no appropriate clothes to wear to services. I'll be alone, dreadfully alone for all of them this year. As I smoked out-side, some guy asked if I'm Jewish. I'm wearing a kippa. What do these people think? But, so far, the only truly negative experience was Shockeye and being told, out-right, that I have no "right" to be in the shelter. (11:20am and I'm fading into dozing here!) - Generally, this evening I've been a bit apprehensive. There's bad weather coming, many new faces, tempers and the likes are coming into the shelter. I make my presence very scarce. - The day closed with shower, journal, bed by about 11:00pm. - Note: When I came in this evening, the DHS cop who helped me the evening I got A108 assigned, quickly scanned me with the wand and asked if I had guns in my sweat-shirt. We both smiled. When he sees me in the building he asks how I'm doing. Humanity? He's a kind soul... and that's so rare, not only in this shelter and system, but in this world in general. I don't think he knows how much good he does for a human spirit, but I appreciate it so much.

Friday 26 September

11:52am at the Midtown Library. The rain seems to have abated. It's QUITE chilly in here now. I arrived at 10:28am. I'm hungry but there's just no way to sneak a nibble. I opened the pack of PopTarts, broke a bit, but can't get it from bag to mouth! People are situated so every move can be monitored. It's a poor day for lunching in Bryant Park too. Maybe I'll be able to get into the stacks here at some point to grab a bite. I still need to get on-line to find the office of VNS Home Care. Ironical: I'm wearing the teal scrub top and am on the second floor... "Health Information Centre". Medical! I'm fitting-in here as I do on 29th Street, at the shelter (being so close to Bellevue and NYU Hospitals. I look like staff!). But before I fade off an out (OH! Thankfully! It's 12:03pm. The afternoon! I can return to my room in 4 hours.) THE FARCE OF THIS FRIDAY: Construction next door to the shelter, right out-side my window, woke me up at 5:26am. I rolled over and dozed until about 6:45am. I SO had to pee and dump. Got the pee but not all of the dump. Had my coffee, headed for the shower. A new guy was coming to take the shower. No contest! I got it. Am I starting to actually LOOK "Seasoned" in the shelter to the point where people move aside for ME? Shower done, dress, lock-up the locker. 7th floor by approx. 8:10am to queue for car-fare at 8:30am and there I stood. 4 behind me, until, at long last, somebody came to tell us to go to another office down the hall! No note on the door. No thought, no

consideration! So I lost my 1st place on the queue but I didn't mind. Angelo A107 came by this morning. According to him, the entire week-end is expected to be a wash-out. RAIN! And me with only one set of clothes. At that, I've worn, at most, my jeans, for 43 days now! If they get wet it's going to be a terrible odour! So, anyway, I get to the guy at the "car-fare" desk who THEN tells those waiting that he has no more car-fare and we're to wait "in the lounge". That's come to annoy me in the first place: the "lounge". No-where to sit, filthy, depressing... "lounge"? But I go. As with last evening and the car-fare but with Pax, there is no return time made known. I go to "the lounge" to sit at the window and stare blankly out at the mud in the construction site and at the rain coming out of the sky to curse me. A woman comes in speaking in a very loud voice. She is a "Substance Abuse Counsellor" with information on re-hab and recovery programmes, to tell us there is no more Welfare, we must be working and on our current job for 6 months before trying for Section 8 and other bits of good information to help us get out of the shelter. I listen until some guy who was turned away at the car-fare desk comes in to tell me that the REAL car-fare office is now open! Again, I was the first there this morning but I've lost my place! But I know enough to shut my mouth. Pissing them off gets you nothing more than further attacks on your basic human dignity. I just grab my back-pack and go in silence. It's the same woman as Wednesday morning: kind disposition, soft spoken, compassionate demeanour. I'm relieved. We exchange thoughts on the weather. She tells me she's to attend a shower tomorrow. She hands me papers to sign. I do. 4 dollars. I thank her, wish her a good week-end, depart. I need to pee and to sh**. I need to get out of the building. I need to eat something. I need to figure what to do with my day. I hate being in The City. I head numbly... as I am most of the time when I'm in the shelter... to the exit. I'm out. A man wishes me a "Good Shabbos". It's strange how many Jews are in the shelter. But none wearing a kippa. Today I think how it could be to be *seen* going into the shelter wearing my kippa. It would make a great news story! Given, of course, only if they'd make public the Edlyne fiasco. Who knows? Still, it's interesting about the Jews in the shelter system. - A smoke and I'm in my 99-cent poncho and out on the streets, wandering up and over to here, the Mid-town library where, at 12:56pm, my eyes are fading, poncho is almost completely dry, my back is sore from sitting, bladder needs emptying and so do the bowels, I'm hungry, the temperature has dropped 2° and some clown turned on a fan and I'm half way through the day, cold, in pain and exhausted. So. I'm caught up with the Journal. The place is beginning to fill up. A list of things to hit on-line, an appointment of time on-line and the rest of the day from here. - 4:52pm A108 (The bed number is A108... the room number is 2E-22) Today, I'd hit the Internet for my 45 minutes and hit ALL e-mails (nothing there to read), "WordPress" to put this into

digital format on-line, just in case these books are ever lost (or, in the case of “family”... stolen and disposed of) and searches! Pee'ed and strolled back to the shelter on foot. At the end of 35th Street is a ferry and a small park. Had my 2 usual cold-cuts sandwiches in the park. (And I ate the broken PopTart en route to the park.) Being by the water was soothing. The waves of the East River broke in places, some rolled along, others hit the cement wall and rolled back out. I found myself feeling sorry for the waters of the East River: so confined, so beaten by boats, so filthy. Oh, to stand at the open ocean again where the water is master to the land. (The little shell I carried in my sweat-shirt got broken some-how. The pieces are in my window. But Killian's post-card of the Tilden dunes is in the plastic on the wall beside the door to remind me of “Home” where I'll return, soon, successful. I actually hate being here, in The City. The buildings are ugly, too TOO much noise, too many “beings” wandering about. I want to go home to Rockaway!) So, after eating, I meandered down 1st Av. to here. How silly to look at the well-to-do and their pamperedness. May they enjoy it whilst they may. At the rate the economy is going, some of them may end up as some of us. Those of us who have always struggled now have it better. We learnt what to do to get by. I arrived here just past 4:00pm, took the damp wash out of the locker where I'd stored it during my “outing” and hung it back in the window, had one more sandwich and now? It's 5:06pm. I can relax until 8:00pm for sign-in. It's calm here now. I don't know what I'll do tonight. Only 3 cigarettes left BUT when I put the 4 dollars car-fare into my wallet there was 2 dollars in there already! 6 dollars in the wallet. 1 dollar in change! Ah, to be filthy rich! - Nap time on this dreary evening. If I could know I'll keep this room I'd wash my jeans tonight. But with the way this place plays with people, there's just no telling. (9:11pm) Mike (from room A127) and I got to talking this evening. He's Hungarian Jew. Family gone in Auschwitz. He's 50 years old. We talked about surviving this “shelter” business. He, like me, doesn't see the sense in it, the surviving. I said that our relatives survived through the war so I'm supposing we owe them that much to continue the tradition. A guy from Washington Heights, a Puerto Rican, probably in his 50's also, said he remembered when the Jews and Germans were there. “You could eat off the streets” and “They all worked together. They left and you don't see that anymore.” We talked about how this system and its people tries to rip basic human dignity out of each of us and how there are men in here, clients or what-ever, who do the same thing. Some of them are here for a while. Others come as “Over-nighters”. Me? I get the gut feeling that some Over-nighters come in to steal what they can get and leave until their next steal. When I woke from my hour's nap earlier, I was having a sandwich and the door flies open. Young, Black guy standing there. Said nothing, closed the door. Checking to see if the room was empty? To see if there was something

to take? Nobody can ever know for certain. This place brings out the good and the base sh** in a being. - As we're talking, comes a White guy. Wants to know about signing for his bed. Chris Bowman. A.K.A. "Boxer". He came in last night from Downstate prison. His supervisor told him to leave his stuff in his locker today while he took care of his parole business and while he was gone, the shelter emptied his locker and assigned him a different bed in a 7-bed room. He's pissed. Can't blame him. This bleating place (and I mean that, they screw everybody when-ever they can) has absolutely no respect for humanity. At the very top of the sh** list is the Africans, and there are so many of them employed here. They're no different than old junk-yard dogs... just plain nasty. Actually, that's not so true. Junk-yard dogs become nasty over time. They're probably adorable little puppies. These Africans are most likely born of nasty parents, dropped from nasty wombs of nasty women and, in spite of any resemblance to humans, choose to become more nasty. Moving along... - I went up to the 7th floor to sign. Pax comes along, takes me off queue into the office. She wants to know how it went today. TODAY she wants to know. I simply said it went well and that I'm now registered with 3 agencies. I am. As for yesterday? They need the results of the blood-work and drug test before giving me a client. I thanked her for encouraging me and giving me the ability to see past my situation. She said it's what she does every day. She encouraged me to go for more money all the time. She's right. When I left her, I went to the end of the queue. It avoids any BS from the gnat-brains here. She came out and told me to go back to where I was. I declined. Hey. It makes no difference when I sign, as long as I sign. - After sign-in, I went down for one more smoke. A guy quietly walked over to me and asked if I'd save some of my cigarette for him. Imagine being at a point in life where a person asks a stranger to "save some of their cigarette" for them. Well, I had one dollar in change to my name and I bought 2 "loosies" (cigarettes sold, out of a pack, individually) from some other guy in the crowd, and gave him one. It was a rather new experience for me, to walk up to a total stranger, especially in this environment that has been rumoured and reported as being so potentially hostile. But even more, it was, as I saw it, the truly correct thing to do: I was in a position where I was able to split what I had, causing no hardship to myself, and now, we both had as much as each-other... and again... it caused me no hardship. And, after all, if the world behaved this way, in all aspects, we, the Homeless, wouldn't exist... we'd have a "home"! - As I queued to come back in, a low-life jumped the line in front of me, un-noticed by those behind me. I saw the injustice and the sense of "entitlement" here, that he would simply, silently, ignore all the others waiting to enter the building, and truly believe that he had every right to disregard and disrespect the rest of us. I thought of making a comment, but I don't waste my time with that

kind. There's no sense in it. They truly do not have the mental capacity to understand the error. I said nothing. - As I stood down there in the dark, confined, fenced and gated court-yard tonight, a thought struck me: Surviving through these 43 days has taken some kind of stamina, courage and strength of character. It's also hardened my heart in some fashion and educated me in many other ways. I've been "Homeless" before but I'd been alone. Now I have to hone my instincts and watch others. It's disproving everything the old man ever said about me all through my life: useless, gutless, brainless, sissy, pansy, fruit, etc. I wonder how he'd react if he knew I was here. I wonder how he'd react if he could see how and where I am. I wonder how they all, family and self-proclaimed "friends", would feel and react if they could see this. I suppose the siblings might feign "care". The old man's so far gone he couldn't grasp any of it. They're all as useless as the sh** in this place. I waste my own brain-power on any thoughts of them. - All the while, day and night it seems, there's the sound of some hissing like steam coming from a radiator. It's been non-stop all the while. I think it's the sounds out-side coming in through the window; traffic and the ventilation from the hospital (NYU) across the construction lot. (NOTE: 8 Jan 2009: The hissing was a generator running a pump on the construction site. The building across the way, out of my window, is Bellevue Women's/Children's shelter and Bellevue Hospital. Behind it, there's construction on a new high-rise. It could be a high-end apartment building, an office building or perhaps, yet another annex to the now huge and highly successful "Bellevue" hospital. Which-ever, how odd that something that new, rather impressive and that expensive should be built this close to an old building that now provides shelter to those of us who can't afford even the most inexpensive of places to call a "home". The irony of life.) Never, never, never any silence here. - Tomorrow will be an interesting day. No Rockaway. NOAA predicts rain through Sunday. Here comes the real test of my ability to stay sane. I'll be, for all intent and purpose, trapped here, looking for a place of shelter against the elements, in a city that offers very little of that, out-side this building. - As I'm writing, Angelo (A107) comes in. He's had a really miserable day and, well, the whole system is trying to screw him over just as he's getting his life together. I mean, he's managed to get a job... on his own. From what he tells me, he does everything he can for his 2 daughters. They're, as I'm to understand, with their mother, too young to do much of anything for him, to help him out of this situation. He's a good man at heart. So, here it is, 11:27pm and we just stopped talking. All I try to do is tell him that he shouldn't let others get him down or keep him down. Again, I'm doing everything I can to help somebody else. But, as I've learnt, this is what I do and I can't think about getting any of this support back. It just won't happen. Still, in my own heart, hardened or not, I hope for the best for

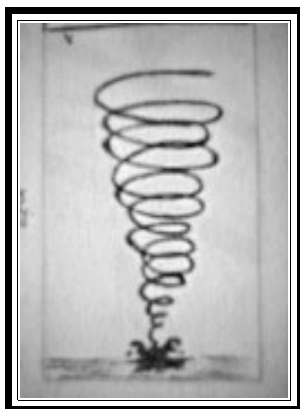
him. - (10:08am Saturday) Angel came back as I was writing. He'd gotten his socks wet, running around in the rain all day and was going to wash them. I've got 4 pairs, so I gave him a pair of mine that I hadn't worn. I figured he could wash one pair, wear the other. He threw the old pair in the garbage! Oh well. That's why "them that's got shall get, them that's not shall lose." - I finally put out the lights well past midnight. Hopefully I've accomplished some good with this day.

Saturday 27 September 44 days Homeless/13 days in the shelter.

10:14am in A108, Not a good night's sleep. I couldn't drift off through most of the night. I try to do good by others and can't even be given sleep in return. Oh well. What the Hell? And it got so cold during the night. Ah hah! I guess I'm supposed to be thankful I have a second blanket to cover my-self with. OK. Not really "OK" but it's all I'll get so I may as well live with it. - First thing this morning Angel wakes me to tell me it's time for breakfast. I said that I skip breakfast and so, he went on. I went back to sleep, nice and warm. I had the alarm set for 8:00am. By the time I finally woke, it was 8:29am! Sh**! I've got 2 cigarettes left and nothing on my agenda for today. NOAA says 90 per-cent chance of rain. Angel says he slept till noon last week-end. I should jump up and out the door into a rainy day of wandering for nothing? Not! So, at 8:30am I made a sandwich (peanut butter/honey/Kaiser roll... my little "stash" that I managed to get into the building and hide in my locker, hoping that it would never be discovered and confiscated), had the left-over cold coffee in the plastic bottle that I carry with me during the day. I've managed to get rid of my finger nails and file-down the toe nails. The pinky-toe, right foot is quite nasty and cracked with fungus. On my next visit to PHC I'm going to do a "show and tell" and tell them it's from *their* shower. I didn't have this trouble until I took a shower, there, in that hospital. I couldn't have come from any-where else. - Meanwhile, I could use a smoke. I took a couple drags off the Newport I bought last night. I'll try for a couple more puffs and then a shower. I also need a real BM before my entire inside goes. I can't do another digital... not here. - I wonder how the folks of RAA-T6 are these days. Dick-heads that they are. No word. No phone messages. I'm gone... AND forgotten. How life does go on... and "friends" take no notice. - I had the phone on for a few moments this morning. No messages. - It's been almost dead quiet here this morning (save, construction which began at about 9:00am or so). Are the scumbag residents here getting their rest to raise Hell tonight? In any case, I'll enjoy it while I can. But for this morning? A shower. I need to see Pax this evening. (I just made an association with her initials: "PO/Parole Officer. How funny. Hah!) - 1:48pm I'm showered and dressed. Did "lunch" here, in the

“cafeteria”, with Angel. Lunch: container of juice, 2 granola bars, a small container of something that might pass for potato salad and a sandwich... processed meat of some kind with cheese on whole wheat. Leave it to the day I go for total non-kosher. Do I care? Hey! I ate something. Maybe this evening I’ll try the dinner menu. Lunch was an experience, sitting in that large and open room with every cross-section of “this” humanity. It wasn’t too far from a disorderly children’s school cafeteria, with those who queued politely, those who argued, those who ate civilly and those who all but threw food fights. Adults, behaving like children and savages. - So Angel is trying to borrow money from his family. You know? When you’re where we are now, nobody will help. As I wrote before, NOFS; not one f***ing soul. Sh**. I’m only 3 dollars away from a pack of cigarettes and I GAVE the half Newport that I’d reserved to Angel this morning. I have to check the give-aways, it’s leaving me close to or with nothing. Cigarettes and socks. I’m not learning! - At about 5:00pm I’ll go see Pax. Hopefully I’ll keep this bed and I’ll wash my jeans this evening. Meanwhile? I could use a cigarette and a nap. I guess I’ll settle for a nap while I can. - 8:58pm I’VE WASHED MY JEANS! 44 DAYS AND I’VE WASHED MY JEANS! - It’s about the way a day gets broken-up around here that plays on one’s sanity. Breakfast at 6:00am. Lunch at 12:30pm. Dinner at 6:00pm Normal? Yes. But in between is waiting for the shower, waiting for a case-worker, waiting for a “bed assignment”, waiting for a “meal ticket”. Waiting to wait for something or somebody. I showered this after-noon then came back to the room with 2,5 hours to wait to see Pax for my new meal ticket. One does this: routinely reporting to a “CaseWorker” who reviews one’s “stay” and then, unilaterally decides whether or not one has behaved properly and how long one’s “privileges” will be extended. It could be one week or two, or it could be a matter of a day or several. It could also be one at all. One never can be certain. I fell asleep waiting. Went up to the 7th floor at about 5:00pm as others were going to eat. On 7, I waited for almost 45 minutes to hear “Why are you here?” (I note: She and I discussed ALL of this just last evening. “My meal ticket expires tomorrow. You won’t be here. You told me to come to you today.” “Oh, I will give you a paper one because I don’t want to get up.” Imagine? All she had to do is walk just across the hall! Oh my!) “Did you do your medical today?” “No. You told me to do it on Monday. I didn’t know it could be done on Saturday.” (I note: She told me Monday to Friday, 9-5. I’m hearing 8:00am from other “clients”.) It took all of 5 minutes for this and I waited, third in the queue, 45 minutes. By the time I got back to 2E-22, my room, I had just less than an hour to get dinner. I chose to wash my jeans instead. WASH MY JEANS! Angelo came to tell me that dinner was chicken, sweet potatoes and broccoli, (Hospital food?) - 9:42pm WHAT A NIGHT THIS TURNED INTO! Angel comes by, makes himself at home across my bed. We talk.

While we're talking, I want a cigarette and so does he so I ask how much a pack of loose tobacco is. He tells me 1,50 dollars. So I figure, I can roll a pack at 1,50 dollars or go without until I can



afford 8,45 dollars for 20. What the Hell? We're out of here. It's just past 7:00pm so there's enough time before we're expected to "sign-in". I put on the blue scrub pants, my boots and we hit a bodega on 2nd Ave. OK. "Tops" and "Bugler" all 2,50 dollars. Bugler comes with 40 rolling papers. 40 smokes at 2,50 dollars? Sold! And me, in scrubs and a kippa. too cute, buying tobacco and rolling papers. But now, Angel wants to buy a bottle of booze. Says he can get something for 2,50 dollars. We go to the park on 28th where I proceed to try rolling a cigarette. I haven't rolled in years! (10:35am on Sunday, continuing.) First try

wasn't all that bad. As Angel said, a little loose but pretty good. And, as I see, "Bugler" is a Turkish blend, it's the same tobacco mixture as my brand of cigarette: Camels! If the 40 papers make 40 cigarettes, I'm going to stick with this at 2,50 dollars! As we're enjoying our smokes, some young, maybe 20 year-old, kid shows up. Well dressed. Well spoken. Hair pulled back. A bit of a throw-back to what we used to call "Cha-Cha Disco". He and Angel get to talking about getting a bottle of something and the kid agrees to go in on it. We head down 2nd. The kid's name is Marvin. Latino. A little buzzed or just "off" altogether. The 3 of us walk into the liquor store. I'm in scrubs and kippa! The other 2 choose a bottle for 3 dollars and change. I toss in 50 cents. They're 10-cents short. The Chinaman behind the counter lets it go telling them not to come back if they can't bring all the money. How stupid. Either sell or don't, but don't sell and chastise. Me? I stay mute and head for the door. We head east on 26th or 27th and Marvin stops under some pretty dark scaffolding. There are 2 older men there, one on a chair, the other behind a chain-link fence, on the ground. Both are sleeping. Marvin goes over to the one on the ground, feels around his chest, pulls out an empty juice bottle. The sleeper doesn't stir. Angel opens the half-pint of rum that they'd (we'd?) purchased, takes a swig, passes it to me, I take a swig. Rum, not my liquor of choice but... I pass it back, it's passed to Marvin who empties half or so into his own bottle. A lot of activity for about a shot each. Then comes the "entertainment" (as if Marvin's earlier display of his masculine prowess wasn't enough when, on 2nd Ave., a stretch limo passes us. Allegedly, there were several girls in it and Marvin does a little flailing gyration, trying to entice them. His efforts resulted in his standing alone on the side-walk, staring down the avenue where the limo had been but was no more.) This time, Marvin informs Angel that he is pimping the old guy in the chair and "maybe what he wants is what you want." Me! I'm mildly amused by this and

wanting very much to get back to the shelter to sign for the bed for the night. Angel takes this offer in stride and politely declines the offer. We leave our little “street merchant” and head back, getting a kick out of the whole affair, stopping to roll another smoke. We left Marvin behind. - Angel needs car-fare to get to a new job in the morning but has no voucher. Why he doesn’t know the protocol and I do is something I don’t understand but I figure I can learn a new twist to the car-fare game by following him to see if he can get the fare with-out the voucher. We go to the 7th floor to sign for beds. Pax. is on duty at the desk where we have to sign a printed roster in the space beside our name. I simply sign, tell her to have a good week-end (she’s off Sunday and Monday the week to come.) and I step out of the office and back into the hall. Angel goes in, asks about his car-fare. She tells him to see the supervisor, Mr. Hamilton (one of 2 CaseWorkers with the same name which just serves to make matters in this place all the more confusing). This is the one I’ve never been quite certain of: rather androgynous, wears excellently colour-co-ordinated clothing from cap to shoes and tasteful cologne. So tonight I learn it’s “Mr.” So, Mr. is in “the lounge”. Angel goes in to enquire about car-fare. I wait in the hall and am interrogated by some “security” flunky who wants to know what my business is. I tell him thrice. He doesn’t understand that I’m simply waiting for someone in “the lounge”. Out comes Mr. Hamilton, followed by an irritated Angel. Mr. H. told him he has to come back later but, as is always the case around here, doesn’t say how much later. Angel gets angry and starts sarcasms which leads into yelling which prompts me to get him to the stairs and away. OK. A save. I tell him NOT to aggravate these people because it defeats everything. He argues that he’ll jump fare tomorrow or walk. Eventually he’s a bit calmer and we’re on the 2nd floor. - A stop at A109. More drama. This young Black man is having trouble procuring a job because of several misdemeanours, a couple of gun possessions and 2 attempted murders. All, it must be noted, “simple misunderstandings”. He’s also the head of 3 Brooklyn “clicks”: 1 raises show dogs (and is referred to as “the dog pound”), another protects the children and elderly (they are known as the “Silverbacks”), and another is simply a gang of kids with excessive hormone trouble and no brains, looking to do some basic violence on an on-call basis. Well, this little chit-chat brings us even later into the night. I’ve heard Angel’s history of having been molested as a child. I’m hearing this guy’s history of being misunderstood. I’m thinking I’m tired and want to get some sleep. Finally, we break when I go to pee. But Angel comes to my room for a final smoke, a bit more chat. Because I didn’t go to diner, he gave me his sandwich from his dinner. I gave him 2 dollars that I had left from getting the Bugler. Hell! He needs it to get to work! Brian helped me when I needed. I pass the kindness of humans along. Angel rolled 2 more smokes and JUST SHORTLY AFTER we’d

finished our last smoke for the night (which, gutsy of us, we had at the open window, which is what they do in Angel's room and which explains why MY room smells of the smoke from time to time, as the prevailing breezes pull the smoke out of their room and into mine), the door opens... BED CHECK! The guard asked if everything was OK. I said that we were just talking about "life". He assured he was just making sure everything was OK and excused himself for disturbing us. Angel was laying across the foot of the bed. I was sitting against the wall at the head of the bed. Well. If anything was made of it, so what? Let the pea-brains amuse themselves if they need to. - FINALLY! The day ended! - A note here: Angel has told me of his HIV status, drugs problems, Gay encounters, Gay relatives. I'm not suggesting anything. I'm just noting.

NOTES:

When the whole world has just gone "wrong".

Where are the spirits of those who were confined to these rooms? Are they the mosquitoes that torment us in the night?



I NO LONGER HAVE ANY HATRED IN MY BEING. ALL HATRED HAS BEEN DISTILLED DOWN INTO THE MOST BASIC ELEMENTS AND IS NOW AN ALL-CONSUMING BITTERNESS TOWARD EVERY-THING AND EVERY ONE. AND I WILL DO NOTHING TO CHANGE IT.

Sunday 28 September :11:32am 45/14 (45 days of being Homeless/14 days in the Shelter... I keep track of this now, this way, in this journal, so I that I never forget.) MORE RAIN! NO SLEEP ALL BLODDY NIGHT BECAUSE OF DAMNED MOSQUITOES ALL BLEATING NIGHT! NO bleating SLEEP ALL NIGHT! - I would be most remiss if I failed to note that the floor in the 3 stalls in the toilet room on this floor are a miserable, bleating insult to every aspect of Creation! There isn't one moment of any given day when the damned floor isn't so soaked with pee that it flows right over the top of my flip-flops that I wear most of the time! The bleating area with 6 sinks is wet because we're doing our wash there and these river-rock-beaters can't quite figure out how to keep the water IN the sink! As for the shower? There again; water all over the floor! Bleating bunch of bleating brain-dead morons! The lot of them! So, now that that's been noted... I was awake ALL night with the mosquitoes in this room! Today, more

blood spots under and on the pillow. Just as I was beginning to doze off (5:45am for the setting on the alarm) the alarm went off. I'd told Angel I'd have breakfast with him this morning. At about 6:15am he came by. I got up, brushed my teeth, splashed my face, and as I got to the room... he returned... from breakfast! OK. He really didn't invite me to join him, He just notified me. So I hung around. Took the 3 cigarettes I'd rolled for me for today. A109 came by. They shared a smoke in HERE! I'm going to put a stop to that today. I'll lose my bed because of this sh**. Smoking in the building is prohibited, every-one knows, most ignore. But when caught, the offender can be tossed out for a maximum of 30 days... from EVERY shelter in the city! It's getting too cold for that AND especially if I'm NOT the offender! Anyway, they left at about 7:00am and I went back to sleep for about 2 hours. It's raining again today. The main public library opens 1-5:00pm today (why the Hell do they even bother? Four bleating hours.) Thankfully I don't HAVE to leave the building today (although I'm still not quite certain about it... The signage reads Monday through Friday. 8:00am-4:00pm. Nothing said about week-ends. So it's another one of those "Figure it out for your damned self" issues, and today it's pissing me off.) - I have to find an EBT/FoodStamps market locally. There are *Gristede's* all over this friggin neighbourhood and none of them have the little sticker or signs for credit/debit/EBT cards. I'm out of peanut-butter and honey and bread. It's 12:04pm and I could go up to lunch but I really don't want to. I'd like a smoke, but not in this room, and I don't feel like going down and out and back through security. Every time we leave the building, it's the same procedure to return: full-body check, packages, pockets, the likes. It's more an inconvenience than much else, still... it's annoying. I might just nap a bit and, if the weather's not too miserable, go to the library for a bit. It would be nice if the rain would stop. - My jeans aren't drying very well. - The floor has been relatively calm all morning. - The "shshsht" of the vent system for Bellevue is almost maddening. 2 weeks in this place! I need to get out! But I need a charger for my phone so I can get called to work! You know? Since "friends" and "social workers" won't and haven't helped me so far, it's time I help myself... phone charger, warmer clothes... it's time. And God will help me in these endeavours... no matter what. - I'm napping now. (5:24pm) Napped until about 1:45pm. Left out of here about 1:30pm and walked up to the library, taking streets and avenues with the least amount of people on them. This is Manhattan. I don't want to see anybody I know. I just don't want to talk kindly to anybody I know. I have nothing kind to say to anybody I know. - The sun broke through making it hot and muggy. I had a cigarette and noticed my thumb and middle finger are tobacco-stained. How charming! And I have no way to clean it. It looks rather "unclean" or as if I'm now smoking weed. I need to watch and be concerned about this. - I got to the

library to find... No Internet at the library! No copy of Argile Sox (who went from Wall St. to this shelter). I went up to the 3rd floor, art and literature. Emergency BM. My guts are exploding. I could swear that there was somebody bathing in the centre toilet stall! Ah, these days. I attended to my immediate "needs" and left the loo, returning to the library for a browse in the stacks for instruction books on drawing faces. Nothing of any inspiration but I took 4 or 5 books and went to a table. As I sat there, 2 men came from the stairs. One mumbled something and the other commented "It's a shelter for the homeless". I wanted so very much to quietly stand, softly stroll over to him and sharply punch his face to the back of his head. Be it so or not, I shall pray that you learn, first hand, the feeling of Homelessness. Daily, I pray for the same for all those who coldly let me slip into it. I'm terribly bitter. I make no effort to change that. - A young Black girl came to ask if there is any significance to the colours of my "yarmulke". I told her they're "John Deere" colours and there's no particular significance to any of the colours. She politely thanked me for taking the time to answer her question. "Politely"... even now, there IS SOME civility left in this world... even for me. - As I was leaving, I heard a "psst" and stopped to see a young Black man motioning to me. I went over to him. He asked if I knew him. I said I might but wasn't sure. He's from here, the shelter, 2nd floor, "Michael's room". Ah! "Which Michael?" I wonder now. A109? A127? 6th floor? I know of several, obviously. No doubt I'll find out soon. - The walk back, from the library to the shelter, was quick. The DHS guard who helped me the night I got this (A108-2E-22) bed asked "How you doing, sir?" He's magnificent in his respect for dignity. I wish I was in a position to help him in his career or something. I wonder if he actually knows how much I, in my very core, appreciate being addressed as if I'm still a human being, worthy of any respect, trying to hold fast to what little dignity I have. I wonder... - I've returned to my chamber. My jeans are still hanging in the window where I chanced to leave them during my absence. The door to the room doesn't lock, and it's obvious that anybody can come and go at will, and, if they're the type, can (and will) steal what-ever they can (whether they need or can use it or not). They're still wet. I washed them in the basin and wrung them as much as my strength will have. It's 5:45pm. I'm quite hungry. There's no food left in my locker. Dinner is served until 7:00pm and I don't want to go... alone. And of course, I know there's nothing kosher and what's there being served is anybody's guess. With my good fortune and fate, no doubt it will be pork anyway. I should go, find out if Gristede's will crumble if I use EBT there. Soon the sun will set, the day will end. Angel will be here with stories of work. - This morning somebody set off the fire alarm. Smoking in the room should be kept down for a while. - People are milling in the loo and hallway. Every movement echoes in the toilets, out the door, up and down the cavernous halls. A

stall door slams, toilet flushes, a voice, foot-steps. It's all amplified. No TV. No radio. No music. No news. No energy. No affect. Today is my challenge to maintain some sanity. Tonight at 8:30pm I sign for the bed. This routine is gnawing at me. Tomorrow? My psych eval. (psychiatric evaluation) After that? A world unknown and unknowable. The administration plays with us as if we were un-human toys. - Angel's room-mate, an old Black man with white hair keeps coming and going. My wall wobbles every time his door closes. The sound of Bellevue's ventilation system wooshes non-stop. The sun is setting. Another day in the shelter. - There is the stench of this place and the stench of Manhattan and the stench of all that both personify. The stench of merely existing. The stench of banality. The stench of the complete insanity and irrationality of it all. Just stench. It make me nauseous. I curse, with each heart-beat, all those who could have helped keep me away from this and did nothing. And when I say "all", I go back to the day I left Nr.3150 in The Bronx and headed up to the Mid-Hudson valley. Pookie too. The bitterness has finally gone that deep. - I noticed in the library, that the hair on my fingers is darker and more noticeable. I always wanted more body hair. Maybe I'll get it just at my moment of death. I'm tired. I'm hungry. There's nothing to eat. It's 6:05pm. Doors slam and echo. People walk and echo. Voices carry and echo. What the Hell am I doing here! (No echo from me, I yell "internally".) - 8:40pm I've signed for bed. Security monkey doing the sign-in tonight in the Case-Workers' office. We had to queue in the opposite direction and in front of the lift! Honestly, the "staff" in this place put them-selves out to create confusion and chaos, merely for their own entertainment. Meanwhile, one of the P.R. junkies from A104-5 cut the line but, there's no sense in saying anything to that kind of sh**. Besides, as I keep in mind: I'll get there, to the desk, eventually. I just don't like the idea that sign-in happened earlier than the usual 8:30pm as it's supposed to begin. In this sh**-hole where protocol is so bleating important (when it suits some sh**-head's purpose) any excuse to screw a resident over will do. Tonight, this may be an excuse to play us all, shift us around by claiming we didn't sign and causing all kinds of BS. It appears that this too, is something the "administration" of this place plays: open the sign-in early so that people don't get there soon enough, or switch the location of the desk at the last minute and watch as people can't find it until some other resident tells them. I just hope not. I'm hungry and not in the mood. Besides, it's friggin raining again so taking to the streets is not an option, should I be the one to lose the bed and the room for the night. - RAINING AGAIN! MY JEANS WILL NEVER DRY AT THIS RATE! The humidity in the air and no heat in the building just keeps them damp. - So I signed-in and went out-side for a smoke... in the drizzle. Came back up. Washed my socks. They're hanging in the window now. - I went through my bags of papers and

such. Got my medical papers together for tomorrow. PPD, PHC discharge, RHAS blood-work results, just in case they come in handy for tomorrow's circus. Threw a lot out. No need to keep most of it. - There's a mosquito in here that needs to go. I can't afford yet another night of no sleep. - 9:00pm No messages/calls on the phone. - No sign of Angel. He was supposed to work until 8:00pm. I just hope he gets in by 10:00pm to keep his bed. Too bad I stick out so much here, being a 6ft tall White man. I can't pass for anybody else but me. If I could, I'd sign-in for Angel. - I don't recall if I mentioned: the guy in the library today offered me a doughnut! I keep remembering that kindness. A Homeless person offering food to another Homeless person. - 9:48pm Angel's back. He brought a bottle of rum in with him. I got 2 swigs. He's in a good mood too. Hey! He brought a friend into the shelter! Imagine that? Recruiting! Anyway, he and A109 are in his room smoking AND, some guy mopped the loo and shower today! - This room is becoming the social hall and folks is hanging here. They've finally left me alone. But, its nice to have a little "posse". Especially here where we've got THIS "Homelessness" in common. Oh, and hey! Angel gave me the 2 dollars back! Now let's compare to all those so-called "friends" in life. Sh**! Give *BACK*? They can't even *GIVE*! - 11:25pm I have a feeling we've had out first "altercation". Angel was giving some guy a hard time about the shower and the next thing I know, the wall between his room and this one is banging and I hear "What the f*** are you doing?" So much BS over a shower. Anyway, thankfully, I see Angel and some other guy out in the hall. No telling what happened but I'm sure I'll get the details eventually. - 12:38am (yes... after mid-night) Angel got his shower and has gone to bed. The fight? I still don't understand it. A Black guy hogging the shower. The P.R. Doper got involved. They fight over a shower! I don't know. Well. I'm off to sleep. A busy day, stuck in here tomorrow.

Monday 29 September: 46/15

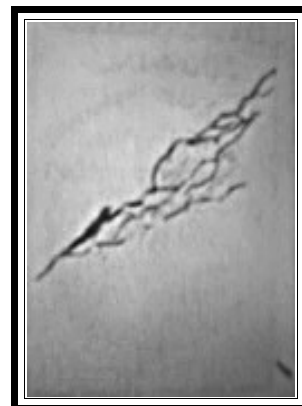
9:50am In "the tank" (waiting area) on the 7th floor. A beautiful day out there today... wasted, just wasted. Had breakfast at about 6:00am with Angel. Got about 45 minutes of extra sleep. Got a shower and went out for a smoke. Back in and up here by 8:45am to stand and wait in the hall for my "physical". JUST NOW I'm told to sign-in! JUST NOW I'm told to come back TOMORROW AT 8:00am for the "physical"! SO I put my name on the 2nd page of the waiting list for "Psych Only" and now I get to sit here, rotting away, waiting some more, sitting on the bleating, filthy floor! Again, last night, broken, light sleep. I'm getting to the point of losing my patience. I need a charger for the phone. I don't know what to expect when called for work. It's becoming a dead-

end loop. It's really all counter-productive. It's farce, pure farce. If I can ever publish this journal, there are so many details I don't write but hope to remember. But the top and bottom line? Absurd farce, from beginning to end. This system is set to drive the sane completely mad and I can't help but believe that it's more for the entertainment of the "administration" than much, if anything else. - 11:12am Still in the tank, sitting silently on the floor, in the corner, drawing/sketching in the "Notes" borders on previous pages. Sitting here, while the sun shines in clear blue skies out-side the grated window. Sitting here, in silence, in the corner, with guys who boast about their criminal records. Sitting here, listening to the jack-hammers and trucks drowning out the inconsiderate woman who is calling out names in the hallway. How long does it take to interview and classify somebody in here? How much intelligence could it possibly take to know who is and who is not a threat to self and/or others? And to think that I get to waste another day tomorrow. "Psych" today and "physical" tomorrow, as if we ALL have nothing to do with a day. And I can't help but believe that it's done mostly out of spite, slovenliness, just plain inconsideration and only a bit of being over-worked. - Phone on for a moment or two. - 11:59am Still in the bleating tank! I'd swear there's some guy telling these Hispanics to go find housing in *Newburgh*. To get on a bus or train to get to Newburgh and when they get there, to see "Señor Resnick"! Well, it wouldn't surprise me. That's really a part of Newburgh's history: the easiest place in the country to get onto the Welfare programmes from 1945 until this very moment. So why not send the Homeless... the worthless Homeless, up there as well? They'll fit right in with the rest of the useless... including the "family" I know who are there, are from there and have never left there. - 12:34pm Still in this bleating room with no idea what is to happen (or not). And the weather is beautiful and lunch is being served on the 3rd floor. Construction next door has recommenced. - Sydney, a fellow who be-friended Denis when we all got in here originally, addressed me as "Jew-man" earlier. He saw me in the room as he passed by in the hall and he called to me. It certainly got a rise out of one guy who heard it, looked at me rather concerned and asked "You're gonna let him call you that?" I smiled and said "I'm a Jew. I'm a man. He doesn't know my name so, it's appropriate. He's not insulting me." Anyway, says he's heard from Dennis. That's nice. I can't be too what-ever. I truly can't anymore. I'm so pre-occupied with survival and my heart is a little clump of ashes for the most part. - I guess I'll go down for a smoke. As I say, "what-ever". - 12:52pm Went down. Had a smoke. Got back. 6 of us sitting here. Got a chair by the window! At 4:00pm I'm going to my room. This is too much now, this waiting, waiting and being told nothing. Meanwhile, more "illustrating" in this note book. - 5:08pm at A108 at last! The psych. eval. lasted about 30 minutes. Intrusive questions, as expected about me,

my history, my “family”. I did get the chance to “out” the beatings I’ve suffered at the hand of the old man so now there’s a record of being abused! Siobhan (Nurse/Psych) asked about my “support” structure. I told her I have none. She wants to know how I manage to handle general, daily existence in this chaos. Apparently, they’re “concerned” about the fact that I don’t “break”. Oh well... let them wonder. Otherwise? I’ll jot more later. I’m going to try dinner here this evening at 5:30pm. - Oh, the day has gone cloudy. There’s talk of rain for Tuesday and Wednesday. But tomorrow I have to be on the 7th floor again at 7:30am for the “physical”. Then, at 4:00pm I have to get a new “meal ticket” and a voucher for car-fare to get to the Post Office on Wednesday (no RAA!) and hopefully to see Brian! Maybe Friday I’ll try to “acquire” the charger for the phone. Penelope’s charger works on my phone as well... and I NEED and cannot afford one. Life is all about challenges, meeting challenges and taking care of “SELF”. If I’ve learnt nothing more, I’ve learnt that much here. - The jeans are almost dry too. Jeans for the New Year!

- 6:21pm A108 Back from dinner. 2 hot dogs, dried out sauerkraut, instant mashed potatoes, fruit-cup (mostly water), orange juice (frozen), coffee. Some baked beans and 2 slices, whole wheat bread. It hit my stomach and I had to go run off to the loo. But I went out for a smoke, made it back up-stairs just in time! H2O trots. Maybe it was breakfast? Egg, juice, Cheerios, coffee, orange juice. Hey! The “food” was hot. I can’t complain. Maybe hot food no longer agrees with me, nor I with it.

- SO, I stand and wait for medical for a good hour before some-body tells me that I had to go IN to the office to register. Right away, they can’t take me today. Come back tomorrow at 8:00am. (More like 7:00am.) I sign the register for psych. There’s a whole page already done. I sign and wait, and wait, and wait. It just so happened that I decided to check the list as my turn came! The forms are very much the same as being admitted to St. Vincent’s hospital: release of information, consent, rights, etc. That was just to open my chart. Then more waiting. In the questions: Medicaid? Nope. Why the Hell hasn’t anybody just done the bleating forms? Hearing voices? Seeing things? Drugs? I admitted to doing and not liking weed and coke. History of abuse? OH YES! History of being abusive? Alcohol abuse? (With my old man-David-as an example of it! his BS abuse is now being told to strangers and being documented. I am feeling rather well about THAT much. I’m living and surviving long enough to tell the world the truth about that miserable sh**.) How do I handle stress, here and in general. (I wanted to say: I’ve pissed away an entire day here. Nobody tells anybody how things are done or what’s expected. I’m sitting here, the gentle man and you want to know how I handle



stress?!? Instead, I said: I avoid it or, if possible, try to defuse.) How do you feel right now?
 “Positive.” Thank you. We’re done. (Oh yay. Tah.) - So tomorrow I get my medical. I need a new meal ticket. I’ll go for car-fare. I’ll try for real food at Gristede’s or D’Agostino’s markets (or try to find an Associated or C Town) (tee-hee. White-Jew-trash that I am). A trip to the library with the artist folks. And since it’s Rosh Hashannah, I’ll hope for nice weather. IF I get another 3 or more days in A108 (2E-22) I’ll wash my sweat-shirt too! - Now? 6:41pm. Nap! Got to be back on 7 at 8:00pm for bed-signing. Always a little something to be done. Isn’t it wonderful to have an agenda... a purpose? (Jeezus!) - Oh. And I took the plastic “frost” film off the bottom window in this room. I can see out into the world! And light came in! It’s probably been YEARS since this room has had this much light... if ever it has. - One note: I told the pseudo-shrink-lady that I’m homesick for the peace of Rockaway. Also told her about Shockeye’s nasty comment. She feigned being “appalled” by Shockeye’s miserable treatment and comments... Me too. I could SEE that she didn’t give a damned sh**. Oh well... Right now it’s NAP TIME! (I wonder where Angel is...) - 6:51pm A knock on the door. ROOM CHECK! How sweet. “ROOM” check now? They entertain themselves in such ways. - 10:14pm Angel and I went up to sign in and then out for a stroll down 2nd Ave. to the liquor store. 2,75 dollars for half-pint “Georgi” vodka and a seat on a bench in a housing project on 26th or 27th. Ah, another swig... for the New Year. - A guy wished me “Hag sameach” (hahg sah-MAY-ach - Happy Holiday in Hebrew) as I came out of the office here from signing in. Mike A127 saw me in the lift and called “Happy New Year!” Meanwhile, I’m remembering least year, sitting on the bench in “Riverdale”, alone, in the dark of night, sketching in a note book, under the street lamp. I’m thinking of how much I’d looked forward to being at Beth El in Belle Harbor this year. It hurts. And I can’t help but hope that those who turned their backs when it mattered most have a year very similar to what they were so instrumental in bringing to me. I don’t ask to be forgiven for having such sentiments. Forgiveness is not appropriate. God knows and understands.

Tuesday 30 September: 47/16

7:56am in the 7th floor “lounge”. I woke at 5:30am, showered, dressed, woke Angel at 6:00am and headed up to the 3rd floor for breakfast of: chocolate chip muffin, Fruit Loops, coffee. I saved the peach we got for later. Ran back down-stairs to hit the loo. TWICE. H2O runs again. I’m beginning to believe that the food here isn’t agreeing with me at all. That, and my nerves, which I’m doing an excellent job of hiding from the out-side world. A 20-minute nap and up here for my “medical” at 7:30 this morning. Waited for the registrar to get in. I was 6th on the queue

already and FIFTH on the list and she, the registrar, has the bleating set of useless balls to say “I already have 4 on the list but I’ll put you down and hopefully you’ll get in this morning or this afternoon. I’d like to know what the Hell they do that takes a whole bleating hour! Idiots and morons! The bleating lot of them! I screwed a whole day in this sh**-hole yesterday. It might be over-cast and cool right now but the idea of sitting in here for ANOTHER day is pissing me the jolly Hell off! They behave as if every one of us is simply here to do nothing. And with the way all this “protocol” is handled, they make it almost impossible to actually do anything to improve our lot. I want to get back to work and out of here... quickly... soon. I need a central point where I can bathe and rest for work, and so I’m forced into following their archaic and anti-productive routines and schedules. This too, wears on my nerves. No wonder my bowels are revolting against me. - One rather positive note though: I’m wearing clean jeans, socks and under-wear for the first time in 47 days! It’s the (Jewish) New Year! I spent 21 days in a hospital, had 2 physicals since April. This is just more than bleating enough! I have no-where in particular to go to, save the library and maybe the market for real food, but I sure-as-sh** don’t want to piss this day away in this sh**-hole! - Now that that’s off my chest... - 12.00pm noon and I’m on the 4th floor library with 12:30pm appointment on a computer. - I got called for the physical this morning at 10:00am! It lasted almost an hour and a half! The Nurse, Black, Islander of some sort or whatever. She had race issues, particularly with Jews, but in the course of conversation, we went into some very pleasant talk about health-care and the shelter population. Over-all, it was a good experience. AND I GOT A FLU SHOT! MY FIRST EVER! She described flu symptoms and all I could think of was that I can not afford the flu now, especially since I’m not eating as I should, have no warm clothing, not sleeping well, need work. There are flu-like symptoms to come, but I’ve been assured they will be mild and only about a day in duration. Hopefully, this is true. I can NOT afford to be ill, especially if I have to interview for work. - On my way out of the building, a guard wished me a good holiday. It’s really quite amazing, how aware the most unexpected people are. - For some reason, I’m in very good spirits... in spite of being exceptionally hungry. - The Nurse told me that A108 is my “Permanent bed” UNTIL A TRANSFER IS FOUND, if I’m not working, I’ll probably be put in an SRO (Single Room Occupancy... one person in one room, possibly in a residential hotel or similar). Me? I’m truly hoping they’ll find a civil one in Rockaway! Rockaway has many such places and I came from there, would like to go back there. Well, I suppose that settles it; Rockaway is more than likely out of the question. Too good. - Meanwhile, I’ll get info on the free CNA (Certified Nurses' Assistant) courses. There’s a 5-year waiting list for the free LPN courses, but I’ll look into that as well. The more education I get, the

better for me. I'm starting from the beginning again here... the VERY beginning... again, with SO MUCH! Then there's the application for VNS (Visiting Nurse Services) Home Care. And away I'll go. Dinner is at 5:00pm. I'll try to get to Ms. Pax by 4:30pm to give her my medical form and get my new meal ticket. She asks for that form on a regular basis. One would think that, if it's so important, they'd make it easier, or at least more organised to get. Yeah... right... in this mayhem. - Angel wants me to help him write his "memoirs" this evening. He's seen this journal and wants to do something similar. Well, that's good! Something to "do", with his time and his life.

Ambition. Good. - So far, nothing on my agenda for tomorrow though. On the way back to the



shelter today I'm going to look for food...

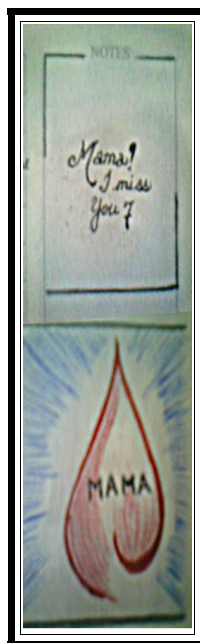
FOOD in the markets (I've yet to see "We accept EBT" in D'Ag or Gristede's markets, but at this juncture, I'll give it a try). I'm dead-ass tired too but there's no-where to nap in this city... save Central Park and that's too far away and it's a bit over-cast. So, I wing it for now. It's looking to be another day of moving, moving about, more moving, and, for the most part, being painfully fatigued. But that's become almost "normal". It's "regular" at the very least. Painful fatigue and no place to rest. - I figured I'd chance a D'Ag on 3rd Ave. Maybe a Greek yoghurt, bread of some sort, something to make a sandwich. Well, almost 20 dollars later, I left D'Ag with a *Fage*, whipped cream cheese, V8 juice, Arrowroot cookies, *Martin's* potato rolls, 6 mini *Jif* peanut butter. Twenty bucks off my EBT. But, it's for and from Food

Stamps. So, a walk to the park at the end of 36th Street, at the East River, under the elevated FDR Drive, for a quick 3 sandwiches and a yoghurt. - 2 women and a man came by. One woman came over to me to ask if I was performing taschlik (tashlik - throwing bread crumbs into the water... a Jewish "custom" actually based in superstition: the bread crumbs representing "sins" committed and other such.)! When I told her I was simply grabbing a bite to eat she said "Bon appetite. B'tay avon." ("Good appetite" in French and Hebrew!) I replied "Merci beaucoup. Toda raba." ("Thank

you” in both the same languages.) Its’ becoming quite charming, how many nice people I’m encountering. Maybe Rachel was right: the kippa brings me good luck. If it would only bring work... a live-in position in Neponsit, back in Rockaway, on the peninsula! - I was back at the shelter by 5:10pm with just enough time to drop my pack in the locker in my room and run up to the 7th floor where I got to meet with Pax immediately. She enquired about my work situation. I made better of it saying that I have to get my ID on Friday. “Do they have something for you?” I don’t know yet. “Will it be live-in?” I don’t know yet. “Have hope. Pray on it.” Indeed, I do. “You are my new rabbi.” I told her. She smiled. Well, in many ways she is: my source of information, support, encouragement. She issued a new meal ticket until 6 Oct. and I bolted to A108 to wash my sweat-shirt on day 47! Piece by piece, my clothes are getting washed... piece by piece. - Angel was already in when I arrived. I woke him for dinner. Although I’d eaten, I went for dinner: Cubes of chicken in some watery gravy, boxed potato, spinach, frozen grape juice, frozen apple sauce, nasty orange, 2 slices whole wheat bread, pale coffee. It really is quite disgusting but it kills the appetite, and I believe causes Irritable Bowel Syndrome. But, I ingested it and then, back to the room for a nap. - At about 7:30pm, Angel came back to A108 to show me the one page he’d written on his memoirs. He wasn’t kidding about his spelling. What was on the page bore little resemblance to what he spoke as he read it. He wants me to correct his miss-spellings. It would require a re-write. But I encouraged him to continue. On the 25th of Oct. he will be 39 years old and yet, he’s almost a teen in many ways. He needs encouragement more than critique. Tomorrow I might help him get a library card and give him a couple pointers on the computer so he can keep a blog for him-self. That is, if he shows up at the library while I’m there. One can never be certain about anything in this “Homeless world”. Some are sensible and reliable... and even the reliable ones can't always keep promises because of the “Homeless System” pushing and pulling us all in ever direction possible. - An early night. Lights out by 10:00pm! My stomach is in turmoil. Near accident this evening. I do believe all of this is beginning to take me down. No doubt, one day, soon it will. For now? I close my mind to it all... just close my mind.

Addendum: When we went up to sign for our beds this evening, I noticed, on the form, that Angels’ entry was blank. It’s right about mine so I caught it immediately. I told him and he didn’t believe me. Went back in to look and insisted that he did sign. Come to find out, at about 11:00pm, he did sign, but, he signed beside “A. Rivera’s” name! Security came to check and, by good fortune, corrected the error and let it go. Proper (dys)functionality around here dictates that they could and would have dropped him off the roster and made him begin... from the very start of all the processes. If one skips even a slight “step” along the way, one begins again... from the

very beginning. It's exasperating, to say the very least.



NOTES

5769

2 NEW YEAR GREETINGS

Schmulik

Zuri

MAMA

THIS WORLD WILL NOT DESTROY

WHAT MY MOTHER LOVED

AND SUFFERED SO MUCH TO

CREATE AND NURTURE.

I SURVIVE BECAUSE OF HER

Somehow, notes and entries for today were either skipped or had gone missing for today. I'm trying to transcribe all of this into digital format, on a web-blog, in case the note books are ever "lost". After the incident with my sister, who arranged to have everything... EVERYTHIING in my life-time taken, I'm glad or the luxury of these "blogs". The difficulty is not having a computer of my own any longer that I can keep all these notes on. So it's a matter of getting a computer for 45-minute sessions... at 3 different libraries, in 3 different boroughs... and all the travel in between them. Other days, I've found, have gone missing as well. But what has been saved... well... it serves a purpose... a reminder... a story to tell others, should anybody ever take a concern about... the "Homeless". I do the best I can with what I have.)



03. October 2008 - Monogram

Wednesday 1st OCTOBER 2008 48 HOMELESS/17 SHELTER



9:21am sitting almost completely alone in Bryant Park. I just finished last night's notes whilst sitting here, trying to appear as a tourist or some other sort having a purpose here this morning. I've been here since about 8:40am. I came in, looked about, finally took a chair and a table off 40th Street. - This morning, I slept past the 6am alarm. Didn't wake Angel for "bread fox". Got me together instead. But he managed to wake in time to get breakfast for himself. (Come to find out, breakfast was sausage on some bread! I missed the pork, or what-ever the "sausage" was made of! My bowels are bad enough with-out THAT added to it.) So, I got a shower in this morning. (4 guys looking rather ragged just came toward me as I'm sitting here writing this. One came up to me to bum a smoke! I guess I don't look so

"homeless"... yet.) - (Note: I'm still not comfortable, smoking rolled cigarettes. I'm still waiting for them to be mistaken for a joint.) - Angel and I strolled over to Broadway and 34th Street this morning. He's got a "meeting" at 10am. I didn't ask for what, and he didn't say what it was about. If he wants me to know, he'll tell me. - This morning, I'm pondering registration with VNS Home Care today. Truth is, I need to find another *kind* of employment! This is just not getting me anywhere! I need my CNA and a couple of days to apply at all the Nursing homes in Rockaway. I'm determined to go back to The Rock but I need a constant income! This style of existence is breaking me down. And I'm hating this residence in The City more and more. But, it's been a lovely morning here, in Bryant Park and now? I need to pee. Off to the library. A re-work of my CV perhaps. - I just noticed that 3 young girls are at the upper level, sketching. Artists all around.

Why can't I make a living doing my art? - 9:42am. Time to move. - 12:30pm at Partners In Care. I'm registering for the HomeCare positions. - I did my 45 minutes on-line at the library. 2 windows open so that I could get my "work" done quickly Most of it was steady research. New HHA (Home Health Aide... the position I've already applied for with the other agencies with whom I technically employed but aren't assigning me any cases.. CV. I've printed 10 to have with me. The printer gave me 10 blank sheets of paper too! Drawing paper! Then I came directly to PIC. Application and a general 20 question, multiple choice. Waiting for an interview. BAD NEWS: THEY WANT WHITES! I NEED WHITE SCRUBS! I'VE GOT BLUE AND I'VE GOT TEAL! HERE WE GO! SCREWED! I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY I GET SO SCREWED! AT LEAST 50 DOLLARS FOR WHITES! WHERE THE HELL WILL I GET THAT? 13 CAR-FARES? WHAT THE HELL? Well, I've nothing else pressing today. Let's see how far I can get with *this*. More to note in this journal, if nothing else. Next entertainment? Suing Edlyne and Premier. - 12:45PM Just getting closer to A108 time. I'm hungry. Where to take lunch is next. - 3:38pm at the river-side park as yet another day comes crashing to a close and my bowels want to explode all over NYC! Yes, I've eaten; 3 sandwiches and some cookies. One sheet of rolling paper and several smokes of tobacco left. - I went through the interview at Partners In Care AND ANOTHER PHYSICAL! This time, only urine and the stethoscope. No blood! Thankfully. And, at 3:00pm I was just crossing 2nd Ave. I hope Angel didn't come looking for me at the library. What I thought was to be a passing of a few hours turned into the entire day! SO now I know how to occupy a whole day: interviews at Home Care agencies. It keeps me off the streets, out of the elements, keeps me occupied and it increases my chances of getting a damned paying job! Nice past-time. - Ending the day here, at the water, is a nice way to close chaos. What a shame it's so loud, with the helicopters coming and going. Right now, 2 of them. - Homeless men here too. I'm developing a silent camaraderie with the Homeless. I'm one of "them" and "they" are more of "us". - Walking up 7th Ave. for my physical today, there were 2 tables, manned, for contributions to the Homeless. I almost whipped out my meal ticket. Hey! I need contributions too! About 75-100 dollars for new whites. Will anybody help me there? Nope. I suppose I'm hardening. (Right now, I'm hoping to control my bowels until I get to the toilet.) - 4:11pm Time to head back to the shelter and try for car-fare for tomorrow. Chabad? Money for whites? I can certainly try. - 7:26pm at A108 Got car-fare voucher for tomorrow! - It's been raining. No sign of Angel. I washed a pair of socks. I'm tired. Very thirsty this evening. The floor



is quiet. If it could always be this way. I got 3 cigarettes out of the papers I had left. One left I believe. Went down to smoke one. Now to wait to sign in. Hopefully a good night's sleep. Please!

Thursday 2 October: 49/18

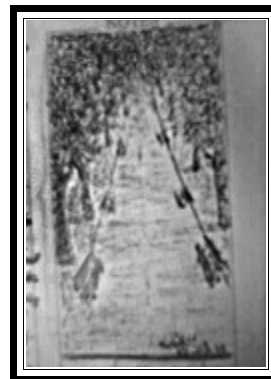
7:29am A108. 21°C and a clear morning. The construction crew are wearing "hoodies" this morning. Cold weather is coming. I have no heavy, cold weather clothing. - I showered, had TWO BMs (bowel movements). Carfare at 8:30am. My stomach/bowels not quite "right". Angel was sick last night. Nausea. - Something in this room smells like urine. I wonder what and how (but certainly not "why"!)- A few minutes to relax and head to the 7th floor for the miserable 4 dollars. I've 3 dollars in my pocket and no more Bugler tobacco. - Chabad today? I wonder: will they fail me, yet again? For a group so set on helping, they've yet to give ME any comfort OR SOLACE. Maybe today they'll prove me wrong. - 9:11am at Bryant Park. With carfare and a new pouch of Bugler (2,50 dollars). The old one gave me exactly 40 cigarettes, the number of papers included in the package. - The library doesn't open until 10:00. Something I learnt when I got to the door. So I'm here, on a chilly morning, with my (relatively) clean (but wearing thin) hooded sweat-shirt, in the shade, having a smoke and appearing as if my life has purpose (the hardest part of being Homeless: appearing to be some-where with a purpose). I'll go to the library to look-up Chabad. As it stands at this moment, I'll go, be honest, get nothing, waste the cash in my pocket on the car-fare. Meanwhile, my bowels are still quite un-settled and I've got no-where to "go". The world is a place of un-ending torment. - I find I'm becoming less tolerant of the noise, congestion, and general "being" of Manhattan. It's hitting every part of my person and weighing heavily. I'm fed-up with hearing Spanish spoken. I'm fed-up with "conversating", anti-Jewish comments, pushing, shoving and needing to be on my guard at every moment. I'm moving from generally annoyed to completely fatigued from it all. But it seems there's no way out at this juncture. Premier. ExtraCare (Home care agency, Rockaway). Rockaway and now, Partners In Care. FOUR agencies and no work! Something is terribly wrong! And my stomach churns with the threat of losing control of my bowels. Even my own body is growing hateful of me. If I were a junkie, had AIDS, mental illness, I could be better off. A convict. Better. But this is the "reward" for being a kind, considerate, helpful human-being. None of it makes sense. None if it. - 9:27am When there's a need for something, time passes slowly. The world is spiteful. - 10:30am 4th floor at the library. I've pee'd and feel better. Computer at 11:00am. As I came to a table to sit, some Asian bitch walked right up to the place I was headed for, grabbed the chair and sat down! Not a

good start. AND, I JUST NOTICED THAT I'M NOT WEARING MY KEYS! THEY'RE UNDER MY PILLOW, BACK AT THE SHELTER! NO KEYS! I'LL BE WORRIED ABOUT THEM NOW! -

Here, at the library, there are 16 lap-tops along the wall. Internet, e-mail, Word, I *had* a lap-top. I *created* web-sites. I did *graphics*. I *journalled*. I collected *music*. All worthless now. All gone. -

6:00pm back at A108. Did my 45 minutes on-line, mostly looking for Chabad. The 770 address is on Eastern Parkway at Kingston Avenue. The Kingston Avenue stop on the Nr.3 train. Crown Heights. Brooklyn. So, off I went. A quick stop at Bryant Park for a smoke, walk over to Times Square. How that's changed! All new signs that project and move and just add to the mess that is this city. I was tired and hungry and in no mood for any of this. But, I went. A few moments later and 4 stops past Grand Army Plaza... Crown Heights. Just in time for Mincha (afternoon) services and the school to let out. Black Fedoras EVERYWHERE! I went round the block to get a feel and my bearings. Found 770. Not what one might expect of a "World Headquarters". I think it was Schneerson's (their most highly revered rabbi) house. When I walked in, men davening (praying), even in the foyer and narrow halls. Movement. Constant movement. Confined. Nobody noticed me in my jeans, work-boots, with back-pack. Or, they chose not to notice me. It was very much like being in an active ant colony or bee hive. There was no one to speak with, no one to ask questions of... No one to talk with, and no indication of any "office" any-where! Just men praying or running about. I left, forlorn, walked down Eastern Pkwy a bit, sat on a bench, had a cigarette and pondered, alone, in silence. The sun shone but the breezes were quite chilly. I wondered what Mom would do in such a situation. Barge right in, no doubt. I thought: I can't say they didn't help if I

don't at least ask. I began to feel so isolated, right in the midst of what I can only describe as a "hive of Jews". I got up and started to walk. As I approached an "approachable-looking" elder, not wearing basic black or Fedora, I asked "Where might a person begin to enquire into information, direction, help about social services?" "The office of the Coalition." was the reply. "And where might that be?" "Kingston and Carroll. Go to the corner, turn right." OK. I asked, he told, I walked. On Kingston and Carroll I asked a shop-keeper "Where might I find the Coalition office?" "You see the butcher at the corner? The next door." "Thank you." A quick stroll. The office is in a non-descript front but clearly indicated "Crown Height Jewish Coalition" (if one is standing directly in front of it.) (6:55pm It's COLD in here! Thankfully, I have an extra blanket to put over me. I've managed to grab a nap.) Inside the



“Coalition”, 3 young men in “Black Hats” are speaking with an Orthodox woman about Social Security and the likes. THEY’RE SPEAKING HEBREW! Charming. When it comes my turn to be noticed, I’m flustered, but I tell the woman that I’ve been living in the shelter, have just found work but need white scrubs and shoes. I’ve no money and no income. She’s attentive and kind. She suggested I go across the street to a clinic to see if maybe they can help me. So, I go. At the clinic, the nice lady doctor, in American English tells me that they don’t wear scrubs there and recommends that I look on-line. Well she didn’t quite get the “I’m broke” part but rather than make an issue, I thanked her and departed. (There was a woman patient there, with 2 small children. They spoke French, Hebrew and English!) I walked back to the Coalition office to tell that I got no help. The kind woman softened and began looking-up places on-line where I could buy scrubs until she finally understood: I’m homeless and penniless. (By the way: as I was walking into 770, an old man, holding some paper cash in a clenched fist, held out his empty hand to beg money... FROM ME! I shrugged, told him I have nothing to give him and am in search of help myself. I doubt it registered with him at all.) Meanwhile, at the Coalition, g’veret (Mrs.) starts to look for telephone numbers (they assume I have no home but I have phone?). First number: MET COUNCIL! WHY DIDN’T I THINK OF THEM? Two more numbers: one for “east side” the other for “west side”. I told her the shelter is on 30th and 1st Avenue. She covered Manhattan. No addresses though. When I mentioned Met Council she said I should try the other numbers. Maybe they could intervene with Met Council for me. At least maybe one of them could provide the money to buy the scrubs. So! I thanked her with all my heart and set out to find a BROOKLYN library (thankfully, I have a card!) to look-up addresses for Met Council and the 2 telephone numbers. - On Eastern Parkway, I asked a cop for the nearest library. “Just down that way.” but he didn’t say how far. In the direction of Grand Army Plaza, 4 subway stations away. OK. I began walking since my car-fare is so limited. About 5 blocks later and no library, I ask 2 Black men, standing in front of a house. “How far am I from the library?” “About 6 blocks.” OK. I’ll go it. It’s chilly. The walk will warm me. So where the Hell do I end up? Brooklyn Central Library at GRAND ARMY PLAZA! In I go, swipe my card for... IMMEDIATE appointment! On-line I hit “Reverse look-up” on the phone numbers: “East Side”, United Jewish Council, 235 E. Broadway. Chinatown! “East Side”? No it’s not! But, OK. Next number, “West Side”. West Side COJO. One’s by City Hall, the address for them is 450 West End Ave. (81st/82nd Streets). OK. What’s a “COJO”? I look it up and well... of course! It’s “Council of Orthodox Jewish Organisations”! Silly me. It looks like God is tryin’ t’tell me something. Orthodoxy, here we come. Ready or not. Next? Met Council. Been there. They screwed me on my rent when I begged

them for help when I lived on Jane Street! They waited so long to get my rent cheque to me that I was tossed out just before they called to say "The cheque is here and ready!" Anyway, Maiden Lane. 21st floor. No hours on their web-site. Idiots! I'll have to wing it and hope like Hell. But, I did get the info I need. Tomorrow, I'm armed and ready. But I'll have to post-pone the PIC bit for a week. I KNOW I can't depend on ANY of these groups for anything expeditious. Out the door of the library, into a clear, sunny, chilly afternoon of 4:00pm (or so). The number 2 train to Nevins to the number 5 to Union Square to the number 6 to 28th to the "Chateau Bellevue". I think I got in at about 5:00pm or so and I was weak from hunger! 2 peanut butter rolls (Martins brand rolls) and an entire small cup of peanut butter plain. A bit of coffee and a wash: corduroy shirt and socks. My shirt is REALLY BEGINNING TO SHOW WEAR! THE COLLAR IS WORN AND THE BACK IS GETTING THIN. To think I have (had?) another shirt exactly the same as this one that's been worn only 4 or 5 times. When I think of what might be gone (lap-top, leather, suit, CD's, etc.) I get sick with anger. I'm not hateful. I'm so bitter that each heart-beat is a prayer for retribution! But, no sense in going into all of it here. Save the space. Move along. A nap. 30 minutes. Down for yet another smoke and here comes more incredible stuff! Round about 7:30pm I went up to Pax for a car-fare slip (and to stroke her ego as I do, always). As we spoke of the "good news" of today, she wrote the voucher. I was out of there in moments and queued for sign-in already at 8:03pm. Mike, a construction guy who calls me "Kessler" (Addendum: his name is Sonny) and I talked about job-hunting. He thought I was in construction! Hey! To me, that's a compliment. As we're talking, Mr. Brown makes his night announcement about having meal tickets "in your hand! Not in your pocket. Not in your arse. In your hand!" "I'll have car-fare at 9:30(pm)." He asked how many wanted car-fare and when it turned out to be only 2 of us, we got to go ahead of the queue, GET CAR-FARE AND SIGN IN! By 8:40pm I am back in my room, journalling all of this. It's 9:10pm right now! And although I'd like to have something to eat (the locker is void of food) I just don't know what I'd get at Gristede's to bring back, so, I'll be a bit hungry tonight. It's not as if I've never experienced hunger before. - I'm not too certain if it's under-nourishment for the day, fatigue or what but my throat is a bit scratchy, as are my eyes. Or is it the flu shot? Or is it the fact that it's 16,5° in here?!? And it's quite a chilly 16,5°! None-the-less, there's also one less mosquito too! I've managed to kill one! And I don't see any on the ceiling tonight! Hopefully I'll get good sleep, be ready to hit the streets in the morning, followed by a trip to Rockaway! I need to get to the post office and try for RAA, and PHC to see Brian. It's going to be one HELL of a day! Let's hope for perfect weather. For now? It's 9:19pm. A smoke and bed I hope. No sign of Angel. I hope he's up-stairs signing in and I hope he doesn't expect to

be entertained until midnight here, tonight. - Almost 10:00pm... As I went down at 9:33pm for a smoke, Angel was coming in. The queue down-stairs was a mess! Long! I smoked, but never again so late! As I stood in the dark and oppressive court-yard having my cigarette, a Moroccan fellow came to me and asked “Manish’ma?” (How's it going - Hebrew) (How are you?) He speaks Hebrew, French and German. The “blüdel” (idiot) in front of me spoke German. Imagine? Languages other than Spanish! And amongst Homeless people! It was a delight! - Coming back in was relatively quick but you could tell the guards are under pressure tonight, to get us processed into the building. - I’m waiting to see Angel and then, to sleep.



NOTES

19h30 car-fare slip Down for a smoke

20h03 queue for sign-in

20h40 back in room with car-fare and signed-in!

Friday 3 October: 50/19

6:51am and 18,5° Celsius! NO WATER! Got to sleep by 11:00pm last night. Woke at 6:15am to 16°! If I hadn't managed to acquire the extra blanket that I have, along the way it would have been a sleepless night from the cold. Still, to wake this morning to NO WATER? Luckily, my clothes are clean. But my body isn't. I need to take a dump, brush my teeth, take a shower! I've got some travelling to do. Today is supposed to be Rockaway and I'd like to go clean. - I'm also thinking about the coming cold weather and clothes. It's cold now and I've got no jacket or coat and very limited “layers”. The “hole” that is my “life” returns and with it, the darkness. Cold. What to do about the cold? - Well. I snuck a bit of a smoke in the room just now and I'm waiting for word on the water. It's almost unbelievable. NO WATER in a city shelter. But then, why should anybody care about 850 Homeless people? I've learnt from the likes of those who called themselves my “friends” and “family”... when you get right down to the bottom line, NOBODY cares, as long as THEY'RE comfortable. (8:09am on Sat.4 Oct.) WATER! Just as I finished writing, we got water so I bathed in the shower, in, out, done, dressed, out of the building. Walked to Herald Square with Angel. The library didn't open until 10:00am and that was too late for my plans for the day. I walked across 34th Street to 8th Ave. and, after what felt like an eternity waiting, caught the A train to Home! This morning, I didn't even mind the change at Broad Channel! And, it was warmer in there than Manhattan. What a pleasure to hear the announcement : “Shuttle to Rock

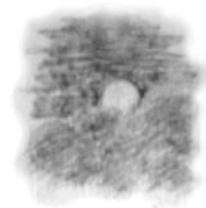
Park” over the speakers on the train. I felt like the soldier coming home from years at war. - Tide was in and the sky was over-cast. The cloud-line followed the beach. Ah, Rockaway. The end of the continent, end of the country, end of the State, end of The City, end of the weather system. - B116th Street. Out of the station and to the post office where there was mail for me and the previous box-holder. Mine consisted of an invitation to “Taschlich” (which has passed) and a card notifying the congregation of Walter B’s death, and a statement from my ADP Paycard. I was pissed: no direct deposit info from ADP! Well, off to Waldbaum’s for food. - Another happy return to a most familiar place. Up and down the aisles; bread, cold cuts, snacks and through the self-check, out the door. I knew where I was and how to navigate and I was there and gone and on my way! Home! A stop at B116 and Newport for the local newspaper, on the 35 bus and out to the wilderness of Funston! The clouds were to my right. The beach and sun were to my left. - As I got off the bus at the gates of Ft. Funston, the sun was shining, the usual wind was blowing and it was truly warmer. A pit stop at the public loo and to T6 where Madame Penelope was busy polishing her stone already. As harsh as it might appear, I wasn’t particularly thrilled to see her. Yes, I miss Tilden. No, I do NOT miss the RAA or its ilk. But, being the trooper, I feigned the missing, did the kissing and admired the sculpture (which I think is a waste of an other-wise beautiful piece of stone). We schmoozed about life in the shelter, life in general. Nothing deep or personal. Geoff came in to work on priming some stretched fabric he’d found and will be using for a portrait... a commissioned work. He’s trying to use a stretch fabric of some kind instead of canvass! It’s not working as he’d like. Duh. It’s not canvass. Oh well. Ripping off the client. Bastard! Typical bastard. Anyway, I made my little lunch at noon and read the latest horrors of home in the *Wave* (newspaper). - Finally! I was left alone to grab my hidden toiletries and the little scissor I used for hair-cut! They were in the bag that I’d stored in the little shed out back of T6! Part one of my purpose accomplished! - About an hour later, some guy named “Billy” came by to leave some kind of machinery for Geoff. He and Penelope were in the lot out front. I borrowed her telephone charger - it will be returned to her, of course - and took my leave to head to Peninsula Hospital. - A NOTE: Life, existence, the world, current situation has made it that I need to acquire necessities in any way possible. At this juncture, if I’m to get the HELL out of this hole I’m in, I need work. Work will have to phone me. I need to keep the phone fully charged. If I asked with all due politeness and humility, I’d get a “No” on the matter of the phone charger from the woman who would never put herself out to drive a few blocks into Rockaway or even into Brooklyn, both on her way home, to give me a lift. Same woman who saw no harm in letting me live out in the Fort under a tree. So, I do what I must these days to get out of where I am. Let

God and all Creation judge me. I just don't care any more. I'm doing what I must to make the best of this sh** I'm dying in. Don't like it world? SHOVE IT! - As I was headed for the gate, a KINDNESS! Billy pulls up and offers a lift to 116th Street! He's a welder and from Rockaway. We talked about the "small town" of Rockaway and how "a stranger will come by and offer a ride." And so we parted at 116th and I went to 112th and up to the boards and strolled down to 54th. - The sun was wonderfully warm. The breeze was strong. The ocean was a whisper and I was on my way. Stopped for a cookie break and smoke at 74th. My feet were beginning to hurt. I noticed it's easier to walk the boards than concrete sidewalks. I missed wearing flip-flops. I thought, I spoke; "I WILL return to Rockaway and I WILL live here comfortably and I WILL do it for my happiness and to spite Life. I continued my walk, noticing how the boards deteriorate down in the 60's and 50's. At last, 54th. I had to leave the sea. - As I got to Beach Channel Drive I had the feeling that Brian wasn't at PHC. As I entered the hospital grounds and looked at his window, I had a strong feeling that he wasn't there. As I left the lift on the 2nd floor, a dialysis Nurse looked at me and said "He's not here." There. Confirmed. So I went to the unit to find Jocelyn and there. at the very end of the hall, she was! I stopped at the desk to learn about Brian's discharge. The Nurses were the expected patronising, assuring me that he was ready to go. but the look on an NA's face told me better. Kleymentova sat in her corner and didn't speak. I was quite fine with that.. I have nothing pleasant to say to her anyway. So, I moved on to see Joycelyn who, when she saw me, gave a wonderful greeting and hug! Asked me how I'm doing, how did they discharge me, where I am living. When I told her how they lied, she said I should have re-admitted and I should sue. Gave me the name of an attorney who'll take my case AND the one against Premier! (Now I have to go back to Far Rock for that. And I will!) We went in to sit in an empty room and there, we talked. I told her of my dilemma with the scrubs. She said she'll see what she can do. She asked me if I have a warm jacket. I said all I have is all that's here. "We'll take care of that." THEN SHE HANDED ME A 20 SAYING "HOLD ON TO THAT. YOU'LL NEED TO GET TO WORK AND THINGS SO YOU HOLD ON TO THAT." A 20 FROM SOMEONE WHO CAN AFFORD IT LESS THAN SO MANY OTHERS! HOW TYPICAL! It makes me all the more bitter toward the liars and miserable f***s who hold tightly to what they have and BS a person! Yes, this 20 is a pair of white sneakers OR a set of white scrubs OR a telephone charger OR more phone time. AND it's something that could have come from an RAA donation jar OR somebody's loan OR a simple gift of compassion and understanding. Well, I learn to hold back until I am taken care of. - Time went by, Joycelyn took my post office address and phone number. It hurt to leave but she made me feel confident that things are only improving. - I walked down to the Frank

(44th) station for the train back. I stood on that platform, looking across the trees and the brush and over to the ocean. How magnificent! How much my “Home”. On the way to PHC I got to 67th and was embraced by Gaston (Avenue). There’s still time and the opportunity to come home to Gaston. I’ll remember that. I remembered that at Frank too. The train came. It carried me along the shore, across the bay and... away. It was about 5:00pm or so. - At 1st Av., back in The City, I took the bus because my feet were so sore that I couldn’t walk. Back in 2E22 (my room), I made and had a turkey sandwich, a beef sandwich, a nap, a cigarette, sign-in. At 8:45pm, I went down for another smoke. Sonny and Angel queued. We talked. When I came up to the room, Angel was just getting down from sign-in. The census seems low. I told him I was tired, sore, needed sleep. We cut the day and the night. - A note: At PHC today, when I was on the floor, Lillian, one of the sweetest Nurses there saw me, smiled and said “You want a bed? We have plenty to chose from.” Funny(?) I don't know how to take any of them there any longer... my trust in anybody is all but dead.

DREAM:

Penelope was exhibiting her works at the Newburgh library. Her recent “Deco” piece was the centre of attention. She stood, smiling, beside it, not speaking but posing as if for some photo-op. Through the exhibit, she'd smile at me, almost condescendingly, as if she felt a responsibility, an obligation to be congenial toward me. I sensed tension, but wasn't quite certain what I'd done, if anything, to deserve it. She turned away from me to greet some-one in the crowd and I woke.



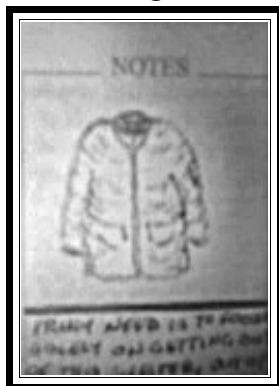
Saturday 4 October: 51/20

10:30am in 2E22 I've just finished yesterday's entry. I woke at 7:35am this morning, started this with my morning coffee. I make it before bed at night, tap water and instant, in a plastic “Gatorade” bottle, and keep it in my locker. I’ve showered and dressed. It’s overcast, chilly. It’s quiet in the halls and miserably noisy out-side the building. Angel said he wanted to go to lunch here and then to the library for his card and computer time. I really don’t want to wait around that long in the shelter. Honestly, I don’t know how these people can just piss away a day. Even a cloudy, chilly one. Oh well. I’ll have a bite to eat and get to the library. Kippa or not. I take my traditions on MY terms from now on. Yes, it's Saturday and Shabbat, but I have things to do and such. - 11:53am 18,5°. It’s cold. I’m cold. It’s drizzling! In the Wave: Shirl is going to have a reading

tomorrow at the exhibit at Tilden! I'll have to miss it! Screwed again! And I shouldn't be angry or bitter? Bull! - 1:29pm: ANGEL HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED OUT! TO "PROJEN", THAT PLACE ON 3RD STREET THAT THE GUY AT "INTAKE" WAS TALKING ABOUT. HE'S GONE TO THE 7TH FLOOR "SCIMS" OFFICE. THE TRANSFER IS TODAY! FROM HERE ON, I SPEAK WITH AND TO NO ONE! IT'S THE BEGINNING OF SOLITARY. I WANT TO PUKE! - 3:29pm

River Park: Everything in our lives gets ripped from us so easily. Especially those that provide us with any semblance of happiness, joy, comfort. I saw Angel to the bus just now, as I'd seen Dennis to the train. East 3rd St. "Project Renew". A guy in the yard at E30th said it's a much better place. E.30th is only a "clearing house". Angel's 21 days were up today. Tomorrow is mine. The rumour is that I'll be out to who-knows-where by Tuesday. Another shuffle in my life. Well, I found this place, this little park by the water. It gives me a little happiness. Yes. This too, must go. I'm alone again. I know some people at E30 but none to sit and talk with. Lonely nights are coming... empty nights. A "why" question: WHY HAVE I NOT BEEN CALLED TO WORK? - The sky has cleared. Sunshine. Cold breeze. - Angel was cleaning out his locker and gave me a heavy jacket! It fits me very well. Odd olive-sort-of

warm. I suppose I must be camaraderie for warmth. by a Homeless man. basement. He sees her daily. she lives in a project and can't one and no-where and no-like a pile of wind-blown



colour. Black lining. But it will keep me thankful for that much. An exchange: Warmth against the coming cold, provided "Homeless". His mother has a place, with He's stored things in her basement. (Maybe offer him space?) "Homeless". I have nothing. But I have a warm jacket. My mind is cinders. Like melted plastic. Like vomit.

Yes. Like vomit. Nothing is making any sense. This morning I stared out my window and wondered about my own cousin, Anita. This family, my family, our family abandoned her too! How cruel! Relatives of immigrants. She was the daughter of immigrants. How cruel. Just dumping humanity on a whim. How miserably cruel! She died, Homeless, penniless, in a shelter... at a bit older than I am now. But the sun is shining warmly on my neck, the river rushes by. The traffic behind me is almost maddening. Will I be transferred in the night? Tonight? No. Not until there's a cold, rainy night. That's how it will be. The only "appropriate" way to handle me. And all the while, I wonder why I'm still here - still alive - still going. Curiosity? Morbidly morose curiosity? To see just how much of a further beating I can take? It's SO VERY past the time when I should be GONE! - 4:00pm It's cold and the beginning of an empty night. - 4:44pm Angel rang. HE HAS TO WAIT UNTIL 11:00pm FOR

HIS ALREADY-ASSIGNED BED! There's TV to watch. Dinner is spaghetti and meat sauce. He says it's cleaner than here. He sounds lost. Hey! I had a massive anxiety attack when I got back to the room! Ate 2 cereals, 2 turkey sandwiches, the 3 graham crackers he gave me. I'm a mess alright. Security came by about 4:55pm. "Hello. Are you alright?" No! I'm not "alright". But there's nothing you can (or would) do to make it any better. I merely looked up and said, in my most assuring voice that I'm fine. - A Note: The jacket co-ordinates with my back-pack. "Olive" must be my new, up-and-coming colour. - Angel works tomorrow. The library Mid-town is open 1pm-5pm. Shirl's reading is 1pm-5pm. All I know is, I'll need diversion. Pax is off Sunday and Monday. Yom Kippur is Wednesday night. Synagogue around here? - 6:19pm I just came up from a smoke. Conversation (in Spanish) over-heard as I waited to go through security to come into the building: "You have to go to Newburgh. Broadway and Liberty. You take the train, Metro-North, to Beacon, and bus for one dollar. You tell them you're homeless and you don't want to go to a shelter. They'll put you in a hotel or motel." NEWBURGH! It's still the welfare capitol and easy-street for the dregs. If only I could put this on the "voy" community board somehow! But as I came back to the 2nd floor, anxiety attack in full charge, I thought "How different am I from that sh**? Just because I'm HERE in the shelter system?" - What a day! What an evening! Nothing more or less than anxiety. And I believe I have to see Pax this evening about my meal ticket. I don't want to. I don't want a new one. I don't want to see her. So it means "shut down" and go anyway simply to pass some time. I'll go at 7:00pm. If it takes an hour, I'll queue for sign-in.



Then, I can sign in, come here, try for sleep. I'll have to face tomorrow alone. - All told, what I truly TRULY NEED IS TO FOCUS SOLELY ON GETTING OUT OF THIS SHELTER, OUT OF THIS SYSTEM, OUT OF ALL OF THIS AND NOW. NOT LATER. NOW!!!! - As I write, the sun is setting and the sky is dark, dark grey with ominous clouds. My chest is closing in on me. The room is closing in on me. ANXIETY ATTACK! in dead silence. - (Note: WHAT HAVE I DONE TO DESERVE THIS?) - 6:48pm It's ever so dark out there. Thick with clouds. Angel's bed is being moved about. A new guy already? I want to cry. I want to punch

something. I'm sick to death of being bleating-frigging stoic! Sick to bleating-frigging death! - 9:17pm Pax extended my meal ticket to the 8th by making an 8 out of the 6 and initialling it. I can't wait to see what this will cause and if it will be reflected on the sign-in sheet. She can write anything on the ticket, but it's what "Operations" puts on the sign-in sheet that sticks. But we had a really great chat about language. She's Nigerian. I told her how I love African English. She told

me how she hates Black-American English. That done, I queued for sign-in. She was running it tonight. Then, after sign-in, a diversion from anxieties by having a talk with Mike, (from A127, now on the 4th floor). He grew up in Riverdale! We even talked about living in Riverdale Park! Seems people have done it for years already. Little communities are there! He also told me of a synagogue close by where they let you sleep on the benches in the sanctuary over-night and give you food. It's in Chelsea. Since I don't have "proper" clothes for Yom Kippur, I'll look into it for services on Thursday. I won't be able to go Wednesday night because of sign-in. But maybe I can catch week-day services anyway. Why? I don't. know, exactly, Seems "God" is in Hate mode with me of late. But maybe the routine will help. Rabbi Lewis said it does. I'll try anything now. - From the looks of this floor and the sign-in, now people are coming in and none look "civil". I want out of here. Soon! Then, think of Mike: 3 compressed vertebrae, bowel problems so bad he can't stray too far from a loo, Alcohol. My problem? I just hate existing. Tired of life itself. Well, I snuck my half cigarette in the room. Library at 1:00pm tomorrow. If my feet will manage, a look-up on that synagogue. Food shopping. (No more food stamps on the account until Friday and about 40\$ left now.) It's 10:03pm and the hall-rats are congregating. Me? Time to try for some sleep. - Thank you for the jacket, Angel.

Sunday 5 October: 52/21

12:05pm Back in "dorm room number" 2E22 My stomach is churning. An emergency trot before shower. Woke the first time about 7:00am. Finally up at 8:30am. Kept very busy this morning cleaning the locker, organising, trying to make packing and schlepping easy. I do think I can manage with only minor difficulties at this point. I'm getting ready for the next "move" they'll force on me. - Angel phoned at 10:30am. "Call me back." was the message he left. - It rained over-night into this morning so I didn't rush to wake up. - A cleaning crew mopped the hall and loo. I heard a woman "Hello? No smoking." Me? I've had 5 cigarettes this morning in half-cigarette intervals. - Library opens at 1:00pm. I'll go. Shirl is having a reading today at 1:00pm. I'd like to go but not for the 20 that Joycelyn gave me. I need that for whites and I need the whites for work and I need the work to get out of here. Besides which, although I've nothing against Shirl, I've no real desire to participate in RAA any more. YES! I want and NEED to get back to Rockaway but NO! Not to the RAA. - So, 12:30pm. A bit of sun. I'm off to the library. - 2:50pm at the library. My eyes don't want to focus! Fatigue? Or a bit of depression? Don't know. Don't care. As I waited (from 1:25PM to...) for my 2:00pm appointment, I doodled and a woman wanted to know where I

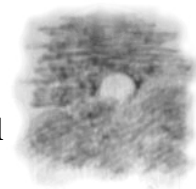
got this book. Then she saw my “doodles” and remarked “They’re really exquisite!” Says I should make good money at it. OK. Another “should” with nothing more. The person is OK but you know? Screw the “should”! - Got on-line. ADP disputes: they've charged me an overdraft fee AND processed a 5\$ cash back transaction? What the Hell?). Forbell and E.3rd found on an internet search so now I know where they are. Attorney in Far Rock found. Angel added to my “Grand Central” telephone contacts list. I posted to voy community board for Newburgh. Re: the conversation I over-heard yesterday. Even checked some e-mails! Busy! A second call from Angel. Now I’m checking. Nothing. Blanks. OK. - Looks like good weather out there. I’m quite hungry. It’s 3:00pm. This was the only thing on my agenda. Perhaps I’ll go for a smoke and check the 3rd floor. Sign-in is at 8:00pm but today I can go back to my “cell” at any time. - 12,65\$ left in time on the phone. I need money for minutes! The “NEEDING” never ends. - 6:46pm 2E22: Left the library and went to D’Ag at 38th on 3rd for cream cheese, peanut butter, yoghurt, PopTarts, rolls. The peanut butter should have had 6 containers. IT ONLY HAD FOUR! FRIGGING screwed! But I didn’t go back. Why bother listening to them accuse me of trying to get away with something? I ate. That’s what’s important. - Spoke with a man who was walking a dachshund. Good moments spent. It got chilly. I came here at about 4:45pm or so and passed the time sorting through my little notes and tearing them into little pieces. Had a cigarette by halves. - The sun is setting. Another day gone. - Tried to phone Angel twice. No answer. Well, I tried. - My locker is looking quite neat and tidy. Ready to pack and go. I hear that some guys have been here 2 months. I don’t want to be here that long. I’m quite anxious to go now. Too bad it gets too cold at night. - I need clean linens. Maybe this Wednesday. I don’t know and don’t much care. - Looking forward to sign-in and sleep. LONG walk tomorrow to Met Council and LONG walk back! - 8:58pm Signed in and the bleating lunatics have taken over the asylum tonight: One f*** tried coyly, to take a place in the queue in front of me. I disappointed him when he turned to me, almost threateningly and asked “OK?” and I said “I don’t f***ing care”. DHS security manned the sign-in table. There’s no “control” over anything at all on the 7th floor. - I noticed Angel’s bed (A107) isn’t assigned. They just couldn’t wait to move him but there’s nobody to take the empty bed. - Down-stairs for a smoke and some trash on the 2nd floor has a boom-box in the window blasting what I can only call “niggersh**”. LOUD! Even DHS security isn’t stopping it. Chaos. Madness. And we're all in an abandoned psychiatric hospital... and tonight it's obvious. - The hall over here in the East Wing is full of cigarette smoke. 3 security guards at the desk in the Centre Wing. All goes un-noticed.

NOTE: Synagogue 23rd Street b 7th/8th Avenues

On the sign-in queue, the ass behind me was blasting some sh** ring-tone tune as “security” walked by playing with a text phone. Behind Mr. Ring-tone, some moron kept shouting vulgarities at what-ever. Right now there are some idiots slamming doors and toilet seats in the toilet room across the hall. Everything is falling apart. I truly NEED to get out of here! But I keep my own person and emotions and thoughts pulled deeper and deeper inside. I think of my nights in the Bakfort, on the dunes, under my tree. There’s no sense reacting to any of this here. This place is the actually proof that there are “human” brains that are biologically and organically pitifully inferior. It is a grand promotional support for a “Brave New World”. There truly ARE those whose destruction could make the world a better place. - And the doors in the hall slam on and on at 9:13pm. - I’ll be out of here early tomorrow. Let the weather be good! - PopTarts for snacks. A sketch or 2. Bed. Lights out.

DREAM:

I’m in a small, crowded, small-town candy store to get 4 or 5 pieces of candy. There's a very fat man at the counter. He's busy with slow customer in front of me. As a favour to him, I count for exact change. He sees my small purchase and points it out to the fat woman owner who says “Since he wants to be like that here...” and she calculates, slowly, the cost of my candy, one piece at a time. I’m furious and yell at her, punching her, telling her I was trying to make it easier by counting exact change! She apologises but I’m in a rage, punching her, poking at her breasts, telling her she’s fat, disgusting, foul-odoured! She keeps apologizing. I keep yelling, punching, poking. She follows me out of the store and down the stairs. I’m still yelling and poking. She’s sweaty. Fat and sweaty. I wake up.



Monday 6 October: 53/22



12:52pm And I'm at Met Council 10th floor. SO TIRED! I slept last night but sleep is no longer restful. Woke at approximately 5:40am, had coffee, jumped into shower and dressed and bolted for the door. I may have left at just past 7:00am because I walked down 2nd Ave. to 3rd Street and found “Projen” at E.3rd. Nice building on the outside. Typical E. Village neighbourhood and “common” Homeless trash on the streets. It started to drizzle. Said I, to God “You wouldn’t dare!” God heard. He didn’t. I walked to

Broadway and down to J&R, off to - no, wait - OK. Yes, Fulton St. where I stopped for a smoke,

and a phony phone talk as I smoked. I do those now: There's no-one on the phone, but I "chat" away, as if on an important call. Passes time, looks less suspicious that me simply "there". Onward to Maiden Lane. Arrived SO early that by 8:11am I had already been sitting, established, at Pier 17. At the pier, I noted the following: 12°. It was 49°F. at Houston (at 7:50am). Cloudy. Feet hurt, back wet from sweat. Could use a BM. Left approx. 7:00am. Angry this morning. Rang Partners In Care at 8:50, was told to call back at 9:00am. I'm SICK of people, congestion, noise. Sick of passing so many places with so many memories. Kips Bay. Barbara and Eileen and Zur, 22nd, lived there, Lower Broadway where I'd bought my first futon for Jane St., John St., Duncanson & Holt reinsurance co. and Sinclair, 40th and Madison, Nancy, Liz, Lord and Taylor, Mama, Takashimaya, 36th and 3rd-Dakota, Judy, Joyce, Alex... Too much. Too much. 8:40am heading for Met Council. - And so I did. Met Council, Maiden Lane, 21st floor. William at the reception. He asked if he could help me. I told him I doubt it but I'll try. I told him, bluntly, of my walking from the Shelter, my Homelessness, my need of uniform for work. He invited me to have a seat. A welcome invitation! I read the *Jewish Sentinel* as I waited. An Iranian man of quite a certain age, dressed very well, claiming "Refugee" status, looking for an apartment immediately! I over-heard a young woman tell him that it doesn't work that way. There are waiting lists and such. William kept me abreast by telling me that someone from Crisis Intervention would see me at about 10:00am. His English, spoken, grammar are a delight to the ear and I told him so. As I'm sitting and reading, a tall Black woman comes in, stands in front of me, introduces herself as "Jackie" and asks how she can help me "this time after so many years". I'm still on file! (I'm nodding off as I jot this too!) I took the leap and told her that the cheque, years ago, arrived after I'd lost the apartment. Lip service to having tried. She heard my story. I told her that since then, I've lost faith and trust in people but have strengthened my faith in God. (Well, I test him now.) - 2E22 at 3:20pm - She told me that if I have faith in God then I have to have faith in mankind. Then she told me that I should have called before coming in. It would have saved a lot of wear and tear on the body. I said that my body doesn't make much difference these days, I'm in the shelter. Even at that, I'm in it simply for the experience. I was blunt. I told her it was a simple choice between the shelter or death, and I still can't be too certain why I chose the shelter. She told me to wait a few moments, she'd be right back. Well, a very few moments later she came back to tell me that I needed to go to a store where I could buy what I need, have them write an "estimate" and bring that back to her. "I deal in vendor cheques, not cash." She told me there's a uniform store up on Nassau, get the "estimate", bring it to her on the 10th floor. She didn't say they'd cover it. She didn't say they wouldn't. My feet were sore already, I was hungry, tired, thirsty. I went. It was

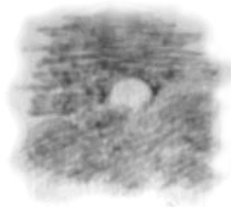
about 11:00am by now. - Up Maiden to Nassau, up Nassau to the end. No store. I was at Pace College already and, well, I thought, if they teach Nursing, somebody should know where to get uniforms. I tried. - In the lobby, the security guard, a lovely, soft-spoken woman, told me she had no idea where to get uniforms. I joked about no longer being able to look in a phone book since everything's on the Internet now. But just as I turned to leave and start walking all over the Financial District, THERE, beside her, a phone book! 2005, but a phone book! She gave it to me and I went browsing. Most stores are in The Bronx and New Jersey. Many are up-town. One was only at 386 on Broadway. I could just about manage that walk. I thanked her and left. - O.K. *Uniforms* is about 4 long blocks from Pace. Avi, the proprietor, young, black kippa and the longest peyote (side curls), I've ever seen tucked up slyly under the kippa, greeted me with "Shalom". (Rachel? You were so right about wearing a kippa!) I told him what I needed. Jackie had said "two" sets of scrubs and shoes. So I told Avi. I went through what they had in scrubs. A woman asked if I was finding what I needed. I was, but needed the shoes. "Size?" 11. She replied "*Weppa!*" (Wow) but went into the back and moments later came out with a box containing size 11, white, professional but comfy shoes! OK! I found the scrubs, had the shoes, Avi printed a receipt for me. 113\$. I figured "Not a chance" but thanked him and returned, slowly, limping, to Maiden Lane. It was about 11:40am. Some woman gave me a "Standard Application" for persons under the age of 60. It struck me when I told her I'm under by only 7 years. ONLY 7 YEARS! Sh**! But I completed the application, she copied my social security and Benefits cards and gave all, with receipt, to Jackie. More waiting. I asked if I could eat my 2 little sandwiches (peanut butter and cream cheese, made this morning before leaving the shelter), she said "Of course!" I promised not to leave crumbs. She thanked me. I ate and as I ate, Jackie passed to leave the floor. "Enjoy your nosh." I said "If my sugar goes down too much..." "Don't go getting sick on me now!" she said. We chuckled. She left. I finished and began journalling. - As is obvious by the writing, I was falling asleep as I wrote. It was horrible! I couldn't keep from dozing off! It's become that way now: I get someplace out of the shelter and I doze off! It's got to be because, in the shelter, EVERY second is "on watch", on guard, expecting violence of some kind. (Even as I write this, at 7:21pm, the Spics are in the hall, wandering like feral chickens, yelling and slamming doors. So conducive to relaxation. TRASH!) Get out of the shelter into the world of civilized human, humane beings and the body collapses. - I didn't see her return but in a matter of maybe 20 minutes, she, Jackie, came from her office and asked me to come with her. We went back to the 21st floor. En route I told her of my entry into the shelter. I've resolved to tell everyone I can about Shockeye. She said it's a shame how people can be so ignorant that they choose to stop thinking beyond such

stupidity. We arrived back where I'd begun on 21. Jackie bade me have a seat. - It wasn't 10 minutes later when she returned with an envelope. Handing it to me she said "You can open it. I just prefer doing it this way." IN THE ENVELOPE WAS A 100, A 10, 3 SINGLES, THE RECEIPT! NOTHING MORE! NOTHING LESS. CASH! When I thanked her, she said "None of us knows if or when we might be on the other end of this. I just hope someone will be there to help me if my time comes. Meanwhile, I do what I can. Happy New Year. Good luck." I was (and still am) numb. En route to Met this morning I was angry, knowing that I'm worthy and deserving of help. I've given, given, given, in silence and when-ever I've asked for help I've gotten just less or not at all. I expected that today. OK. So I got just exactly and nothing more. But I received help... nothing less! Jackie and I parted on the 10th floor. Me? I hobbled directly back to *O.K. Uniforms*, handed Avi the cash and proceeded to PAINFULLY limp and hobble back up-town. It was about 2:00pm. I thought the slow, painful walk would take at least 2 hours. Well, even with a stop at 17th Street and 1st Ave. for a smoke, I was back at the shelter by 3:10pm! WITH MY WHITES! (8:59pm signed-in, smoke.) Met Mike on the way in at 3:00pm. We chatted a bit. I wasn't sure I'd be allowed in before 4:00pm because I think the earliest we're allowed to be in the building is 4:30pm. but I SO needed to get off my feet. The PAIN from all the walking today was horrible. I was thirsty. I needed to pee. What another blessing to come to this vacant, stark, cold room, take off my work-boots, wash my socks, t-shirt, scrub top, to lie down. The sun poured in through the window and directly on me. I fell asleep for almost an hour. - 4:38pm I woke. I decided to break the 20\$ from Joycelyn for another pouch of Bugler, having finished the second pouch today. Flip-flops on and downstairs just in time to see DHS Security in action! A tall, thin, very dark Black man. I'd seen him a couple of days ago. Scars on his bald head. Surgical. I remembered thinking he'd be trouble. Obviously there was some kind of surgery to his head. No telling what for. Indeed, he was. The take-down reminded me of the Wingdale Psychiatric days when I worked there for the state, but this time, no "sheet" no Ativan, just cuffs. The big, burly White guy with the kind face smiled. "This is the second time." I waited until the fracas was done, had a smoke, not wanting to get too close, then hobbled over to 2nd Ave, for smokes. En route back, alone, I stopped at an obscure bench in the projects, rolled a smoke and hobbled back for 2 peanut butter and honey sandwiches. Time to journal the day and wait for sign-in at 8:00pm. - As Fate would have it, at just past 8:00pm, FIRE ALARM! Harsh. Shattering. Haunting. Awful! The electronic blips, at different pitches, echo all through this hollow, empty, cold, concrete asylum. I focused on climbing the 5 flights of stairs but at one point it almost choked me. I don't know what, exactly, it evoked but I was, for the briefest moment, in terror on the stair! Deep

breath. Climbing slowly. Non-stop to the 7th floor. As I went through the door to the hall there, all was as if nothing unusual was happening. - And so, 9:17pm the “trash” is making havoc in the halls. I’m just going to get to bed and hope with all, for sleep. I wish I could take something to help but the only thing I have has codeine and if I have to take a drug test, I’ll be screwed. Not to mention, one truly needs to be alert in here, at all times, even in sleep... especially in sleep. So, I’ll suffer through trying for sleep. - It’s cold in here tonight. I closed the window. The forecast on the monitor in the elevator on Maiden Lane said 44°F for tomorrow night. Winter is coming. It’ll be interesting to see if I make it that far. This is all beginning to wear me down, mentally, emotionally, physically.

DREAM:

I napped this evening. A dog. Jack Russel? Black, brown and white being attacked by a larger, short-haired, grayish dog, in the stairway here, in the shelter. I grabbed the large dog at the neck to choke it, with both my hands. It reared, pulling the neck-skin up over it’s eyes. Its tongue protruded. It went limp. I left it on the landing and called the little dog to follow me. It did. I looked back. The large dog regained consciousnesses, tried to follow me and the small dog, but couldn’t. I was surprised that I managed to choke the large dog and happy to have saved the small dog. I was prepared to kick the large dog if it got too close to us. I woke.



NOTE: WHITES and SHOES! FULL UNIFORM! Jackie-Met Council. O.K. Uniform-113 Total
Re sched PIC Orientation for Mon.13 October.

Tuesday 7 October: 54/23

8:44am Bryant Park. 46°F. A horrible night, last night. RicanTrash in the hall most of the night. - Woke 6:16am. Shaved. Painful. Bad razors! Showered. Dressed. So much pain! My right foot is really badly blistered! So much Pain! - Cold this morning. Not cold enough for a heavy jacket, too cold for sweat shirt. - I hobbled slowly up to here at this park on 42nd Street by 6th Ave. The library opens at 9:00am. I’ve no particular destination today. Certainly can’t walk any great distance. It would seem this is truly a “Homeless” day. I’m only just considering a trip to Rockaway but not certain. My mood and general spirit this morning: Just a touch “down”. - Two brief messages from Angel. “Call me.” It’s costing me phone time. How to get 22\$ to put on the phone. Dilemma du jour. And where to charge the phone today. Dilemma du jour deux. - I find

time dragging yesterday and today. When I'm not hurried, neither is time. Always arriving too early. - When I get up from here there will be more pain. As I sit here, more cold. 5 more minutes to library. There's no sunshine to be found in the morning. No warmth. The buildings in this city block the early morning sunshine. In Summer, it's almost a blessing, shade abounds. But as the weather becomes cooler and colder, well, I don't have proper clothes for the cold and this early in the morning, the air is cold and damp. It goes right through to the bone. This can't continue much longer. I can't take much more of it. I simply can't. There are places I could go. But I can't walk! My worst dread has come to be: "Can't walk." - Two minutes to library. A slow hobble. A bit of time on-line. Then what? I just don't know. - 10:58am. A train to Rockaway. I managed to get 75 minutes on-line at the library instead of the 45-minute normal appointment time. And... I got an immediate appointment. Posted twice to Luach, the Jewish community board on-line. - Only 9,50\$ on the phone now too. Had to block Angel for now. Most of the money/time is listening to his multiple messages which, honestly, for the most part, say nothing. I know that he wants and needs to talk, and that he wants to talk with me, but when we DO get to talk, I try to make arrangements to meet some-where and, well, I'm the one making the arrangements, and he's the one who seems to be either busy or tired. I try my best. It's all that I can do. - Tired. Dissociated somehow. Hungry. - The MetroCard/bus-train pass was 7,50\$ not 7\$. The less money I have, the more expensive things are. - Nap time on the A train. - 9:28pm. A108. SpicTrash in the hall. Doors slamming away! FRIGG! It's almost amazing how stupid these morons can be and still they manage to breathe. Just amazing. Black and Beige alike. And yes, in all honestly, White too. - Anyway, I'm in. Throat coated with sand (or so is the sensation). Nose dripping. Eyes dry. Head heavy. Something's coming on and it ain't Christmas. I can't afford to feel like sh** now. I just can't! I just won't! - Believe it or not, some dick-head is tapping on something at the construction site next door at this hour! Sometimes the world's just hateful. But, I did manage to get my new meal ticket, valid until the 14th, sign-in and wash my socks from today (the blister broke, a huge blister, making my socks wet) and a set of whites (to take out the folded creases - replacing them with plain wrinkles). I could wish for a good night's sleep but it won't happen, so why bother? - The day: off the train at B116th Street and to the post office for nothing but 2 pieces of junk for the previous "resident"! - I need my direct deposit info. FRIGG! To Waldbaum's for today's lunch and snack. Food Stamps down to about 11\$ and more not due until Friday. Time to watch carefully. The markets in The City are too bleating expensive! But as I went through the aisles of Waldbaum's, it felt good to be "home". So familiar. So quiet. So needed. - I took the Q35 bus to the Fort. Penelope and Geoff were there, both working and both

quiet. I truly admired the glass-like, almost liquid-like appearance of Penelope's sculpture as she buffed and waxed. It honestly is a wonder that happens to the stone. The piece? Not to my taste. The "art"? Magnificent! - Ego-stroking. That's what I do. - Geoff is painting on a huge, stretched bit of brownish fabric, not canvass, some cheaper bit of fabric. He's painted a brick wall. No doubt for the Halloween do (the one I'll have to miss again this year!). But both of them, very quiet. - I arrived about 1:00pm! Later than I'd expected to arrive. Still, the peace, the quiet, the serenity, clear skies, sea breezes, warm sun... feeling of "home"... I didn't care about anyone or anything. I had my lunch, alone, in the back yard. - Geoff left. Tommy came. Penelope's mood brightened. I'm obviously not HER COMPANY OF CHOICE now. Ah, then, but, what the f***? Eh? Tommy told jokes. Geoff returned. They smoked a "dube", as they call it, out back, cracked jokes. Tommy told me of his few days working on the "Nugget" bar in Monticello! (or, "Montighetto", as he called it). Of ALL places! Imagine him there, in the "land of my paternal ancestors". So we talked Catskills (the mountains and the region). It amazed him that so many people up there have guns. Duh. He stayed at someone's home out in Swinging Bridge (where I used to go swimming when I was a child... just down the dirt road from "gramma's"). Ah, well then. It was a bit of fun to tell my "I remember that when" tid-bits. Not that I care to "remember" these days. Those days are no longer a part of "my" past. Nor are the people who are part of those days. - I left at 3:30pm. Fare well, Funston. As delightful as it may be to be there, the most blatantly obvious fact that remains is that, for all the hoopla the RAA claims, NOT ONE, knowing I'm in the shelter, need work and money, NOT ONE has done ANYTHING, NOT EVEN OFFERED to help me in ANY way. I think of this, always. Not that I care. I just note it. - (10:01pm BLEATING MUTHERFREAKING USELESS TURDHEADED ROT-MOUTHED SPICS IN THE BASTARD-FREAKING HALL AT THIS BLODDY ARSE-SCREWING HOUR! They have NO concern, acknowledgement or respect for any-body or any-thing except themselves. Base mentality at best, very base.) - Well, when I left the Fort today, I headed out to PHC to find Joycelyn. Yay! She was there and so happy to see me! I told her about getting the whites. She was planning to get them for me! As we chatted, the dinner trays came. She put one together for me. Chicken, veggies, pasta, potato, soup, coffee, pineapple chunks. I hid in room 257 and shoved it down so quickly, lest I get caught. Klembitch was on the floor. (10:15pm I have to try for some sleep!) - (9:02am Wednesday at the library. Feeling like sh**.) I just don't want to deal with her (Kleym) interrogations and, as with this evening, false smiles of concern. Two-faced bitch. And, while I'm on the two-faced folk: Brenda, who comes at me with judgemental statements about my general worth as a human-being, and none too positive when she gets into her tirades, tells

me about New Haven Home Care and does absolutely NOTHING to help me along to getting back to work. Her first question to me was “Are you working?” Not “How are you?” As Joycelyn pointed out, Rachel will do things to “help” and Brenda will simply spew words. She’s generally useless. But then, I did find, in a previous conversation with her, that she’s one of those “Orthodox” who believes that, if one is not of “her” belief, one is unworthy of even her attention. And this is a Nurse! We move along to the next patroniser: Rozann, the “Social Worker”, who came to the floor as I was about to leave. A simple, blatantly forced smile. Why does she bother? I asked her about the paper-work allegedly sent to the shelter to “Arlene”. I told her it’s been 3 weeks in the shelter and nobody I’ve spoken with knows of any “Arlene”. DEFENCE! The tone, turned hostile and she blurted “Of course I faxed your records over! How do you think you go in there in the first place?” I calmly replied: “Just like anybody else off the streets. I went through the general procedures like everyone else. And all along I asked about the records and nobody knew what I was talking about.” She continued to insist that she did some kind of work to help me and as she spoke, she dropped the acronym “PLU” (I still don’t know that that’s supposed to be) for “Arlene and Vanessa Cupid” who allegedly work there and with whom, allegedly, she was in contact, a Nurse, and another name I can’t recall just now. I tried to allay her tension, made my point and she toddled off, irritated. So? So. - Joycelyn’s talking about buying me a set of pots and pans for my apartment already. She makes certain I eat. She’s planned on buying me clothes. She’s actually taking care of me. And she says “That’s just the way I am.” Yes. And it’s just the way I’d always been... until now: giving, giving, giving... until now. Now, I can’t “give” and even if I could, I doubt I would... all things of late considered. We parted, her telling me that she’s on the week-end and asking if I had car-fare to get back to the shelter. Where has she come from and how is it my life is touched by her? Now, of all times. She’s a blessing... a true gift. A miracle. - It was about 5:20pm when I left PHC, got the Q22 bus to B139th. Stopped by to see Lillian Benjamin to pay respects. Walter was her husband, I took care of him before he died. They were kind enough and nice enough. She candidly replied: “Not well.” Told me how she’d planned on bringing Walter home. How difficult the coming Bar Mitzvah that they are celebrating will be. She wept a bit and asked if I’m still in the area. No comment when I told her that I’m in The City (I gave no details). She said she was cooking “for yontiv” (the holiday) and couldn’t talk but ended with “Come by any time.” I never got inside the door. But, I suppose that’s better. I needed to get back to the shelter anyway. - Q53 bus to the 2 train to the 5 train to the 6 train to 28th Street. I was back in by about 7:30pm. - Upstairs to the 7th floor for a new meal ticket. Down-stairs to the 2nd floor for quick nosh and water and such in the room. Back up-stairs to the 7th floor for sign-

in. Down stairs to the ground floor for a smoke. Upstairs to end a busy day in a f***ing hell-hole of Earth's trash. - Noting, however: as I did my little laundry, a new face says "Big holiday coming up for you, huh?" White guy. We joked about the starvation of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and tradition vs. religion. I observe the "tradition". There are some pleasant people around in the world. A few... very few...

Wednesday 8 October: 55/24

9:38am at the Midtown Library, 2nd floor. I'm continuing... VERY, VERY little sleep last night! Stuffy, runny nose. Couldn't breathe well because of a scratchy throat. Couldn't get comfortable. My mind wouldn't shut down! Miserable. I even had to get up to pee at one point. The next thing I know, I'm looking at my little clock. 6:58am - Coffee. Shower. Quick half smoke. Feeling run down, run over. Tired, tired. Scratchy throat. Runny nose. I'm dozing here. No plans for the day. The phone is charging. The time is passing slowly! SO slowly. - Sign on the 7th floor at the Shelter tells that linens for 2nd floor are exchanged on "Wednesday". I'd planned that for today. However, the sign on the 2nd floor tells "Tuesday". Bleating inconsistencies and stupidity! But I went to the "linen office" on the 5th floor, only to find it locked! SCREWED AGAIN! So I just left and came here, arriving for a queue and entry. - I'm run-down this morning. But I've got a few things that can be done. Let's see how we manage this comfortably coolish day. - 6:46PM in 2E-22. This place is as good as dead. Silent. Wonderfully silent. I've just awakened from a sleep of almost 2 hours! It's sun-down. Yom Kippur. The "fast" has begun. Will I make it this year? No promises. - Got on-line with an extra 15 minutes at the library today. Had I known, I'd have done my CV and cover letter. I got both written as I sat at the table on the 2nd floor. I also got the cell phone charged fully. Now all I need is money for it. - Received an e-mail from Met Council Home Care, addressed to "Miss". Even there! Stupid women who either don't read or don't pay attention. Either way, I keep thinking they're "Godless". My name is Biblical... READ IT! Anyway, applications are on the 21st floor. I'll go and give the Shelter as my address. Maybe they'll get me work and get me out of here. Too much? Most probably. I also sent a "Thank you" e-mail to Jackie. I'll have to write her one as well. Perhaps tomorrow while I fast. - I managed to stay in the library until about 1:30pm then went over to Bryant Park for a smoke. 2, actually. Sat at a little table with cell phone to ear, talking full-conversation-like to nobody. And I carried it along until almost 2:30pm! If anybody knew... there I was. The phone wasn't even turned on! But it passed the time until I went over to Chabad. Now there was an experience. Yes, it's the old *Takashamaya*

building (where, as a child, it was Mum's FIRST destination when we'd come into The City together! How she LOVED the Japanese art and craft packages and such!) 2nd floor. Elevator opens directly into a room full of tables, chairs... an Ark (for the Torah)! Like a fancy dining room with an Ark! A woman in an office behind plexiglass invited me in. Katherine (with a K.). She took a telephone call before addressing me. Tomorrow's services at... A pre-fast meal for 36\$ per person. Suggested donation for tomorrow: 100\$. Oh well. And I had an invitation to attend in Beth El, Belle Harbor, free! I had an invitation to participate with my new congregation in a place I think of as "home". My own congregation! I told her I'm "Conservative" and not "Orthodox". She told me she's "Reform"! We both agreed we're ALL Jews and it doesn't make any difference in the long run of it all. She put me down on the list for Kol Nidrei (prayer services) tonight and tomorrow's services! I told her I'm stuck in The City, no proper attire. She told me they have many different people attending, "back-packers", Israelis and 2 Asians. Of course, there will be the rich, mid-town Jews as well, but I shouldn't stay away. "The holiest day of the year and they should turn you away because of attire? What kind of message would that send?" She invited me to linger, browse, write, read, meditate. I did browse. Chumash, Talmud, Tanach, Siddur... all of the books and scriptures, and all Orthodox. I thanked Katherine. She bade me enjoy this evening. I left. - Now, about D'Agostino's on 38th Street. I'm fed up! Little rolls in the bin. 3 at 1,15\$. The girl rang-up 69cents EACH for 3. I didn't notice until I got to the park to eat! Last time the peanut butter: packaged for 6 cups and only 4 in it. Now I'm pissed! Giving them money! OK. Food Stamps. But money non-the-less. This is the last time! - 3 dinner rolls with cream cheese. Yoghurt. I actually relaxed. Had a smoke. 4:00pm and back to "Castle Bellevue" (the shelter). - A female guard on the 2nd floor and I spoke. She tells me of stories of ghosts about the place when I mentioned the history when this place was a "Mental Hospital", and all the "treatments" (electro and chemical and such) and the radical surgeries and the pain and sufferings, no doubt. We laughed about the plans to turn this into a hotel. It's rumoured that some company wants to buy the building and turn it into a "High Class" hotel! I said I want to come for a night and tell the guests what it was. We laughed. She said I'd put them out of business. - I came in, had 3 rolls with peanut-butter and vanilla frosting, an instant green tea, laid down to sleep. - 7:33pm (1933! in military time... Mum's birth-year.) I ate for the last time. I feel I should eat since I'm really not feeling too well. Nose is sore and runny, runny, runny. Coughing. Sneezing. A little better than before. But to go hungry now, when the body needs energy. First mitzvah (Jewish law) is to save life. I have. Now I fast. - The schmucks are working at the construction site outside my window! I know they're breaking a law of some kind by making all this noise at this hour and on such a

“high” Jewish holiday... AND they're disturbing my peace! - A door closed in the hall. The morons return, like the monkeys to the wicked witch in Oz... - 9:09pm I met Mike (2E-21) on the queue tonight. He's back on the 2nd floor in what used to be the “Over-night” beds. Good talking with him. But these “friend-ships” are fleeting. Although, he's been pretty constant. One can't figure anybody in here. None of us knows anything about anybody. - I'm feeling weak. Mike says I'm supposed to get a grey blanket from the shelter for the colder weather. I'll have to get linens! Somehow. - A little reading from the Tanach (Bible) for Yom Kippur and to sleep. I discovered my Dor Chadash t-shirt in with my tallit. It was filthy! Washed it thoroughly. It's hanging in the window. I hope it will be dry enough to wear tomorrow. I might just go to service at 9:00am. (No doubt God will see to it that the shirt isn't dry enough. - I thought today: How would Riverdale Temple feel if I showed up and let it be known I'm in the shelter? But, in my heart I know exactly... it wouldn't touch any of them at all.)

Thursday 9 October: 56 Homeless/25 Shelter



7:58pm YOM KIPPUR DONE. A TRULY MISERABLE DAY! THIS COLD PEAKED WHILE I WAS AT SERVICES! I SOAKED ALL MY TISSUES AND BANDANA WITH NOSE-BLOWING! ABSOLUTELY SOAKED! AND HERE I SIT ON THIS BED, HOT FLASHES, TISSUE STUCK IN MY NOSE TO KEEP THE RUNNING FROM MY FACE, SNEEZING, EYES DRIPPING. JUST BLEATING MISERABLE! PLEASE! LET THIS BE THE WORST OF IT. - The alarm was set for 7:00am and, like yesterday, I woke at 6:59am, took my time getting up.

I wasn't sure if or where I'd go to services. By 8:20am I was out the door with no particular direction or destination. It looked as if it had rained last night and appeared to want to rain again. But somewhere in the streets I decided to head to 23rd Street to find that synagogue “Riverdale Mike” told me about. And so I walked along to Chelsea. The City was quiet so the walk wasn't too much of an effort. I felt like last week's sh** 2 Fridays from tomorrow. But I got to 23rd. there, mid-block, south side, an old synagogue. I'm still uncertain how, but I simply crossed the street and walked in,, no thoughts about services or welcome committee or anything else. As I entered, a woman stood on the stairs to my right. I asked “Have services started?” “We were waiting for you.” she replied. A Latino, non-Jew (no kippa nor head covering) bade me leave my back-pack down-stairs in what is a small “Beit

Midrash" (library)/house of learning/study). I left the pack, brought my tallit. "Up-stairs to your left." she told me. I went, non-stop, as if I've been there all along. In the sanctuary it was delightfully old. Very much like a long-established synagogue, drenched in history. An old man led services, the Chazzan's (cantor) voice was pure song! I learnt later the congregation has no rabbi. But the service was magnificent! Attendance began sparse, increased, thinned. I was given a card: *I opened the Ark at page something-or-other. Another amazement at how comfortably I walked up to the Bimah (platform at the front of the congregation), opened the curtain as instructed (manually) (no electric Ark here. Conservative!), continued to daven (pray), closed the curtain, shook hands, returned to my seat. Ah, Jews. Comfort. - The schul (synagogue), *Emunath Israel*, has a balcony and a mechitza (separate area for women, as it were) of sorts. A plexiglass separating 2 rows of pews/benches to the right. Conservative! (Or... Orthodox?) Comfort. If only my nose and eyes weren't dripping NON-STOP! Well, I made it through schachrit, yizkor and most of Mussaf (parts of the service) but by 1:00pm I couldn't take any more. I had nothing left to blow my nose or dab my eyes. I went down to the men's room, washed my saturated bandana in the sink, wrapped it in some paper towels, got my back-pack and departed. - The day had become almost Summery a warm! So I walked to the end of 23rd Street at 11th Av, to some new "park" there. I took off the kippa and had a smoke. God forgave me even as I went to do so. I am atoning and then some: Shelter, homeless, jobless, food-less, Food Stamp-less, fasting (I did have a coffee though before leaving the shelter), friendless, alone. I am in constant atonement. - For an hour, I feigned talking on the cell-phone. Familiar? (I'm getting quite good at it really.) - PIC called. Left a message. Will re-schedule Orientation. Please call back. I did. More bleating voice-friggin-mail! Why can't they simply re-schedule and tell me when?! It pisses me off and wastes phone time! - Anyway, I got to sit in the hot sun and the shade, going between too warm and too cold. At 3:45pm I started back to "Castle Bellevue". - Exhausted and SO thirsty and hungry I made an educated decision: I drank 2 green teas and finished what was left in the little, plastic container of frosting, and 3 rolls. I'm sick! I need some sort of something to combat what's ripping at me. I ate. But at about 5:00pm I was out cold asleep. At about 8:50pm I went up to sign-in and here it is, 9h09pm and I'm back in the room! It was quieter than the 8:00pm crew. Of course, this hall cackles with the shrieks of Ricantrash. But... Hopefully I'll be in the dark and asleep soon. - My feet are sore. My nose is raw. My eyes burn. My head aches. My heart is heavy. My thoughts are dark. - But a note before closing this day: The DHS cop who helped me the night I got this room has remained THE MOST respectful person (save my case-worker) in this*

entire place. He always addresses me as “Sir”, always asks how it’s going. This evening we spoke on the stairs. I mentioned something about getting old. He said “One day I’ll be old too.” When I went out for my smoke after 7:00pm, he simply wand-scanned me in saying “You’re good sir. Thank you.” One good human-being in here who allows dignity. - Oh, last night, a young guy came in just ahead of me and dropped a black kippa! Another Jew in here! I wish I knew where. For all the talk of tzedaka (charity and charitable actions), why are Jews in this shelter? Lip service and nothing more about their “charities”. - I’ve got to wash my bandana for the second time and try for some sleep here amidst the hell. - One more note: As I left this morning, I lit a cigarette. As I did, I whispered :OK God, HIT ME!” and with that, my right foot slipped on the rubber, non-skid runner! I didn’t fall. But how funny was that? - (My eyes and nose are a steady drip now.) MISERY!



Friday 10 October: 57/26

9:20am at Bryant Park. I broke down just before lights out last night. Took one pain killer and happily, I don’t recall a thing about last night’s sleep. That means I slept right through. I did have 2 dreams, but I only recall part of one. BUT THE MOST EXCELLENT NEWS OF THIS MORNING IS THAT ALL THAT DRAINING YESTERDAY HAS BROUGHT ME TO A DRY DAY TODAY! INDEED, I PEAKED YESTERDAY. And this morning is a clear, warm, comfortable day. I just wish my clothes were clean. - Up at 7:00am. A coffee and a hit (cigarette). The shower and washed 2 pairs each: filthy socks and under-shorts! Water all over the floor. At 8:11am, DHS came tapping on the door, opened it then let it slam. 2 minutes later! Same, with-out knocking. Just to slam. They are pitiful. I let it go. No sense bothering with it. - Out the door and a casual stroll to Partners In Care where I spoke, enjoyably, with Ms. Cummings and am scheduled for a one day “Skills Test” on Monday AND “Orientation”, PAID, on Wednesday. IF I’m correct, I’m paid for orientation at Rockaway as well! Money is coming. But if it’s in cheques, it’s all but worthless. I have no banque, no account, no address with which to open one. Still, maybe I’ll get out of Castle Bellevue and on to something better. Time will tell. - Here, at this park, they’re tearing up the sod, tossing it like carpet tiles. It’s perfectly green. I wonder where it goes from here. I can think of many places where it could go to excellent use. Living grass, thrown about. Man treats grass AND humans the same: disposable. - The longer I spend here, in The City, the more I come to

dislike it. I want, so much, to get back out to Rockaway and live a peaceful life. May yesterday atone and make me worthy of being so blessed. - 9:43am and waiting for the library. After that? Dead space in the day. - 3:00pm at the river-side. These are the good days of being homeless and jobless. A beautiful day. Comfortable. Only (of course) ... I've eaten my little lunch and my bowels are gurgling! Of course. Still, I left the library at 1:00pm, spent 30 minutes or so at Bryant Park talking to myself on the phone (again). Went to D'Ag on 28th Street. Food Stamps came in today. When I mentioned the over-charge on the rolls yesterday, the head cashier gave me 92cents refund! Cash! Plus the 30 cents in my pack, I have 1,22\$ cash! And the 10\$ left from Jocelyn! 11,22\$! I'm getting so close to that condo on the beach! OK Maybe something I ate wasn't fresh causing me delusions (I laugh). But the afternoon of dead space is almost done. The total misery of yesterday has passed into 2 fits of coughing because of a tickle. The sun is warm but the breeze, refreshing, and when I get back to Castle Bellevue, I'll wash my socks and have a nap. I even have something to eat later tonight! Now, to plan for Rockaway tomorrow. I hope. - 7:53pm From about 4:30pm to almost 7:30pm I slept! BUT THE BLEATING-FREAKING SNEEZING, RUNNY NOSE, WATERY EYES, TICKLE IN THE THROAT, HOT FLASHES ARE ALL BACK, FULL SWING!!!! NOSE-BLOWING AND COUGHING FITS. JUST LIKE YESTERDAY! - I dreamt too. Viv and Montreal, and the Christmas song "Little Drummer Boy". - Rolled my last 5 smokes. Had one here. Cleaned the window sill. - When I did my little wash earlier, got talking with a thin, older Black guy who I spoke with as he was doing his own wash, a few days ago. He's from Houston! Has been to Lafayette, Port Arthur, Lac Charles and hitched to NY! Georgia, Ohio, Tennessee. Older guy. He said I could get to Lafayette in 2,5 days if I stay on the Interstate. It's so tempting! I've been pondering the possibility of simply getting up, grabbing my "garbage bag luggage" and simply heading out... thumb up. Ah, the guys you meet here! - Anyway, I'm going to sign-in after 8:30 again. It seems less crowded and more civil, some-how. Meanwhile, I'm just COUGHING AND DRAINING AGAIN! SHIT!!!! - 9:55pm In for the night. The queue at 8:30 was all the way down the hall so I went out for a smoke. When I got back to the 7th floor, it was just past the half-hall. Must be a full house these days. Sonny was standing in the hall. THEY BUMPED HIM! RE-ASSIGNED HIS BED! CLAIM HE WASN'T IN IT AT 1:30am! YET, 9 OUT OF HIS MATES SAY HE WAS THERE! THIS IS HOW THIS PLACE F***S WITH PEOPLE! So, again, I MUST prepare for some kind of BS to happen JUST when things begin to come together. SOME-body will pull SOME BS when I can least afford it. - Meanwhile, this after-noon's wash (undies) is dry! I'm ready for tomorrow and hoping for un-medicated sleep tonight. - 10:41pm AND THE RICOTRASH STARTS THE BLEATING-FREAKING BULLSH**! THEY REALLY

SHOULD BE WIPED OFF THE EARTH! ALL OF THEM!

DREAM:



Viv and I were together. She was staying at my apt. It was on Liberty St. in Newburgh. I had the Volkswagen too. She had to go buy Bugler. We were rolling cigarettes. I went to park the car in front of the building. I turned on the radio to a Spanish station. "Little Drummer Boy" tune but lyrics: "Here he's come again, pa-rum-pum-pum-pum" in English with Spanish accent. I thought "They just can't get anything right. Not even on the radio. Then, I thought of Mum and how happy I was to be with Viv...

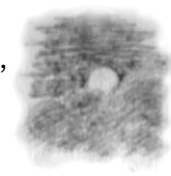
Saturday 11 October: 58/27

9:29pm A108 Over-all, it was a super-superb day. Of course, it ends with coming here and, at this hour, having to bear the yelling and door-slamming of the Ricantrash. Ah, but nothing of anything good in Creation is with-out price. This is my fee for the lovely day. - I slept for the night, last night, for the most part. Two dreams that I'll try to fit in this journal. (I'm on page 78 of 81 in this note-book.) But right now, the day... Up at 6:30am. I took my time to shower and such. Left about 8:00am for Rockaway! I didn't wear the kippa though because of the trains, buses, and shopping. Somebody might have something to say about "appearing to be an observant Jew and taking trains on Shabbat (the sabbath)". Well! What a trip! Construction on the Canarsie (Brooklyn) line (L train) so I had to take the Nr.6 to 14th St, the L train to Myrtle-Wyckoff, the M train to Myrtle Ave, the J train to Broadway Junction, the A train to Broad Chancel and the shuttle to B116th. I asked the token clerk if I still had a transfer on the card. "You have until 10:26." It was about 10:15 already! I still had to take a bus to the Fort! I bombed to the post office. NO, NO, NO BLEATING ADP INFO! BLEATING AFTER-BIRTH IDIOTS! So, a dash to Waldbaum's where it cost me too much because they had none of my 79-cent cold cuts so I bought "Butterball", brand-name and expensive, and no "*Total*" Fage with honey and no Muenster cheese! But I got substitutes and a small jar of instant coffee and bolted for the bus with 5 minutes to go. 10:30am, the bus left, with me on it! To The Fort. Geoff, Tommy, Billy were working on the "Moon Stage", welding and painting. Penelope finished her sculpture and was working in clay for her next one. Peaceful. Beautiful. I cleaned the back yard of T6 and potted the baby pine that some-how managed to grow in all the clutter and mess in the yard, for indoors. I'm interested to see if it survives. Over-all, I took it easy. Kristen came by and I got to thank her in person for the scrubs, and bring her up to date. She's taking courses in EMT, phlebotomy, NYPD, all sorts of Civil

Service jobs. I gave her the Queens address for the free CNA courses. Somebody she knows lost 40k\$ because of this “recession” and her Mom has had to forget about retiring. It’s all sh** these days. At about 3:00pm or so, I left for the 22 bus to PHC. Used an empty MetroCard to see if I could get away with a “no-fare” trip and when it registered that there was no fare on it I was about to get off the bus when the driver said “Don’t worry about it.” Truthfully? I did it on purpose so to have the full fare for the train back and unlimited time visiting with Jocelyn! (I had one fare on one card and an empty card in my pocket. I intentionally tried for a “free ride”... I’ve come to this, which is something and some place I’d NEVER have thought I’d be.) Hey! I deserve a “free ride”. - 2North unit was quiet. Jocelyn was at the Nurses’ desk when I arrived. I joked about getting a room for the night. Lillian said they had one waiting. A little sense of humour... very little, but these days... ANY is appreciated. (10:20pm I’m exhausted... I’ll catch up tomorrow...) (Sunday, the 12th at 1:25pm MMLib-MidManhattanLibrary) Jocelyn greeted me more warmly than family. Seeing her feels as if I’m re-uniting with true family. She asked how I am and how all is going. We talked on until 4:30pm when the dinner trays arrived. She pulled one, put it to the side for me. She makes certain that I eat. We went into a patient’s room and she fed a patient as she and I ate. (I had the stew with pasta. Good, hot food!) I stayed until 6:00pm and as I got ready to leave, she handed me 2 Fives and a 10. I’m now into her debt for 40\$. But I can certainly use the cash. She also asked my jeans and shoe size. “We’ll take care of that.” she keeps saying. Yes, I can use more clothes but I can’t go deeper into anyone’s debt. And learning to accept is difficult. - It was painful leaving... Jocelyn, Rockaway. A perfect evening. The foliage at the shore is changing. Deep greens, reds, yellows. An awesome sun-set sky. Gentle breeze. Peace. Peace. Peace. It’s my “Home”. I want to be there! - Only 3 trains back: A to 14th/8th Av, L to Union Sq., 6 to 28th. Pax was on the sign-in table. The queue was short, sweet, quick. She asked how things are. “Very good. And I hope better when you get back.” She’s off Sunday and Monday. - In the room for the night. Hungry, hungry. Ate. Journalled. Set my alarm for 8:30am tomorrow morning.

DREAM

Rooftops. Friends walking. One takes a “path” to the edge of where we are walking. I have a breakdown, shaking and wanting and needing to cry, deep, hard, loud. Aware of what’s going on but unable to communicate. Spasms. I come out of it in a posh house. I am Homeless. Must get back to check-in. - In the sky,

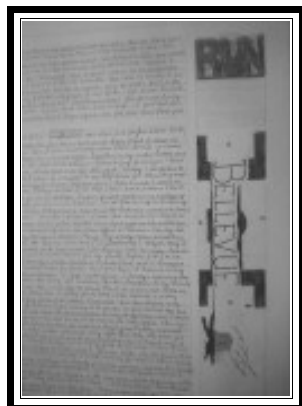


there's a strange "Frisbee"-like thing flying haphazardly. It lodges in a tree by utility pole. A pigeon is attached to it, legs stuck in the tree branches. There are rungs of a sort on the pole to climb up it but I'm terrified. Too high.

Sunday 12 October: 59/28

1:48pm MMLib. Continuing. I did it! Slept-in until 8:30am! Earlier I had to pee but wouldn't get up to go. Forced myself to stay in bed. - AT ONE POINT DURING THE NIGHT I WOKE, LOOKED OVER MY HEAD OUT THE WINDOW TO SEE THE MOON! MEMORIES OF THE BAKFORT, OUT IN THE OPEN, ON THE DUNES, UNDER THE TREE. HOW I WISH FOR THOSE DAYS AGAIN! - Had my coffee and a bit of my cigarette. Got my things together for the day and off to the shower. WELL! Somebody left 2 pages of straight porn and a latex glove in the shower room. The floor was covered in water. A woman was cleaning the toilet rooms with bleach. I don't understand why the shelter allows these vermin bastards to destroy the place! It's bleating disgusting! I wonder what sorts of disease breeds in there. I'll probably find out, the hard way. - Showered, dressed, out by about 9:30am. The City was so quiet! The sky, perfectly blue. I walked to "Jack's 99-cent" store on 32nd. I browsed for almost TWO hours and came away with a nail file, clippers, stuff to make the room smell better and 2 sketch books. THE SAME SKETCH BOOKS I GOT AT THE 99-CENT STORE IN YONKERS SO LONG AGO! - Strolled to Bryant Park. French music playing at the carousel. Began a sketch of my Bakfort dunes. Came here. - I'm hungry. Time to take my computer appointment. - 6:57pm Dark. Already. If this place (Castle Bellevue) could always be as it is right now: silent. - Got 5 CV's and covers corrected and printed. Finished the 1st sketch for the new book in the library. Stopped at "Jack's 99-cent" store on 40th Street for Yardley Lavender soap. They've got my Coney Island Avenue socks there! 99 cents and quite nice! Yay. Now. If only I had cash. I've got 15\$ left and although to me, that's a millionaire's fortune, I have to hold on to it, in case of some true "need"! - Got back in at the shelter, ate peanut butter and cheese, and Fage yogurt. Hey! I did my nails AND my jeans! Just trimmed my beard too! Ready for tomorrow. I want to take a quick shower before bed tonight too. This hole (room) smells better too with the stuff I got. I got dryer sheets and air spray. At last! No funk. Now, if tomorrow - NO! Tomorrow WILL be perfect. - Today at the computer, there was an e-mail from Jackie at Met Council: "All I ask is that you pass along your blessings to somebody else. HAPPY NEW YEAR." Jackie? I shall. I do. - At 8:20pm I WENT UP TO SIGN-IN, LOOKING FORWARD TO A NIGHT'S SLEEP AND AS I LOOK AT THE LIST I SEE: *UNASSIGNED*! NEXT

TO MY NAME AND BED NUMBER! I'M MOVED! "GO SEE ALEX." I DO. NEW BED! NEW CASE WORKER! NEW BED! NEW FLOOR! RUN! PACK! UP TO THE 5TH FLOOR. SEE MR. JIMSON! TURMOIL! I JUST MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY SHUT DOWN. MOVE ON. MR. JIMSON IS HANDLING OTHER TRANSFERS. "GIVE ME YOUR PAPER AND HAVE A SEAT IN THE LOUNGE." F*** THEM ALL IN THEIR BLEATING "LOUNGE". 9:21pm IN THE "LOUNGE" 5TH FLOOR. I'M WAITING, MY JUST-WASHED AND STILL WET JEANS IN PLASTIC BAG. SWEATING LIKE I'M FEVERISH! THERE'S A CRAZY "NIGGER"



(I call them as they are... Black, White, Blue, Purple, a "nigger" is a "nigger" and this one IS!) THREATENING TO PUNCH SOMEBODY AND PACING... "MOTHERF***ER" TO EVERYBODY AS HE PACES. I LEFT MY PAPERS WITH SOME DUMB F*** IN AN OFFICE. LET'S SEE HOW LONG I'LL BE HERE. WITH-OUT THEM, IF I'M STOPPED WALKING IN THE HALL, I'LL BE TOSSED OUT AND FORCED TO START THE ENTIRE APPLICATION PROCESS FROM THE ABSOLUTE BEGINNING! - 9:48pm BED D18 IN A ROOM WITH 3 OTHERS. I'M BY THE DOOR! WINDOWS ARE BLOCKED WITH SCREENS AND THE BED IS BESIDE 2 LOCKERS. MY LOCKER IS PAD LOCKED! NOT THE COMMON, SHELTER-ISSUED COMBINATION LOCK! I GO TO A "CASE WORKER" WITH A VERY HEAVY SPANISH ACCENT. HE TELLS ME TO GO TO "OPERATIONS". DOWN TO THE 1ST FLOOR. I WAIT, AND WAIT, AND WAIT AND FINALLY TELL THE "NIGGER" AT THE DESK ABOUT THE LOCK. "NOBODY AVAILABLE TO OPEN LOCKS TONIGHT. TELL THEM TOMORROW." I TELL THE NASTY BASTARD THAT I HAVE TO BE AT WORK BY 8:00am! "TELL THEM TOMORROW." AND HE DISMISSES ME! BACK UPSTAIRS, SPANISH GUY TELLS ME TO GO BACK TO OPERATIONS AFTER MIDNIGHT! SO... 10:21pm, THIS NEW BED MADE WITH DISGUSTING "FRESH" LINENS. THERE'S A VERBAL FIGHT IN THE HALL. DOOR TO THIS ROOM IS OPEN. CEILING LIGHT ON. I'VE GOT THE FEELING THIS IS A VIOLENT FLOOR. I'M WET, SWEATING! I SO WANTED A SHOWER BEFORE BED TONIGHT! I'VE GOT TO BE UP AT 6:00am! NOW, AGAIN, I ASK "WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE THIS? WET JEANS IN A BAG AND NO-WHERE TO HANG THEM. WHITES AND NEW SHOES IN ANOTHER BAG. MY BELONGINGS ARE ON THE FLOOR! IN A BLACK TRASH BAG BUT ON THE FLOOR, IN THE OPEN, EASY SNATCH FOR SOME THEIVING CRIMINAL, AND THERE'S AN ABUNDANCE OF THOSE IN THIS PLACE! I'M THINKING "OPTION" FOR TOMORROW. OFF TO THE BEACH. BACK TO ROCKAWAY! PILLS AND A

HIGH TIDE AND I'M DONE WITH THIS, ALL OF IT! - THIS ROOM REEKS OF FLATULENCE! - YES. TIME TO CHECK-OUT... OF CREATION. - AT 10:30pm I TRIED FOR SOME SLEEP, TO NO AVAIL. UP AT 4 MINUTES PAST MID-NIGHT. SINCE I'M AWAKE, I HEAD DOWNSTAIRS TO "OPERATIONS" WHERE THE BITCH JUST TELLS ME "WE DON'T CUT LOCKS ON THIS SHIFT. COME BACK TOMORROW." (I'LL BET THAT IF I WASN'T A JEW THEY'D DO IT!) SO, BACK UP-STAIRS, GRABBED A HALF SMOKE IN THE SHOWER ROOM (I'M GROWING DEFIANT OF EVERYTHING NOW), BACK TO THE BED TO TRY FOR SOME SLEEP. - FROM 1:00-1:30am THE GUY IN BED D17 IS IN AND OUT. I'M NOT ABLE TO SLEEP ANYWAY. SOME KIND OF EQUIPMENT RUNNING OUTSIDE. THIS IS SUCH A GRAND F*** OF ALL THE TIME.

Monday 13 October: (60 HOMELESS DAYS/29 SHELTER)

8:25am PIC AGENCY CLASSROOM. I HALF-DOZED ALL NIGHT (MORNING!) THE FLOOR WAS QUIET BUT MY MIND WASN'T. ALARM CLOCK AND PHONE GOT ME UP AT 5:30am. TO THE SHOWER. ANOTHER GUY (2 SHOWERS) SMOKING. ME TOO, IN THE SHOWER. HE TELLS ME THAT THIS IS THE FLOOR FOR WORKING PEOPLE WHO ARE TO BE SHIPPED OUT TO HOUSING. YES, AND A108 WAS TO BE MY PERMANENT BED. SO? I SHOWER, DIG THROUGH MY THINGS, GET MY WHITES ON. DECIDE NOT TO BRING FOOD. ROOM-MATE ASKS HOW I SLEPT. "SLEPT?" HE COMPLAINS ABOUT ONE GUY'S SNORING. D15 IS ASLEEP UNDER HIS COMFORTER. "COMFORTER"! A REAL BLANKET IN THIS PLACE? WOW! I'M DRESSED. MY TROUSERS ARE TOO SHORT! I JUST GO. GET OUT. I WANT, SO MUCH, TO HURT EVERYONE! I LEAVE, STROLL TO BROADWAY, NICE MORNING. ARRIVED AT NUMBER 1250 BY 7:14am! CAME IN AT 7:30am. SIGN-IN AND TOOK A SEAT IN EMPTY CLASS-ROOM. - 8:35am AND THERE ARE 10 WOMEN IN THE ROOM. NO CLASS YET! I COULD USE A BM AND A NAP! ANXIETIES ABOUT MY FEW BELONGINGS JUST LAYING ON THE FLOOR, IN A BAG, UNDER THE BED, "AVAILABLE" FOR THEFT. THEY'RE UNDER THE BED! - 8:38am FINALLY! CLASS? NOPE. NOT YET. - 7:22pm in bed number D18. The room is hot. It was a very warm day. Today's "class" had 16 people in it. Most were bright. Most and most certainly not all. A lot of information was covered. The instructresse said 3-weeks worth in one day. I stayed awake all through. I still don't know how. Probably pure stress. Pure stress. But the important thing is I'm in Wednesday's orientation. That begins at 7:30am! So let's see what BS these dick-heads pull on me tomorrow night. A shift

at 11:00pm to a 10-bed room? F***heads. They're all so pitiful. When I got out of class I was hungry, thirsty, tired. Thoughts of getting food and going to the river, but HAD to come back because I don't have access to the locker. - *When I got in at about 5:30pm I told "Operations" about cutting the lock. The whore on the desk took the bed number and said it would be done after dinner. It's 7:30. Dinner's been over 30 minutes ago. Let's see (that they don't bleating show again tonight. *) AH, MY MEAL TICKET? VALID 10/12-10/14 FOR BREAKFAST ONLY. Not that I eat here. It's not only the "meal", it's the pass, the I.D., the only way IN! I ate the turkey (whole package, sneaking bites, hiding my head in my locker since we're not supposed to have food in this place), 3 rolls, 4 Little Debbies. If I didn't have food here, I'd have had to go with-out... completely. NOW the f***ers want to starve me too? I want to publish this journal now more than ever before. - My jeans are wet, hanging on the metal bed rail. If they get rusty? I'll die in them - Right now I'm hoping PIC will put me to work immediately. Live-in position! I could get out of here that way! - I'm thirsty. Must go dig through the bags for my bottles. Coffee's ready for morning though. - Oh, the machinery running all day and night? A pump at the construction site! ALL DAY, ALL NIGHT! to keep ground water out. - Tonight I want to shower and sleep. Must be out by 8:00am tomorrow. The guy in D17 is really quite nice... and clean. But I don't look forward to spending time in this room. D15 is empty. I hope for "normal" and clean. My spirits are sinking (and I'm running out of pages in this book!) - Just noticed: Room number 5W-101! NO COMMENT. (OK... after-thought: 101 was Oma's house number... I grew up knowing that number, it's so familiar and here, in this HELL, it appears. Odd.) - No shower tonight. Too tired. Lights out. Gotta try for sleep tonight! - NOTE! *George*, D15, lost his bed last night due to failure to sign-in. HE GOT HIS BED RIGHT BACK TONIGHT. WOULD IT BE LIKEWISE FOR A WHITE MAN OR A JEW? I MOST SERIOUSLY DOUBT IT.

Tuesday 14 October: 61/30

10:30am MMLib: SUKKOTH (and another Jewish holiday that I know but am in no position to observe... nor enjoy) - I am here, in blue scrubs, 2nd floor, since 9:00am, alone, on a beautiful day while my jeans are drying on my bed in the Men's Homeless Shelter and I'm hungry and I'm wondering "Where are all of those self-proclaimed charitable Jews who should invite the poor into the sukkah (small shack-like structure built in celebration of the harvest holiday) to join them in their meals and celebrations?" I wonder this as I sit here alone in my blue scrubs, passing this time on this festive day of celebration. - Last night I slept. I slept. I was told I could expect the

lock on my locker to be cut between 10:00 and 10:30pm. I put the lights out at 11:00pm. I woke this morning, 7:20am, still unable to access the locker. I had my cold coffee, shat, brushed my teeth, had a smoke, HOT SHOWER, dressed, stored belongings under the bed and departed. It's very difficult to be positive today. 5 hours and 15 minutes to "use up". I'm tired. I'm hungry. I am, above all, bitter. - 1:10pm Still at the table at the library. Going for a smoke. Then computer time. Then (Ducer! * It was bound to happen sooner or later. I have no idea what this word is supposed to be as I type. I'm transcribing from my notes and this was another note written as my brain simply went... dark.*) I'm hungry! - 4:25pm at the little riverside park again. Accomplished precious little on-line. Did open a blog for this journal. Now to figure how to get it all typed. Far Rock library? Just the fare for a day out there will wipe my cash out. Well, we'll see what comes. It would be perfect to get a live-in, West of B116th Street, commencing this Monday. Orientation is tomorrow. I put my request to the Metaphysical. - Found that Emunath Israel, that synagogue on 23rd Street, serves breakfast and hot lunch during the week, for the Homeless. I sent them an e-mail for more details. Used my name, told them I'm at the shelter. Maybe tomorrow after orientation I'll check at the library. I'm in no hurry to get to the shelter any more. - I'm doubtful I have locker access yet. - Dinner? Fage: plain and with honey, 3 dinner rolls with cream cheese, Cadbury Caramello and Starbucks vanilla coffee. Entenmann's chocolate-chip cookies for munchies. - It's getting chilly here in the park. I'll be forced to head back soon. My meal ticket expires today. I wonder how I get a new one now? My primary concerns: 1) Are my things intact under the bed? 2) A good night's sleep for tomorrow. 3) Getting an immediate assignment. - Sh**!

30 days at the shelter! And f***! 61 days of Homelessness! - 2 tug-boats bringing a tanker out. I wish I was on it. - (7:66pm... 19h55 in military time... and the year I was cursed with coming into this existence, on 15th) Finished my "dinner" in peace and strolled back to Hell and waited for sign-in. Up here, 6 guys constitutes "a long line"! On the 7th floor, a "regular line" is half the length of the hall. So, I get to the office to sign in, mention my meal ticket and sure enough, all sh** hits the fan because nobody knows who my bleating case worker is. So, the one in the office has to issue another "temporary", valid until Thursday AND IN THE MORNING (when I'm supposed to be at orientation), I have to see some Ms. Reed or Reade or _ to find "my" case-worker! OK. Ah well. What the f***? Just more BS. Like the novelty license plate on a Rockaway pick-up truck reads "You just can't fix stupid". - AH BUT I ALMOST FORGOT: WHEN I GOT BACK TO D18 THIS EVENING, EMPTY ROOM, STILL NO BLEATING ACCESS TO THE BLEATING LOCKER! PISSSED, I GRABBED THE BLEATING PAD-LOCK, GAVE A FIRM PULL AND... POP!!!!!! OPEN!!!!!! SHITFUKGODAMN! SO! I PULL OUT THE GARBAGE THAT WAS IN

THERE, PUT ALL INTO A PLASTIC BAG, TEAR A SHELTER-SUPPLIED TOWEL IN HALF AND CLEAN THE WHOLE INSIDE WITH THE AIR FRESHENER. HEY! IT DID THE JOB. NEXT WAS ARRANGING "ME" IN THE LOCKER, SLIGHTLY DAMP JEANS AND ALL. WHOLE BLEATING ORDEAL TOOK ABOUT TWO BLEATING HOURS AND THEM SOME. NEXT? A TAPE TAG ON MY OLD LOCK (FROM 2E-22 WHICH I TOOK WITH) AND TWO SIGNS NOTING, IN RED, "LOCK CHANGED 10/14 DO NOT CUT LOCK". NO DOUBT ONE OF THESE EVENINGS SOME IDIOT WILL BE BY AND JUST CUT THE BLEATING LOCK ANYWAY. IT'S THE NATURE OF THE EVIL, NASTY BASTARDS IN THIS HOLE. BUT FOR NOW, I'VE GOT "ME" IN A LOCKER! - Meanwhile, this evening had good conversation with Ray (Bed 17) and George (Bed 15). Ray knows the Lower Hudson Valley and Monticello! He drove trucks up that way in the late 90's. He's from the Virgin Islands. George was in a shelter in Chester, up-state (LaGuardia maybe) and knows Monroe! George is a really young guy of Puerto Rican lineage. (I still have yet to carry a full conversation with Number 16. But he, like me, doesn't eat the food here. I suspect he's African but I can't be at all certain. Pleasant though.) So, Ray and I talked until almost 11:30pm. George came in a bit "out" (drunk) and passed-out on the bed. - So, there you have it. The first day of Sukkoth and me? In a shelter. - Oh, I went to shower, George saw me take the kippa off and almost had a fit. "What are you doing?!?" He'd worked for the Monroe Jews (I can't help but wonder if they "took advantage" of him or anything of the sort) and had never seen anybody take a kippa off. It was almost endearing, as I explained that I don't bathe, swim or sleep in a kippa. - I've become quite the spokes-person for "regular, normal, every day Jews!" So, the Beit Din (Jewish law court who denied my Jewish ancestry) can go shove something B'tachat (in the arse) as far as I'm concerned. The bigoted dopes. - Shah-lohm (Shalom: peace... and/or QUIET!). ("Shalom"... peace... hello... and in this case... Bugger off!)



BACK TO WORK AT LAST!

(and I got the job on my own... with-out all the promised help)

Wednesday 15 October: 62/31

8:57pm in 5W-101 and George is passed out. Nr.16 is dozing. Ray is somewhere in the "Castle". The bleating pump is running in the construction lot next door but, it's calm as I'm catching up here before sign-in. - WHAT A DAY! -

(At 8:43pm I went to sign-in. At 8:48pm, I'm back at the bed! In my previous assignment, "sign-in" took, on average, 30-45 minutes and there were MANY more people! I wonder what THIS is all about here. No doubt, "time" will tell.) - OK. Last night I set the alarm for 5:15am. I was awake at about 2:00am, 3:45am, 4:47am... 6:00am! I slept through the alarm! Up, coffee, piss, brush teeth, shower and smoke (no BM in 2 days now), dress, out. Got to PIC at 7:20am! There, of course, we had to deal with dramas, late-comers, folks who didn't complete forms, had no documents AND MY NAME WASN'T ON THE LIST! (10:00pm and I'm showered. SO NICE TO SHOWER AGAIN!) THERE WERE 3 OR 4 OTHERS WHO WERE NOT ON THE LIST. BUT IT JUST MADE ME UNEASY. I WAS TOLD TO PUT MY NAME ON AND SO I DID. ORIENTATION WENT THE WAY MONDAY DID, FOR THE MOST PART. IT'S REALLY AMAZING HOW STUPID SOME PEOPLE CAN BE AND HOW MANY CHHA'S ARE THAT STUPID, AND SLOW! BUT THE WHOLE ORDEAL WAS INFORMATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL AND HOW THOROUGH. PIC REALLY WANTS THEIR PEOPLE TO KNOW EVERYTHING! IT'S GREAT TO BE PART OF AN AGENCY THAT COVERS ITS PEOPLE AND SUPPORTS AND INFORMS THEM! - WELL! BY 5:15pm THIS EVENING I WALKED OUT OF THE VNS BLDG. WITH MY I.D. AND A CASE FOR FRIDAY MORNING... SOUTH OZONE PARK. BUT QUEENS! ONLY 12 HOURS A WEEK BUT "PERMANENT". AND THIS IS STEP ONE TO GOING BACK HOME! 7,25 HOURS PAID FOR TODAY. A CASE. I'M WORKING AGAIN! AND WORKING TOWARD GOING HOME TO ROCKAWAY! NOW I JUST NEED TO KEEP MY FOCUS ON NOTHING ELSE BUT ME!!!! - My biggest concern right now is having car-fare to get to work. I should be getting paid, but it'll be coming in a cheque. The cheque will be going to my old B116th address and that's as good as nothing. ADP won't send me the information for Direct Deposit so there's no way I'll be able to buy my transport. You see? Fate. Life. Creation. All Existence. Constantly fighting against me, against me, against me. I've got 15\$ to budget. I need 16\$ just to get to and from work. Typical. - But for tonight, I can't find a bleating case-worker who knows sh** about anything around here. My meal ticket is good until tomorrow. The floor is calm. I've smoked and showered. The day is closed! I truly can't think about any more of this.

Thursday 16 October: 63/32

9:13am at the Centre Hall 5th floor - I've been sitting her for 45 minutes waiting for some allegedly super-tall woman named "Miss Renice/Renees/Reneice/Reneese/Watthef****" to appear from down the hall. The morons who get paid in this anus of creation constantly amaze. They're excellent at walking up and down halls, carrying papers of all sorts, popping in and out of doors, appearing to be either terribly busy or seriously perplexed. But, the fact is, they serve no purpose, have no purpose, and simply should have been abortions. I asked for Ms. R. and was told, all too simply: "If you sit right there (where I am) you'll see a tall woman come out of a door down the hall." 45 minutes. No "tall" woman. I asked about a Mr. James. 4-12 Night Supervisor. But does anybody know if he's on tonight? Nope. Not one functioning brain cell. I've no patience anymore. Slugs, earthworms, general vermin, each, singularly, possess greater intelligence than the mass on the payroll here. And the floor goes empty and quiet... save those who wander in their miasma. - Mean-while, I can't completely kick the cold I came down with. Nose won't drain and coughing hurts and is "productive"... nasty too. But sick or not, I keep my focus on me and going home. ROCKAWAY! - 9:27am No "tall woman" has appeared and I must get to PIC to correct my mailing address or I'll never get paid! One more shot for "Miss R and company" and I'm out of this sh**-hole. - 10:52am MMLib. Arrived here at 10:30am. Waiting for a computer. This sh**-head from "2E" at the shelter, the "dope addicts" room, is here. It's a day for the shelter to be out on the streets. But it's hot and muggy. I'm tired and sweaty. And somebody re-booted the computer I'm supposed to be on! Let's see if the "re-boot" takes from my allotted time. - OK. Done. No e-mails other than an on-going argument with my ADP Payroll card and I'm in no good mood for that this morning. 11:43am - THIS MORNING, IT FINALLY HAPPENED! MY ENDS LOOSENED AND I GOT SHARP-TONED WITH THIS BITCH IN THE SOCIAL WORKERS' OFFICE ON THE 5TH FLOOR. SHE HAD THE BLEATING AUDACITY TO ASK ME WHAT I NEED! I DON'T FLEATING KNOW, OTHER THAN AN UP-DATED MEAL TICKET. AND I ONLY NEED THAT TO GET INTO THE FRIGGING BED! MORON! SHE FOUND MY NAME ON SOME HIDDEN LIST, TOLD ME TO SIGN ON SOME SHIT LIST TAPED TO THE WALL IN THE HALL AND "HAVE A SEAT". I'VE ALREADY HAD A SEAT. TWO SEATS. I HAVE THINGS TO ATTEND TO. SO I PUT MY NAME ON THE LIST AND LEFT AT 9:30am. WHAT A BUNCH OF DOUCHE BAGS! - As I crossed 31st at 1st and 2nd, I ran into that guy who has reminded me so much of Walter Suarez (from years ago, up-state). Out on the street, on this truly crisp Autumn morning, he was wearing only his street clothes, no jacket! I approached him to greet him, maybe talk with him and noticed how almost forlorn he looked.

He told me that he'd been verbally attacked by the same bitch I'd just had a run-in with this morning and all he asked for was some direction, he needed information! He was shivering as he spoke! He told me he'd walked out of the shelter and gone for a walk to calm down! Calm down? One of the most docile people I could recall ever having met in many years, I never saw him speak even with the other residents at the shelter. I never heard him SPEAK! He always appeared so rather timid. It's what caught my attention in the first place. Timidity in that place is rare, and could certainly be taken for a "weakness". And I remember, one evening, standing in a hall-way packed with all sorts of "people", how I wanted to speak with him because I felt so blessed to have people who knew me and be-friended me... and there he was... always so very much alone and looking rather lost, alone... as I'd felt when I first arrived. And now, to be verbally abused? For asking for information from people who are PAID to GIVE information and direction? What kind of BS must we deal with in that place? What? If I could learn where the salaries of the staff are coming from I'd simply send a few choice words and...well... nothing would come of it. The entire lineage is probably sh**. The entire hierarchy. I told him first of all, to get to someplace warmer. He didn't know where to go. I directed him to the library. And I told him what my gut was telling me: that those who are employed in that shelter aren't there to "help", they're there to rip what little dignity we might have left out of our souls! "You came into that place with your dignity... you hold onto that. They have NO right to that. Don't you let them take it! Do what you know you have to do to better your life and get out... no matter what that might be. But do it with your dignity intact!" We parted ways, he to the library where he could be warm, me to my appointment. - So, at PIC the mailing address is in and up-dated. Of course, in this day of rapid technology, I was told that the change "might" get in this week or next week. I was kind. I was pleasant. I simply thanked and left, kindly, came here. From here? Lunch, somewhere. Probably back at the river. Then? Back to the 5th floor of the shelter to... sketch, read, write, take a seat, wait, wait, wait (how great! The pen ran out of ink! from "waiting" too much!) And well, today I learn: "Ms. R..." is supervisor 8am-6pm. Mr. James is supervisor 4pm-midnight. I have to be out, in whites, tomorrow morning, between 6:30-7:00am. So today? I'll just be an annoyance by my presence. - 2:30pm at Riverside. I've just eaten. The usual: 3 dinner rolls with cream cheese (I get a block and split the whole thing on the rolls... I have no place to refrigerate it), 2 yoghurts, and bottled coffee. But today, 2 chocolate puddings too! And my bowels are now "awake" and churning. - It's extremely warm. The sun is hot. Light breeze. Humid. Overcast. Looks like rain. I'm exhausted. Congested. So much in the chest. It's so peaceful. I'd really just love to nap right here, but I don't dare to. - I keep thinking: Margot, Rabbi Lewis. How the story of my presence

and departure must read, according to them. None too well, I imagine. Cyndi, John, Joe, my siblings. What, if anything, they've said in front of Michael and Sarah, my nephew and niece. I think of how they'd be so pleased to know I'm in the shelter. 1 pair of pants and boots. All of them, so very pleased. - I'm not looking forward to going back to the shelter and sitting there. But I must. I wonder if they haven't already gone into the locker and removed everything... including my whites for work tomorrow. It would be typical of that place to do so. It's been done to others while they were out of the room, the building, for the day, in accordance with protocol. Well. One more smoke and "into the fire". - 4:09pm THIS HAS TO BE DOCUMENTED! THERE WERE 5 NAMES ON THIS MORNING'S LIST FOR THE CASE WORKER WHEN I GOT BACK AT ABOUT 3:15pm. I SIGNED AGAIN, CAME TO THE DORM-ROOM, PUT MY THINGS IN THE LOCKER AND WENT BACK TO THE OFFICE. SO THE DAMNED AFRICAN B**** TELLS ME THAT SHE NOTED MY RECORDS "CLIENT SIGNED AND LEFT". THEN SHE TELLS ME THAT MY CASE WORKER, MS. S., HAS CALLED TO SAY SHE WILL BE OUT SICK FOR A FEW DAYS AND MR. JAMES WILL NOT BE HERE TONIGHT. SO! THE WORLD CAN GUESS WHO'LL BE GETTING SCREWED. AGAIN, AT ANY MOMENT. THEN MS. NO-IDENTIFICATION TELLS ME TO COME SATURDAY, 10:00am "BRRRING PEPPEZ" (BRING PAPERS) TO SHOW WHO I WORK FOR AND WHAT "OW-WEZ" (HOURS). "YOU COME FRRRAHM DEE SEVENT FLOW'WAY. DEE SISTEM EEZ DEEFERRRENT HEE-YUH. YOU DIDN'T ASK THE RRRRIGHT QUESCHUNZ." (YOU COME FROM THE 7TH FLOOR. THE SYSTEM IS DIFFERENT HERE. YOU DIDN'T ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS.) OH, I'M TERRIBLY SOH-RRR-EE. PLEASE F*** ME. IF THIS SHIT ISN'T EXPERIENCED FIRST HAND, IT'S UNBELIEVABLE! - And so, my meal ticket is no good after tonight. There's no one to give me a new one. I still don't know "DEE SISTEM" but my socks are washed, hanging on the head rail of the bed, I'm tired, will go for a smoke some-where after a brief shut-eye. - Brief? I woke at 6:32pm! And I could use more sleep. Well, tonight, hopefully. Meanwhile, the armpits of my t-shirt are "ageing". I need to figure a way to wash and hang this stuff. Hopefully, I'll have the weekend. - (Continuing on Friday at 5:27pm) Here's how "DEE SISTEM" works: I went to sign-in, told Santiago (one of the resident Homeless who has, over time, some-how become part of "dee sistem" with privileges and a (laughable) "position" resembling a school "hall guard) the situation about the meal ticket. "You have to see somebody across the hall." Across the hall I go. 2 people sitting in their respective cubicles. One, shoving food in her mouth, messy looking like she was about to vomit something as a man seated beside her desk is completing some form. I wait quietly. Mrs. looks up at me. I apologise for disturbing her repast. She's obviously annoyed. I tell

her I was referred. Missy asks, snappedly “What do you want?” I tell her I need my meal ticket extended 2 days per Mrs. What-ever who is filling in for Ms. S. “Oh I can’t do that!” “Well, could you tell me who can?” “Lemme see wachoo got.” I hand her my meal ticket, upon which, she scribbles “10/18/08” and something slightly resembling “402” and pushes it across her desk at me. I thank her and depart. Such is another moment dealing with those employed by DHS. - Later this evening, I get into a chat in the hall with Ray-17 and Kendall (from down the hall) and another guy from the floor. Kendall has a saving sense of humour about being here and says “I have to call my travel agent because this surely isn’t the vacation package I booked.” We all get a laugh and continue to talk about what it takes to service this place. I hear the shelter gets 100\$/day/person here. As we discuss... 3,000\$/month to keep us here. It would be cheaper to give us 1 or 2,000/month toward our rent and help us get on with out lives in dignity. Likewise, the position of the case-worker is to help us get out of here and return to living successfully. If they do, they’ve done their job. However, if a person gets fed-up and walks out, essentially returning to Homelessness, the official records only indicate that he’s not in the shelter and the implication is that DHS has been a success. So, there we have the ... excuse me... DEE SISTEM! Leave and go home? They’re happy. Leave and go Homeless? They’re happy. The 100\$/day? There’s 2000 other Homeless men waiting for your bed even as you sleep in it. Nobody here wanted or needed you before you arrived and nobody will miss you when you go. Period. - And so, discussion and education done, I took a hot shower and smoke and by about 11:30pm, lights out.

NOTES

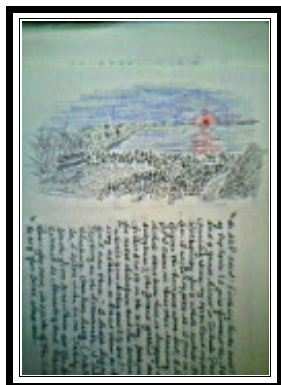
Ms. Emaly COVERING Ms. Simpson SAT. (10h09)

REY TELLS ME THAT THE CLEANING LADY WANTED TO KNOW “IS HE A JEW?” AND WHEN HE TOLD HER THAT I OPENED MY OWN LOCKER SHE SAID I’M NOT SUPPOSED TO DO THAT.

Friday 17 October: 64/33

8:13am WELL! Last night showed me why I’m here and why I should be, at least, partly thankful: EVER SO COLD! 2 blankets doubled and still COLD. So, I must remember the nights at 19 CTN, laying on an old sofa, in an un-finished basement, often with flood-waters rising across the cement floor, in my sister's and brother-in-law's house, when it was so cold I had headache and

my bones felt brittle and I got the night-marish sinus infection for almost 3 weeks, blowing the most horrendous-looking and foul-smelling matter out of my nose. I must remember that here, total strangers can treat me disrespectfully but at CTN, my own *siblings* did so. Here, I'm transferred from bed to bed. There? I was thrown completely out. Family; it means absolutely nothing. Sometimes strangers are kinder, more human, more humane. - So. The day: RUSH. STOP! Up at 5:30am. Prepare. Shower. Dress. GO! By 7:06am I was on the Pelham train to Union Sq. to transfer to the Canarsie train. Broadway Junction and transfer to the Lefferts train. 8:15am, I wasn't sure where to get the Q10 bus so I walked round the block and got an empty bus. Of course it was empty. It wasn't going the full route and so, about 4 stops later, I was at Rock. Blvd., still uncertain of distance. Ah. One block down, 3 over. Wrong direction. Asked a fellow who was in his front yard. Other direction. There it was, right on the corner. A relatively short walk from where I'd started. 8:27am! Early. Another walk around the block and... The client's daughter answered the door. She'd told the agency she wanted AFTERNOON! Mary (daughter) didn't want me to stay! I'm in whites. It's cold. I've no-where to go. My car-fare's limited. I asked to call the agency from their phone. She agreed. Brother (Steve) was asleep in the living-room. She had to wake him so I could use the phone. I called Kristen, told her of the change in hours. She OK'ed and said she'll try to get me a morning client and pay me for my "travel time", what-ever that might be. I'll find out when I receive it. Then, I was invited, by this family, to coffee. Come to learn, Steve is quite a history buff. The family is from Austria-Hungary. German is spoken. We talked for quite a while. I met "Honey", their Rottweiler. Precious dog. Affectionate. The kicker? Maria is the VNS Nurse in charge of this case. I'd met her one day on the peninsula, in Rockaway. She covers Rosario's patients there... meaning... a connection with the Albert Green farce! I'm nervous about the stories that may have or might circulate about me because of that. I'll need to be prepared now. But, I stayed until 10:30am, met Mr. T. VERY heavy man, of course. A

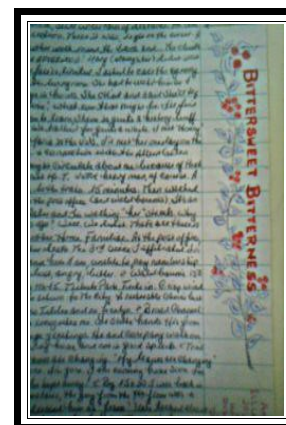


challenging case, no doubt. - When I left, I timed the walk to the train. 15 minutes. Then walked along Liberty Avenue to Cross Bay. Decided to take the Q53 bus to the post office (and Waldbaum's). It's an odd thought: This is where Liz C. grew up. All these years later and I'm walking "her" streets. Why didn't we do this during the time we spent together years ago? Well. We didn't. That's all there is to it. - B116th! Back home. Ocean to one side. Bay to the other. Home. Familiar. At the post office NO ADP INFO! Only a card from Beth El announcing another death. The 3rd since I affiliated. I'm saving the

cards/announcements. The membership in the congregation is dying and here I am, unable to pay membership. WORSE... unable to even attend services! I feel empty, lost, angry, bitter. - Waldbaum's 15\$ in shopping. THIS should last me about 3 days. Lunch at 11:45am at Tribute Park, Rockaway. The tide was in. Crisp wind. Calm. Soothing. Comforting. Home. Quick. I decided to return to The City. A miserable choice but no carfare to use for more travel and no change of clothes. So, I decided to to Tilden and not to see Jocelyn today. - At the transfer from the shuttle to the A train at Broad Channel: 2 guys walk toward me on the platform. I recognize one. He recognizes me. We shook hands. He's from the shelter! Imagine. Meeting at Broad Channel... all this way "out here", away from The City. We exchange greetings. He and his company walk on. I didn't want to talk with him much anyway. I was leaving "home" and not in good spirits. - On the train, I tried to nap on the trip back. - Looking out the window: The leaves are changing. "My leaves are changing." A lot of yellow and gold. Spots of deep reds. Summer is gone. I'm gone. I am coming home soon. I'm coming back. This is my home. I love it here. I will NOT be kept away! - By 3:50pm I was back in the shelter. Everybody was in the room. - When I came into the building downstairs, the guy from the 7th floor whom I'd met on the street this morning was in the corridor, sitting, silently. (Someone addressed him as "Jesus". Indeed... Latino.) We talked about the way we're treated here; the verbal abuse and such. He did get his business attended to but is still sensitive to the mistreatment. He's been here a month and a half and has been thinking he's alone in the confusion, misinformation, absence of information and direction, the abuse. He smiled as we talked. He was relieved. It did my heart great good to see that. I assured him and then told him he has his heart and his mind. I advised he protect them both, this place is designed to attack and destroy both. I suggested: Mothers do their best for their children. Don't let anybody else destroy a Mother's work and efforts! He thanks me. No need to, really. It's why I'm here. - The rest of the evening went along as time does in here. We, of 5W-101 talked. At 9:00pm I signed for my bed. I was the only one at that moment. A sweet, older Black woman sat alone in the office. The radio played. She was most kind and sweet. I appreciated her human-ness. - Back in the room, I prepared for my shower/smoke. After that? Day 64 of homelessness, Day 33 in the shelter... closed. I was bathed. I was on a bed. I was inside.

NOTES

BITTERSWEET BITTERNESS: AN ILLUSTRATED JOURNAL OF
HOPE DISAPPOINTMENT AND DESPAIR



Saturday 18 October: 65/34

1:54pm and I'm in the room! With the exception of 2 smokes downstairs, I've been inside all day! It's a bit on the cold side out anyway. So... And, as I write, I'm alone. An odd situation. I should go out. But I've no-where to go (on Shabbat), no appropriate clothing (that "mid-season" thing) and no particular drive to go anywhere. The first day in 33/34 that I haven't been running all day. - I woke at 8:00am, took my time. A shower. Dressed. Went to see Ms. Emaly, the "seestem" case-worker, at 10:05am. Today she was relatively polite and took the time to explain a bit more to me. The actuality is that I'm no better off than ever, just that some things are more specific than before: I'm to see my case-worker twice/week - but for now, since my case-worker is out until some un-known date, I'm to see Ms. Emaly every (get this) SATURDAY AT 10:00am! (What about my religious services? Hmmmmmm?) My meal ticket is now pink and valid 10/18-11/01 but that doesn't give any guarantee of bed. She kept reminding me of the "temporary" status of all of this. - I'm "mandated" to save 60% of my salary and will need to provide proof... on demand, of course. I've a letter to bring to Bellevue Hospital Monday morning (before work, of course) (moron) to apply for Medicaid. A list of "Rights" that mean nothing. A list of responsibilities and warnings. Up to this morning, my file was missing more than it should. So, all (I suppose) is now current. Any difference? No. Of course not. So, that all done, I used the rest of my morning sorting through papers, organizing papers, putting order into my existence, had 2 sandwiches and too much sugar. Right now I'd like to nap. I'd also like to go outside. I can't decide. I should have washed something. I will, later. It's just a relief to have the "formal preliminaries" done now. I can breathe a bit while waiting to be screwed the next time. - Oh. And on one of the forms "Target" date to be tossed out of here: 30 November! Winter will be coming in and I'll be going out... back out. Oh well. - 5:17 Hot soup. I went down for a smoke mostly just to get out. There was an empty styro-container on the window ledge. Remnants of soup visible. I'd just eaten 2 peanut butter and frosting sandwiches. Hot soup. How delicious that would be. Hot food. A hot meal that wouldn't make me sick. A hot meal served on real plates with real flatware, on a table, in an environment where I could take my time and actually taste the food and enjoy it. How many YEARS has it been? I don't remember. Now I know why taking a day like this is not good. I've been in this room most of the day. I washed an RAA t-shirt and a pair of socks. I've had time to think, to ponder, to contemplate, to grow... even more bitter. The bitterness is growing into hatred. And the one person who comes to mind with favour is Tommy. Tommy B, who said "It isn't ideal, but the bus is there." The only one who made a kind gesture. - I have the jacket from Angel too. Angel Ortega. I need to contact him. I've little time on the phone though. It would do

me good to see him. But he has family and he works on Sunday so tomorrow is not possible. Well? Today, because I am idle, is a day for slipping into reality. Reality is not a good place to be lately. Thinking is not a good way to pass idle moments. Tomorrow I must get up, get out, get going, keep going, keep moving, figure this out, figure the way out, one way or another. - It's getting dark in here... again. This place is always dark. I keep thinking of those poor, tortured people who used to be locked in these rooms! I can leave. They could not. The staff then and the staff now. Not at all different. Simply abusive, cold, apathetic. But I can walk out at will. Those before us couldn't. They screamed aloud. I scream in silence. - The day ended with a great chat with D16. He's from the Cote d'Ivoire! When he talks of it he's absolutely energetic. Tells me I could go, get an excellent job, beautiful home and always respect. He showed me photos of his wife and 9 children. One is dead, though I'm not certain of the cause. He speaks French and I'm trying to get the nerve to try mine again. Anyway, he says he'll give me a name and address there if I should ever decide to go. I'll be "received with joy, live and eat free". You see? It's as we do discuss around here, often; the world is lovely and people are respectful. It's *here* that people are worse than sh**. But daily, our conversations (amongst most of the residents) turn to mutual respect and basic human dignity. The staff are relentless in their attempts to belittle us. D16 showed me a photos of him with the president of Cote d'Ivoire. His children are there, 2 in England, 1 in The States. The boys are military with degrees. The story is the same through-out this Hell. So we try to support one-another in our efforts to maintain dignity. - It was a hot shower again before sleep. I'm happy I can return to that aspect of my own, normal life: a shower before bed! How wonderful! - George (D15) missed sign-in AND bed-check tonight. He'll lose the bed and the 3 of us will have to deal with what-ever comes in, in the middle of the night, to take his place. I hope it's (he's) clean and quiet and mature! - Late, late, G. returned. Noisy, drunk (as usual). Fumbled about and went to bed. I wonder. He's too young to be here (he was the last to be out of LaGuardia shelter so they put him here) and too young to be so into booze. This place is a lesson. I wonder what the purpose of the lesson is.



Sunday 19 October: 66/35

11:59am Still in the room. Showered. Dressed. D15 and D16 sleeping. D17, gone. I've washed the under shorts and a white t-shirt. The green shirt I'd washed yesterday and the socks are dry today! Rolled 6 smokes. Need more. Straightened the locker and am almost ready to get out and go to the library. It's chilly in here though. 21,5° But I hear it should barley break the 60's°F.

It's getting too cold for just my sweatshirt and corduroy shirt but not quite cold enough for Angel's jacket. And I keep thinking of all that's probably lost from the hotel. It hurts. Very deeply. Honestly... why the Hell do I let this keep going? Curiosity? Or what? 5:09pm So I'm back. I'd gone to the library. Got another note to Ashley typed and printed. Spoke for a while, with the woman who admired my sketches and this journal. Very good to talk with her. Then, at about 3:00pm, strolled back. Stopped at Gristede's for food. Got my coffee and found my cheap cold-cuts. (10cents more than Waldbaum's, of course) so I had meat today! - Coming in, the x-ray detected a glass jar! The guard asked me to open my bag. The coffee was in the back-pack. She wanted me to open the grocery bag. I did. She looked in the bag then at the scanner, cleared me. OK! And to think: I'd planned to get the coffee tomorrow. Oh well. It's done. I came to the empty room, unpacked the groceries and ate 2 pastrami sandwiches, with mustard! 2 apple sauce. I just wish I could remember how it tasted. I ate so damned quickly because I was so damned hungry. And, sure enough, a security guard came in, looking for George. Then Santiago came in, looking for George. And I'm trying to feed myself through it all. But, it's just a little too cold for the riverside park today. - I had a thought too: it's getting colder and I have no gloves with me. My Hell is developing very well. - Food done, I got my water bottles filled. The water here has been cloudy the past 2 days. I'm drinking it anyway. Maybe something in it will cause death. That would be delightful. I can hope. Time for a casual smoke. Now, I could have violated house rules and gone to the loo or shower room. But, I went outside. Coming in, one security guard looks at my ticket and ID and comments "IN AND OUT. HUH SIR?" "I came out for a smoke." "BEST NOT MAKE IT CHAIN SMOKING." "No. I keep it down: up and down stairs." Through the door and the next security guard makes the comment: "WE WILL NOTE HAVE IN AND OUT ALL DAY." "No, we won't." I replied quietly, smiling. So, what we WILL have is violations of house rules and to Hell with security. There's nothing written prohibiting smoking out-side the building. It's just because (I hear) 26 people are supposed to be on security this evening and only 18 showed for work. Poor schmucks. So we, the residents, are expected to be considerate? Not. The tables are turned. Time to return kindness. Dumb f***s. - 5:34pm Time for a nap. D16 is here, quietly. I'm a bit fatigued.

Monday 20 October: 67/36

10:00am MMLib and here I sit, with at least an hour to spend. - 10:59am And I did it, spent the hour, reading a book on what to do with a Psychology Major. OK. So this morning, Ms. Emaly

gave me carfare, BUT insisted that my employment/assignment sheet have a “letter-head”! Like I want PIC, my employer, to know I’m in the shelter. Well? Library, Internet, print! Voila! 10 of them, all appearing quite “official” and professional. You know? If the shelter wants to play, then let’s play... to my advantage. THEY didn't do a damned thing to get me back to work, they haven't helped me in any way toward returning to my productive life. They won't give me Saturday to attend service. I'm not eating their food. I'm not getting linens every week. I'm not bugging them for every little thing. I'm running independent. So? So! - 11:04am I'm going to get this show on the road. It's chilly out today and due to be VERY chilly on Wednesday. I'm in scrubs and white shoes! Ms. Emaly wanted me to apply for Medicaid this morning and tell them I'm unemployed. Right! I dress like this for drama. (I'm not actually a Nurse. I just play one in the local Homeless shelter. NEXT!) Not to mention: she's actually demanding that I present fraudulent information now! Just goes to show what “dee seestem” truly is, and I'll not play into THAT! Most certainly not for the likes of THEM! It just supports my theory: They DON'T want us to get back on our feet and out of her “seestem”! To Hell with that... and them. - 8:42pm and back at the Castle Bellevue. I left the library at about 11:30am, took the D train to W4th Street and transferred to the A and walked along Rockaway Blvd. The stroll is about 25 minutes. The total trip was about 1,5 hours. (Coming back? 1 hour 45 minutes.) When I arrived at the new “clients”, the Physical Therapist was working with a new-model Hoyer lift and couldn't figure it out. Truth? Neither could I. Oddly, I had been thinking that I wanted to meet the PT and OT. So? 50% done. I'm glad. I want to meet the “team”, just in case of any “fall-out” from the “Green force” (that good-for-nothing family). - Well! Mary and Steve fed me cakes and coffee. Mary asked if it was OK if some weren't kosher! To go from the anti-Semites of the shelter-staff to this family is such a relief, a blessing. Much needed and so appreciated. And they're supportive of my presence and working with their father. My whole-hearted hope is to get the father up and walking with the walker before Thanksgiving... Sincerely. I hope to. For him. For his family.- I left them at a bit past 4:00pm. Took the Q7 bus to the A train, Broadway Junction L train to Union Square 6 train. What sh**! People! Bodies! Crowds! Congestion! I want OFF of this island (Manhattan) and back to my Peninsula! I hate this city! Honestly. I hate this island! Honestly! Nobody knows how it hurts to go to work so close to “home” and know that I have to come back here at day's end. It just might kill me after all. - Walking by Lefferts, Linden, Rockaway, I think of Liz. Her childhood neighbourhood and here I'm treading it. “Creation” is strange and quite f***ed-up. - So, back at Castle Bellevue, I shoved a package of pre-packaged turkey cold-cuts (with mustard - no bread) down my throat, 2 little apple sauces, the rest of the *Wheat Thins* and some chocolate

frosting. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, all three meals in one. Put on my jeans, washed a white T-shirt for work, chatted with Rey17 and now, it's 9:00p,m and 21°Celsius, the 4 roomie-residents here are all accounted for. Rey's somewhere about but Georgel5 and 16 are here. It's quiet, save the never-ending drone of the machine in the construction site next door. That must be a violation. But I'm in no mood to piss away my phone time complaining about it, knowing my complaint will amount to nothing and go no where anyway. - Tomorrow? The Medicaid application. I'm not going to lie, but I'll probably need some documentation proving that I've applied. I also need car-fare for Wednesday. Papers and case-workers. General Homeless BS. - 10:20pm, I've come from a good, hot, shower. Santiago comes to the room. "Is everybody home?" All 4 us are here. "Everybody's home." Home? I suppose it is, in some manner. Well there's been good talk all evening. George has been here since May! Sh**! Rey is reading. 16 is silent and looking through some papers he keeps in his locker. "Home"? Kendall's in the hall talking jokes. Robert105 comes by to tell of some guy who keeps showing up in his bed. He leaves the room and when he returns, there's this stranger, laying in his bed. He tells me he can hook me up in a 2-bed on the other side. "Home"? Maybe. But one thing this place does is turn total strangers into "family". Most of us are "equal". Some of us are insane. Others are clinically out to lunch... and dinner. But we're all in here. And the world is out there. It means something, I suppose. Tonight I wonder how I've survived 36 days of this. But, no matter what, I know that when I leave, I'll miss the guys I've met in here. - I saw Jesus earlier. He smiled and greeted me as a friend as we rode the lift. I'll have to go find him up on the 7th floor. - Ms. Emaly was right: DEE SISTEM is different here. All told? Few exceptions, it's a bit more "human". - 10:32pm Good-night.

NOTES

STEAM!

RED DRAGONFLY

Lavage

Tuesday 21 October: 68/37

7:52am - 5W101 And so begins the "steam season". This morning, the sound of steam coming up in the radiators. It's here. And I have no clothing appropriate to the coming cold weather. Again, I'm looking toward bitter cold. Cold. Cold. Cold. I don't mind the cold. I love the Winter. But not when it rips my meagre body apart. And it looks like this year will be the worst of my life. My

heavier clothes are out of my reach (if there at all). This will be a “make or break” Winter. Perhaps my lessons will have been learnt, my time served, and on 21 December, I can finally go to that Peace I long for. I can go “Home”... to stay. - But for now, there are chores and tasks and events to be journalled. The sun is shining and I must be out of doors and in the light. I must keep moving. For what reason? Toward what destination? I’ve no idea. But I must move on. And so, I shall. - 8:40am And yet another “Hurry! Rush! Stop! Wait! Have a seat.” Bellevue Hospital. Medicaid Office. Of course, it doesn’t open until 10:00am. So? So. “Have a seat.” And so I do. What else is there to be said? There’s one person before me. No doubt, the window will open and we shall let the mayhem begin! But I’ve got my car-fare for work covered. That’s my major concern. And yes. As I write, there’s one who waltzes in, believes himself to be above the world and takes a stand at the door, instead of “having a seat”. Humanity. How worthless. How strange. How stupid. - 6:45pm WELL! A day to write about and try to remember. To begin: I was at the wrong place at first, but caught my error on time. Got to a lovely lady at reception who told me that my application, the one JCCRP had completed and given me, was OK. All I needed to do was put it in the basket at the desk and someone would call me (have a seat). So, I did. It was about 9:30am when, shortly, a kind voice called my name and yet another kindly woman asked me to take a seat, at her desk. She’d put in my information and was ready. Soft-spoken. Kind. Attentive. Brief. It was an amazing delight to be treated humanely. Of course, the catch” I need to apply for unemployment! Edlyne Bellanton screws my payroll and I’ve got to try for unemployment? You know? If I could know that it wouldn’t track to PIC, I’d do it and let Premier know about the screw-up and my situation in the shelter. But for that, the time will come when I get to the lawyer. Anyway, I’ll either have to go that route or let the application be denied. We’ll see as time goes. - By 10:30am I was feeling rather positive and came back to the Castle Bellevue to deal with the case-workers. Ms. Emaly is off but she said she wanted me to see Ms. Renice (as I see her name) or Mr. Valley. My “ILP” (Independent Living Plan... my “goals” and steps toward them) had to be singed and my “official” assignment sheet from PIC had to go on my file. I had it figured: The first part went well, the next would make up for it. - Into the building, up to the 5th floor. After a few moments of waiting at the door to the “Social Workers Office”, I asked a man in the office across the hall (where we sign for our beds and get car-fare) for Ms. Renice or Mr. Valley. “What can I do for you?” he asked. As usual, no introduction or identification. Come to find out... I was talking with Mr. Valley! Legally blind, good spirited, Mr. Valley. I told him about Ms. Emaly and her instructions. He brought me across the hall (from whence I’d waited) opened the dutch door and bade me in. In a cubicle sat a refined-looking woman, thin, striking. An island

accent. Soft spoken. The elusive Ms. Renice. She asked me to take a seat. Again, gentle, dignified, respectful. She asked me the particulars of my visit. I told her. She got my file. She made quick work of what needed to be done. Organised. Dignified. I was a human-being with human dignity. And when she'd finished, she asked me if I had any questions. I asked about car-fare for tomorrow. I asked if my direction (focusing on my work above all else) was the proper way. She said it is. Then she asked: "Are you fighting with anybody?" (No) "Are you cussing at anybody?" (No) "Are you signing for your bed each night?" (Yes) "Then you're 'compliant'. You're fine. See your case worker each Saturday and good luck." I thanked her, for the time, the information, the help, the respect. I left, feeling quite good and quite confident... in spite of the fact that she took a copy of my HHA certificate. I don't know exactly why she felt she needed that. But these people are so preoccupied with paper-work. I suppose my life is too meagre and collecting paper gives it value, substance. - I went to the library. - Now, en route, at 36th Street and Park Ave., as I stepped up onto the sidewalk, I missed stepping on a RED DRAGONFLY. YESTERDAY, WAIT, SUNDAY, WALKING DOWN PARK AVE AT ABOUT 35th STREET, OUT OF NO WHERE, A RED DRAGONFLY CAME AND HELD ON TO MY SHIRT FOR A MOMENT OR TWO. IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK, CROWDED STREETS, RED DRAGONFLIES FIND ME... OR, I FIND THEM. OMEN? SIGN? I HOPE THEY HAVE SOME WAY OF KNOWING HOW I ADMIRE THEM, WISH THEM NO HARM, APPRECIATE THEIR PRESENCE IN MY LIFE. RED DRAGONFLIES. IT MADE ME THINK OF THE BLUE-BLACK DRAGONFLY THAT LANDED ON ME AS I SAT AT THE BROOK IN NEW PROSPECT ONE SUMMER DAY... SO LONG AGO AND SO FAR AWAY. THEY'RE QUITE BEAUTIFUL, MYSTERIOUS, CHARMING. I WONDER WHY THEY FOUND ME. - At the library, I enquired about the computers at the "Job Information" section. A young lady told me that they're the same time/appointment as those on the 4th floor, but she signed me onto one as a "Guest" which gave me the time on the 2nd floor AND the option of MORE time on the 4th. These, on the 2nd floor are limited only to specific tasks. No searches. No e-mail. But, being a "Guest", I could use these and then go to the 4th floor for my regular Internet. A THIRD KINDNESS IN THE SAME DAY! So I searched Psychology, Counselling, jobs, associations. Then, at about 2:00pm, I went to the 4th floor and got an immediate appointment for another computer! The mouse on the one I got was malfunctioning so it cut into my usage time. But I got to what I wanted. - Went to the 3rd floor to look for Psychology books. So many are "Unavailable". Missing/Stolen I'm presuming. - At 3:00pm I was quite hungry and headed across 40th Street. There, at the corner of 2nd Ave., a Gristede's. Pre-packaged meats and a package of hamburger rolls, a box of PopTarts, a bottle of coffee. A stroll to

the river-side park to eat! - The tide was in. There was enough sun to make it comfortable. A Black man stood at the rail, hands raised, he faced East, he chanted. A cormorant dove and rose with fish in beak. It too was dining. I ate. I spilt coffee on my jeans! But timing was good and it was only small spots. I headed back to get the coffee out quickly. - JUST IN FRONT OF THE SHELTER, SUSAN S! PREVIOUS PRESIDENT OF THE CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE I USED TO GO TO UP-TOWN! SHE RECOGNISED ME! SO WE CHATTED... BRIEFLY (THANK GOD). IT WAS GOOD TO SEE HER THOUGH I DID ALL NOT TO MAKE CONNECTION TO THE SHELTER. (NOW I WONDER WHAT SHE'S DO IF SHE KNEW. AH. THE LINE: "YOU'LL BE JUST FINE." I'VE ALREADY HEARD IT MORE TIMES THAN I "CARE TO SHARE".) SHE REMINDED ME THAT THEY'LL BE DANCING WITH THE TORAH TONIGHT. YES. YET ANOTHER CELEBRATION DENIED. ANOTHER REASON TO MAKE THIS SHELTER-SHIT AS SHORT AS POSSIBLE! ANOTHER BIT TO ADD TO THE BITTERNESS. - In the building and to the room by 4:30pm. I decided to full-wash my jeans instead of "spot washing" the coffee out. As I was washing, Kendall came in: "You've GOT to see this! Come with me. Leave that (the jeans)." He brought me into the shower room. It smelled like fresh BM. He told me to look into the stall. I expected to see what I'd seen so many times before down stairs on the 2nd floor: faeces sprayed all over the wall, floor, bowl. But what WAS there truly was remarkable and something I'd never seen before. In the toilet, clean water, and, completely intact (probably the most remarkable aspect), a STOOL! It had to be approximately 45cm long and, at the widest, approximately 35cm around! Of course, those who saw it had many jokes to make. But I immediately thought of how that stayed in somebody's bowels and how it could have possibly passed... intact! The anus/rectum had to be so stretched to permit that circumference to pass... intact. Well, as I say, the jokes continued until, at some point, the stool was removed, by someone, somehow. Fortunately, the removal happened before I got there to do it. I'd gotten gloves and apron ready to go but when I arrived to do the job, it was done. Still, it deserves mention simply on medical and biological merits. Not to mention: the things you see in the shelter! THIS had become my... "life" now. - And so the evening went by. George, Rey and I discussed the philosophies of shelter living. I told George about my trepidations on the first and second nights. We joked about "being in Bellevue". George said "But it's getting better now. Right?" I replied "Worse!" jokingly referring to the oddities and insanities. But the truth of the matter is: Here, on this floor, the loo, the showers, the halls, the room... all are kept quite clean. Most guys are asleep (or, at least quiet) by 10:30pm. My inability to fall asleep and remain asleep is my own problem. Over-all, considering the whole situation, it's not too bad. It is, after and

above all else, giving me the opportunity to re-start my life. I can focus on employment, money, getting on my feet. And there's just enough pressure and distress to keep from becoming "comfortable". - One note: Rey tells me that clothing is here as well. I need a "referral" from my case-worker but I can get under-wear, shirts, trousers, jacket! And so, with the coming cold, I will! Meanwhile, I NEED to post this recent letter to Ashley. - Well. My jeans are washed. Second time in 68 days. What have I become?

Wednesday 22 October: 69/38

10:30am MMLib - Up at 6:30am, fumbled about during morning routine. No particular rush. Had to be at PIC to give Ada the "lease" I have (for Rockaway... presumably) and then? Ah hah! A message on the phone! RHAS! The agency I attended orientation for! They're just waiting for the finger print report. But! Hey! I've been thinking of them and wondering. So, this is good news and the message said all else is fine! And so, out the door I went. Inside we had STEAM. Outside I learnt, it's 45°F. I didn't wear the jacket from Angel. It's chilly. At PIC, Ada was a doll. Remembered me by sight. Actually apologized for the inconvenience. I told her I had to come into The City for today anyway. Well! So she did the photocopy of the "lease" and off I went. - At 34th and Madison, there was Jesus (7th floor)! He wanders about all day! Poor guy! He's got a limp and they still force him out. I told him of warm places to go for the day. Once again, my past has prepped me for my present. What then is my present preparing me for in future? I don't know that I want to know. - Well and other-wise, I came here, to the library to get.... an immediate appointment on the computer. ADP finally sends me the info for Direct Deposit! I'm settled on a new MCU savings account which I'll need if PIC and RHAS send cheques. Oh well, Life... screwed up. - Got a day and a half of this journal onto the new blog. It's going to take time because I'm writing small and this is being writing on page 87 already. Still, it's going to be fun, reading and recounting as I go. So... - 10:44am Time to move out, move on, move along, get to work. I've got 2\$ to put on the Metro-Card which will cover today and Friday work. 7\$ in the back-pack. 4\$ coming for carfare tonight. Another 4 on Thursday. MCU tomorrow. 2 pay-cheques pending. All is certainly not perfect. But I have no family and no friends. So THAT'S a reason to be cheerful today. - Out! Into the sunshine and crisp morning air! - (Continuing on Thursday, 23 Oct. at 11:06am MMLib) I'd finished the previous entry and was preparing to leave when I spotted Georgel5 making a reservation for the computer! How odd it seems to meet guys from the shelter, out on the streets and now, in the library! Ah the ways in which people get to know

people in this city. So we spoke briefly and were on our respective ways. NYC. - I took the D train to get to work. Put 2\$ on the MetroCard, giving me car-fare to cover this week in full. As I walked the tunnel to the train, a guy was singing: THE FIRST TIME EVER I SAW YOUR FACE". The (my thoughts are so scrambled as I think about this. Every thought crashes into the next!), Dennis Nixon. The blue VW. NY Route 208. Woodcock Mountain. Rd. Mister G's. Downing Park. Pain. Memories. Melancholia. Sadness. Depression. Anxiety. Roberta Flack. My music. Gone. So much... gone. The next tune began... "NEITHER ONE OF US WANTS TO BE THE FIRST TO SAY GOOD-BYE"! I kept walking but my entire body went numb! I actually had to think, to concentrate on moving, walking. The grip of depression was horrific! Had I the opportunity, I'd have simply shut-down at that moment, sat quietly and died. It was a most frightening and amazing experience. Just a depressing over-load of darkness. But, at the top of the stairs, I managed to pull a bit together and make it to the train. - Arrived at Rock Blvd. at noon! An hour to spare! I walked. Stopped at a deli. Cheese Danish, croissant, Nutriment. 4\$ off my Food Stamps. I was starving! Walked slowly along the street and ate as I walked. Still, I arrived at the client's at 12:40pm! When I'm in no rush, time passes so slowly. - It was an OK 3 hours at work. Their Hoyer was replaced but Mr. T. is so heavy, we had complications. Coffee and cakes were served. How they spoil me. One brother confided: We like you. You work very well with my father. We're thinking of asking for more hours for you. Maybe 8 each day. That could be good or bad. I'll have to make the very best of it, no matter what. It will be much needed income! - At 4:07pm I left the house. Q7 bus to the train and back to Hell. It was EVER so COLD! - Back at the shelter, there was steam! A welcome relief! HEAT! I washed my "hoodie" and the wash water was disgusting! It hadn't been washed in MONTHS! But little by little, everything is getting washed. (Of course, the forecast for the week-end is RAIN!) - Got to talking with George. He reads Robert Frost, Steinbeck, Steven King. Read "Anna Karenina"! Even some Tolstoy! It just goes to show how we can't "presume". - As the evening went, I shoved 2 cold-cuts sandwiches down and waited to sign in. Rumour: 50 people waiting for beds tonight. NO margin for screw-ups tonight! At about 9:45pm I signed-in. At about 10:00pm, security came for me. *I hadn't requested my car-fare and it was noticed!* The case-worker (Stinson? I'll have to check that to be accurate) was SO pleasant about it. And I was so grateful! I'm depending on that car-fare to help me get on my feet! When I told George he said "They don't ever do that, come get you for something like that." Maybe this is a good omen... things will change and all will be better... soon. - A hot shower. A warm bed. Another day... done.

NOTES

DON'T IT MAKE YOU WANNA GO HOME?

Thursday 23 October: 70/39

11:51am MMLib Continuing.. WOW! Did I ever sleep last night! Woke at almost 7:00am... the hour I'm to be "on the train to work". My "hoodie" wasn't completely dry but just dry enough to wear. Not having access to weather reports, and the steam being up, I've no idea what to wear out-side these days. - Shower, half a smoke. Dress. My stomach/bowels are bothering me lately. Cramps last night and the urge to "go" this morning. - A WALK! Down to MCU at Lafayette, by the Centre Street court buildings. The horrors begin: Not only was the morning temperature about 2°C and I was exhausted from the walk and chilled-through, when the nice lady at MCU put in my social security number, a notice came up! "NSF activity" (non-sufficient funds... bounced cheques!) from Ridgewood Banque (formerly "City and Suburban"). NO ACCOUNT OPENED TODAY! Long story short (it's noon now, I'm hungry. Haven't been on-line. Need to contact the banque. Need a nap too.), I settled the issue at hand quietly and began the walk from Lafayette Street up to the library... over an hour. It's cold out! I'm hungry and tired. My thermometer registered 11°C when I got in. So! As it gets colder, it gets tougher all round. - So now I have car-fare for tomorrow. 5\$ for MCU to open a new account and 6\$ in the wallet. Tonight: arrange for car-fare for tomorrow. That will put 10\$ in the wallet. One moment at a time. I need more cigarettes too! But what I'd like most, is a nap! - 5:14pm Back at the Castle where my clock tells me it's 26°C but it feels like 36°! Can't say they're trying to freeze us out. But the warmth is most welcome! - When I got in at about 3:45pm, G. and 16 were both in. G. was shaving and getting ready to go out. 16 was snoozing. I washed my corduroy shirt and an RAA t-shirt, ate my 2 meat sandwiches and the rest of the chocolate frosting as sandwiches on the last 2 rolls. Food's gone and only 60-something\$ left on FoodStamps. I'd gotten a new pouch of tobacco and rolled 5 smokes for tomorrow and a few to "quick draw" in the loo. (Less tobacco in those.) G. left. The place has gone quiet, save the TV next door and 16's got sneezing fits. - I'm still worked-up about MCU. I spent 45 minutes on-line searching for contacts for "Chex System", Ridgewood Savings. I don't know if I got through to Chex Systems but everything else bounced back. I'll have to fight this one slowly. DAMN IT! - Rick came by to remind me it's dinner time. Since my bowels aren't all too good, maybe I should try a meal. But not tonight. I want to get to the post office tomorrow before work. - I need a hair-cut, a beard trim, shave, manicure, pedicure. I have the energy for... a nap. - Took one! Until Rey came in. I woke at 7:18pm! Dreamt I was taking a Nursing final exam. Don't remember much more than that. The question on the

exam, as I woke, was: “What is 1917? 19/17.” “What do we call that?” And my answer, that I was waiting to give was “A greater possibility of one out-come over another.” Which, in the dream, I was sure, was right. Hey! It was a dream. The teacher liked me. - Now, if all the little morons in the loo would leave so I could grab a “quick draw”. - Oh, oh, oh! As I’m walking back here this afternoon, I cross 34th Street at 3rd Ave. and right in front of the QM (Queens-Manhattan) Express bus to FAR ROCKAWAY B.21! Don’t it make you wanna go home?

Friday 24 October: 71/40!

7:40pm At the Castle. All’s calm. 16’s spewing viruses with unabashed sneezes and we’re the only 2 in. 26° again and yet, it feels like 36°. - I’m not certain what time it was when I left this morning (and oh, I didn’t want to get out of bed). It was a bit past 8:00am. The Canarsie train stopped at Wyckoff again. The next train went through to the Junction. I got to The Rock by 10:30am! At the post office, 2 cards from the synagogue and my ADP statement. The balance? Almost 40\$ OVER-DRAWN! ANOTHER UNEXPLAINED AND INEXPLICABLE 5\$ “PURCHASE/CASHBACK”! I’m bleating-well fed-up! I HAVE to clear the banque records NOW! I’m not going to have THIS sh** screw me too. It figures. I got the card from Premier. That place means no good at all! - And so, being on a “Pay Per Ride” card for transportation (costing me considerably more)... I bought an envelope and posted a letter to Ashley. This one tells the whole saga, gives her an address and phone to contact me. Now I get to the news that EVERYTHING in ALL of my life is GONE! What will I do? I just don’t know. I should have been dead already. Maybe THIS Winter. Maybe. So I added a hand-printed “Thank You” to her and how I miss Rockaway, dropped it in the slot and headed for the Q53. Bought “The Wave” (local Rockaway newspaper) for the first time in ages, got the bus to Rockaway Blvd. Looped back to Sutter and a C-Town supermarket for some yoghurt and snacks for here. Ate the 2 yoghurts as I walked. That’s how hungry I was! Good thing I carry the plastic flat-ware all the time. - Even with the casual walking, I was at RockBlvd. and 115th Ave. at 11:15am! Luckily there’s a place to sit, and so I did. Had 2 PopTarts and 2 puddings, read the paper, smoked a cigarette and waited for the time to pass. - Was at my patient’s at 12:45pm. Now this was an easy day. Mitch (OT) and PT came. In 3 hours with them there, I had little to do. So I encouraged, observed, ate, had coffee. 4:00pm came quickly and I left. - As I waited for the bus to the train, the skies darkened. The forecast for tomorrow and Sunday is rain. In spite of not getting the Thursday car-fare this week, I’m planning on being at Tilden and PHC on Sunday! Rain or not! - The trip back here served its purpose very well: This morning the

Jamaica Bay was remarkably calm, beautiful, amazing. The air was delightfully clean and comfortable. It was a post-card /calendar photo day. Coming into The City screws your spirit, what, with all the idiots in the way, the traffic, the noise, congestion, yelling, general stupidity. I MUST get AWAY from here! - I got in after the usual queue of regulars and idiots, and newcomers, to a furnace! This place is so warm it's unhealthy. Washed socks, teal scrub-top, white T-shirt. (The scrub top is dry already. That's how hot it is in here!) Kendall and I had a discussion on why we're in the shelter. A guy from down the hall came by in black Muslim attire. By this point, the discussion with Kendall dropped into religion. When he asked "Can we all just get along?" the Muslim guy simply said "Yes." It touched me deeply. - Next line of business? Food! I shoved 2 peanut-butter sandwiches down my throat. I keep remembering how I did the same thing at Ahlena's, Cyndi's, Jim's and Margot's. I haven't actually tasted food in almost SIX YEARS! A bleating disgusting shame, that. Always something or someone to keep me from eating. Food! Is it any wonder I can't reach a healthy weight? Well, I rolled a few cigarettes. Tried a "quick draw" but I'd rolled it so tight it was a waste. I couldn't smoke it at all. - And so, this brings me to 8:25pm, a quiet floor as we approach "sign in". 26,5°. I need a haircut, beard trim, shave, manicure, pedicure, over-haul. No George or Rey. Just me, 16 and his "funk" (he has the most foul body odour! I doubt he ever bathes!). Why these people won't shower is something I'll never understand. But, as long as *I'm* clean and their funk doesn't stick to me... - George squeaked in at 10:00pm tonight. A guy came round not 10 minutes before to do bed-check. Rey had to bend the truth a bit when asked if G. was here. I just don't know how he (G.) gets away with coming in way past sign-in... and drunk on top of it! OK. So he's the youngest on the floor. Maybe everybody has a little "parental" thing happening. But even as Rey told him tonight, he needs to start showing some responsibility for himself. The weather's turning colder and more guys are looking for shelter. This place will turn over his bed-and we'll have to put up with something new. Yes. It's all selfish. But, it's fact.

Saturday 25 October: "IF YOU CAN BECOME COMPLACENT BEING HERE, THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOU."

72/41 - 5:32pm "Dancing Queen". George took out his radio. The song came on. He was dancing to it. I'd never expect HIM to dance, never mind, to that song. It's amusing, entertaining and cause for laughter in this place. - It's 9:00pm. The temperature in here has finally dropped to 26°. Most of the day it was 29°! I spent the entire day in here. Napped for about 3 hours. - George,

born January... 1965! Joe's age! He asked me "How do you fix this?" He meant, him. He's got dreams/notions of jumping off the Tappan Zee Bridge. (THAT, of itself, is interesting because I'd never expect anybody here to even know OF that bridge... that I've crossed so many times in my own life-time.) This evening, Rey gave him the riot act. G's under the impression that the world will go his way forever. There's always been somebody there for him. It's sad. He looks about 24 years old and yet, here he is, 43. Sad. He had Rey tearing, out of concern for him. It's good to know that there are people who care about others. Me? I'd like to be able to help G. I'm willing. But, truth is: my heart is dead. Once upon a time, I'd have wanted to help from the heart. Today, I want to help from the head, strictly on a "psych level". Hey! Maybe that's a lesson I needed! Maybe this is another step toward maturity. I don't know. That's the trouble. I just don't know. Meanwhile, G. went back out at about 8:00pm. Rey told him to be back before 10:00pm. It's 9:13pm. No sign of little G. But there's a cool breeze coming in the window. It's pouring with rain. A bit of thunder. A bit of lightning. Let it all happen tonight. I've got car-fare for Rockaway tomorrow. I'm looking forward to the 4:00pm meeting of the new Writers' Group out at Tilden. Hoping to see Jocelyn too! - All my clothes are clean. I'm ready to go. - Now? For a smoke and a shower. - A stormy October night... in Bellevue! How "Halloween"!



Sunday 26 October: 73/42

9:42pm-10:18pm Two starts. No notes. Insane evening. Pushed day. To begin (noting this on Monday 10:03am at the MMLib): George lost his bed last night! Truly. "Unassigned". Out. Gone. At about 1:30am this morning, Operations (my favourite "Lady" from the mid-night to 8am shift) came in and stripped the bed. She apologized for disturbing us. A "Lady" in all respects. Lights out for a few moments and THEN: In comes this skinny, beaded, be-decked and ear-ringed, greying Black guy who proceeds to turn the lights on and put his linens on the bed... perfectly... neatly... time-consumingly! This is followed by rattling of plastic bags and some muttering and mumbling... to himself! Suddenly, as I'm thinking he looks neatly dressed and appears clean, the "cloud" covers me. FOUL! SWEET! DISGUSTING! CHOKING ODOUR! He's nuts and funky! The bed moves, shrieking on the floor as it does. The bags rattle. He leaves, presumably to shower. Not so lucky. He'd put the light off when he left the room, moments later he returned

with his stifling funk, the light went on again... and so did his mono/dialogue! More plastic bags. Finally! Light out again... in the darkness "click click". He's lit a cigarette. Rey caught it and told him to take it to the bathroom. The guy bolted silently from the room. I had to say something at this point because I was amusing myself with thoughts of murder. "This is gonna be a fun night." I said aloud. "Thanks to George." came Rey's reply over the lockers between our beds. And soon, too, too soon, "Chatter" came back, with funk, tossed himself on the bed. I tried covering my nose, mouth, face with my blanket, to block the funk. Nope. Rey used his air freshener. Nope. I got fed-up, pissed off. It was 2:39am! I opened the dorm door wider. SOME relief. I drifted to sleep, watching to see if "Chatter" made any moves toward me or the others. - 7:30am and all are awake. "Chatter" has managed to cover his feet AND the floor round the bed with power. He dressed, gathered his things, left the corner a mess and disappeared, leaving the rest of us hoping he wouldn't be back... EVER! - I showered, put on the *Dor Chadash* t-shirt and the blue and white kippa and with Rey and a guy from down the hall, left. Today, for me, is Rockaway! Rey and Co. got the up-town 6 train and I went to the down-town train. Something must have been off in my head (after the night? Really?) because I had some trouble putting money on the MetroCard. I just forgot how... briefly. A little guy working on the turnstiles told me what I was doing wrong and when I finally got it, he said "B'seder?" (OK? - Hebrew) (OK?) More Hebrew! It's quite interesting how many people speak some Hebrew these days. So, I got the 6 train to Union Square where I got the Nr.4 train to Fulton and tried for the A train which doesn't stop on the down-town side because it's running on the F train line so I'm supposed to take the up-town A to W4 to change for the down-town A train which is what I did after walking up and down 4 different sets of steps trying to get a J train at Fulton only finding locked gates at each potential entrance and no signs to inform us that the J train was not available. At about noon, I was walking into T6. PEACE! - Penelope was her usual "fake" (as I've learnt) "So glad to see you." Luckily we didn't see much of each other while I was there. I didn't have time to get lunch before arriving (I got off the train at the Playland station and grabbed the bus from there: to avoid B116th and to get on the bus before my transfer expired). I ate candies from a bowl that was on the table, and helped myself to coffee that had already been made. - With great fortune, Shirl arrived and asked me to help her build her contribution to the RAA Halloween do. I did. Gladly. - In T7, work is full in preparation for the Halloween celebration. Hallways, rooms, mummies, being constructed. Tommy gave me a tour of what it will be when completed. Asked if I'd be there and seemed mildly disappointed when I said I couldn't (I have a curfew at the shelter and the festivities begin too late). But I enjoyed the tour. - For brief moments, Penelope and I sat on the back porch of T7, in the

wonderfully warm sun, and talked politics, only lightly because we differ greatly and I'm in no mood to get into any serious conversation with her these days. It's become an effort to talk with her, remembering how she told me to be "scarce" and tried to pin it on Geoff and Tommy. No trust any more. - Well, the day went by too quickly. I attended the first meeting of the new "Writers" group. I made no comments at this meeting because I had to bolt at 5:00pm to get the bus to PHC. - Got to PHC at almost 6:00pm. It was cutting time close! But Joycelyn was busy, dinner had been served so I didn't get to stay too long. Now, she, Joycelyn, tells me she has "bags" of clothing for me. Warm things. She mentioned gloves. Wants to get together during the week, out of the hospital to give me what she has. And then she hands me another 20\$! I'm in need of cash right now, mostly to make sure I can get to work, so I accept. But I'm in to her for 60\$ at this point. She tells me not to think about it, but I must. - Well, by 6:30pm I was on my way to the train. (Jocelyn said that 44th Street/Frank Ave. was a dangerous station, better to go to 59th. As I said: one's as bad or good as the other but 44th is closer.) I stopped at DunkinDonuts next to the hospital for 3 Bavarian crème donuts. Just what I needed, sugar. Somebody had dropped a lit cigarette, half-smoked, in the empty lot, so I finished it (and I wonder why my lungs are so bad). - The sun was gone. Night in Rockaway. Kriste! It hurts to leave there! It's "Home". To think that I'd exchanged drawing and painting ideas and hints with Cathy... writing ideas with the Writers' group... rushed to see Jocelyn. Good times and good people... across good waters. - Back at the Castle Bellevue, the news for the day is: I went to sign for the bed and George's name is back on 15! How the f*** he does it is anybody's guess. Yes. We're happier than all sh** that he's back. But, if there's any truth to what folks is sayin', he's run out of back-up and is on his own. If he pulls sh** again, loses his bed or the likes, well, "Junior" will find himself "Homeless" in the shelter. (This morning when we were leaving, he was on a chair, leaned up against a soda machine... sleeping. It was sad but hey! You want to see how far you can go before getting smacked? Now you know.) - So, the day ended with George coming back to a 29° room, in from the cold... as it were.

Monday 27 October: 74/43

8:03pm at room number 5W-101 - 28,5° and the guys in beds 15,16 and 18 are here. 17 is out in the building some-where. - This morning I got to the MMLib at 8:50am, 45 minutes on-line, e-mail and such, and to type a letter to try and clean the "ChexSystem" records so I won't be collecting pay-cheques that are of less value to me than the paper and ink. - Left at about 10:45am. D train

to W4 to A train, Q7 bus to Lefferts and found a FoodTown supermarket in walking distance. A quick 7\$ shopping and to work. BUT! A CALL ON THE 646, NYC TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR ME. PIC IS QUESTIONING THE PRIVATE DUTY HOME CARE I PUT ON MY CV AND USED THAT NUMBER FOR REFERENCE! SO NOW? COMES THE EFFORT TO DODGE A CONNECTION BACK TO THE COW, ANOTHER ONE WHO WAS SO INSTRUMENTAL IN GETTING ME TO WHERE I AM THESE DAYS... HOMELESS! WE'LL SEE WHAT WE CAN MUSTER. I NEED ANOTHER DODGE! I NEED IT TO KEEP WORKING AND TO GET OUT OF THIS SHELTER AFFAIR! I DID IT BEFORE. I'LL DO IT AGAIN! - AND, I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME ON THE PHONE! - MY LITTLE TOE NAIL IS GETTING EVEN WORSE WITH THE FUNGUS FROM THE HOSPITAL! - It's just happening again! Creation is trying to slam me. But, work was a delight and Mary served apple strudel and pecan pie and I filled-up on it and coffee. - The train ride back was a horror. Rush hour. - George was here when I arrived. Still is... amazingly. I washed socks and undershorts. Made 3 cream cheese and honey sandwiches. Of course, quickly, hiding, eating rapidly so as not to be discovered. It's 8:27pm. I'm waiting to sign in and shower and hoping for some sleep! Tomorrow is "Linens Day". I need fresh and another blanket. (Just in case... I've got 2, folded to make 4 layers. It would be nice to have 3, unfolded. And I haven't had fresh linens since the 12th when I got this bed. It's time. - Ah... a breeze! What a charm! - Oh. This morning? 7:30am through 8:00am, idiots in the showers! At a time when working people need the showers! Bleating HELL anyway! - OK. Anyway... - In an earlier talk with George about Rockaway, he asked me if there's a place called "Gaston"! He knows somebody out in Rockaway who told him to take the train to Gaston... but on the subway map, there's no "Gaston" station! So I took out the maps and held a geography lesson. Odd, but it pisses me off that somebody "on the mainland" knows about "*my*" Gaston, *my* refuge, *my* peace and what looks to be *my* final destiny... one of these days. - So the floor went quiet. I had my shower. A breeze comes by now and again and yet, another day is gone.

NOTES

Living well is the best revenge - Live well back Home!

Shirl: COPY SKETCHES (4X6/5X7) FRAME and EXHIBIT

SELL

MARKETABLE!

Tuesday 28 October: 75/44

9:04am MMLib RAIN! THUNDER! LIGHTNING! My jeans are soaked. My shoes are soaked. And I do mean “soaked”. Well I certainly couldn’t have dry weather all of the time. But my 99-cent poncho came in handy again this morning. At least the upper part of me is dry. - This morning: I SLEPT UNTIL 8:22am! After a very restless night. It’s becoming increasingly difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep. I’m not consciously aware of being depressed, but there are the symptoms. And, let’s face it: Depression is long past due. With all that’s happened lately, all that I’ve managed to go through, in spite of being here and still in pretty fair condition, the depression could well have taken over, taken me. But this morning, I got up, took a very small BM, grabbed a quick smoke, brushed my teeth, showered, dressed. ND I GOT LINENS TODAY! Nasty but clean. Well, as “clean” as can be expected considering from whence they’ve come. In poor condition, but clean. - Jolly! I took the table by the window on the 2nd floor here. Usually, it remains empty. No. Not this morning. A group of brats has come to join me. Quiet though they are, they’re seemingly un-aware of my presence. A “class outing” of some sort. (Pay no attention to the Homeless man there... ignore him... he’ll go away.) - My jeans are now cold and wet, and the rain is falling harder. Lovely day. Surely it will become lovelier as my back goes into spasm. It’s beginning to. The rain is falling. The temperature is falling. Pain will follow. Guaranteed. - 2:10pm on the 4th floor. Appointment on a computer at 2:30pm. I’m finally dry. Just came in from smoke. Imagine? I’ve been in the library all day! How reminiscent of the Newburgh days where, there too, I dodged the discomforts of being some-where where the “hate” in the air was palpable. Let’s see: All told and calculated, it’s been 5 years of this “wandering” all day... getting up in the morning and bolting to be out of somebody else’s way, out of somebody else’s “space”, out of “their” house and home... out of their presence... away from general hatefulness. Five years of running, non-stop, all day... running. - My stomach is growling, I’m hungry. It’s wet out-side AND COLD! COLD! COLD! It was cold on the 3rd floor, where I spent the morning. It’s a bit warmer here, on the 4th. But my feet are damp and cold. This morning’s rain soaked right through. But I’m not OUT on the streets or parks or rivers. Things for which to be thankful... as if I could be thankful these days. HAH! Well, I can look forward to excessive heat later, back at the Castle Bellevue. And my timing away today should bring me back in at 4:00pm. So? So. - 7:22pm and back in the dorm (as it’s called). 23°C. All are in. I almost feel for George. He left this morning but was here when I got back at 5:30pm. I know how it is to be used to being out most of the time and then... grounded. But, there’s “responsibility” and it hits all of us at some point. - As I wrote, the ONE security guard who has unfailingly treated me like a human-being came by the door

and said “How you doing?” She’ll never know how much good she does for someone who needs to be recognized as a human being. Every time she (or ANYBODY for that matter) addresses me with any dignity or respect, I actually want to cry... break down and sob. If there is any justice anywhere in ALL of Creation, let it bring her all happiness and contentment. If more people were as she is, this world would be closer to Utopia. - Well, all I’ve left in the “larder” is 3 buns and some peanut butter. 6\$ cash. 40cents Food Stamps. 13 days until more Food Stamps. The meagre days are coming and the temperatures are dropping. Here we go. Cold weather and Homeless. What I wouldn’t give for a drink right about now. A nice cocktail of some sort. - 8:04pm The room is full of French! Philippe wanted rolling papers. I detected the accent. Asked where he’s from. Paris! Marde! (Sh**- French) So now, he and 16 are babbling away. How “c’est tu cute là”! (Isn’t that cute?) And, indeed, the French language flowed on into the evening. Had it been Quebecois, it would have been a sweet tonic. But being “French” from France, it did little to actually lift my spirits. OK. I’ll face that fact: I’m an elitist snob (where the French language is concerned). I happen to prefer “my” dialect. Merci. - My 2 letters to Ridgewood Savings and ChexSystems are stamped and ready to go! Having the envelopes, bought at Jack’s 99-cent store for 1,29\$ and remembering the stamps I’ve had, I’m happy that my letters will go to the post tomorrow! - Tonight? Try for sleep. I’ve got my car-fare to work tomorrow and that’s about as important as life can get right now.

Wednesday 29 October: 76/45

10:31am at the MMLib 3rd Fl. Winter was in the air this morning! I could smell it as I crossed 32nd Street at Madison and as I came across 40th toward 5th? Slush fell from the skies! I’m now wearing the jacket from Angel. What a “save”! And I can’t even express my gratitude because it’s that deep and that sincere. - Last night, Philippe came back to the room twice, well after 10:30pm! Friggin frog. So “Parisien” of him to be inconsiderate of all else. So sleep was broken (common). Then, at about 3:00am, a woman came to check for empty beds! The nights are getting cold. The Homeless out there are all seeking shelter. It’s time to keep a wary eye on everybody in the shelter now. I’ve been “in” long enough to figure: there will be more “strangers” about, especially “Over-nighters”. “New faces” are NOT to be trusted. - Anyway, I got here, to the library, just before 9:00am this morning. Got my computer appointment and, thankfully, have re-done the pages of my art blog! Somehow, the “originals” ceased to function. So I’m re-building the blog. If possible, I’ll build a duplicate, just in case. Good to have back-ups...

PARTICULARLY WHEN I THINK OF HOW ALL OF MY PREVIOUS WORKS, SITES, PHOTOS, JOURNALS, MUSIC, and such ARE GONE, GONE, GONE!!!! (It was a “first thought of the day” this morning: I look into the locker at my bed-side and realise that what's in there is all that's left of my entire life. How stupid I've been to EVER trust ANYBODY! ANYBODY AT ALL! Well... this is the result and this is the lesson and it will NEVER be forgotten. Trust and ye shall be destroyed!) So, for now, I'll focus on re-building what's left of *me*, work on some re-invention based on recent events (not pretty) and move along from there. - Right now it's 10:46am. A little book search for something to read and pass time on the rails and then... to the rails. I've no food with me and no desire to shop for any today. 12 days til more Food Stamps. Lettuce sea. (Let us see.) Eh? - Well, I left the library at about 11:00am. D to A trains. Got to Lefferts in the RAIN. Grabbed the Q10 bus to RockBlvd, 121st. The sun shone! But it was COLD. “HT” (my patient) was up, looking good but in no condition to do much. He's rather down, understandably, and quite weak, especially for his weight! So it was cookies and coffee with him and his family for 3 hours today. When I left, no rain but breezy and crisp. As I stood, waiting for the bus to the train I thought of how fortunate I am to have this jacket from Angel. Otherwise, I'd have been standing there with the hoodie and corduroy shirt, freezing. How Fate threw me a “Good” this time. Grateful? Yes. Yes, I am. More than I can express, more than anybody could know. - Back at the “home” (“Is everybody home?” home), I hand-washed 2 towels. I now have 3. There's something about having towels. If only I could bring the larger one from the bag stored behind T6 out in Tilden. But washing and drying it here will present problems and probably lead to it being stolen. No sense even tempting these people here. - Addendum: The night was long. George stayed in tonight in spite of his plans to ship out after sign-in. We were up until 11:30pm, talking. Books. Geography. All manner of topics. He's really knowledgeable about so very much! - As usual, I had a great deal of difficulty falling asleep.

Thursday 30 October: 77/46

9:26am in the “Castle Bellevue” and waiting for the “Clothing Room” to open at 10:00am. A friggin morning. Up at 7:22am. Toilet. Teeth. Shower/smoke. Fire alarm. Mayhem. To Ms. Emaly. Sign the register. Wait. Car-fare. She's pushing the issue about my first pay-cheque. AGAIN, she mentioned the “60% Savings and “downstairs”. I will go to work, get paid, cash my pay-cheque and bring HER my pay-stub so she can see the total I receive AND I will give HER 60% of my income, in cash and SHE will give it to “downstairs” where SOMEBODY will “save” it

for me. As if she thinks I'm stupid enough to let THESE IDIOTS in THIS PLACE take MY MONEY! I'll hold my un-cashed cheque for a month and WALK to work first! I'd given Renice, the supervisor, my assignment sheet... an "original", as I was instructed to do. It's in the file. Ms. Emaly had it in hand. NOW she wants one with address and phone number! I've already been through this with Premier Agency telling me that if I'm in a shelter, they won't employ me! So NO! You want to call my employer, on a job that YOU did NOTHING to help me get AND you want me to quit? Oh yeah! Sure. Not in a lifetime of yours AND mine combined! I'm still waiting for some moron here to f*** this job. And, I just KNOW, in my gut, that they will, if given even the slightest chance. - Meanwhile, as I'm in the midst of all of my business, the "security guard" in the hall was directing people here and there. The Over-nighters were herded... literally "herded". The rest of us just shook our heads, smiled, laughed. Some of the little idiots in blue shirts ("security") do all they can to make themselves appear important while the rest of us find it entertaining. Little laughing-stocks those "blue shirts". - Well! I got my car-fare. Made very nice chat with Ms. Emaly (she said I'm being "compliant". How charmingly delightful. Right. "Compliant".) and I am now waiting to see what "treasures" are to be discovered in the "Clothing Room". A sweater and jeans are essential. Shoes/sneakers would be nice but I'm not pushing the Fates. What will be interesting is trying to get back to the room to fetch my jacket and back-pack after. We're not "allowed" to be in the dorm past 9:00am. (It's 9:39am and I'm journalling as I stand at the locker beside my bed.) Well? Here we go... more attempts at degradation... no doubt... - 1:26pm MMLib 3rd floor. It's chilly in here. I've just spent 45 minutes looking at "no e-mails" and correcting the links on my art portfolio blog. It's cleaning up nicely now. Let's hope it doesn't simply disappear. But at the rate everything else is going, it seems Creation is trying to obliterate me completely. This too shall cease. I will be eradicated and erased. may it happen "swift and soon". - Got to the "Clothing Room" this morning. I'm now 2pairs of socks, 2 T-shirts, 1 thermal t-shirt, 1 scarf, 1 pair of "Ladies" stretch gloves and 2 white cotton boxers ahead. No pants. No shirts. But the woman who was there was magnificently HUMAN! Very sweet. Very pleasant. She told me that if I'm still in the shelter on Thanksgiving (the very thought makes me ill), the Bowery Mission sends a bus to get us, bring us to dinner and they'll have coats. I'm being thankful for my jacket. I'm exceptionally thankful for this woman and her kind demeanour. - Well... I left with George at about 10:30am or so. Out front of the Castle stood a woman of Hispanic decent. She wanted to know if this (the Castle) was where to go for an "HA Number". Liz (her name - can't lead to any good if history proves and prevails) is on an eviction from her place in The Bronx. A guy (Ivan) told her to meet him at 30th Street and he would help her with

"Intake". She arrived late (Liz). George and I filled her in on what to expect. She was so thankful to us for our "help". She's a CHHA! Making 800\$/month. Her rent is 900\$. She's 3,000\$ behind. Already blew a "One Shot" where the Department of Social Services helps tenants catch-up on rent payments... but only ONCE. She has a court date for tomorrow morning. (In Bronx Housing... with Judge Doherty! How I remember her... with the greatest and truest respect!) "Order To Show Cause" there. I told her wonderful things about Doherty and tried to impress upon her that she should be nice and respectful, no matter what, under every and any circumstances. That's one judge who deserves nothing other. I gave her support referrals, she gave George job referrals. We "networked" in the cold wind. Again, I'm doing the jobs of the "case-workers" and "social workers". It's bleating disgusting! I'm doing somebody else's JOB at no pay! Well, as it ended, I figure I'm due for a mega beating-down for being of any assistance to this woman. Indeed! No good deed goes un-punished. - Right now, I'm truly hungry. Would like a smoke but have none rolled, so, I will finish my "Tolstoy" and head out of here. I can't go back to the Castle before 3:00pm so I've got 2 hours and 10 minutes to blow away... - 3:08pm Getting out of here and on with what remains of the day. - The time went by well occupied. (It's 6:54pm Friday, at the shelter.) The woman who's been so interested in my sketches stopped to chat with me awhile when we left the library today. We covered politics, Obama's anti-Semitism, the library's bias against her, personally. (She says she, because they perceive her as Black. I believe she's Indo-Pakistani.) As we parted, she asked which direction I was going so she could go opposite. She didn't want "them" thinking we were collaborating for any reason. "Them"? I don't know who "them" is/are, and yes, I wonder more about "her" than "them". Still, she's well-enough spoken. We'll see what comes of it in the passing of time. "Nothing"... I hope. - And so, I opted for a food shop at Gristede's on 40th Street and 2nd Avenue. Buns and pre-packaged colts. 8 of each, to last through Saturday. Back at the "metal detectors" and "security check" at the building entrance, it all made it through! That and some "Detail" wire brushes to scrub the calluses off my feet. - IMPORTANT NOTE HERE: LETTRES TO CHEXSYSTEM AND RIDGEWOOD SAVINGS POSTED FROM GRAND CENTRAL post office. - 3 sandwiches for daily meal when I got in. There'll be no weight gain at this rate. Oddly... Rey tells that he got a meeting with Ms. Emaly, "Miss Renice" and Mr. Valley (case-worker, Asst. Supervisor and Supervisor, accordingly) because they're concerned about his 5lb. weight loss. I find it strange that not one has noticed that MY name or number doesn't show up for eating meals here. 46 days and 3 meals and nobody questions? Ah... how "lame"... my existence. - George rang Liz this evening. She got her *ConEd* electric bill paid today and is back in her flat. From the almost

childish joking and laughter on the phone, I'm presuming George has found a new "play-mate".
Meanwhile, me? PLAY THIS!

Friday 31 October: 78/47

7:25pm back at the shelter and... Here goes. Up at 5:45am. THE RUNS! Brush my teeth. Lie down. Get up. THE RUNS! Take a shower. Get dressed. To Ms. Emaly for car-fare. Wait. Wait. Wait. Approx. 8:20am, a voucher. Date of trip 10/22. Had to get it corrected because they'll notice THAT and the voucher will be no good at all. Back to the room. But this was AFTER: I had to follow Ms. Emaly down to the 3rd floor (Supervisor) because car-fare wasn't on the 5th floor yet, then back up to the 5th floor because car-fare was en route! What? It goes all over the place? And all the while? Me ever so sweet and understanding, patient and "compliant". My thought? A bunch of brain-dead, moronic gits! So, I got out of here by around 9:00am or later. - Walking toward the library, which opened at 10:00am this morning (gits? them too), a "Never mind that!" I went directly to Grand Central train station. THE RUNS! "Bathroom East", not one stall available. "Bathroom West", a brief wait. All for very little in the way of a bowel movement. But the urgency, the cramps! The panic that sets in when one has no "home", no place to go to the bathroom. The things that people take for granted and never consider when one is "Homeless". - Business done, no time for anything else, never mind the library... to HOME! ROCKAWAY! At the post office, notices for classes at the synagogue which I would have TRULY enjoyed (Kabalah) but can't attend. MCU banque info and an application for an account, my first cheque from PIC for 66\$, and that's for 9 hours. I'm missing the previous cheque! Anyway, this one will remain un-reported to this bleating institution until next week. If I'm to keep 60% and "live" on 40% it leaves me with 26,40\$ each week. Carfare, at 12\$ right now leaves me 14,40\$. (10:31pm I walked in here this evening to the bleating odour of flatulence! Now! Again! "Farts!") - NOTE: 60% TO BE SAVED "DOWNSTAIRS"! THESE MONKEY-BASTARD REFUGEES THINK THAT I'LL TURN OVER MY BLEATING INCOME TO THEM TO HOLD? OH HELL HELL HELL NO! (3:35am on Saturday morning. I'm sitting in a stall, on the toilet. Nr.16 is snoring so that somehow justifies the slamming of windows, screens, and yelling from Rey. This bleating place has GOT TO GO!) - OK. So it's Saturday. 1:09pm in my bed at Nr.D18. To finish: I got to the post office and got on the bus. Got to B121st Street with time to sit and read the *Wave*. Got to my patient's home at 12:40pm. The one son, J., begins to tell me that the family sees me as the best of all the home care team and that they want to "negotiate" with me to keep me on after the term of my assignment.

But, they want more progress. The father won't co-operate with me no matter what I try. I don't believe he's physically able. But I do what I can with him. Then, from this same one who says that I'm the "best" comes the line: "This Jew doesn't want to be a failure." I'm not merely a person now. I'm a "Jew". I'm expected to work miracles with their father and I don't "want to be a failure". This bends me a bit out of sorts but I keep in mind, this family isn't exactly all it could be: 2 grown sons and a grown daughter, living with aged parents. I'm in a shelter, but I'm on my own. Nobody to lean on or fall on. And when I get in the house? The father has shat himself! I'm not on the clock yet but am at work already! M. (the daughter) tells me that the agency has phoned. They want an evaluation of my performance. She praised me. Yet, as we spoke she said, rather irritably, "He comes early and leaves late." They get extra time and they're annoyed! I note it to myself, think of the extra service they derive, I consider my own comfort and move on, in the smell of sh** and the mayhem of trying to clean 310lbs of dead flesh and fat. During my shift I made certain to get their father up and down and moving. Good show. Finally, 4:04pm, I clock out and brother J. wants more schmooze. I'm polite and take my leave. - Miserable train ride back. - I'm out of smokes. The camel jockey in the usual deli ignores me. The next deli down doesn't have Bugler tobacco. I get "Top". I'm annoyed, but the day is done and I want to relax. I get to the dorm? FLATULENCE AND ARM PITS! Not bad enough I have to deal with this at work... I come away from work and walk into MORE! All is reminding me that I must escape! Not that I need reminders. 3 cold cut sandwiches and the candy M. had given me at work today. The daily "meal". - Sign-in, bed check. Shower.... a cold shower because some moron adjusted the temperature. We can't adjust the temperature, so we get what it's set at. Some reading. Tanach. I want to find the exact words of the "law" concerning work on Shabbat so I can freely do to the library and freely smoke. Not that it truly makes much difference, but it's good to know... in case somebody has something to say to me about it. George signed in for his bed and headed out for the night. His case-worker, Dimski, is covering his absence tonight. Apparently, this is normal on the nights when George goes out and fails to meet the curfew. Certainly not promoting responsibility. An observation. But I need to deal with my own situation and nobody else's. - Lights out by about 11:30pm. Another day of existing completed.



04. November 2008 - Monogram

Saturday 1 November: 79 Homeless days. 48 days in this “Shelter”! HELL!

1:33pm (D18 - A Shabbat “in”.) As noted in yesterday’s entry, I was shot awake at 3:30am this morning by Rey’s tantrum of grumbling, yelling, and slamming windows and screens. The sh** of one day carried to the next. So, I got up, went to the loo, had a smoke, came back. Fell asleep until about 9:00am. In the shower, some dumb-nut broke the shower-head in the first stall. The idiot in the second stall suggested that I go use the shower in the East Wing. Being the brain around here, I used my bandage tape (medical supplies for plumbing jobs) to repair it for the moment and showered. - A 10:00am appointment with “Miss Emaly”. I was on time. She was late. Maggie was in the linen room listening to old country and reggae music. “Great Pretender”, “Send Me The Pillow That You Dream On”. Fond and hurtful memories as I waited for “Miss Emaly”. - The appointment went well enough. Quickly. I have car-fare for Monday morning and a new “Meal Ticket” to the end of the month. She wants my pay-stub to use toward my “Housing Application”. I’ll see her next Saturday (PLEASE GET ME OUT OF HERE BEFORE THEN!) - Rey tells me his woes about the snoring all through the night coming from D16. He’s trying to change rooms! I’m completely selfish about it. I don’t like his flatulence and the fact that he’s almost proud of it (no qualms about discussing the odour), but he’s generally clean and quiet. What will come in his place to torture me? He discusses the snoring with 16 who get into his “political asylum-they’re trying to kill me” routine. He’s obviously delusional but I ignore, read Tanach. Rey leaves. 16 comes to me: “You’ve experienced much life...” he begins. I suggest he let the matter ride. We’re all here, in the shelter, until we can get out. Life is too short. In the end, we die and nothing matters anyway. - (I’m a bleating Counsellor in this screwed-up place!) George comes in, goes directly to bed. - I’m keeping to myself from here on. I need to find the way to more money, quickly, long term, and bust out of this place. - And the generator outside drones on. It’s 31°C In this sh** hole. I’ve eaten the last of my food. It’s 1:58pm - 2:43pm I’ve just added 3 more blank pages to journal. 99 pages Of HOMELESSNESS! - 4:54pm At 3:30pm, I decided to nap. I’ve just awakened from a truly wonderful, but heart-breaking dream. Even in my sleep I’m trying to get to Shabbat services! - It’s 31°C in here again today! Unbearable HOT! - 6:29pm

WELL! ANOTHER PART OF ME AND MY EXISTENCE IS GONE, GONE, GONE! I ACCIDENTALLY DELETED EVERY PICTURE ON THE CELLPHONE! I DIDN'T INTEND TO BUT... GONE! CREATION GOES ONE MORE STEP TO WIPE ME OUT! - Temperatures dropped down to 30°C! - I've signed in. Went for a smoke in the shower room. The shower that I "fixed" this morning is broken again. But, it's no surprise. - Only an hour ago came the news: Somebody took a sh**, in the hall, right beside a garbage pail! On the floor. In the hall. Took a sh**. This is what humanity is now comprised of. If I could be amazed any more. But I can't. If there is a reason for all of this, a simple, divine reason why I must experience all of this, I'm almost afraid to ponder it. - The day is done. Tonight we go off "Daylight Savings Time". The darkness will be coming earlier. I'm having anxieties about it. This place is miserable, with fluorescent lighting. My vision is blurred as it is. What's to come is unknown. And the holidays. Thanksgiving, Chanukah, Christmas. New Year. I wonder how many of them I'll pass in here. Will I be with the same 3 in this room? But right now, the immediate, present, I'm hungry and I've got absolutely nothing to eat. Only coffee. Ah. Well. And as I write, George appears to be gussied for another night out. The days go by...I "escape" in dreams. Some good. Some bad. My "normalcy" is in my sleep now. My little "reality" is my dreams. I look forward to them. Perhaps I'm slipping away. I'd really like a few martinis tonight. If I trusted anything in this place enough, I'd take a Vicodin. I still have some. But I don't want to sleep that deeply. In here, one should NEVER sleep "deeply", one need be aware... at ALL TIMES! These are the times I miss the nights on the beach. But tomorrow is yet a new day, with new possibilities and potential. It's a chance to move forward, upward, onward and most important - OUTward. May that be the direction! - Round about midnight, George comes waltzing in. I know because I was having major problems shutting my mind off to fall asleep. I'd been lying in bed from since about 10:00pm. The pump/generator outside seemed particularly loud tonight. My thoughts on how to get out of here, comfortably, kept rolling. So George's first line of action, in a dark room where 3 people are apparently asleep... gets on the telephone! Chat. Chat. Giggle. Chat. Next? 16 gets up and goes to the loo. He comes back and Rey gets up and TURNS ON THE BLEATING LIGHT! My turn. I get up, put on my scrub top, grab a cigarette and lighter... SLAM my locker closed and go for a smoke and some cooling down time in the loo. Middle of the night. So much for that "extra hour" of sleep this evening. It was probably about 15 minutes or so later when I decided to return to bed. The lights were out, George was snoring. I got into bed and the next thing I know it was/is... (the next morning)

Sunday 2 November: 80/49

11:27am I've been awake from since 9:30am! I got my sleep. Gulped my usual morning, cold coffee, off to the loo for a morning smoke. I'm hungry. My stomach is a mess. Bowels want to but can't move. My back is painful because the mattress on the bed keeps sagging to one side, forcing me to lay in an awkward position during the night. I brush my teeth. Get ready for a shower. Kendall comes to tell me that somebody shat BEHIND the toilet in one of the stalls! As he says: It's getting worse round here." Rick says he had to clean sh** out of a shower stall lately. It's getting worse. But then, this is no "home" and isn't supposed to be. - Very early this morning I heard, in the hall, the radios for security: "D19!" "East or West?" "West" "D19" "East or West side?" "West. WEST!" over and over. Harry, the fellow in the room next is off to hospital. Now, this morning, he's here, walking about with EKG patches and tapes all over his chest. The guys call on me. Is it legal to let him out of hospital like that? Of course it is. Well, that's not what they wanted to hear. Oh well. I didn't want to hear the word "Hopeless" associated with me. Life is Hell. I went and showered. - 16 comes to me to show some storage documents to support some claim to property mentioned in his conversation with Rey yesterday. Tells me he understands why I slammed my locker last night. I said nothing, walked out. Yeah. So? Meanwhile, the other 2 are avoiding me, not speaking. Yes. George is awake only just now. I guess it kicks the world's arse when the "Old Sagely Rabbi" (me... "Rabbi" was Angel's nick-name for me when we were on the 2nd floor) type drops a bomb or just becomes "human" Oh well. Tough sh**. - Right now I need to figure how to get to the library in spite of my sore back, and how to eat for 8 days on 29,68\$ in Food Stamps. - When it comes to thinking' bout anything but MY welfare, I just don't have the time... - 12:34pm on the steps of 101 Park Ave. Back, sore. Bowels? Reminding me that they're present. Weather? Lovely. Mood? Miserable. A pastry that used to be 2 for 1\$ cost me 75cents. But I needed to put *something* in my stomach. I'm quite hungry. - Am noticing gargoyles on buildings near by. I remember when I had a few of my own... I remember when I had a life and home. I remember how it all got lost: family and friends... back-stabbers and liars. And now I sit here, waiting for the library to open and I've got 2,52\$ to my name. - Oh, I got paid 58\$ for "orientation" and travel time. I never received the cheque. So MORE money I should have but don't. - My bowels want to move, of course they do. I sat for the longest in the loo for nothing. I'm on Park Avenue now. My body hates me. Creation is hateful. It's all just disgusting.- So *The Wave* said that "Stimulus Cheques" MUST be delivered and gave the info to check on where undelivered cheques went... on-line. Might be 600\$ there! A month's rent! Screw me, but I'll look into it. Sh**. I'm in a shelter now. What next? Goal or is it Gaol? Jail. WTF? As they say. - Library

and.... a BM!!! - 1:16pm MMLib Computer use appointment at 2:00pm. Some funky, nappy thang is at my appointed computer. - Before coming here, I went to Grand Central for the BM. Just in time. But the toilet bowl was filthy and the floor was wet. The world is a miserable place today. And my bowels gurgle as I write. - I returned the borrowed Tolstoy book in the "Quick Drop". Something less to schlep. I've really no time to read for enjoyment lately anyway. - 10:22pm More on the day. How odd and yet so VERY complimentary: As I'm sitting at the computer, one screen on the art blog, the other popping searches, a young Orthodox guy (black kippa, trousers, coat, shoes and white shirt) comes up and says "How are you doing?" I nod, trying to get through my responsibilities. "Are you visiting here? For how long, may I ask. Are you from Israel?" I answered "No. I'm from New York." "Oh, I thought you were from Israel. And you have such a frontiersman look. But obviously you're no frontiersman to the computer. You have a rugged appearance." So, Now I'm looking like a "Halutznik" (the name given to the original settlers of today's Israel). "Rugged". I'm a "rugged" Jew. Ah hah! ("People should only know the half of it." I think to myself... and, as always, I say nothing.) - Anyway, I made it all through that, and a trip to Gristede's market, and back to here (D18) with a stop to eat my yoghurt by the river... another yoghurt, 2 peanut butter/frosting sandwiches and no runs. Happy to report. - I got back just before 4:00pm to an empty dorm! That's always rather quite a blessing because I have a bit of time to actually relax, even if for only moments. A guy named Ron (or Rod) came and asked to buy a "rollie" (hand-rolled cigarette). I gave him 2 papers and tobacco and told him he could "have" them. I'm stupid that way. They sell for 50-75cents each. But, I can't help but think: We're all in this sh** together... we've nobody but each-other. I can afford these smokes, it's my responsibility to share. I'm no "bleeding-heart-liberal-socialist-Communist or anything, but the fact is: WE are ALL here, at the same station in Life and we actually owe it to ourselves, in here, to, at the very least, be kind to each-other. Obviously, our "friends" and "family" aren't. We're no better nor worse than abandoned pets, put into another kind of "shelter". - Oh, I checked my "Economic Stimulus" cheque: I DIDN'T QUALIFY! BLEATING MORONIC IDIOT BASTARDS. *Not enough income.* Morons. Not enough income to qualify for a "Stimulus" cheque? How utterly ignorant is THAT? I work, at a job that strips me of my income in the way of taxes that support this city, state and nation, but I can't afford to keep a roof over my head, shelter against the elements, but I don't deserve a "Stimulus" cheque? Well, there's extra money that won't go into the economy. And truthfully? I can't even bother to give a sh**. I need to look out for ME... NOT the country. The country isn't looking out for me. Every man for himself. - Earlier this evening as I tried for a nap but Harry (next door, Nr.D19) was fighting with some Spic-idiot in the hall. It

got so bad that “Operations” had to come up to the floor. Yes, the times they are a-changing here... for the worst. - On the topic of “Operations”, the GREAT NOTE: I came in this evening and made a stop in the office for some toilet paper (in case). We have to request it from the office, and they give what they deem sufficient... it's sometimes a roll with the cardboard tube removed... THE WOMAN WHO HELPED ME THE NIGHT I GOT ASSIGNED TO A108 AND ADDRESSED ME AS “MR. KESSLER” WAS ON THE DESK! WHEN I TOLD HER HOW I'D BEEN HOPING TO SEE HER TO THANK HER FOR HER KINDNESS SHE SAID, SOFTLY “I REMEMBER YOU.” SO I THANKED HER AND SHE SAID (SOFTLY) “THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR.” “NOT *ALL*” I REPLIED. WHAT A MOST TRULY MARVELOUS HUMAN-BEING SHE IS. SHE'LL PROBABLY NEVER KNOW JUST HOW MUCH SHE HEALED MY HEART... AND MY SOUL. - Well, 10:50pm. George is in. He's reading a book. I can't tell the title, but he's reading... a book! 16 is napping. Rey isn't in yet. I'll go sign-in, get an early shower. That should screw the night up well enough. An early shower, try to get settled-in early and something will break. That's the way it is. Tomorrow, I've already got my computer reserved at 9:30am at the library. And then... off to work. - I've calculated my income now that I'm back to working: 66\$ per week, 264\$ per month, less 81\$ for an Unlimited Travel MetroCard (freedom to ride and travel!) and a remainder of 183\$. 60% of the 264\$ is 158,40\$. 24,60\$ remains per month and 6,15\$ per week. Whoopee! F****!)

Monday 3 November: 81/50

7:39pm at D18. I can't believe I slept through the night last night (after trouble falling asleep because Harry decided to conduct a general conversation in the hall AND THE BLEATING MORONS AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE NEXT DOOR - BELLEVUE HOSP - WERE CUTTING AND HAMMERING WOOD WELL INTO THE NIGHT!) Woke around 7:00am. The usual morning routine. Out the door and to the library. Arrived 9:10am. Immediate computer. (Appointment made for tomorrow morning again. Now that I know HOW and that I CAN reserve in advance, this is MUCH better.) Fixed my “Art Blog” on “WordPress”. Will work on another “blog” for CV's. One central repository for all CV's. Best to have them on-line and accessible no matter where in the world I am (or end up). Went to the 5th floor where it's all Psych and Counselling books! Took one out for reading. If I... NO! WHEN I get out of here I'm going full-force into Counselling! Using this time in the libraries to refresh, renew and learn more on the matter. Ah, but when I went to check the books out, the “Express Checkout” wanted

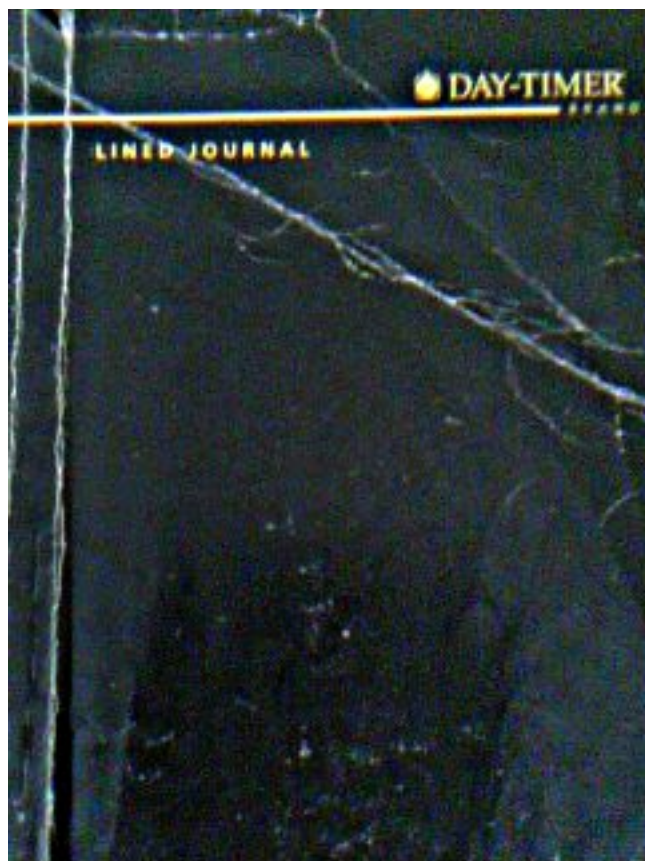
an address confirmation so I had to go to the "Circulation" desk. No big deal. It got done. But how odd it should happen now, when I'm in the midst of "record-cleaning" with the banques. We'll see. On the way out of the library, I chatted with the security guard who is considering HHA (Home Health Attendant) work. I did, indeed, tell her of the pitfalls... including my own "housing" situation and that that's about what she might expect from such work: A LOT of responsibility and VERY little pay. - And then... so, at 11:35am I was at the D train at 42nd Street and on my way to "WORK". - By 12:14pm I was at Lefferts Blvd.! The end of the line on the A train. I got a Q10 bus to Sutter Ave! It all went like clock-work today, because I didn't want to be early. So I took a stroll for a few blocks. - Whoa! As I walked about, I noticed the planes come in to JFK AIRPORT SO CLOSE TO THE TREE-TOPS! IT WAS GREAT! QUITE EXHILARATING TO WATCH AND SEE! - Got to the patient's house at about 12:50pm and clocked in at 12:58pm. Daughter M. got her father (my patient) dressed and into a wheel-chair and we were out on the front porch for about 45 minutes. In retrospect: They didn't ask if I'd mind (for health or safety). Between that and brother Joey's comment to the letter-carrier about "schwartzes", I'm seeing this family as another "Green" family... inconsiderate and not very bright. "Brother" had yelled to the letter-carrier, a rather derogatory comment about the neighbourhood having gone down since all the "schwartzes" (Black people) have moved in. He's right, it's true, but to YELL such a thing from one's front porch? I'm "on guard". But today's GREAT news is that my patient STOOD ALONE today! 4 or 5 times at the rail! Excellent progress! I'm hoping it continues and improves. And, at the end of the day... at 4:08pm I left. Q10 bus to the Lefferts A train to Broadway-Nassau-Fulton (waited through the 5 and 4 trains), Brooklyn Bridge, 6 train, 28th Street. Here. - En route the reality of all of this past 50 days in this miserable shelter began to strangle me. I've been nauseous ever since. For several, long moments, as I crossed 28th Street, I thought I'd lose my mind completely. I actually had to "hold on" consciously! I AM PSYCHOLOGICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY COLLAPSING! AND... I'M ALONE! - (8:18pm and I've signed-in already!) - It's all really starting to get to me. Time to BOLT, GET GOING, GET MONEY, GET OUT! - As I queued for sign-in, a guy named Patrick was coming in for the first time. I offered him the help I didn't get when I came here. How strange it felt to go down "that hallway" again, the first one I had to traverse... alone, that first night. But the incident took my mind off my own anxieties for a while. But... they were here, waiting for me in this room... anxieties. - 2 peanut butter/frosting sandwiches for meal. Roll a few cigarettes. I'm running low again! - Searched through the PIC papers for cheque cashing. Found it and how to report the cheque I didn't receive. - Today, in Queens, at work, it occurred to me: An "Unlimited" MetroCard will allow me to get to a lawyer to

sue Premier which is something I'd truly like to do, especially considering what their negligence has led me to, and to travel about (back to Rockaway) and not have to be concerned about car-fare to get to work! Tomorrow I will be busy... FOCUS! ESCAPE! - Well, 8:31pm. All here are present. My stomach is knotted. 28°C in the room. The bleating generator is going in the lot next door. I'm planning my shower and HOPING for some sleep tonight. Vicodan to help with sleep? I have... but I'm saving it as my "ticket out of this", should the need to arise. All I know is that I want OUT! - By the way: since I slammed the locker door the other night, it's been "peaceful" in here. Just noting.

(BLACK NOTES)

Tuesday 4 November: (The BlackNote Book) 82 days of Homelessness 51 days in this Shelter

(I'm jotting this note on Wednesday, 5 Nov. 10:01am, 5th floor MMLib) I was going to wait until I'd completed 100 pages of the other journal (having reached page 94 already), but I purchased and modified this note-book today, and so, since it was a good day over-all, perhaps opening a new Journal on a "good" note will lend some "good" direction to the metaphysical and further entries will follow suit. As I say: *Lettuce prey*. - This morning, I took my time preparing to leave the shelter so as not to have time standing on 40th Street, waiting, in the morning cold, for access to the library. But it was a warm day and Angel's jacket was a bit "over-kill". Still, I had my "agenda" and no time to fall back. - Library. Internet. Looked-up Legal Aid offices for Harry (D19) in case he should want to sue the hospital for putting him back into the shelter with-out



proper medical attention, I cleaned-up the Art Blog on “WordPress”, gleaned some useless e-mails and left. En route to the library I’d decided to check with PIC on the status of the missing cheque and had found the “free” cheque-cashing place nearby. So? Out the door and to PIC where, to my amazement, the cheque had been RETURNED, marked “Moved”, addressed to me at B116th. There were no questions asked when they gave me the cheque, I gave my ID, they gave it back with the cheque! - On to cheque-cashing where, just before 11:00am, it was completely empty and yes, no hassle cheque-cashing. I cashed 2 cheques, the one from this morning and the one I’ve been holding until the time I got to where I could cash it. Why not? I’d made a list of little items that I must have to keep moving forward and the Hell out of the shelter: (a)black trousers, (b)dress-shirt, or one with collar, (c)dress shoes, comfortable, black, (d)luggage to move OUT with, (e)beard trimmer, (f)”unlimited” (to begin my “Freedom Train”) MetroCard. For the next 7 days I won’t have any concerns about “carfare”, “case-workers”, vouchers, etc. Yes, it would be a delight to collect some extra cash via the car-fare from the shelter (at 4\$ a pop), but, in the first place, I don’t trust anyone in that “system”. I keep thinking that there’s going to be a “cap” on the amount they’ll give and/or a day of collection to get it all back, now that I’m working. Never mind, I can’t trust any of them to provide the voucher or the cash regularly or timely. Better to have the means to get to work, in pocket. So, I do. And, I’ve got agencies to register with, agencies to re-connect with, lawyers I want to see, the post office, maybe even schul, *Saturday morning services!* I need the freedom to RIDE! to TRAVEL! to GO! - By 10:52am I was on the downtown Pelham/Lexington train And by 10:55am I was back on the Brighton/Coney train and off to *Jackie’s* Discount Store and Ocean Parkway! Brighton! The BEACH! Over the years, Brighton has been my hide-away, my place of solace and comfort. The end of the continent, as it were, on the great Atlantic Ocean. Too far for anybody to follow me and too far for most people I know to travel. I started learning how to read Russian out in Brighton. A new language, new people, a different and nicer “me”. Today though... Tired? Yes. Of course. Every night is the same: Midnight and the bleating “trash” takes to the halls to yell and rant, and shortly after, George comes stumbling in, drunk, clanging his locker. Not to mention the never-ceasing drone of the generator outside the window at the Bellevue construction site. But, at the moment, on the train, headed back to Brighton, I wanted more to see that I was “going”, in motion, than to rest. - As the train crossed the Manhattan Bridge, I looked out at the East River, noted Brooklyn to my right and, inside, I smiled! - When I arrived at Ocean Parkway there was a strange bit of mist hanging low above the open ocean. The air was comfortably cool. I breathed deeply. Ocean air again! It was rejuvenating! - In Brighton, the façade of Jackie’s store is now quite clean, modern, glass.

They renovated with the new construction above. But inside is the same: merchandise, arrangement, floor plan, prices, curt old Russian women. How wonderful to be back to the familiar! Too bad they had nothing on my list. Nothing my size. Nothing enticing. But I browsed a while. Truthfully, I was enjoying just being back in Brighton... my original refuge and respite from sh**. This is where, over the years, I'd come to get away from Jim and Margot, and away from the oppressively dark moods they both had. Being in their homes was, indeed, one thing. But the oppressive atmosphere... well... This little stretch of open space, looking out to the open Atlantic Ocean... this was my solace then, and again, now, it was my comfort. - I found nothing of need at Jackie's, so after browsing, I left and walked along Brighton Beach Ave. toward Coney Island Ave. for the B68 bus to the "99cent Limit" store. Passing what used to be "Bertha's" (now Kings) store, I decided, having the time and carfare, to browse some more. Bingo! Flannel shirt: 4,99\$. Long-sleeve, blue T-shirt, heavy weight: 7,99\$. Black, linen pants (lined), drawstring, good length, thankfully adjustable waist: 2,99\$! Not "Perfect". But "perfect" for now! - To the bus! At the 99cents store? This journal in which I'm writing, 2 cakes of soap, hangers (miserably cheap crap these days), banana chips (I was hungry), water (and thirsty) and a foam sanding block (to keep working of the calluses on my feet!). Oh! Tah-dah! Shopping! I'm moving FORWARD toward moving OUT of this sh**-hole-Hotel-Bellevue and BACK to MY existence! - It was about 1:30pm by now. The sky was grey, my mood was almost brilliant. But! This morning, I was in such a rush to get out of the shelter that I'd forgotten to LOCK my locker when I left and it was very much on my mind. Too many sh**-heads wandering about the halls and dorms like free-range idiots, and all with an eye for error... like mine. So, shopping done, quickly, I got the trains back. Besides, I have great difficulty breathing lately and the weight of back-pack and purchases was getting to me. I needed to stop, and a ride on the rails was a good way to do that. - The B train to Atlantic for the 5 train to Brooklyn Bridge to the 6 train to 28th Street it was. (Just a note: One "fling" purchase: A pack of Camel "Light" cigarettes! Ah, the joy. A filter. A cigarette! Normalcy! WTF? Why not? It made the walk toward the sh**-hole a bit easier to handle.) - Back in room 5W-101 and it was sweltering! Why there are 2 radiators, open full in that dorm is anybody's guess. I was alone. I un-packed and decided: Need glue to convert this wire-bound note-book here to "non" wire-bound, and I need to put 20\$ on the phone. So, back out the door, off to the Rite Aid pharmacy on 31st and 2nd. Glue and phone card... Done. Return to dorm, "fix" the journal (remove the wire and bind the edge with the glue). - The others returned in time to "rest" before dinner. There's precious little conversation of late... oddly, enough, since the night I slammed the locker door. Have I frightened them? Little Jew-boy can get pissed. Oh my! Who

knows? Who cares? Oh well. I did have good conversation with Kendall though, about the kinds of men in the shelter up here: 2 are PhD's and most of the rest of us are clean and presentable. - As for the rest of the day? Common. The usual. I did get to sign-in shortly after 8:00pm instead of having to wait until 9:00pm or so. Showered shortly after, looking forward to an early sleep. You'd think that I'd know better by now. Yes, I did get under the covers by 10:00pm, but the BS in the halls began shortly there-after. Most of these sh**-heads don't work, so they sleep as late as possible, leave when they must, come back when they can (4:00pm) and go back to sleep. Under "normal" conditions it could be said that it's depression. In this situation it's bum-f*** laziness. So, as is the case, I laid in bed until fatigue took hold and forced me to sleep as the chatting and yelling went on in the hall out-side the door.

Wednesday 5 November: 83/52

7:32pm in 5W-101 A rainy night. A comfortable 22° in the room. Up this morning at 6:30am, not so happy nor well-rested. But that's the way of it lately. I need to get out of here! But, I showered, dressed, left at about 8:05am or so. I considered taking the M15 bus to 42nd Street which stops almost right out-side the building here on 1st Ave. but I actually walked up 1st Avenue to catch the M42 bus to 5th Avenue. An over-cast morning and very warm. The bus this morning had about 4 or 5 cameras mounted in the ceiling. This is what the world has come to; everything and everybody has to be "monitored". It makes me rather sick to think about it. More and more, worse and worse. - Oh yes... Today's "HUGE NEWS": Barack Obama won the Presidential election. The country now has a Black man in the White House. If this is what the nation wants, by the majority of votes, I say nothing. Otherwise, I think of a line I heard recently and can't recall where: "How long before he becomes a martyr?" The expectation is that this won't work out well, somebody will assassinate him and he'll be seen as a "martyr" because of his race. Bad times, they are here. I have to think, observationally, it proves that "Whites" are quite in the "REAL" minority and this will give "the rest of the population" the opportunity to show the world exactly what they are in terms of intelligence and humanity. Personally, I fear the worst. This may just be the time to re-think Israel and Montreal. Time to get out. Not so much for survival as for not bearing witness to the stupidity. But, inauguration isn't until January and then 4 years of him "running the show". Time, only time will tell. Meanwhile, I'm wondering how Israel and Montreal are these days. I've resolved to re-commence the job searches, salaries, rents in both. Schmulik! Eyfo atah? (Where are you?) I do wonder, a LOT. Are you still in Tel Aviv? Did you

manage to move to the U.S.? Are you even alive at this point in time? I wonder. - At the library, time on the computer went quickly, but I hit ALL the e-mail accounts this morning, checking and “cleaning” them out. Nothing of note in any, of course. I was up to the 5th floor by 10:00am to begin this Journal and left at 11:15am for the D train. What a pleasure to have the fare all ready! No “vouchers”! - Lefferts by 12:00pm again, I walked back along Liberty, just because. Stopped at KeyFood, got cookies to kill my hunger. Grabbed the Q10 bus at Liberty and Lefferts. Arrived at my patient's home at 1:00pm. - The son, Joey was sitting on the stoop when I arrived and wanted to discuss the election. Since I'm now aware that a) there's something not “right” about the 3 kids and b) they have no problem letting their prejudices be known, I just don't want to get into any subject matter that could bring me to another “Albert Green” fiasco. No discussing MY politics and such! Besides, I arrived on time but with this distraction, I was about to clock in LATE! - As I walked in the door, needing to pee and wash my hands, Mary had her father in the wheel chair, ready to go out-side. I had time to put down my back-pack, clock in and go to the porch with him! Well. The “nice people” was bound to end eventually. Let it be now. - The 3 hours went along. By 2:00pm we were back inside due to drizzle. But H. (my patient and the reason I was there in the first place) and I had a good talk about the history of his house and neighbourhood as we had our coffee. At about 3:00pm, Mary took Joey to the bus. He's headed to Windham for 6 days. Apparently the family has property of some sort up there. He'd actually wanted to hire me for a week-end so he could take H. up. I declined because of work on Saturday. This did not please “the children”. I don't care. A trip to Windham would be lovely, even a “working” trip. But no, NOT with this family. Something tells me “don't”. I won't. I left at 4:02pm. - I walked to the bus in the drizzle. Got the Q7 bus to the A train to the L train and, HAVING THE FARE, I transferred from the train to the bus that drops me right AT the shelter! But, maybe it's the cookies (the only thing I've eaten all day) or fatigue or depression, my stomach's gone sour. Needless to say, this constant stomach illness is slamming me hard. - Nobody queued at the entrance when I arrived. I went right along, got the lift and was looking forward to being able to rest and relax for a while but when I got in the room? Pits! The odour of arm-pits! Disgusting! Nr.16! Something just doesn't hit right. He bathes but the odour remains. I wanted to vomit, because of fatigue, depression, disappointment, the stench. So? - Instead of resting, I did a wash. Diversion. Avoidance. Who cares? - After the wash, I had “lovely chat time” in the hall with Kendall and Rey. - Oh! Received a reply to my Home Care advert on “Luach.com” (a Jewish on-line “board”)! Must investigate tomorrow. And, as I did the wash, had a chat with George who has been hanging with Liz (who is 25 years old) who has asked him to help her move boxes into

storage. We did a little “therapy session” this evening in our talk-and-chat, and, shockingly (to me) George wonders why Liz is attaching to him, considering he’s in a shelter. The boy’s thinking! I’d like to do a few “sessions” with him before I leave here. Maybe... oh, I don’t know. It would be nice to know I “did” “something” of value with my time here. - Well and anyway. It’s 8:32pm. George and Rey are napping. 16 is just sitting on the bed with his coat on, staring. Somebody shat in one of the toilets and, because it doesn’t flush properly (the line must be clogged) left the sh** and wads of paper in it. The loo stinks so I finally flushed the bowl. Honestly? If I don’t get out of here soon, it’ll kill me. - As I’m writing, a guy from down the hall popped his head in the door: “Hey Judah. You writing your memoirs of the shelter?” Imagine? If they only knew. - Note. Rumour has it that today’s NY Times is re-selling at almost 200\$! History. First Black president. I wonder where I can mooch a copy! If I could get a free copy... But imagine? That much money because of the election. Sh**! People have 200\$ to buy a newspaper... and I celebrate having 2,50\$ for a train-ride... to WORK! - 8:45pm Signed-in. The wonderful lady security guard is on this floor tonight. What a touch of “human-ness: to talk, albeit, with her. - BUT WHEN I CAME BACK AND WENT TO OPEN MY LOCKER... A ROACH SCURRIED UP THE LOCKER DOOR! JUST AS I WAS NOTICING HOW “FRESH” IT SMELLS BECAUSE I KEEP THE SOAP BOX OPEN! (“Irish Spring” soap... I never would have used it before but the fragrance is strong and keeps that “Homeless” odour off of me, and as the soap is in the locker, it keeps that smelling nice as well.) WELL, IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN, CONSIDERING THIS PLACE. TOMORROW I’LL CHECK THE CALL FROM “MOSHE” (who needs HomeCare) ON THE “LUACH” POST. HOPEFULLY IT WILL BRING ENOUGH TO GET ME OUT OF HERE. Although, the fact remains: I’ve no furniture: no bed, no chair, no dishes, no clothes, no anything. But when I moved in at 232nd Street, some years “back there and then”, I had nothing then too. So? Not so very long ago, my “home furnishings” were black plastic trash bags and a bed-sheet. This gives me an opportunity to re-build, as it were. There are only 2 directions to go at this point: side-ways (and remain here like this) or “UP”! (and out of here to better). - Time to shower. I’ve got... (Talked with Rey in the middle of that note and I’ve lost the thought.)

Thursday 6 November: 84/53

(Catching-up at 7:47am on Friday morning) Up, showered, out by about 8:30am. Stomach/bowels bad but... 6/L/A trains to Far Rock. Had to see Leetha at JCCRP then Carol Hayes at RHAS (my

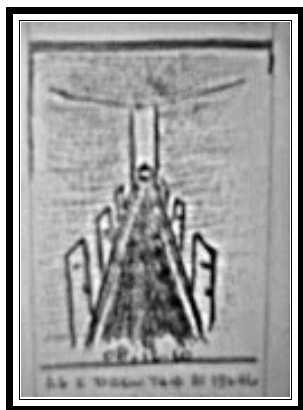
“finger-print report” is STILL not in but she tells me that when a case comes available they will call me). Stopped at the Far Rockaway library from about 11:00am until noon (putting prose on my “Dunes Sojourner” on-line journal). Then to “Mandel’s office”, the attorney who Joycelyn told me would take my case against Premier Agency. He wasn't “in” so I left a message with the secretary, giving a brief description of the case I'd like him to handle... I came away not too thrilled by her attitude though), walked around Far Rock to “V.I.M.” clothes store (browsed, bought black sneakers at 19,99\$ to make a set of “normal” clothes), passed by the “Fashion” store selling scrubs and got a set of navy. (A note here: the first sales woman, Indian, AVOIDED me because I'd just had a cigarette and 'the smell bothered her', second woman, very helpful. The man at the register, Arab, addressed me as “Brother” as did the Arab fellow at “bag-check”). Well then, that done, I stopped and rang “Moshe” (who'd responded to my advert on “Luach”) He tells me that he needs a tutor for his handicapped foster son, 14 years old. He particularly needs help with his Hebrew and Yeshiva studies. Interesting, but when it came to the money, well... no, it's not even worth the effort. Honestly! Some people can be quite insulting that way. So... that matter is “dropped”. So, I grabbed the Q22 bus to the post office to get the mail. (ANOTHER member of Bet El has died!), Waldbaum's for “binding” food to hopefully stop the runs. (Ah... I learnt today that the little bitch at Gristede's market in The City has ruined my EBT card! With her “attitude” and swiping the card roughly, she's scratched the magnetic strip! Now I have to get a new card! Honestly... people simply annoy me any more.) I walked Rock Freeway to B108 Street and Rockaway Beach Blvd. for a bus to PHC. (Joycelyn was on, I received a very warm welcome from most of staff, got to eat a hot meal in an empty room, 15\$, and I will see her again on Sunday). Left PHC about 5:30pm, got the train at Frank/B44 St. station. Standing on the platform, waiting for the train... it was a cloudy, beautiful evening. I stood there, alone, taking deep breaths of good ocean air. Got on the A train to the L train to 1st Ave. Stopped and got cigarettes at CVS drug store, which is cheaper than the Duane Reade store. And... I arrived at the dorm, all in good spirits. - But this evening, somebody in the room discovered a “hook” of some kind under the bed of D16. It's more like a paint roller that's had the “roller” removed and the end of the metal is sharpened. We're all really very much “concerned” about this. It's a “weapon” of some kind here. Me, I wonder how this nasty little jungle-bunny managed to get such a thing into the building, through all the “security”, including the metal detector. Well, we left it there. Hopefully that little bastard is keeping it for his own good and not to be used against any of us! - I went and signed-in for the night. This day passed quickly! Very tired. Stomach very unsettled. - The guys (Ken, Rey, Geo) are presently all agog over some porn mags. (Some of which have

come from the “Imar” or “Imam” or what-ever they call themselves. “Muslim” is what it breaks down to. Imagine... a “religious leader” brings porn into a Homeless shelter... HEY! Imagine... a “religious leader” is in a Homeless shelter. There's something completely wrong in that from the very beginning, I should think.) - Anyway, this evening I'm too tired to shower. Tired from all the discomfort in my bowels. To bed, no shower. (A note here: NO GENERATOR/PUMP/VERY PEACEFUL!)

Friday 7 November: 85/54

(I'm recounting today on Saturday.) Not exactly my “best” day in spite of looking forward to it when I woke, after a typically restless night, but one without the generator running. I was out by about 9:00am this morning and, since libraries didn't open until 10:00am, I decided to take the rails and go to Tilden in the morning. The 6 train to the 5 train to the 2 train to the Q35 bus (the rather “long way” but it keeps me out of the shelter and out of the weather and moving). Ah, how peaceful Tilden was this morning. How encouraging to feel like a “human”. How comforting to breathe open air. -T6 was busy. People working on the “Moon Stage”, Geoff working about the studio, Penelope working on her latest sculpture. Talking with her is useless any more. As of recent times, she just wants to be argumentative. She talks of things she knows little or nothing about and is vehement in her presentation. She insisted that Republicans have “always” been selfish and have “never” done any good for the country. This was her reaction to my having told her that they abolished slavery, gave western land to early settlers... free, got women the right to vote. She insisted that Israel is a terrible place to live because Israeli Jews are selfish and greedy., but she admits that she's never been there. As I spoke, she interjected and went off on tangents. What I'd hoped would be relaxing and pleasant turned into an inconvenience. Tilden can only become my refuge as long as I avoid conversation. I don't know what's going on out there but there's some sort of hostility in the air and I'm not certain as to whether or not it's directed at me. At noon, I left on the Q22 bus to B119th Street (not B116th as usual). Walked to the post office. My 66\$ cheque for the week was there. - Met “G”, a friend of Tommy's, waiting for the Q53 bus. I was reluctant to talk with him, not knowing if he'd recognise me or if he'd even want to talk with me (RAA politics, anti-Semitism, the likes). But he came over, shook hands. We talked all along the bus ride until I got off at Rock. Blvd... at 1:06pm! LATE FOR WORK! I called the agency to tell them about my tardiness. - Finally arrived at my patient's house at 1:38pm! Again, Mary had him ready to go sit out doors! I barely had time to clock in and didn't have time to pee! H. was in

down spirits. I sat with him, trying to help him into a better mood. I never did learn the “bad news” he’d received that put him in poor spirits. But I suppose it truly is none of my business. I’d hoped to get him walking by the 27th. I don’t know that he will. I believe that he can, but won’t. Well, the day went along, sitting on the porch, by the wheel-chair ramp in the cool evening until 4:08pm when I left. - I’m glad I got the MetroCard. A train to L train to 1st Ave. for the bus. That takes away SO much un-necessary walking, and I’m trying to save my energy now for work. - But I discovered that I’d used all of my cash, save for the 5\$ for MCU to open an account for “Direct



Deposit” of pay, and I wanted to get black pants and a tie. I MUST GET INTERVIEW CLOTHES AND GET OUT OF THE SHELTER AND OFF THE ISLAND OF MANHATTAN! IT’S GETTING TO ME NOW AND I CAN’T HANDLE IT! I’M HEADING TOWARD A BREAK-DOWN! -

Back in the dorm, I snuck 2 peanut butter sandwiches for meal. No more bread. No more food. 9\$ in Food Stamps. I don’t know if more will be posted on Monday. - MY TOWEL WAS STOLEN FROM THE FOOT OF MY BED TODAY! IT WAS DAMP FROM MY MORNING SHOWER. I’D HUNG IT OVER THE FOOT OF THE BED AS I’VE

DONE ALL ALONG. WHEN I RETURNED THIS EVENING, IT WAS GONE! THIS SHELTER GIVES ALL OF US FRESH LINENS INCLUDING TOWELS, FREE, WEEKLY! AND YET, SOMEBODY SAW FIT TO STEAL A TOWEL? FROM A HOMELESS PERSON? REALLY? THIS IS WHAT THE WORLD IS COMING TO! HOW PATHETIC! - And so, the day ended and I didn’t bother to shower. No generator running. To bed 10:34pm.

Saturday 8 November: 86/55

10:57am at D18 Woke at 8:25am this morning. Little sh** and quick smoke. Feeling “detached”, “dissociated”, fatigued. Up twice because of snoring (16) during the night. Had to wait for a shower! The guy whom I’d seen “checking rooms” on Thursday was in the one shower that isn’t broken, taking his sweet-ass time! (“Checking rooms” to see if anybody had left any belongings that he might take. There are those who do this... every chance they get. Imagine: the Homeless robbing the Homeless. This is the “World” today.) By about 9:30am, I just took the other stall but, as he came out of “his” I noticed that he’s terribly bruised about the right side along the ribs! NOBODY should have to be beaten like that. Unless he provoked it somehow, but since I’ve been in here, in this “shelter”, - now there’s a friggin’ joke: shelter! - I’ve learnt better. It takes nothing

and no reason for some of these dregs to try and display their frail “masculinity” by picking fights where none need be. This fellow here is thin, terribly thin, actually rather with-drawn. He may have tried to take something from some-one and gotten caught. But still... to inflict such bruises! All I say lately is: this will be running the nation. - So, I simply went about my shower. - 10:00am appointment with Emaly. Today, she's curt. Brief. I showed her my first pay-check stub in the envelope marked and labelled by the post office showing it was misdirected. SHE ACCUSED ME OF HAVING GIVEN THE AGENCY THE WRONG ADDRESS!!! She “waived” the “savings requirement” of 60% because it's my first pay. THEN she asks why I'm not working full-time, AGAIN she asks. I've been over this with her at least 5 times! THEN she suggests I look for other work and go for CNA training. SHE OFFERS NOTHING! BUT CAN DEMAND ALL SORTS OF SHIT! When I told her I'm putting together some clothes to go for other work, she tells me about the clothing room here. I tell her, I've been. Now, as if the stupidity isn't deep enough... She asks me what days I work next week. I tell her: Monday, Wednesday and Friday... SHE THEN ASKS ME WHAT DAYS I HAVE OFF! And so I tell her, calmly: Tuesday and Thursday. She tells me to come to her on Monday and she'll give me a list of places that give clothing. I remind her that I work on Monday. She digs into her desk and tosses a list at me. She then instructs me to follow her across the hall. As we leave the office she asks if I've corrected the mailing address for my pay. I simply say “Of course.” She copies my pay stub. I ask her if we could possibly change the time of my appointments with her... “WHY?” she wants to know. “BECAUSE I HAVEN'T BEEN TO A SYNAGOGUE IN ALMOST 2 MONTHS. I'M A JEW (I WEAR MY KIPPA AL THE TIME! I THOUGHT) AND SERVICES ARE ON SATURDAY” “AT WHAT TIME?” “9:00am.” “UNTIL WHEN?” “NOON.” “YOU'LL COME TO SEE ME AT 8:00am.” AND SHE CALLS THE NEXT NAME ON HER LIST. I? ME? I JUST WALKED AWAY FROM HER. NO SENSE DISCUSSING ANYTHING. SHE'S OBVIOUSLY TOO STUPID TO GRASP ANYTHING OTHER THAN WHAT HER FEEBLE NIGERIAN MIND HAS BEEN PROGRAMMED FOR... INCLUDING ANTI-SEMITISM. And, so, I journal, at 11:43am, in relative darkness. 15 and 16 sleep. 17 is out somewhere. - During this morning's “meeting” I made a point of stressing, and I DO mean “STRESSING” the facts that I don't eat here, I no longer receive car-fare, all I want is a place to shower and sleep but above, beyond all else, I NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE SOON AND QUICK. - Truth is, my mood, my mind, even my body and being have gone sour. I've no patience. I've no charity. I've no capacity. - So, I'm trying to decide where to go on this frigging bleating day. I'm hungry. I want to get to the libraries. I'd like to do “the old circuit” (The City, Brooklyn and Queens libraries) but I'd have to remove the kippa (I should

think). But you know? Maybe I just won't. Maybe I'll just go, be a 21st Century Jew and go. Be defiant. Be realistic. Be "me". After all: who the f*** are the rest of the world to "judge" me? (I'm just in a bad mood all round.) - 6:06pm Another day gone. I never went out and now I'm hungry. 15\$ in my wallet and 9\$ in Food Stamps and admittedly, I'm just being too damned lazy to go get something to eat. And, I'm just watching time go by until sign-in and sleep. Napped for an hour from about 12-no-2-3:00pm. Time is wasted in this hell-hole. - Rey is talking about being out by moth's end. If I'm still here, it means getting somebody else in that bed. I dread that. I dread being here then. I dread being here in 5 minutes from now. Why don't I have what it takes to make more money? How did I get dealt the "poverty" card? In a week's time, it will be 2 months in here! I absolutely MUST get OUT! But how? I NEED to know! I'm not asking "Why?" I'm asking "How?". - This evening was quite "interesting. The 3 of us, 15, 17 and 18, had quite a few laughs: Rey, Danny, Alex and the group usually pass the time in a game of dominoes. Tonight, every time somebody came to get Rey, he refused to go. It seems Alex plays by his own rules and those rules change to fit his position of "Win or Lose", and, when he loses, he's one of those who plays the game as a matter of life or death, taking the fun out of it. So, the arguments erupt about who plays fair, who makes it uncomfortable (and who needs to bathe... a common topic in the shelter). "I don't want to play with...!" "Aw... c'mon!" "No! Because..." So I took what George called "The Perfect Parent" position saying things like "You're grounded!" and "If you boys can't play together nicely..." and "I'm going to take the dominoes and put them in my locker until..." and the clincher came when I got up, headed for the door saying "I'm just going to have to have a talk with Alex's parents!" We got such laughs! It's great to be able to laugh in these conditions. As I say (to others as encouragement AND to remind myself): *the moment you stop laughing, start worrying*. So true. It's a sad and miserable way to exist: in this shelter where there are so many people trying to rip human dignity out of you, right through your chest. To find the "Truth" in it all; that it isn't worth the seriousness, and to laugh is healthy. Yes, being Homeless is a horror, a nightmare, and, perhaps, a serious catastrophe. But we are all alive, still on this Earth, still existing "beings", breathing, thinking, hearts still beating and blood still cursing through our veins... exactly the same as those who are "domiciled". And to allow this situation, this "Homelessness" to pre-occupy our every thought, emotion, to allow it to darken every bit of our being is, most certainly, NOT necessary. We, no matter who we are, no matter what our status or position, deserve to laugh... even for a moment. To think that I was so very nervous and anxious about coming to this room (5W-101). I've been fortunate, having met and being with 2 out of 3 of my "room-mates" and most of the guys on this floor. I say "2 out of 3" of the room-mates because I

of them, 16, worries me, what, with his stories of being hunted, someone trying to kill him, his poor bathing habits and snoring... not to mention that he mumbles to himself. But, we get a laugh. It's refreshing.

Sunday 9 November:

87/56 9.11: How strange that this date should come up like this since what I want to get on here this morning (Monday at the Lib.) is "concerning". Payment for the good moments enjoyed in the evening came quickly during the night. That generator/motor/pump was off, giving some pretty shocking peace in the room. How strange that we seldom pay any attention to the effects of noise on our bodies and spirits and yet, as soon as it stops, we can't help but notice how the tension we took for granted leaves and how wonderfully refreshingly calm out entire beings become. BUT! The bleating SNORING ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT! D16 was in "full throttle"! IF I slept an hour total, it was quite an accomplishment! So, when I got up to shower at about 8:30am, I was still exhausted! This is BS! That sh**-head sleeps through the night, keeping Rey and I (George is usually bombed and so, sleeps through well enough) at sleep-deprivation levels! I do know that the snoring is unintentional and that perhaps I should make an agreement with 16 that, should he snore at night, I can tap him or the bed and hopefully he'll roll to a position where it will stop. But that's all in a "Gentleman's World". This is a shelter. I don't know how that would go over. So... - The day: The subways are screwed up. (No news there. I can't help but think, almost every day in this City: the system is over 100 years old' one would think that, by now, they'd have managed to figure out how to run it properly and efficiently. But.. no, they haven't. Either that or they intentionally screw it up to find reasons to charge more, keep more money and maintain the jobs of "certain people". It's aggravating. But, it's become "common-place". Just as with all large "systems": incompetence rules.) The morning trip went along: 6 train to the 4 train to Nevins to the 2 train to The Junction in Brooklyn to the Q35 bus to Tilden. I arrived at T6 at about 12:45pm. The day was shot. And the "ladies" were hanging the next exhibit (ANOTHER one I'm missing!!!) Cold shoulder greeting from Tommy, and Penelope running about, as usual, making herself important to her-self. I tried to offer assistance but?... But... every offered was simply ignored, not declined, "ignored". I finally let the "ladies" go ahead with their hanging in spite of the fact that the pictures aren't level - with the floor, ceiling, each other - none of my business. Then! Penelope's "beau", José, shows up and Penelope goes into her "grandeuse", coming to me like a little high-school girl, telling me how she's all flustered and how much he

wants her. Well Penelope. If this is what your (Janet calculated her age: Married at 13, 2 sons born maybe 5 years later, they'd be 70 so she's around 87 or 88) 87 or 88 year old mind needs to tell itself (along with telling me to make myself scarce), so be it. Geriatrics should be allowed their harmless phantasies. And so, I stayed and enjoyed just being back on the Peninsula... back on "The Rock". - It was a glorious day anyway. - I left at about 3:00pm on the Q22 bus to PHC .Well. In spite of the fact that I told her I'd be there today, Jocelyn didn't bring those "bags" she keeps telling me about. Admittedly, I was a bit relieved, to be honest. I don't have space in the locker at the shelter, and I wasn't looking forward to carrying too much back on the buses and trains. Nobody knows just how exhausted I am all of the time these days. Then too, there's coming in at the shelter: metal detectors and scanners and searches. Too much "stuff" to sort through would take too long, slows the queue and pisses people off (including me, I must admit). But, I did get a hot meal there tonight. It's the part of the visit I appreciate more than I can express. Food Stamps will not buy hot or prepared food, so I exist on cold sandwiches and other such "slapped together" food. Anyway... Apparently the staff knows about it all too. Seems they know I'm in the shelter and yet, they are supportive of me. Phelicia (one of the Nurses who had been assigned to me while I was a patient at PHC) came to me and said "How could you forget me? After all, I was your Nurse." I assured her that I remembered everybody's name: some for good, some for not-so-good. But when I said something about *me* being remembered and warmly welcomed back, having not annoyed anybody she replied "Are you sure you didn't annoy anybody?" I assured her that I know that there are some who don't like my presence at PHC but I don't particularly care. (I didn't say how hateful I am that I got "thrown out" and tossed into the shelter). So, the evening went. Joycelyn gave me her phone number... but tonight, no money. What a relief that was! I'm already up to 75\$ that I owe her. All told, with all my heart and soul, although I don't know why she's taken such care of me, she's been my Blessing, my Angel, my Hope. Dear. Sweet. Wonderful! - Leaving: Q22 bus to B116th St. for the Q35 bus to The Junction, Nr.2 train to Nevins to the Jerome train to the Pelham train. I was back at the shelter by 8:00pm. Tired. Exhausted and looking forward to sleep. Nobody will ever know the pain I suffer when it comes to leaving Rockaway. And tonight I brought a snail shell back. Heavy. As if something's in it. But it has no odour and somebody put a "Mag lite" to it to check for a "shadow" of "somebody at home" in it. Empty. But heavy. I'm keeping it in a "zip-lock" bag just in case. If there's a crab in it and it gets out in the shelter, one of these bastards will kill it. Hopefully it is empty and I can hold onto it... as a reminder of my ultimate goal: to go back to The Rock... successfully. It hurts terribly to leave there. - Well, let's blame it on sleep deprivation but tonight? THE SHIT HAS HIT THE FAN AND

SPLATTERED THE WALLS! TONIGHT TURNED INTO A “NIGHTMARE IN THE SHELTER”! ALMOST COMPELTE WITH MURDER! It was almost midnight, the room was dark except for the stream of bluish fluorescent light that always streams in from the hall, the generator out-side was off, relative (relative) quiet, and all 4 of us were asleep when the snoring began... in earnest! Not just a steady, light, regular snoring but the intermittent low, grumbling mixed with deep snorts. I tossed. I turned. I waited for Rey to say something or bang something (as he's wont to do). When it didn't happen, my own thoughts turned to thinking how unfair it is: Rey and I work 16 (the snorer) doesn't. Here we are, awake for more than half the night because he (16) won't change his sleeping position or make any effort to stop the snoring and there he is, sleeping soundly and snuggly. I... snapped. I quietly opened my locker, took the little plastic bottle of talc and tossed it into the corner over bed D16. Thwack! followed by “thud”. Next thing I know, he's up and fumbling in his locker, in the dark. Then Rey gets up, goes calmly to the door, turns on the light, goes back toward his bed and yells. “Yo! Who you takin' that weapon out for?” (About a week ago, I happened to glance across the room, under bed 16 and noticed a long handle of some sort. I brought it to Rey's attention and, on closer observation we discovered it was a paint roller with the extension for the roller cut off. Effectively, it was now a sharpened “hook”. At the time, we said nothing but...) The idiot had taken the “hook” out of his locker! When confronted by Rey, he went into a RAGE, denying that he had a “weapon” (but Rey and I both knew the hook was a weapon because we'd seen it) accusing Rey of trying to kill him “wi dis!” (the talc bottle). I feigned waking at the moment, looking confused. I said nothing. I truly expected this to end as nothing more than a verbal confrontation, as has been every previous incident in the room. Rey denied trying to kill anybody and assured the raging idiot that IF he wanted to kill him, it would be done, certainly, quickly and there wouldn't be an argument about it. Again, he asked after the hook. 16 denied having a weapon at which point Rey calmly said “We'll see about that.” And left the room. - While Rey was gone, 16 moved to the wall-end (the head) of his bed and put something on the floor. I couldn't see what it was. He then sat there, on his bed, looking “annoyed”. - Rey returned with 2 “security” guys who asked to see the “weapon”. 16 denied having a weapon and returned to accusing “Sumbuddy try to keel me wi dis!” holding the plastic powder container. Security told him to open his locker. He refused. They told him they could cut the lock, if necessary. Again, he refused. So, at that point, they, “security” took Rey and 16 with them, downstairs, to “Operations”. Out they went. - Even with all of this going on George finally woke up and, the room, being still, I went over to find the denied “weapon”. It wasn't under the bed but George discovered it behind the locker that separates his bed (15) and bed number 16! We left it there and I went to get

“security” to bring it as evidence. Ah yes... what do you suppose? Some African “security” guy comes in, looks at the blatantly obviously modified item and, with a smile says (in catastrophic English) “Ees for paint!” I snapped at him “NOT like THAT ees not for paint! It’s been in here for almost a week! What I want to know is: How did he manage to get it into the building? Where was ‘security’ when he brought this in?” No comment... of course... worthless and biased as the African staff is in this building. I’ve no doubt at all that they work together and that 16 actually convinced somebody on the staff that he’s in actual danger. And, being the only Black man in the room of 4 of us... well... It’s just more to be added to the insanity around here. At this moment, I didn’t want to fight with 16 but I was fully prepared at this point, to plow into another African bastard idiot tonight! Unfortunately, this one went strolling out the door, essentially leaving what was an obviously potential confrontation and a potentially hazardous situation. Moments later, he returned, asked for a newspaper, and, using it to apparently avoid touching it with his own hands, he wrapped the handle of the hook and strolled out the door into the hallway. George and I were left in the room, in silence. - It was about 1:00am on Monday morning when Rey and 16 returned. What happened at “Operations”, I still don’t know. But when Rey and 16 came back, the argument continued with 16 threatening to get his son after Rey (he, 16, claims his son is in the Army here, in the U.S.) and yelling “I am a *true* African!” repeatedly. Rey got right up into his face and, with no physical contact between them, they took the argument into the hall for a while. When then returned, after several moments of musing about the locker, 16 finally calmed down and Rey simply told him to turn out the light when he was done. I don’t like this idiot (16), nor do I trust him in ANY manner. He talks to himself and has told a story about being here for “political” reasons. He claims “they” are out to kill him here and that Rey has been “planted” in the shelter to do the job. He’s even claimed that Rick, in the room next-door, is part of some “curse” put on him and his family in Africa. Things are not so “kosher” about all of this....

Monday 10 November: 88/57

Up this morning, feeling like sh**. Aching head. Burning eyes. Tired as all hell. Well? Only about 3 hours of sleep last night! And even those were, to say the best, restless, events considered. Bleating BS! But, I did take a little solace (and, admittedly, joy as well) knowing that 16 didn’t sleep well last night either. - I quickly (as usual) got myself together and hastily headed for cheque-cashing. When I got there, the place was empty! A delight. Cashed my cheque and away

into the day! Then I went directly to the Mid-Manhattan Library (MMLib as it were) for a few hours. I got nothing really accomplished on the Internet but time successfully passed, and as it is on most days, since we, the “residents” can’t be in the shelter between certain hours, so passing time and being active is essential. It’s also, at times, the most difficult thing to do. Time often passes slowly when one is actually keeping track of it. But it was a chilly morning and I was in no mood to wander aimlessly. - Following the usual “commute” through tunnels on the subway and such to work, I managed to clock-into work at my patient’s home at 12:59pm! (My shift begins at 1:00pm here.) Mary wanted to send her father and I out -side for a while this afternoon, but decided it was just too cold. I was relieved. I mean, considering my life and “life-style” the very last thing I wanted today was to SIT, OUT-side in the cold! I DID, how-ever, work with H. (her father) today and he actually stood, on his own, not holding the walker. I truly *do* want to see him walking, with the walker, by the 27th of this month. Today, this was encouraging to me and, I have to say, to him as well. It made for a nice afternoon too, and he and I passed it chatting and having coffee together. - Anyway, as it was time to clock-out, came the runs! I don’t understand it. There’s so little in my body these days, but what-ever it is that’s in here seems to want to get back out... in a HURRY. The ride back to the shelter this evening was painful and full of panic and anxieties. On the subway, there are no public toilets, and on the buses, the best one can hope for (personal experience talking here) is to know where there is a place that DOES have a public loo and to get off the bus close enough to it and soon enough! On the subway, this is a particular challenge since the trains run under-ground so one usually doesn’t know the neighbourhood above. In time of “colonic need”, there’s no telling where the nearest loo might be! - Well, with much heavy mouth breathing and “clenching”, I did make it back into the shelter. And tonight we were able to have a few chuckles again. - Now, the “concern”: It seems Wards Island Shelter suffered a power failure today, and DHS (Department of Homeless Services) bussed most of the “residents” over here. So many, in fact, that the 8th floor here became bed-space! It’s usually closed and off limits to the point where the lifts in the building don’t stop on that floor. The Wards Island bunch are rumoured to be “seasoned” and un-civil. I’m not saying that we here don’t have our share of “seasoned” and “un-civil” Homeless folks, but, for the most part, this shelter seems to manage a really impressive degree of, shall we call it “Décorum” for the most part. This crew from “Wards” tends more toward the “violent” type... which is, to and extent, why they’re put on an island where there’s only one road on and off the place. Yes... “Concern”. Once in the building, they’ll be pretty much free to roam about... at all hours of the day and night. With them “in residence” there’s to be “sleeping with one eye open”. - Meanwhile, I moved my bed out

from the wall and discovered a large centipede stowed away! Well Hell, better that than those huge cockroaches that we call “water-bugs”! THOSE things FLY, and will, sometimes, nestle into the bed-clothes! I've seen a few of them, scurrying about the place... even in this room. Not many, but even one is too many because, where there's one... there's MORE... in hiding, waiting. My heart went out to the poor insect. It reminded me of my mountains, now so far away, of quieter and more peaceful times. But Rey wanted it “gone”. As the poor bug tried for escape, Rey moved his locker in frantic search for it. The same man who, just last night, invited battle with 16 (who, by the way, shot a few threats on Rey's life saying “I am a true African!”) was now panicked because of this little creature. Well, it all passed and, to my relief, the centipede disappeared. I returned to the “Courtyard” (which is what we've come to call the hallway) for a while. - Earlier this evening, I'd been “entertaining” Kendall and the crew with “Wingdale” antics. Wingdale was a psychiatric institution in up-state NY and I'd worked there some years ago before the state shut it down. Considering it too, was a “psychiatric hospital” (just as our “home” was)... using my blanket as a “take-down sheet” I rather mocked incidents that I'd actually seen as well as behaviours we'd all heard about. (Kendall kept telling me that I'm frighteningly convincing and too close to “real”.) - Later, Rey got up to leave, stopped at my bed and said “Old man, can I go play?” (He passes his spare time playing dominoes with some of the other guys in here.). I said “Yes, As long as you play nice.” See? We can have good moments in spite of all the BS... and our environment and circumstances. It certainly isn't “Home”. It certainly isn't comfortable. We're certainly not happy here. But we do manage out better moments. So, Rey went to play. - George and I talked about dances of the 80s, New Wave and “House” music (he had the radio on and I recalled that it's been a good... good?... 4 years since I was able to sit and listen to a radio. We talked “clubs”. *The Tunnel, Limelight, Pyramid*. He's ten years younger than I but managed to have “some” fun with what was left-over from “my days”. SO much of NYC is gone these days. SO much of “life” is gone these days. - Ah, well, so, another day gone. Not too bad. My stomach is horrible. I've got Food Stamps (and an increase too!) and so, I have the ability to get something to eat for another while. Rey let me use his cell phone to report that my card won't “swipe”. I have to go to B59th to take care of it... on Thursday. So? Who needs an excuse to go “Home”? Not I! - What I meant to write before is: Rey let me use his phone to report that my EBT card won't swipe. I'm trying to write and pay some attention to what's going on around here. Every evening there's a buzz, everybody coming in and out of the room. It's a double-edged situation: to be popular is good in this environment; to be too much alone and solo can be dangerous. But how I miss, and need those days of coming “home” from work or travel, to be alone with restful down-time. But that's

not to be now. Creation continues to punish, and I still don't know what wrong I've committed to deserve so much punishment. I'll most likely die never knowing. Life is a curse, not a gift. That's why we have no choice in the matter of being born.

Tuesday 11 November: 89/58

Veterans' Day/Remembrance Day/Linens Day. Woke. Showered. Got my linens. I'm up to 4 blankets on the bed and 3 sheets covering the mattress. We're supposed to "exchange" lines, bringing our used in exchange for the fresh, but I learnt that I can get away with holding some and getting full sets. It helps, because the allotment is only ONE of each piece and with the blankets, extras are a necessity, especially on these colder nights. Today's sheets were crisp, fresh, clean. The pillow case had the odour of having been stored somewhere enclosed for too long. So, but, and, I made the bed and headed out the door into a lovely day. Cool. Clear. Nice. - Decided to take the train to The Junction, just in case of screw-ups on the A train. The connections were pretty good too. - At The Junction I decided to drop into the Target store there, to check on beard trimmers and, good news or bad news, found a Remington, rechargeable, for 20 dollars. I prefer my old one. I don't like being trapped into needing electric for this thing (as with the phone!) and my old one, now gone, operated on batteries. But I need a hair cut and a good beard trim so I've lost the 20 dollars and gained a trimmer. No doubt, it comes with regrets. - Trimmer with, on the bus, out to the Fort. - The travel over Marine Park Bridge was magnificent! Clear skies! Perfect views across the Peninsula, over to Coney, out to sea! It was an absolute delight to be back! I'd been thinking about charging the trimmer and doing a hair cut whilst out here. I was almost weak from hunger and was hoping to get a slice or 2 of the frozen pizza I bought and put in T6 for the "weed-heads", in case they got hungry some night while they smoked themselves into a state of mental retardation. The pizza... The same pizza that seems to disturb Penelope, and that Geoff simply wanted to throw away. Yes, all that bothers me. Wasteful ingrates, tossing FOOD! But, I was to get nothing: no haircut nor food. Penelope wasn't there so I had no access to anywhere. I have no keys to any of the buildings. Undaunted, I decided to head into The Fort, get some cell-phone photos to sketch. - As I approached T6, Tommy was coming out of T7. We were the only 2 people in the Fort. I'm reluctant to talk with him these days. I can't say why, exactly. It's more of a gut feeling that tells me that he's not to be too close. I may be wrong, but I may be right. I continued to walk, as if not having noticed him. He called to me. We chatted a bit. He asked if I'm working and still in the shelter. He offered that he was en route to Brooklyn, having

been in Rockaway for 2 days, phone dead, needed rest. (As I write and think about it, I'm grateful to him for the offer to stow-away in the bus that's out there, shelter against rain... and these days... frost. But when I look, he takes odd jobs, off the books because he can't hold a legit job due to some felony. He spends most of his time getting drunk or stoned and mucking about RAA with working guys or with G. who, generally speaking, paints pictures, looks like sh** and gets stoned. THIS is what Penelope has aligned herself with. And I should feel somehow "less than" that simply because I'm in the shelter? Not!) So, after shallow chat, we parted ways. He strolled out to the bus, I strolled into the back fort. I was alone! It was quiet! It was great! I ducked into Harris W. for some photos. Continued along the Ranger Road to the end and to the Cement Rd./Fishermen's parking lot. Stopped at Battery Kessler for some out-side photos. I didn't have my Mag-light so didn't actually get in for good exploration. A few photos of the "view" from the battery, which is one of the most beautiful and bucolic, in my opinion, and a stroll down to "my dune", the place where I'd slept alone for a while, for a few photos there. It's almost odd how "attached" I feel to that spot and how I actually wish that I could go back. When I got to the tree that provided me "shelter" from the night, it was the same. And I started looking for other, better spots to be ready for Spring, should I still be in this situation and in need of a place! That time out in the open, on the dunes and under the tree, really did something to me and now I want to go back to it! - A stroll on the beach got me a conch shell, in good condition! A dead star-fish was washed in. The beach is terribly eroded these days. The Winter months are coming. You can tell by the beach and the shells. You can tell the seasons, if you know what to look for. - It was just the perfect day out there. Just the perfect day, even though I was actually weakened from not eating all day. And so, at about 3:30pm I headed back to The City. The Q35 bus got delayed because the Marine Park draw-bridge opened. I didn't care. The sun was just a beautiful gold, washing over everything. I was at peace. (My stomach/bowels, on the other hand, were in turmoil all day.) - When I got to 29th and 2nd, I went shopping for what could have been food for 2 days but became one meal. Hey! I was almost starving! I need coffee but, since glass is forbidden in the shelter and the DHS crew is new, I just don't want to be bothered with the formalities. I'll need to get the coffee and put it into zip-lock bags. Yet, another reason to get out again... SOON!... to sit calmly and enjoy a nice hot coffee... calmly. - When I arrived at the dorm, it was empty! I was alone to make my sandwiches (4 of them) and eat my yoghurt. Not "Kosher" but just at this moment, I didn't care! I made the meal and as has been the situation these past YEARS, I shoved the food in so fast that I tasted none of it. I am not to ever enjoy eating anything, ever again. What made it all the more "enjoyable" was when, not 20 minutes after I'd done eating I was

bolting to the loo! Good thing I didn't stop to eat at Tribute Park! Add to that the fact that some idiot shat all over the bowl in the next stall and didn't clean it! Food consumption was such a pleasant event all round. Right! F***! - So, I tried to settle in, nap, enjoy being alone when Rey came in. Not for long and he was out the door. Said he was going to get something to help himself get some sleep. Moments later, the rum arrived. That's what he'd gotten. I was invited to share, and so I did! Sadly it didn't touch me in the least. I didn't have much anyway. It was more important that Rey have enough to take the edge off and get a good night's sleep for a change. - Down the hall, one of the guys was having a porn-night. Kendall dragged me down to see, as if I should be interested in straight porn, or any porn for that matter, at this point. And what a charm listening to 2 men in the room discussing how small their penises are compared to the Black men on the video, just openly and candidly. Then, Richard (who still strikes me as familiar and I can't figure why) asks "Are you supposed to be watching this?" because of the kippa. I said "Probably not 'supposed to' but what's the problem?" They actually look at me as being quite religious. Maybe Rachel was right: wearing the kippa is lucky. (And maybe I'm Golda Meir). - So, we shared the rum, had good talk, everybody in the room accounted for tonight. - George admired the conch shell and wanted it. I promised it to him either when he leaves or I leave here, which-ever comes first. - Tuesday's dead.

Wednesday 12 November: 90HomelessDays/59ShelterDays.

10:17am at the Mid-Manhattan Library - I just have to post quickly this morning as the sh** at the shelter seems to be happening fast and hot these past few days. In a conversation with Rey the other evening I learnt that the "weapon" that 16 has been hiding (and was discovered and reported and taken by "Security") was never reported *officially*. There's something very not kosher about the situation and that African prick, and I don't like it. I don't trust him and I certainly don't like the fact that not only does he keep weaponry in the room, but he manages to get it into the building AND when it's discovered, the incident is hidden. There are 3 others in that room. This moron is psychotic (he claims there are people in the African government planted in this country and in the shelter who are trying to kill him. Last night I heard him talking with some new face, another African, and again, the photos of the Ivory Coast were drawn out and the stories of persecution and attempted murder were the topic of the discussion. He swears R. is out to kill him. He swears the tall, bald guy down the hall is planted in the shelter to perform voodoo on him. I want to bring this to somebody's attention, but since R. went to one of

the supervisors with the weaponry report and it didn't get documented, it looks like we're all on our own.) OK. So I've put this out here, on the Internet. If anything should ever happen to any of us, let this be found? I'd appreciate it. - 11:40am still at the Mid-Manhattan Library after a restless night. The earplug I'd bought and used didn't completely block the snoring (of 16 AND George). I'm quite tired. - But this morning, I got up, went to the loo, brushed my teeth and tried the beard trimmer. I need to muck with it to figure it out. it's rather different from my previous trimmer. So... Showered. Dressed. Out with Rey. Mid-Manhattan Library at 9:00am! Immediate appointment on the PC but this computer is SLOW for the last 20 minutes so I LOST the last 10 minutes when I got fed-up and left. Came to the 5th floor to catch-up and complete Monday and Tuesday's entries in this journal. SH**! I HAVE TO LEAVE FOR WORK! I'm not paying attention to the time as it passes here! - 7:47pm back at D18. The old brain is finally showing signs of wear. 11:45am and I'm sitting in the library as though I've not a place in Creation to go to. Just there, writing along. Well. No matter. I clocked-in at 12:59pm. H. was tired today but I read him the Riot Act: If he's not interested in improving, I'm wasting my time with him. Steven (the son) over-heard and gave me the "thumbs up". Mary approved as well. They have unrealistic expectations of both, H. and I. I know there's more to H's inability to walk than simple laziness. I do know this. But I also know that he'd given up a while ago and, there's the fact that his kids are living in his house that bothers me. (Sh**! I didn't get to do that: live at my parents' until well past the age of independence. And I NEVER had the opportunity to get firmly established and ready to be tossed around by life and the world. I'm in a bleating shelter now! And I've no sympathy for others.) So, I'm looking to get him some of his (H.) independence back, as much as is humanly possible. My existence is bleating screwed. Maybe I can make somebody else's better... if not my own. - On the way back to the shelter, stopped to get more yoghurt and some dinner AND COFFEE! The yoghurt really does help my intestinal problems. Probably because my diet is so miserable. As for the coffee? Bought a jar of instant, stopped at the projects on 28th and emptied the jar into a zip-lock bag! SO screwed-up! But, got it all through "security" at the door. - Came in. Ate. (If "eat" is what you want to call it.) Did a small wash, by hand, in the wash-room basin. Everybody's quite quiet this evening. It's 28°C in here right now. This place goes from hot to cold. It's miserably un-healthy. - Oh! As I came in this evening, I saw and chatted with Mike (formerly A109)! Just as I'd been thinking: Dennis, Angel, Sydney, probably Sonny are gone. Here was a familiar face! I haven't heard from Dennis in a long while. I have to call Angel when I have time on the phone. And one of these nights I'll have to sneak up to the 7th floor at sign-in to see if anybody's left out of all the guys I met when I came in here. I wonder what's become of Jesus up

there. Sh**. Poor little guy. I hope he's some-where safe and that his anxieties are over and gone. My presence won't be of any note up there. Not that it should matter at all. Not that opinions in here should. - Well! 8:21pm. I'm right up to date with this! - (Or, so I thought) At some time around 11:00pm, the yelling and hollering in the hall commenced! And, in earnest! The Viet Cong down the hall, drunk, no... nasty, loud drunk started hollering what sounded like "Harry!" at the top of his lungs. Simple foot steps in this hall echo terribly. This yelling was almost ear-shattering! The night wasn't bad enough, being so hot in the dorm that I slept on top of the covers. I'd only just about fallen asleep when this sh** began. Well, of course, our "security" team was called to the scene. Tonight they missed no opportunity to show us all just how completely useless they are. The VC kept yelling and they stood, gawking! If it hadn't been so annoying, their completely moronic stance and gawk might have been amazing. But it went on like that for 45 minutes, if not an hour before 2 DHS cops came and, at long last, hauled the VC sh** off the floor in cuffs! Why it had to take so long is what burns me. But, as I say, "security" showed their stupidity and uselessness in full colour and glory; from the stupid Africans to the fat little White dyke-ish thing. If the situation here weren't so serious, the "Security" force here would be comical. - When silence returned, I turned and went to sleep. Close the day (at 1:00am the following morning... SHIT!)

Thursday 13 November: 91/60 DAYS AT THE SHELTER.

But Saturday's date is the official 2 months. It's 7:39pm, 28,5°C here now. At 4:52am the Viet Cong was back on the floor as if nothing had happened! I say no more. THIS describes this entire place and the system all by itself. Suffice to say, the VC ended-up back in his bed and when we all woke, he was soundly asleep... again, as if not one blessed thing had happened. Life and justice in the shelter. Those who cause the most un-rest are those who get the most and best (rest). - And so, we move along to the day. Moving. On the go. On the run. Non-stop! In the rain. (And did my Gaston look beautiful today when I got out there!) - Woke at 7:15am, headed directly to the shower, back in the room, dressed and out the door. My bowels were grinding but I just kept going... moving... on the run. 6, L, A trains to Straiton/B59th Street. Into the "Social Services" office. Very quick. Very polite. It all went like clock-work even in spite of the fact that, when they put my Food Stamps card number into the computer, there was a glitch. Somehow, the application for Medicaid (which still hasn't been approved, if anybody can imagine that... Homeless, only just back to work, making 66\$ per week and I'm not eligible for Medicaid?)

messed my case number. But it was all resolved and in moments, I was back on the A train to Jay Street for my new card. When I got to Brooklyn, the rain was coming steady and I just couldn't remember how to get to the office where I had to get my card! I knew the street, I just lost my bearings! I stopped and asked a cop. "Straight down Smith!" said he. At the office, it was another matter of moments and I was out the door, in the rain, with the old card and the new. The "Seq" number changed from 3 to 4. (I don't recall ever having more than 2 cards in my life-time though. Oh well. Certainly "they" know what "they" are doing... and that's a laugh!) - Back on the A train and back out to Rockaway to the post office. Empty! Nothing. Oh well. It's not like I'm corresponding with the world of late. So, I got the shuttle to Broad Channel and the A train to Mott Av., to the FarRockaway Library. Brief wait and a computer to use. I managed to complete my first 3 days of this Journal on the WP blog. Little by little, it goes on-line. Little by little this will get louder and louder. To what end? I don't know. But I want it off the note pages and on the web pages! If ever... EVER somebody else should steal anything else from me, particularly THESE notes, just as others have stolen my ENTIRE LIFE and EVERY BIT OF MY HISTORY ... (let's not mention names here, shall we Cindy, Joe, Tony...?) these words will remain on a server, or several servers, located round the world, to be retrieved by somebody who might give a sh** (or, as I'd rather expect, simply be nosey and have nothing better to do.) - I'd planned on trying "the library loop" (Queens, Brooklyn, Manhattan libraries) today, but, instead, I got back on the A train at 3:00pm, hungry and tired. Homesick for The Rock too. I decided to shop for something to eat and head to the shelter. It was very difficult, leaving my Peninsula today. It would have been a joy to stay... at home. Creation is cruel and Life is a burden... Life... is a burden. - When I got off the train (at LONG last) I didn't dare go to Gristede's with the new card where the previous one got scratched by the cashier. I recalled going to D'Ag market when Zur and I lived together on 24th. Street and sure enough! It's still there! So, I did "dairy" food shopping for dinner. But, as I got to the front door, I stopped to look across the avenue at Nr.330. Zuri... Why? How? Died. Dead. Gone. Why? What happened? I'll never know. But I'll always wonder I suppose. Nobody truly knows the answers... but today, now, he, like so, SO much of my past, my history, is gone, and like my past, is out of reach. More pain... inside. I keep it to myself because, well, nobody gives a sh** and even if I tried to explain and describe, nobody.... NOBODY would or will ever understand. Something more to carry with me... until... - And so, I did my shopping and tonight's dinner consisted of 2 cream cheese sandwiches... an entire block of cream cheese on bread, and a yoghurt. This dairy will either "flush through" or "stop-up". We'll see... eventually. - Got in about 5:00pm, washed my jeans by hand in the basin across the hall. It was hot enough in

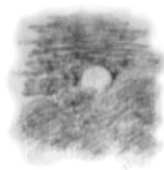
the building to dry them. Here, in this room, all that's necessary to dry clothes is to lay them across the top of the locker at night. But morning, even jeans are dry. And if laid properly, nicely creased as well! - And so, now, I'm ready for the night... hopefully, to sleep.

Friday 14 November: 92/61

(I'm journaling this on Saturday morning at 10:38am. It's pouring rain out-side this morning and I'm in no mood to battle it. Looks like a day inside. Thankfully I can stay in today!) Daily news: Took my time leaving this morning and got to the library about 30 minutes early. In. On-line. Checked e-mails. Blogged another day and bolted at about 11:00am or so. - Post office. Pay-cheque. Letter from ChexSystems that told much, said nothing, dated 6 November. Getting this sh** settled and getting a banque account for my salary is going to take more time. Time, something I don't have! So, I got the paper, got the bus, got to work at 1:13pm. H., my patient, is having a bad time of it now. Weakness in both legs. It concerns me. I hope it's only transient... for his sake and mine. Truth about this case: I could work very well with him... alone. His kids are unrealistic and demanding of him. They've let him deteriorate over a period of years and now they expect everything to be repaired by me, working 3 hours a day, 3 days a week. Seriously? And they want everything to be wonderful and fine and probably perfect in a matter of weeks... if not days. Their father is over-weight, elderly, nostalgic and depressed... "normal". And his illnesses and inabilities only add to the depression which makes it all the worse... That, and, I've no doubt, the fact that his family has all but ignored him and his deterioration over the years... Well, as I say, I could work very well with him... alone. But I'm paid for what I'm allowed to do by my agency. I'm trying. - 4:30pm I'm on the bus, jotting my notes here in my little note-book. It's drizzling. It's Friday evening. No cash. Half pack of cigarettes. Chocolate chip cookies and PopTarts left to eat. Another week-end. Another typical week-end of hunger and deprivation... with one exception: THIS week-end I have decided: I AM A GOOD HUMAN BEING WHO HAS SPENT HIS ENTIRE LIFE TRYING TO DO THE BEST POSSIBLE FOR EVERY OTHER HUMAN BEING. I HAVE BEEN A GOOD JEW, TRYING TO FOLLOW THE LAWS, RULES, REGULATIONS OF MY TRADITION, HERITAGE AND RELIGION. I'VE RETURNED TO WEARING MY KIPPA, AS A SIGN OF PRIDE AND IDENTITY. THIS IS THE 21ST CENTURY NOW. OUR "LAWS" ARE, FOR A GREAT PART, OUT-DATED. NOT THE LEAST, THESE TIMES REQUIRE FLEXIBILITY IN SO MANY WAYS. SO, IF I NEED TO CONDUCT BUSINESS ON SATURDAY, GET MY CHEQUE CASHED, GO TO ROCKAWAY, ETC. THERE IS NO

REASON THAT I SHOULDN'T... EVEN WHILST WEARING MY KIPPA. I'M STILL A JEW, STILL A GOOD HUMAN BEING! AND, I'M ABOVE PRESUMPTION OF OTHERS. IT'S TIME TO BEGIN A NEW SCHOOL OF THOUGHT AND BEHAVIOUR. SO, IF POSSIBLE, I'LL CASH MY CHEQUE ON SATURDAY, RIDE THE TRAIN TO ROCKAWAY *AND* I'LL BE A JEW WHO ANSWERS TO NOBODY BUT MYSELF AND GOD! So, we'll suffer through hunger tonight and see what tomorrow brings on. And so, *that* decided... a night at the "Castle Bellevue". - Tonight, Kendall decided to come in all but completely wasted! SO DRUNK! So, many of us banned together to make certain he didn't leave to go out and get more drunk. If he did, chances are he'd either get hurt or stay out and lose his bed in here. There's a remarkable camaraderie in here. But the *shocker* came when one of the "security" guards (Juliet) came to get him to escort him to sign-in and then escorted him back! When I went to sign-in she said "He's drunk but I don't want him to lose his bed." BY MY GOD AND ANY GOD ANY-WHERE! A nice, "good", kind, compassionate, HUMAN and HUMANE woman. How rare! How wonderful! How much it brought me to actual TEARS! of happiness! SOMEBODY GIVES A SHIT ABOUT US! Rare... but SOMEBODY! Even if it's only ONE person! SOMEBODY! - And so, the night went along into the usual. George went out. Rich tried to remind him to get his sh** together. George pays no attention (and then wonders why the rest of us get angry with him... of course). And the rest of us try for sleep. I say "try" because there are steel plates on the street outside now where there's some kind of excavation, and they bang and rumble as cars and buses run over them. Life cannot be peaceful. Somehow, I'm not worthy of peace.

Saturday 15 November: 93HOMELESS/62SHELTER/2MONTHS on this DATE I entered the SHELTER 3:27pm



DREAMS: Last night I dreamt that I was in a hurry to get out of here but had to see Ms. Emaly for some reason before leaving. I arrived on time but there was a crowd waiting to see her when I got there. She'd told me that she would see me right away but when I got to the door of her office, she walked down the hall (toward the East Wing), ignoring me, saying something about needing to do some other business first. I was nervous about my appointment and pissed because she'd lied to me.

I just woke from an hour's nap and another...

DREAM: I was out at The Fort. The old man had driven me out. He was working out there on some carpentry thing. I was waiting on a chair outside a "DuaneReade/Walgreen's" sort of store.

Nancy (T.'s girlfriend) was there, waiting for somebody or something, I wasn't sure which or what. We were talking when 2 guys whom I knew came in. One had a plastic package with an opened bottle of cologne in it. "This just doesn't look good." he said as the other one went into the store. I recognized the two from the shelter and knew they were up to no good. I got up, said bye to Nancy and went to find the old man. I asked Nancy "Are you going into town?"... Town. "The City." (meaning B116th Street, Rockaway) She said she wasn't. The old man (I never saw his face in the dream because he was wearing a hooded sweat-shirt) said to me "There's somebody looking for a ride out of here but I don't know who it is." He wanted to give the person a lift. "Sounds like it might be T.." I said. I turned to go look for him to ask and... I woke up.

- This morning, I took my time getting ready to see Ms. Emaly as is our "regularly scheduled" appointment and I'd wanted to go to services this week but instead of making my appointment with her in the afternoon, she wanted me to see her at 8:00am. Even if I'd gone to the 23rd Street synagogue, it wouldn't have given me enough time to get there. And, sure enough. I showed up at her office at 9:45am and her list already had about 6 names on it! She comes out of the office telling me that she'd called me already. I asked her how that was possible. "Isn't your name on the list?" "Not yet. I'm just getting here to sign." (Imagine that... to lie to me, straight-faced, and directly to me. What kind of complete idiots do these people take us for? Homeless? Useless? Idiots? Morons? The insults never seem to cease! The attempts at degrading us are endless in this system.) She took the next name on the list. I waited. 2 before me. (Last night's dream? How could it not be?) So, when I finally got to her, she asked when my meal ticket expired (it expires at the end of the month), she gave me the supposedly "bi-weekly"-but-"weekly" "Re-assignment" forms to sign. (She previously told me I'd get one bi-weekly but she gives me one every week. Yet another bit of abuse and degradation.) She asked if I'd gotten more hours on the job. I told her I hadn't but PIC has an "Open House" on Monday in another region of the city and I'm going to attend to register there and see if I can't get assignments else-where. "Why are they looking for more people when they can't give more hours to those they already have?" She asks me. "That's what I'm going to ask them on Monday." I recounted how, on our first meeting, she'd told me how I was new to the system on the 5th floor and wasn't asking any questions. I've learnt, I assured her, to ask. She actually remembers the incident and smiled. I figure, she's proud for having imparted some sort of "wisdom" but other-wise, I've no idea why she'd smile at something so petty. Meanwhile, I'm simply "ego-stroking", saying what I believe she wants to hear. I've reached the point where I see that that's the best approach to all of this: tell them ALL what they want to hear, allow them to live in their own phantasy and keep my own dignity... at

any cost. She told me that I need to get full-time hours and when I've had 30 days of full-time work I'll be eligible for "housing assistance", that they will help me find a flat of my own, help me get out of the shelter, back on my feet. They will help me. She recommended a security-guard job. 1 class of 8 hours and I'm "Certified". 10 dollars/hour to start. Full-time job immediately. She claims she's done it. But she also claims to have a law degree that she gave up after some years to do social work. Claims her daughter gave up anaesthesiology for a general practice. Her son is giving up telecom for a security-guard job. I wish I trusted her but, I have no reason to do anything of the sort. We also discussed the plants in her cubicle. She's got so many that it's almost like sitting in a garden in her little area. She claims her house is full of them as well. Well? As I say: trust, I have none. - Kendall came by. He's out to look at an apartment they've arranged for him to take. As I'm to understand it, they pay rent and security, give furniture allowance and a pots-and-pans-and-dishes set up. His "new place" is out on Eastern Parkway. Flatbush, I believe. I'm looking forward to hearing about it. - Spoke with Dennis B. today! He phoned this morning. I called back. He's still at Forbell, working in the kitchen there, washing dishes and doing as much as he can to "avoid the riff-raff" as he puts it. Says the residents are un-thankful and it's getting to him. No matter what anybody does to help them along, they're vulgar, nasty, ungrateful. What amazes me is his "sensitivity". He's in the system. How can he retain sensitivity? Personal sensitivity! Says he pulls breakfast, "brunch" and dinner shifts, washing dishes, working in the kitchen, (at no pay) just to avoid the residents. Has found friends in the kitchen staff. Is still surprised when residents lie about sh**. I'm almost shocked that he's so naïve about it all. Well, it just goes to show: we don't know and, as I'm fond of saying, we must never presume anything about anybody. - OK. So, as I write, it's dark in the room. I'm sitting at the foot of the bed using the dim light that comes in through the door from the hall lights because George is still napping. It's 4:38pm. After "official" sun-down, the end of this Shabbat. I'm thinking I should go for food. I've a dollar cash. Might buy a "rollie" or 3 from George. "Life on the inside". In some respects, it truly is a bit like prison, I suppose. Earlier I had coffee with creamer and honey to kill an appetite. Hey! Shabbat's over. I did another one, not working, shopping, using electrics, riding the transit. I was forced, but I didn't shop or travel. - Tomorrow? Out to The Fort. Maybe make a hair-cut. Definitely the "reception" for the new exhibit at the Artists' Alliance (RAA). Maybe see Dennis. But to be sure, NOT HERE, NOT STAYING IN HERE ANOTHER DAY. George says the paper forecasts possible flurries on Tuesday. Winter approaches. I'll be alone, "Homeless". I suppose I should be "happy" that I won't be out on the ground, on a sand dune nor under a tree (that won't have leaves to protect me any longer). I'm in here, with some very good and

wonderful people... but... still alone and still “Homeless” and still in “a shelter”. I can't ever keep that truth out of my mind and heart. - 7:25pm I decided to go out, get food, come back, eat FOOD! NOPE! I'M NEVER SUPPOSED TO EAT... EVER! I'd un-packed the back-pack for carrying some “food” back with me. I'd even put on my new, never-worn, black sneakers. Hey! At 4:00pm the sun was shining. Everything had to be dry by 6:40pm. Jacket on, ready to go. Got the lift... It was EMPTY! Not the usual state of packed, which always, for some reason, includes at least ONE slob whose body and clothes have NEVER even been NEAR soap and water. First floor and out the door. Bleating BLOODY RAIN! NO umbrella. No poncho. Just me and the bleating RAIN! I turned right round, back upstairs. Wet shoes. Wet jacket. Wet attitude. NO BLEATING FOOD! AND... TOO LATE FOR DINNER HERE! SO? As usual, I “fast” again, like EVERY STINKING BLOODY SHABBAT! While Jews round the world sit down for a special dinner following havdallah (evening service at the end of Shabbat)? I'm ready, with headache, to pass out from hunger. A good Jew? Oh, why not just SCREW me even harder? Eh?

Sunday 16 November: 94/63

9:31pm In bed, signed-in, piss-poor mood here. New morons roaming the hall and in the room, all 4 of us are here... in silence. Good thing too. Miserable night, last. I had trouble falling asleep to begin with. As I began, at long last, to drift off, 16 went into active-with-the-snoring sh**! So? It woke Rey who then *really* kept me awake. It just never fails: I look forward to a particular day (today), and the night before (last night) is sleepless. So this morning I slept a bit later than I'd hoped. Got no sleep on the trains or bus (6 to 4 to 2 to Q35) and arrived at the Fort, wanting to nap at 11:30am. Penelope and T. were there. Tables were set for the reception but Penelope was still going on about how things should be and appear. She behaves as if these exhibits are going to attract the highest of society from Manhattan. We're all the out past the end of every public transport line, almost at the end of a peninsula that nobody really cares much about, and that's assuming they even KNOW about. But things must be... “high society” for Ms. Penelope Well, T. had me laughing as he poked fun at Penelope All said though, the reception I received as I walked in the door was very good. I mean, I was well-received. I don't, somehow, expect that any longer. I can't help but recall that Penelope lied to me, telling me that G. and T. suggested that I make myself “scarce” this Summer past, and T. confirmed that that was strictly her wishes and not his or G.'s. But, as he (T.) pointed out, my dues are paid and I've done nothing against the RAA. So, I'm welcome. And so I was. - The gallery reception went along well. I got a bit of food in me and,

I'm happy to report, 4 or 5 glasses of wine! YAY! I've needed that for a while. As I'd said, the night Kendall got so bombed: I want to enjoy being drunk and that's just impossible in the shelter. (One has to be on guard at all times, awake and asleep, because one never knows when one will be called to "Operations", or told one has been transferred to another shelter and must leave "immediately", and then there are the violent residents, always at the ready to jump, beat, and yes, even kill somebody for no apparent reason. I don't know HOW the others manage, getting drunk or stoned. But... that's them... I'm me. I choose to remain alert, ready, aware.) I didn't get drunk today, but I did enjoy the wine. And, of course, the attendees were the incestuously usual crowd. Jimmy, yet again, put himself out in every conversation (with me and over-heard) to make some mention/reference of/to Jews. I'm not sure if I find it curious, humourous or annoying, but I do find it quite typical of that calibre, ilk and type. Too bad. I've heard that he and his neighbours in their little "commune" at the peninsula's end are mostly Irish, Catholics, and seriously bigoted. But...I've neither time nor interested in such sh**. They're "out there" in their "gated community". Let them be. They rarely leave it anyway. - The day rolled into the newly-formed "Writers' Group" and it was quite the delight when a "new voice" (Megan) asked "Isn't anybody pissed?" after hearing all the sing-song, la-dee-dah prose read. So I gave my readings of "I will take my medication" (which floored people at the ending, Dan, the group's founder, in particular. "I wasn't expecting that!") and "These days I put pen to paper..." Sh**! Shir! reads her darkness openly, her depressions, her anger, her bitterness. It's almost the only thing she writes or writes about. Here's my chance to toss out a few bits of stuff. Ah, the Metaphysical will RING! - So, the meeting was another delight. Unfortunately, after, in the parking lot, Megan was talking with a member of the Group who is already published and I was invited to join them to continue the discussion, for either beer or tea, but could afford neither and didn't have the time (the meeting ended at 6:00pm and I needed to get back to the cell... shelter!). So, as I walked, in the darkness of the night, out of The Fort to the Q35 bus, yet another reason to get my life together, get MONEY and GET OUT of that friggin' hell-hole shelter became obvious! - The trip back was uneventful and good. Taking the Q35 cuts a lot of time from the journey. - You know? I'm just writing this in on Wednesday, the 19th at 11:21am (Mid-Manhattan Library) and I can't recall anything back at the shelter. So, it must have been OK. Either that or my brain is wasting away at last and I'm losing actual brain matter. In any event, I have to say that evenings have been humourous lately. Geo And Rey are great room-mates. If only we could get rid of 16. That said...

Monday 17 November: 95/64

(On Wednesday, the 19th Nov: 11:25am at the Mid-Manhattan Library) Up and bolt today! Hurry! Wait! Run! Stop! “CashZone” first thing this morning to cash a pay-cheque. Money! Yay! New MetroCard! Yay! Rockaway! Yay! VNS on Rockaway Beach Blvd. to attend their “Open House” (with the hopes of getting more assignments, more hours and... in Rockaway!). I asked about increasing my hours and was told to talk with my supervisor (I have no idea who that is since that aspect of the job isn't quite clear). I picked up some information for Geo (on CHHA offers for free classes since he expressed an interest in getting a job... imagine that). - When I left? The CRAMPS! The intestinal PAIN! I searched for libraries (since they have toilets): The Peninsula branch? Opens at 1:00pm! I grabbed the bus to So. Ozone Park. Again... that doesn't open until 1:00pm! Bus up to the Lefferts branch. 1:00pm AGAIN! Cursed and so cursed! And it was only about 11:30 now and my guts felt as if they wanted to explode! To distract my mind, I dropped into “Dollar Days” store on Liberty Avenue-off-Lefferts Blvd. to look for my “haircut” mirrors. I took my time browsing and trying to hold my bowels and just as I was ready to leave, there they were! Perfect mirrors! Not the “perfect” price (99cents) but even at 3 dollars each, I could get the 2 I needed and it wouldn't cost me 10 dollars. Sold! Bought! A trip worth the while, and to think I'd have missed them if the libraries had been open and I didn't feel as though I was about to sh** my toes up. So, by 12:00pm I'd cashed my cheque, gone to Rockaway, found the So. Ozone and Lefferts libraries which I'd never been to before, and gotten the mirrors I'd needed. OK. I still had an hour before I had to be at the client's for work. I walked down Lefferts to about 134th or 135th Streets, came back up, taking my time and still got to the house early enough to hear J. tell me that they believe I'm the best thing to happen for their father and that when my assignment is done, they're quite ready to “negotiate” private duty. Of course, there's no mention of the cash value of this “negotiation”. I expect it'll be loaded with “perks” and no cash. The saddest part? I'd like to see H. (their father, my patient/client) recover some independence but I really don't feel comfortable in the “family unit”. But, if the money is right? I'll take the job. I NEED to get back to something “mine”. - The rest of the day was, as would be noted professionally, “unremarkable”, thankfully, And I DID get to use their loo! AT LAST! But my digestive tract is in complete and utter turmoil and chaos! And it's PAINFUL! Truly and honestly PAINFUL! (And, I must add, shows just how few places there are in this “city” where a person can do what ALL people do... There are no toilets! Really! Something that each and every human being on Earth needs, without exception, and it's so damned rare! What is WRONG with people? I ask... Not that I don't know already.) - Ah well then, tonight I got back to the shelter, opened my locker, hooked the

mirrors on the doors, laid the "Wave" newspaper on the floor, changed into my scrubs and... *HAIRCUT!* AT LONG LAST! Not my best, but at least the hair is cut! I'm not crazy about the new trimmer but it cuts hair. I'll settle. (It eats me up inside when I recall all of what I'm now considering "GONE" forever, including my beard trimmer/hair-cutter... and so, SO much more!) Anyway, my hair is now cut. I look neater, cleaner. And I feel closer to human. It's rather amazing how much so little can do to change everything, including one's perception of one's self... and the world around one! HEY! YEAH! - And so (since it's now 8:51pm) to the notes of the night... THE NIGHT OF MORE BLOODY-BLEATING SNORING! It was unbelievable! Almost non-stop! Even the ear-plugs didn't block the friggin noise! Rey said that Ms. Renice told him that she would re-assign the guy in bed16. Yup. Right. Sure. Chronic, compulsive liars, the entire lot of them. I smile though because *THEY* tell *US* what *THEY* believe *WE* want to hear... and *I* tell *THEM* what *I* believe *THEY* want to hear. And the game plays on. And so, it was yet ANOTHER sleepless night!

Tuesday 18 November: 96/65

I'd say "I woke this morning" but I really only "napped" last night (more like "this morning"... f***) so, I got out of bed later than hoped and planned. Just did a "forward motion" of non-stop: sh**, smoke, brush teeth, shower, dress, out. Exhausted. Burning tired. Hungry. Exhausted. Hungry. Blind to the world. By about 10:30am I was at The Junction for the Q35 bus to Tilden. I was actually looking forward to having a couple of slices of the pizza I'd bought, thinking of T. and Kristen when they smoke in T6 (and Penelope wanted to throw out!). But, as I neared T6, the parking lot was empty! NOBODY was there today which meant I had no access to any of the buildings to duck the cold and wind (and eat). Of course... I was hungry, food was involved, I'm not supposed to have food. And, it was windy and quite cold. The weather report had said possible flurries. Still, there was sunshine in the Fort so I went directly to the beach. Why? Because I was there and so was the beach... and RAA or not, I was really glad to have the day to myself. No BS (from Penelope mostly). Just me and thoughts, surf, sand, sea. Alone, and admittedly at peace, I walked the beach. - All along the Tilden beach, only one fisherman, a dead ray, a dead gull. The tide was in so there weren't many shells to be collected. I sat for a while by "my dune", just to sit, then walked up to Battery Kessler and over to Battery 411. T. really did clear it out with his machete! Not complete, but more than enough. I'm truly sorry I told anybody about the place and have resolved and vowed: Anything else I find in The Fort, I keep it to

myself. Now I understand the secrecy of those who know The Fort. It should be respected and protected. But there are those with another “agenda” and it most certainly isn't “respect”. Oh. I did get some photos of 411 on the cell phone. I'd like to do a sketch of it before T. has his little groups run amok around it. He keeps talking about doing a “tour” of the batteries, and having some little “touristy meetings” in 411. Makes me sick! First of all, these batteries are poured concrete, some of the walls are 4 to 6ft thick, but the ceilings are 4 to 8ft thick! And add to that, they're covered with 8 to 10ft of dirt and sand! They were built for WWII and have been completely abandoned since 1972 or so. And he wants to have troops of idiots traipsing in and out of them? It's not bad enough that they're loaded with graffiti as it is. Now he wants to draw even MORE attention to them. Nope... as I say: I find anything else in this old fort, I keep it a secret and protect it. - And so, a slow and peaceful walk came to a close as I walked out through the gate of the old Fort and to the Q22 bus and headed out to the library at Far Rockaway. - I got another “Journal day” on-line, more transcribed from paper books to digital “blog” and by 3:00pm, I departed. Stopped to do some food shopping at Associated market. Even though that end of The Peninsula isn't “home”, I still feel I belong there and I hate leaving! It rips a piece out of my heart each time I get on a bus or train and travel back to... “the main-land”. - On to the A train. The sunset on Jamaica Bay, through breaks in the clouds was actually radiant! What a beautiful journey it is. I just wish that when I got to Broad Channel, I could get on the train back to Rockaway to go HOME! One day, very soon again, I will. Never soon enough though. - Back at the shelter I ATE! 3 sandwiches, 4 PopTarts. There was water at the cooler so I filled my bottles. (The tap water in the shelter had been beige all day. So, in spite of the Deer Park bottled, which, to me, has a strange flavour, I was happy to have drinkable water.) The sandwiches tasted so good. I was just so bleating hungry! They were nothing more than cheap cold-cuts, tossed onto some rolls with a bit of mustard... that I'd thrown together in my locker. And to think, the food came in from Far Rock! - Oddly, coming into the building was quite easy tonight. No queue! As cold as it was today and tonight, there are no crowds packing in. But Geo commented that there have been 2 buses transporting to Wards' Island each night. The shelter system is actually packed. 850 beds in here, alone, and no room for anybody. There are than many Homeless men in this City that they come in here to register for a BED, and TWO buses of PEOPLE are “hailed out”... EACH NIGHT! Yes. Being here is a hard kick, square in the face. THIS is “Reality”... and it's truly disgusting. Humanity is disgusting. That PEOPLE should go with-out a place of shelter... people who have “family”? People who have others who call themselves “friends”... and we, as a society, as a species, have “*Homeless* Shelters”? Bleating pathetic. - So, I looked forward to a night's sleep

BUT IT DID NOT COME. BRINDOU (16... I got his name from looking at the sign-in sheet) IS STILL HERE! HE BRINGS IN A WEAPON, THREATENS TO HARM OR KILL ANOTHER RESIDENT, PRROF AND EVIDENCE ARE OBVIOUS AND NOTHING... NO ACTION TAKEN AGAINST HIM. IF WE DON'T SIGN FOR A BED, WE LOSE IT. BUT THREATEN SOMEBODY'S LIFE? NOTHING. AND AGAIN, THIS NIGHT WAS DESTROYED BY HIS BLOODY-BLEATING MISERABLY ROTTEN STINKING SHIT SNORING! I DIDN'T DRIFT OFF TO SLEEP EASILY TO BEGIN WITH. SO MANY OF THE REGULARS ROAM THE HALLS, YELLING AND GENERALLY CREATING HAVOC. MORONIC SHIT-FOR-BRAINS. THEY SHOULD KNOW BETTER. BEGINS. NO MATTER WHAT I DID, EARPLUGS AND ALL, I COULDN'T ESCAPE THE NOISE! A CURSE! AN ABSOLUTE CURSE! AND NOW I SEE, HE'S GOT ANOTHER "FRENCH"-SPEAKING AFRICAN CHUM WHO COMES BY TO VISIT. I JUST DON'T LIKE IT. I DON'T TRUST HIM, ESPECIALLY SINCE HE'S GOTTEN AWAY NOT ONLY WITH HAVING THAT "HOOK" IN THE DORM BUT THE FACT THAT IT WASN'T REPORTED! AS REY SAYS: THERE'S MORE TO HIM THAN WE KNOW... AND I DON'T LIKE IT. As this night went into Wednesday morning...

Wednesday, 19 November: 97/66

10:59pm Rey, Geo and I were awake through to 1:30 this morning. Brindou snored through our talking. I told R. what I think of Ms. Renice (another lying sack of sh**). He suggested the 3 of us go complain together. Sounds like a good idea on the surface, but me? I don't believe it will do any good at all. None of them can be trusted or relied upon. Anyway, I'm thinking of other ways to handle this: including a report to the Mayor's office about weaponry in here going un-reported and ignored. We'll see. But I will go to my CaseWorker and tell her how it's affecting my sleep and my work. I doubt that that will do any good other than me getting the opportunity to vent. My "CaseWorker" is Nigerian... another African, and she's got a bad case of anti-White and anti-Semitism. No matter how I shake it, no matter what I do... I'm in here against "they" wishes, the lot of them. - Well, as it turned out, I over-slept til 8:00am this morning but managed to get out and to the Mid-Manhattan Library by 10:00am. Got another day and a half of my notes here "Blogged", including a comment about today. I'll just add this on when the time comes. Left the library at 11:45am and got to work on time! H. was having another bad day. And so too, I had the same: No accomplishments. It bothers me. - Left just after 4:00pm. - At 5:15pm or so, the temperature on the banque on 3rd Av. read 3°C. The cold is upon us. Time to panic? At

this point, being back out is a certain slow death. But the truth of the matter is, I continue now, more out of curiosity than anything else. I don't really give a sh** about "Life" or "living". It's all a matter of curiosity, to see how much abuse I actually CAN take and what's to become of the guys who are actually a wonderful little crew. That, and, I suppose, a sense of being a part of something, a little "group". Imagine... Homeless... and "belonging". This world truly is a sh**ty curse. - At the shelter, I just came right on through. NO QUEUE AT ALL! In the dorm, I had 3 sandwiches (made in the locker, as usual) and did a wash, by hand, in the basin, in the wash-room. The day is complete. - Right now, 11:11pm, Brindou and Rey are sleeping. Geo is out in the night. The temperature in here is 23°C. There are SPICS out in the "sitting area" waiting for beds and kicking up noise. Bleating trash, that lot. They should be put back out on the streets. Actually? They shouldn't be allowed on the floor. There should be a place to confine them on the 1st floor. There should be an enforced rule prohibiting any noise on the floor after 11:00pm. But, bottom line: if you have no assigned bed, you should be in a "holding room" on the 1st floor. If you can't behave, you don't need to be here and should be put out. I suppose this is all a part of the disrespect for us, it's a way of letting us know how those who have "homes" truly feel about us. Truth be told, we're their "merchandise", their income, their pay-cheques, nothing more, nothing less. We're "merchandise", not "people" and certainly not "human". They probably think more and higher of their dogs and cats than they do of us. - But for now, it's 11:16pm, and there's no snoring. Time for lights out. I'm not expecting a night's sleep so I'll nap until the bleating African bolts Rey and I out of sleep AGAIN! - How I HATE it here! - Oh. As I headed for the stairs this morning at approx. 9:30am I heard: "Mr. Kessler!" I turned to see Ms. Emaly standing at the office door, smiling and waving to me. I'm sure it wasn't for any good. But there she was. Anybody who didn't know any better might have been misled into thinking we were on great and "chummy" terms. - Enough. I'm caught up at last. Nap time (I hope.)

Thursday 20 November: 98/67

2:32am (19°C) 98/67 No sense even trying for sleep any more. Brindou is snoring. Security and some staff are yelling in the hall. About 10 minutes ago some fat arse bastard comes knocking on the door yelling "BEDCHECK!". The way they shout, you'd think we were all half dead! Not 10 minutes before that, Geo comes rolling in all chatty and then gets on the phone. (Today I finally said "Of all the nights, this one! No snoring. This is BS. Just BS." Rey told Geo to take the phone out to the hall - he didn't. When he's drunk he's absolutely the most selfish little prick. I suppose

we tolerate it to a point because he's just so damned young. He and Rey have a camaraderie of some kind, but the booze dissolves that too.) - Most of the noise in the hall is the "security" staff! Yelling at and to each-other from end-to-end in a hall that's granite and echos even a heart-beat. It droned on and on and finally, when they wouldn't shut up, the bitch complaining the loudest (because somebody actually called her "bitch") being the instigator amongst them all, I got up and went out into the hall to say to them directly: "I don't know how we're expected to hold jobs when we're not allowed to sleep. Quiet, for a night's sleep, to go to work. Is that asking for too much?" I got no answer, no response, just dead stares. I suppose they didn't expect ME, of ALL people, to say ANYTHING... and NEVER to THEM! I feigned going to the loo. And now? Even as I write, the bleating African is in full snore, the little bitches are yelling in the halls and it's already about 2:30am. So much for a pleasant day tomorrow. Once again, I'll be running on nothing but "Death Energy". AGAIN. THIS IS NIGHT THREE OF NO SLEEP! THREE CONSECUTIVE NIGHTS... OF NO SLEEP... and yet... I don't miss a day's work. In a while, if I'm still awake, I'll take my shower, get dressed, get on a subway to somewhere to sleep. Sleep... on a subway train. THIS, DEAR SHIT-FOR-BRAINS, IS HOMELESSNESS! And yet? This isn't much different from the nights at Margot's when, at about this very same hour, she started cleaning closets, and checking plastic grocery bags for holes. Imagine that? Imagine that! And she'd do so, as I laid, trying to sleep on the small sofa, only mere feet away, in the living-room. Here, I actually am grateful in a way, for the luxuries of a my own bed, and a room (albeit shared), out of the way. THERE, I would half-sleep at best, always attentive to Margot's movements, in case I was needed to help her with something, or to see to it that she didn't fall, that her blood sugar was good, and other such "care". Here, the abuse comes from strangers. There... it came from the very person I was attending to. - Anyway, I'm sitting/reclining reverse on the bed, using the light from the hallway to see what I'm writing. The brief wash I'd done earlier is almost all dry. The socks are damp, the t-shirt is already folded. I've a towel needs washing. I think I'll get to that now. No sense even trying for sleep any more. - 3:22m My mistake. Geo as the sorer... snorer. Rey rang his cell phone to wake him so he'd turn to his side and stop. Meanwhile, I washed a towel and snot-rag, had a smoke, took a pee. I'm not planning on any sleep any more. It's a bit too early to shower, although somebody actually is. I can hear the whine of the shower running. Perhaps an Over-nighter? Poor bastard. One came down the hall earlier. Imagine: coming in from the cold, getting a bed at 3:00am only to have some bitch-butt wake you at 8:00am to tell you it's time to got up? Meanwhile, Brindou was awake and Rey just went to the loo. Me? I'm passing time. The post office opens at 6:00am. The 99-cent store in Midwood opens at 9:00am. Library Mid-

Manhattan at 10:00am. The library in Queens at 10am. Brooklyn Central at 9am. And there's all that travel (and sleep) in between. I can go to all those places and sleep on the subway. (THIS is how and why there are people sleeping on the subways. One never knows. One can never tell where the sleepers come from. Never can tell...) And now some bastard is mucking about down the hall, banging things about. But you know? This really is a typical night here. I'd just adjusted to it in the course of time, never journalled it because it seemed mundane. But it truly does depict what *every* night in the shelter is like. No wonder (any more) that there are those who prefer the streets. No wonder... anymore. - The air in here smells like drunks. Geo. - No wonder... any more. - 1:11pm By almost 4:00am I simply gave in and laid back. Actually fell asleep until 8:21am! But that 4 hours wasn't restful and wasn't enough. But that doesn't matter. It was all I could get (in spite of the fact that Geo was still sleeping as I left at almost 9:30am. SHIT! How the hell does he do it... AND get away with it?) Well. No sense wondering. No wonder... any more. - I've made my way to Seaside Library, Rockaway. Rolling along tracks, through tunnels, round and about the city of New York... mostly to get some much-needed sleep. - 7:34pm Back at the Hotel Hell-hole. I've eaten and shat and now I'm waiting. - Yes. I made it to Seaside. The day went: IRT subway trains to the Q35 bus to the post office. Nothing of note there. Then - NO NO NO. Wait. I'm so tired I can't recall this morning! My first trip of the day was to my 99cent store in Brighton/Midwood! 2 pairs of Thinsulate gloves (they didn't have black but I did get a pair for work and a pair for every day), a book light (to replace the one lost when I left the hotel in RockPark), a 2009 calendar book for work (smaller and lighter weight). There was more that I'd have liked to get but... Oh yes. Advil PM. What the Hell? Let's hope it does help with the sleep situation. At this point, I don't care what I sleep through any more, just so long as I sleep. Kill me if you must, at least I'll be sleeping when I go. I just hope Brindou's bleating snoring doesn't keep me awake and I have to go through the following day half dead, as has been the case thus far. Only way to know is to try. - B36 bus, B3 bus, Q35 bus to the post office. Got to the library by about 1:00pm (1:11pm as noted here). A very brief wait for a computer. Finished posting a half day's journal and checked a list of shelters (not a good list, unfortunately) and some e-mails. Out to the Q35 again. It was nippy today out "Home". But the quiet was wonderful. - Brooklyn Central library to post another day's journalling to the blog and back on the train. I'd wanted to do the Mid-Manhattan Library but hunger took me. The Nr.3 train to Atlantic Ave. to the D to W4th Street to the A train to 14th Street to the 6 train to 23rd Street. A walk up and over to D'Ag supermarket and then walked to the hell-hole here where the queue was a mess! I'm not used to waiting any more. And when the queue to get into the building is long, "security" takes even

MORE time, working even slower (or, I must admit, so it seems). - When I got to 5w-101 I was alone! I ate! 2 peanut butter and cream cheese sandwiches, some V8 juice, donuts. Food at last! - 8:07pm and the “muscle pimp” across the hall is kicking up noise and sh** with Harry in the hall. Harry looks doped-up. But these abortions (residents) know how annoying hall noise is. Yet, they have no respect for anything or anybody. Retards. Truly. Retards. I grow more hateful of ALL people the longer I’m in here. (Of course, then there’s Charlie. 193cm of “Oh. Just once.” But only “just once”. He’s really quite nice, when he’s not being pushy and demanding of everybody for everything. I suppose his personality today is the result of a need to be that way over the course of his life-time. And I can’t help but believe, some-how, that he’s teaching me to be a bit more assertive. After all, being so “kind, compassionate, sympathetic and empathetic has gotten me... well... here, in this shelter, alone.) - I’m waiting my turn in the shower before bed tonight. Tomorrow is Friday. I’m planning on going to the post office in the A.M. and P(ay)C(heque) in the P.M. Let’s see how this planning gets screwed. - Showered. Goodnight nurse.

Friday 21 November: 99/68

11:35am at the Lefferts Library where I’ve just gotten up from my 30 minutes on the computer. Blogged another half day. Checked some e-mails. Now I get to sit by the window, looking out on to Lefferts Blvd. How strange this is: I’m hanging in Liz’s old neighbourhood. A curse to her parents, I’m certain, if they knew. She and I haven’t spoken nor seen each-other in a great many years. (And I DO mean “great”, considering how, over the years, politically we’ve grown to complete opposite ends of the political spectrum and, as I recall all too vividly, how, when I asked her NOT to bring things, “things” to me when I was in that cold, wet, unfinished basement at my sister’s, she chose to ignore me and brought things like “wind whirlies”. Imagine, a “wind whirly” in a dark basement. Well, the choice to ignore me was hers. The choice to stop being ignored was mine. And today, here, these years later, I don’t regret my choice at all.) (Oh my. Tee-hee. I just imagined the horror my presence would be if her parents, who’ve hated me for SO long, knew that my feet are now treading “their” neighbourhood! Ah... I needed a bit of a smile this morning.) - I can’t say that the AdvilPM I took last night worked, but I can’t say that it didn’t. I did fall asleep before somebody put the lights out in the room and I suppose the Advil helped that. But at 12:24 this morning, Brindou’s bleating snoring woke me! So I stuffed the earplug in my left ear, with the right ear buried into the pillow, and soon fell back to sleep until about 6:00am! No BM this morning but hot shower, casually dressed since there was no rush at that hour. Out by

8:00am and off to the post office in Rockaway! (My cheque was there. So too, a statement for my Premier Agency payroll card: Overdrawn. The usual. Morons. I'll have to get rid of that damned card lest it does me more damage. The damned company issues these cards, charges us for the "privilege" of having it and then continues to charge for getting our salary and for using it at all... on top of a "monthly charge". I've no doubt that the agency gets kick-backs as well. It makes me sick! I'm working my arse off here, trying to get back on my feet and out of this shelter, Premier is responsible for my being here, I'm NOT working for them any longer but I'm being charged for something as useless as this card... AND that agency.) After the post office, I stopped at the corner market for the local newspaper and got back on the train to here. - I left the shelter at approx. 8:00am and arrived at RockPark at 9:45am! Ridiculous! Unsatisfactory. This is the 21st Century! It should be better. The distance isn't that far. But, no sense wasting ink on the matter. The more things stay the same, the more things stay the same: incompetent. - I'm drowsy this morning but my stomach is good and I'm hungry! Imagine? I'm hungry. Appetite is something I don't have often, as of late. Most of the time I'm just too damned sick. I was good about not finishing every edible last night so there's stuff to eat later. And I'm thinking that this will be my week-end of pride (and defiance) where I'll be travelling, etc. and wearing my kippa. No more wasting a day, sitting in that shelter, wasting away. - This morning, out-side the gate of the shelter, a young "resident" came to me to ask: "Do you live here?" (motioning to the shelter with his head). I didn't even think to say "No". I answered "Yes." immediately. He was amazed that I, a Jew, would be in a Homeless shelter. I'm setting a new bar on the "Jewish reputation". I should take my act to the road, make money "freeing Jews" and impressing Gentiles. Hah hah. - 12:04pm and I could use a nap and lunch. Being at Lefferts already takes away so much stress and it seems that when the stress is reduced, I want to eat and to nap. It's not Rockaway but it's not Manhattan (or The Bronx). And I'm "moments" from work. It's about a 20 minute walk. Maybe I can stop at the market for something to nosh later. I don't know. Not sure. But I would like a nap. No time. No place. Little reminders of Homelessness... no place to close one's eyes and rest. - 8:09pm Back at the "assylum" (that's rather funny, referring to the shelter as an "asylum" since it is, in fact, asylum from the world and too, it was built as an "asylum" for those considered "insane". I wonder sometimes, if it hasn't returned to that purpose, considering those of us who are in it.) - I left the library at 12:24pm, walked casually down Lefferts. Stopped at KeyFood market for bread, honey, cheese (for peanut butter/cheese sandwiches for today's "meal"). Clocked-in at 12:59! H. was having another poor day. I'd really like to talk with Maria (his RN) about his weakness but I fear she'll think I'm trying to show her up and resent me for it. Rosaria certainly didn't appreciate

anything I did for “her” patient, even though Nancy claimed that she appreciated my services to her patients. These “Nurses” exhibit blatant resentment of me for what-ever reason(s) they have. It makes this job all the more difficult knowing that, at any moment, they’ll concoct a “need to retaliate”, whether based in fact or their own phantasy. Still, I want to talk with Maria. If not? I won’t. I have to weigh my ideas with extreme care here. - I left H. at approximately 4:15pm (more “extra time”, free to them) and came directly to the shelter. Getting in this evening was brief because there wasn’t much of a queue. - Rey was in when I arrived. We talked about the snoring last night and I got some interesting information on Brindou. Seems when the window screen bolt is moved (open or close) Brindou bolts up out of sleep! (The suspicion is that the gate-bolt sounds very much like the cocking of a shot gun and indeed, he IS terrified of being killed... for what-ever reason there is for it.) There’s a very serious psychosis there... paranoia or what-ever. But it has Rey and I concerned. If he starts so easily AND has a weapon, we 3 (Rey, Geo, and myself) are in a bit of danger here, should he “go off”. As I told Rey: He’d better kill me completely right off. But in the mean time, if I can, I’m going to get a picture of him with my cell phone. I’ll send it to some place on the Internet, just in case. Maybe to the blog for this journal. That way, should any harm come to any of us, his face will be seen... around the world. If there’s somebody looking for him, ‘hunting him down’ as he claims, they’ll know just where to find him. Any way and meanwhile, it’s agreed that if and when he keeps us awake with his snoring, it’s unfair that he should be well-rested whilst the rest of us suffer sleep deprivation. So, we will do what we can to ensure that HE gets no sleep either. I want to mention it tomorrow when I see Ms. Emaly. I doubt she’ll take any action on the matter... she’s a fellow African. (She’s Nigerian. He’s from Ivory Coast. But I’m sure in these matters, they’ll stick together. It’s shameful but I used to admire Africans. Being in this shelter has brought me to despise them. Arrogant. Loud. Unclean. Disrespectful. And these are, in Brindou’s own words “True Africans”!) But, I’ll give it a go, get the word out that he’s a threat. If one (or more) of “them” kills me? So be it. At least I’ll be at peace, at last. - That said, the 3rd toilet in the loo won’t stop flushing tonight and there’s a sign on the hallway wall indicating that the water will be turned off “Staurday” [sic] from “9-5”. In the meanwhile, we, in this room directly across the hall, will have to listen to it (the flushing) ALL NIGHT! (I’ll be taking more Advil tonight anyway.) But I did a basin wash already, so? My work there is done. - I didn’t cash my cheque today. I saw no need. I’ve got a small cash-stash here and there for cigarettes for the week-end. I’ve got eats for Saturday (Staurday?) and Sunday. So I can certainly wait. - Right now, at 8:40pm, it’s sign-in time. Kendall was “crooked” already at 6:00pm this evening and headed out for more. Geo says Mr. Dimski (his CaseWorker) has agreed to

“hold” his bed over-night. He (Geo) is out to get bombed tonight too. These guys trust case-workers. Fools and idiots be they. NOBODY in this place is to be trusted. And that’s not just my own general, innate distrust. It’s the way of this shelter and the system. The administration of this system is NOT here to be our “friends”... it’s here to corral us, control us, keep careful records of and about us, and collect their salaries because of us. - 8:43pm The Wildcats (a cleaning crew consisting of Homeless residents, so I’ve been told) have come to clean the loo and I’m off to sign-in. They’re “cleaning” is mostly just dumping bleach on the floor and into the toilets (and urinals, if there be any), a swish-splash with an old mop and they’re off and gone. - That written, I’ve signed in, Advil taken. Now... off to (try for) a night’s sleep,

Saturday 22 November: 100 HOMELESS/69SHELTER

9:38am Rather happy to note that I slept through the night with one interruption. 12:50pm and I’m back in the dorm. Why? The day is all but finished. *Very* cold out. Sunny. But cold. Ms. Emaly doesn’t feel well today so my little “appointment” with her took until 10:30am. That just screwed the morning and, subsequently, the day. Another Shabbat gone. If I could attend services in the morning it wouldn’t be so annoying. But I can’t even do that! It’s really obvious anti-Semitism, but considering where it’s coming from, I suppose it’s to be expected. Well, no sense getting worked-up over it. - The water in the shower, wash and toilet rooms is off and, of course, I could move my bowels right about now. I’ve eaten (peanut butter/cheese sandwich) and it got my system going. Things are moving about in there. Oh well. - 4:30pm At 1:00pm I gave up and gave in and “napped” until 4:00pm when STOMACH CRAMPS hit! Luckily, the water was back on by then. A tiny BM that didn’t match the magnitude of my cramps. 4 days worth of food hasn’t come through yet. So now I’m looking forward to a day of serious runs. Typical of how this day has been all along. It started OK. I woke at about 6:30am with the alarm, feeling rested and ready to go with the day. I had my coffee, took my shower, dressed at a leisurely pace and was fine, looking forward to getting out of here for the day... maybe to The Fort (just to go) and then this. - But, in the meanwhile, Rey and I have arranged Geo’s bed to look as though somebody is in it and he’d (Geo) lost it from being out all night. Rey even did the top of the locker up with socks, toiletries and a box from a lock. It looked like somebody had actually taken the bed because, well, for the most part, that sort of disarray is typical around here when somebody “new” comes in. When Geo came in... well, before he came in, a guy from across the hall came by to buy a cigarette from me. (He gave me 50 cents, I accepted the money. In this hole, one takes the cash.

I've already given away "rollies". No more. And certainly not cigarettes from a pack. But the guy gave me a "Buy One Get One Free" coupon! Hey! 50 cents for the cigarette and a free pack! OK. The rollies are paid in full, not by those who've benefited from the freebies, but in general.)

When he, the guy buying the cigarette, came to the door, he whispered. Rey asked why he was whispering and when he pointed at Geo's bed we had to laugh. Next, Rick came buy to check if Geo was here. When he too thought there was somebody in the bed, Rey and I laughed at what a great job we'd done. So, when Geo DID finally come in, (he was beyond drunk and just slightly past blitzed-out to begin with) he looked at the bed and all he could say is "Mr. Dimski f***ed up." He was *certain* there was somebody in his bed. I held my chuckles to myself. I wanted to see how far it would go but Rey lost it and told him what we'd done. He was only mildly relieved but then, he was so drunk at that time. I'm wondering how he'll be when he wakes up (he's been asleep all day). No doubt, if he remembers at all, it won't have any effect at all and he'll be right back to the same crap of leaving for the night. That's the way he is. - Game over and to Ms. Emaly who wasn't feeling well. What should have been a brief encounter with her was an eye-opener, aggravation and annoyance. She's on my back because I'm working only 9 hours per week which doesn't entitle me to housing. Like it's MY fault! She's pushing the "Security" job issue like she's got a personal interest in it. When I told her about Brindou's snoring keeping me awake, her solution was to *MOVE ME*! I told her "No. I don't need the problems of moving to a new room, adjusting to new people and all that. Not now. Just leave it. I'm very sorry I even mentioned it now!" This "move" idea came even after she said that she'd received a complaint from "17" about it! Mindless! And, let's top it off with: I have a "supervisory review" of my case on Thursday at 10:00am. Thursday? Thanksgiving Day. 10:00am? She's *REALLY* putting the shaft up my arse: Weekly appointments on Saturdays so I can't go to services; now, Thanksgiving with Renice? Yeah. It's just obvious at this point. SHAFT! So, I was in quite the mind-set when I left her office. Miserable, dark, heavy mood for the rest of the day. - THEN CAME SOMETHING I JUST NEVER EXPETED TO SEE IN HERE! I came back to the dorm to get a cigarette and went across to the loo and as I walked into the toilet room, my eyes hit, at the last sink, some blonde, dressed "60's mod" fashion, putting on MAKE-UP! And she looked like a GIRL! Not even a "woman" but a girl, perhaps in her late 20's! Guys were coming/going doing the same thing I did: DEAD STOP in disbelief! Yes. It was a guy. We knew it. But it was quite a shock to see none-the-less! OK. That's your style and your life and what-ever one wants to call it. But, as far as I'm concerned: You want to be in the shelter and do that, you're just looking for some very serious trouble. If you get it? Too friggin bad. Not to mention: I've given up my own life-style (as always), my religious

practices, and much, much more to be in here. But this. THIS sh** goes? What the Hell is THAT all about? Oddly enough though, “Miss Thang” just went about “bi’ness” without skipping a beat and when the primping was complete, s/he sashayed out of here like it was OK. It was an experience and a lesson in basic humanity and a sign that I’m still very stuck in some earlier days. So be it... I’d rather be quite dead now anyway. But the most interesting event was when the guy across the hall came in, saw me staring in disbelief and calmly said: “We’re all brothers and sisters here on this earth and everybody is entitled to respect.” I couldn’t argue... he’s perfectly correct. And how wonderful to hear those sentiments... even here... in this “shelter” full of society’s outcasts. - Excitement over and seeing that I wasn’t going anywhere AGAIN today, I passed some time washing the exterior of my locker and settled-in and put hems on the “wash cloths” I’d done by tearing a towel up. The frayed ends kept making threads in the shower which got caught on toes and fingers. So? I sewed them. Yes, I have needles and threads... cheap, but I have, and I’ve used... again. - Now, last night I understand there was a group of people out front of the building giving out long-johns, scarves, gloves to the Homeless. This afternoon at about 12:00pm, there was a group giving hot meals of turkey, ham, sweet potatoes, etc. THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY ACKNOWLEDGE AND CARE! It brings me to think of how true it is that humanity (humanity?) skips over the “good” and “kind” in the world only to see the nasty and sh**. Meanwhile, I was in here, eating cold sandwiches and PopTarts. Oh well. What the Hell? As they say. I have the ability to get what little food I do manage to get. There are people in here who have nothing, and the food that I didn’t eat down-stairs on the side-walk today, was there for those who have nothing. I don’t mind at all. I just hope that those who need managed to get. - (5:33pm Geo just woke and put on the light. I’d been writing by my little book-light all the while so as not to disturb him.) - And so, that brings me to now. My stomach is still cramped. There are signs in the loo “No Smoking In Bathroom” that weren’t there previously. The water’s on. Geo is awake. Rey is out. Brindou is out. The day is gone. The only libraries open late are Brooklyn and The Bronx. Too late now to head out to any of those. I’m faced with the Hell breaking loose as it’s time to go to sleep and yet another night of broken rest. Why not death? Hmm? Why not death? - 8:53pm CW’s (Charlie) talking (high speed, as usual) about going to church. I don’t get that privilege! I get appointments with a case worker on the day I should be attending religious service. It makes me resentful. But I suppose it’s a part of something to force me to find my way out of this horror. I don’t understand it and there’s no answer. Then again, there never is. All I know is: All that fairytale BS about “Higher Being” and ancestors looking after us when they’re “gone” is bunk. I am alone now. There’s nothing and no-one to give any help, aid or support. I’m

alone. And, on that thought, I try for sleep. AdvilPM taken and a hope for sleep tonight. That's all there is. No more.

Sunday 23 November: 101/70 9:31am

Woke at 8:30am. Almost 12 hours of mildly interrupted sleep. But even with the snoring, Geo's coughing, Rey's flatulence, I managed to go back to sleep right away. All said, I DID SLEEP. - I've had to block Angel from calling my cell phone again. From 5:37pm to 5:59pm he called the number 4 times, left lengthy messages that said nothing much, and certainly nothing important. If the calls had been of any... ANY urgency, I'd have gone down there right away. Yes, I'd like to talk with him but I just don't understand the multiple calls, one right after another! It costs me money on the phone every time I listen to his messages and I can't afford that right now. Anyway... - It's been so quiet on the floor this morning. I've gone to the loo. Tiny BM. Where is all the food "intake"? No "output". It's in there, somewhere. At this rate, I'll be heading for a hospital bed in short order and a disimpact (*manual "disimpaction" is used to remove stool in cases of serious constipation... it's what I'd had to do myself whilst in hospital earlier on*)... or surgery and a colostomy. - This morning's first thought was the calculations for the year 2010. First thought of the day: Death. Peace. When? When? Not soon enough. Just not soon enough. 2010 reduced to its lowest whole number would be 55 (20 divided by 2 is 10, divided by 2 is 5. 10 divided by 2 is 5. "55". I was born in 1955. My Mum died at the age of 55. She was born in 1933 and died in 1988. The double digits. I should be so very, very fortunate! But I seriously doubt that will be the case. This world is so full of HATE against me. Always has been.) - For now? Waiting for the shower. The Mid-Manhattan Library is open 1:00-5:00pm today. Brooklyn, 1:00-6:00pm. Today I'm going to travel to both, blog the journal, look to tomorrow and more blogging. I want all of these notes on-line. Why? It's all I have left to my existence. The rest of my 53 years on this Earth... is gone. I'll die and decay in a shroud of hate and resentment. So be it. I'll see to it or others will. - A delightful start to a day, this. No? - Well, 1:15pm at the Mid-Manhattan Library. Computer reservation at 2:00pm. - After passing the time sketching this morning, I walked up to here so to pass time not standing and waiting for buses and to get the exercise as well. It's not really that cold out, but I just don't feel like "standing and waiting". However, I am feeling some-what dissociated from the world, not at all at peace with anything and quite disgusted with everything and every-body. And people aren't making it any better. Walking slowly, erratically on the sidewalks, 2 pushed ahead of me as I queued to get in here. Another pushed ahead as I as I

queued for the computer reservation. And it seems the retards have all been given day passes and set free to roam about the world. Either that or the mild cold has frozen their brains (what brains there might be). Yes, I'm in the mood for death... mine. But that would be kindness and justice... neither of which exist in Creation. - And so, on 34th Street, I passed a wheel chair, parked against the front of a building, so loaded with wool blankets that, if a body was/is actually under them, one can't tell. Wool blankets... those that were distributed free, here, in front of the shelter last week, in the middle of the night. I didn't get one. I was already in bed, under the "Summer" blankets I've managed to hoard from various linen days. - I suppose it's all beginning to get to me lately. My computer, clothes, books, all my Internet work, art work, writings, past, history, "life", existence... gone, gone, gone, gone. No remorse. No feelings at all from those who shoved me along to where I am today. And, as I think on it: why and how did I get here? Because I'm a frigged-up-idiot. I cared for and about the very ones who turned away. I've let Fate and Creation handle things. I've followed the bleating "Golden Rule" and everything and every one has trampled me and my existence into nothing. Now I'm an "HA number and case file", wandering about NYC each and almost every day. I have no past. I have nothing tangible of my past accomplishments. I have no "me". But I do have a want/wish/hope/dream/desire/prayer: That those who are responsible for this, no matter how remotely, not die, but suffer one year for every minute I suffer and 10-fold. Compassion? I have none. And I'm not trying to find any... in myself or others. Enough has reached more than enough. I've NEVER be-moaned my hardships in life. I've NEVER "blamed" others. And I don't do either of those today. Instead, today, I note them, all too simply, I note them, here, on these pages, in these little notebooks, just to get a "Truth" out... "Truth"... that thing precious few know, and even fewer want to know. - (Monday the 24th. 10:09am at the Mid-Manhattan Library) By 9:00pm I'd signed-in and was looking forward to a good night of (broken) sleep. But, Kendall stopped by and we all had a few good laughs for a while. There are moments when great laughs can be had, even in this place of deep oppression, depression, despair. I've been fortunate in having been placed in a group of (mostly) good guys. - Kendall is talking of going to someone's home on Thursday for the Thanksgiving holiday. Rey too has plans. Geo has family or friends in The City or The Bronx. Brindou? He'll probably find some pathetic African bigot to take him in. me? Alone. I'll probably go out to the beach, alone, as I have in recent years. If weather permits, I'll go to Rockaway and simply walk the length along the water. If it's not pleasant enough, I might go to Brighton and sit in one of the pergolas along the board-walk. What-ever. It makes no difference to me at all, one way or another. I've been alone on every holiday for so many years now that that's my "normal", and I've grown to actually

wanting to be solo on holidays... that way there's no arguing, debating... I can have silence or not, but I CAN have at least some degree of "serenity"... as long as I'm alone. - So, I took my AdvilPM, tucked me in and waited for sleep.

Monday, 24 November: 102/71

10:17am at the Mid-Manhattan Library: Sleep didn't come until about 5:30am this morning! The brain wouldn't let the body go. No particular thoughts. Nothing specific. Just no sleep! By 7:21am I was up and off to the shower. Charley was in the next shower this morning. Always making with the conversation. A taller man than I and, in spite of his almost "coke-induced" ramblings, a good man. Well, anyway... I was showered and dressed and out of the shelter by about 8:15am to cash my cheque and come here to the library where I'm blogging away (and not much else these days... determined, as I am, to get these note-books into digital format and someplace where they can't be taken or misplaced). - As I sit to catch up with this journal, a message from my patient's daughter. He has a cold. I shouldn't come to work today! I'm sitting here in my scrubs, dressed for work. It's not even 10:30am. I NEED the income! But I could do the library loop today and blog more. Not to mention, I could get food? Or go to the Fort (and piss off Penelope simply with my presence - if she's there.). Well, here goes. I'll call the necessary contacts at the office and see what the day does. I'm tired anyway... - 12:43pm at the Brooklyn library. Mary cancelled my appointment at work. Kristin, at the agency, has nothing for me. Rockaway got my finger-print reports but the client they were going to give me is in hospital, so no "Home Care" there. Nancy, the RN out in Rockaway has nothing for me. But she tells me that Premier, the agency that screwed me over in the first place, is not VNS vendor any longer. I wonder what kind of screw-ups Premier did to have Visiting Nurse drop them. I can imagine, I truly can. Well then, that agency screwed me, and now they've got one less source of revenue... one VERY important source. It doesn't help or save me, but, it's the "little things" in life that make a difference if we stop long enough to consider their consequences. - So, having the day to myself, I've actually "blogged-in" to the 27th August! (Page 15 of 94 in the "Monogram" note book. Only 79 blank pages to go. Tee hee.) Now? I've got to pee (never gone to the loo here), am hungry, can't decide between the Fort or Far Rock. But, once I pee, maybe... the Fort? Ah... let's see where the day shoves this Homeless old worth-nothing. - 7:41pm and back at bed Nr. D18. So, I used the loo at Brooklyn Central library, walked out the door and down the grand front stairs. In the middle of Grand Army Plaza, I rang Angel. Seems he lost his bed one night where he was at the other

shelter. He says he got shipped back here, to Bellevue for the night! According to him, he'd been working and he lost his bed! I know that his hours at the new job were rather erratic, and didn't always coincide with the "curfew" demands of this place. But he's working! This whole system is so counter-productive! A bunch of total worth-sh**--for-nothings. Those who are here who don't even try to better their lot in life simply roll along, receive favours, are treated rather well, considering. Those of us who try on our own, are ambitious, have self-esteem and dignity are treated like renegades. It's counter-productive, annoying and aggravating, but me, I get what I want: bed, sh**, shower, done. So? So. As we settled it, I'll ring him this evening (I blocked his number from my cell so he can't call me back and I didn't tell him that I've blocked him.) Maybe we'll meet up tomorrow. - Ah. Tomorrow's Viv's birthday. I miss her and hope this Life has given her all the Very Best possible and more. I can't help but remember the last time we were together, so long ago and the horrible situation she was in then, being stalked by her "husband" and being alienated from her friends. Honestly, my heart and soul ache to think of the possibility of her still suffering. Honestly, she should have so much happiness in her life... she truly should. - So I got on the train to The Junction and to the Q35 bus to The Fort. I had no intention of going to The Fort. I was headed to Far Rockaway library. But as the bus crossed the bridge and I could see clearly enough, I looked into the Fort at T6. The parking lot was empty. I can't help but think dear Penelope's staying away so as not to be there if/when I go. It's sophomoric of me to think such a thing but she's certainly capable of such nonsense. I had to transfer to the Far Rock bus anyway, so I had to get off the Q35 at the gate to the Fort. When the Q22 Far Rock bus arrived, to my complete and absolute delight, Willie was the driver! How truly wonderful and spectacular to see her! THE link to my most joyful days on the Peninsula! But she was exhausted and not her usually good-spirited self. She didn't exchange smiles or talk so I took a seat quietly until we got to Far Rock. As I left the bus we got to chat. It had been a difficult day for her but as we talked, the Willie I'd come to know and luv returned and it was well with all again. As sweet as she is, that route can be a bit of terror and torture. At the Fort end, all is peaceful, bucolic, the ocean, the open, silent space. But as the bus rolls in the other direction, toward Far Rock, the calibre of people changes, horribly. Passengers have been know to threaten the life of the driver, spit at them and generally behave worse than a cage of wild beasts. I don't know how Willie manages to keep up her position on this run. But when I'm on the bus, I try my best to get her to smile because when she does, it seems all's well with the world. As I left the bus, she was smiling... hopefully for the rest of her day. - Well then, it was off to the Far Rock library where I got a computer immediately and blogged more. By the time I was ready to leave, it was already

4:00pm! An entire day had gone by. So I stopped at the Associated market for “dinner” and on to the A train to return to the “Hotel Sh**-hole” here. - 6:00pm, nobody too much on queue to get into the building. Rey was in the room when I arrived, on the phone. I changed and ATE! hoping for a quick night and a sleepful night. - At about 8:11pm, I rang Angel. He’d been sleeping! How these people sleep is beyond me. He asked me to call back in an hour. So I did. He’s got a meeting tomorrow at 10:00am so he asked that I should call him at 11:00am. (By 11:00am I’m well on my way around the World!) - By 9:15pm I’d taken my Advil and was under the covers, hoping for a death-like sleep. - Notes: When I got in this evening, I put a fresh bottle of water up on the hallway water cooler and I cut my finger on the plastic bottle-cap. I now have, on the cut, a bandage made of toilet paper and Elmer’s glue. - Geo is in self-destruct mood again, this evening. He claims he’s useless. Imagine? He’s talking about jumping from bridges. For some reason, he’s infatuated with the Tappan Zee bridge up-state. Says he’s heard of successful suicide jumps from it. But, he doesn’t know where it is. As I told him tonight, he’s only heard tell of suicides but not attempts that didn’t end up in death and those are horrible! It’s not so much that I’m trying to talk him out of his suicides, but more that I don’t want him to suffer, in the event his efforts fail. We also discussed the inhalation of salt water and how it burns. How about that? Me, almost talking somebody out of suicide. Hey! He’s 43 (so is my estranged brother). He’s cute. He’s got childish charm. He really could be out there and most likely, happy. He just needs to give himself a break (and cut back on the beer). And so, in the midst of “therapy”, he fell off to sleep. Hopefully all will be better tomorrow. These holidays are just impossibly difficult for all too many. And in here? In a shelter? Some have family or friends to go to. Others (me?) have no one. Me? I’ve spent a life-time learning to dodge it all until it’s all a lot of sh**. I wouldn’t take the holiday spirit from anyone. But I sure as hell can try to help make it all more “real”. And hopefully tolerable for those who could be devastated by it all. My “gift” to humanity. - And so, my AdvilPM taken, I hope for nothing more than a night’s sleep. Amen. (Bullsh**!)

Tuesday 25 November: 103/72

And so, the day: It’s 9:14pm and the evening’s Advil is taken. May this be a night like last night... sleep all the way through. - This morning brought rain and with it, and last night’s Advil, I slept until 8:00am. I got up, grabbed a brief shower and was off to catch the M15 bus to 42nd Street and the M42 bus to Madison Ave. A brief stroll to the MMLib as it is, and an immediate 10:15am computer appointment. After blogging, I’d gone to the 5th floor of the library to journal and as I

wrote, the phone rang. It was Kristin, from PIC Agency with a “2-hour client”, 4 days per week, out on B25th Street... Rockaway! Well. It’s 8 hours more per week than I have, so I took it. It’s a 2,5hr. ride there and the same (if not a bit longer) back, but, with the “Unlimited” travel card for the transport, it doesn’t cost me more, but it gives me more toward getting out of this situation and a return to a “normal” life. And I work 2 hours on Thursday, Thanksgiving, at time and half pay. I have to make up for the 3 hours of work I lost on Monday when Mary cancelled my working with her father. It conflicts with my appointment with Renice on Thursday morning but, I need the money and I need to take cases for the agency. It’s going to be tough: 10:00am to 12:00pm in Far Rock and 1-4:00pm in So. Ozone. I can do the commute with little-to-no trouble. But hopefully it will lead to something better, quickly. Right now, the job is top priority and to Hell with all else. - Well, with that settled, and with a brighter frame of mind and mood, I was out and away from the Mid-Manhattan library, to the 7 train at Times Square and the train to Grand Army and Brooklyn Central library. And it rained. Not a heavy rain, thankfully. At Brooklyn Central library, I got another immediate computer. Another page of the journal blogged. When I left, the rain was letting up. I timed a trip: To the Franklin Shuttle and Rock Blvd. Just about an hour. If I go to Brooklyn Central before going to So. Ozone, the trip would be about 1,5 hours. Good to know, since I keep managing every single “free” moment I have these days, wasting none of it. But for today, I stayed on the train to Far Rock. - B25th Street is by Bayswater. Private houses. Hopefully my 2 hours each morning will be light work, in a good environment. Oddly enough, my only connection to a “home life” these days is when I go to work... in a house, where there’s a living-room, kitchen, bed-rooms and a loo with only one toilet and no wooden stall doors. How sad, but it is what it is and what I deal with now. - I got my hour on the computer at Far Rock library. Printed some prose pieces. I think there’s a reading on the 7 December “Writers’ Group” at T6 at the Fort. If so, I’ll have a couple of pieces to read. And why not? I doubt it’s going to get me “fame”, but maybe it’ll get me a “reputation” (other than the one I’ve already got... which isn’t all the good, one must say). Anyway, as I got to Far Rock I looked out the windows of the train. It’s elevated along the length of the peninsula and looks out over the open Atlantic. The ocean waves were beautiful, the sky was almost clear and all was drenched in sunshine. Sunshine in Rockaway. It was good to be “Home”. After all, Rockaway is “Home”... where I *should* be... where I *want* to be... where I *SO* want to be... and, at the end of these days, a painfully difficult place to leave. - At about 4:30pm I was back on the A train and heading back to The City, back to the “Hotel Sh**-hole”. - Back in Manhattan, I got off at 23rd Street and made a quick stop at the DuaneReade for cigarettes. The guy down the hall had given me a coupon: B1G1

(Buy 1 Get 1). 2 packs for the price of one! (Well, almost. I had to pay the “tax” on the “free” pack. Honestly! The way OTHERS make money and we, the working idiots, get to pay it... even those of us who can't afford a place called “home”.) On the way back to the shelter, I strolled past Nr.330 again. It's still unsettling, passing that building. No Zuri. (No Viv. None of the people who ever meant anything in my life-time. What happened in my life? What's happened *TO* my life?) A stop at D'Ag's market for yoghurt and sweets and... Hell. - Coming into the shelter this evening, the “junkie Puerto Rican” from the 2nd floor was behind me, doped-up and throwing fits, slapping the walls and yelling. How I would have enjoyed twisting his head and breaking his neck! Not just because of this but for the nights he kept me awake when I was in A108! But? But. He's just not worth the results. I'd be blamed and, in spite of all the turmoil he causes, I'd be punished. I *should* be rewarded, but that's not how society or “dee seestim” works. So, I focused on my destination, blindly walked through the door, the x-ray, the metal detector and up to the room to eat. - By 8:45pm I'd signed-in. By 9:15pm, AdvilPM. By 9:45pm the hope for sleep. And early morning tomorrow. I put on my sleeping scrubs, got under my little blankets on my metal-frame bed, put my head on my pillow and.... as far as I was concerned, closed this day behind me.

Wednesday 26 November: 104/73

4:47am NOT ONE BLOODY BLEATING MOMENT OF SLEEP ALL BLOODY BLEATING NIGHT! I'VE BEEN OUT OF BED FROM SINCE 4:28am! THAT BLOODY-BLEATING UBANGY SNORING ALL NIGHT! Rey slammed a locker at 4:15am. There was no sense even trying for sleep any more. So I gave up trying so I got up, took my note-book and have been “hanging out” in the hall until now... It's going to be an interesting day, trying to function and stay awake all day. - 10:20am at the Far Rock library. “Interesting” day? More like generally screwed! I was on the 6 train at 8:11am, arrived at B25th Street at 9:35am... No answer at the door. I waited a bit and then called the agency. Kristin confirmed the client has been admitted to hospital last night! No client! No money! No sh**! I'm so bleating exhausted! After a night of Hell at the shelter, no sleep, and now THIS! THEN, another call from my “Mr. H's” daughter, the afternoon client. SHE isn't sure if I should work there today because her father might have a cold. I'm supposed to be there to take care of him... BECAUSE he's not well. That's what you hired me for! She's going to call me at some point this morning to let me know whether or not I should go there this afternoon. And I'm low on phone time. I've got 23\$ to use and 10\$ I'd like to save. This morning, in the hall at the shelter, I “sold” 2 of my cigarettes for 60 cents. I smoked THREE

before I left (hiding in the toilet stall, of course and hoping I wouldn't get caught)! (Sh**! I was awake and because of Brindou, there was no going to sleep at all.) You know? I'm actually getting to be quite the racist with the "preferential treatment" I'm witnessing in the shelter. I mean: A weapon was found and confiscated in Brindou's possession! It was never documented and no punishment is given. The "security" (laugh!) staff, the social/case staff, "Operations" staff: Black and African. An obvious bias is there and I'm fed-up with it!- 6:03pm On the shuttle at B116th Street, Rock Park. Me alone, in the car with my Waldbaum's bag of yoghurt and cream cheese and V8 for tonight's "meal". And 2 types of pre-packaged turkey cold-cuts for tomorrow's "Thanksgiving" meal which, according to plan right now will be sandwiches on the beach at the Fort, alone.) And so the day draws to a close. Here I am... miserably and truly heart-sick about leaving Rockaway... Here we go... - Well I got back to the Hell-hole by almost 8:00pm. On the trip coming back, I sat on the train and watched my Home disappear. At Broad Channel, I stood at the southern end of the platform and just stared at the "sky-line" of Rockaway, in the darkness. I looked at the trestle that spans the bay and came to hate it because it leads away from, and loved it because it leads back to the place I miss, the place I call "Home". Some Black guy came up, excused himself. He needed to pee... and did so, off the end of the platform. I couldn't dislike any of it. Facilities for basic needs aren't provided. When he'd done his "do" he came back over to me and began talking (and wouldn't listen to me because he had head-phones on) and wouldn't shut up! The next thing I know, he's trying to sell me "God". How pathetic. I mean, here I am, a Homeless, working idiot... residing in a public shelter, and he wants ME to fall for some "God" lines? Honestly... if HIS "God" works for him, then take it and run, but DON'T come shoving it into my face and try to shove it down MY throat. I tell no-one about my belief system... I don't want to hear about theirs. Period. And oh... I wondered: Does your "God" approve of you peeing on public property? Well, as all this went along, the next train into Manhattan arrived. I boarded. I read the paper. I was exhausted. - Waiting for the bus at 14th Street at 1st Avenue: Thoughts: Zuri? Why did you leave? Why did you feel you HAD to die? Why am I back here in this neighbourhood where I once lived? Why here, where there are memories? The Eye and Ear Infirmary is here! Margot! The cow. haKalbah! (the bitch) Memories. I hate being in The City! I hate the traffic, the noise, the people, the buildings. Hate it all! I'm so bleating bitter now. I don't harbour "hate". "Bitterness" is all in and around me. It's no longer transient moments. It's full-time bitterness. It's ALL bitterness. The bus came. I boarded for the trip up 1st Ave. to... BACK to... an evening in Hell - When I got to the shelter and in the front door, the idiot ahead of me at "security" was stoned. The security monkeys asked to see my socks! (Yeah well.) As if I'd be

bringing in any sort of weaponry (like the spear-chucker in our room) or drugs. Well, I got through all that, keeping my mouth shut and moving right along. - In the room, everybody was “in”, I was starved! 2 rolls, a bit of honey, half block of cream cheese each. I ate. - Sign-in. As I stood waiting, “the old guy” from Nr.20 came out to the hall, stopped, put his hand to his chest, and I could see he had very laboured breathing. He stopped to sit on a trash can. Next thing, a guy is asking him if he’s OK. The old guy asks for help to his room. He’s got me and the other guy who are more than ready and willing to help him. Before long, everybody on the floor knows he’s bad and we’re keeping watch, taking turns going to his door and looking in on him. No matter how different, how disparate, how low we may appear on Life’s ladder, we are all, in time of need, one, true “family”. In here, in times of need and possible crisis, indeed, we are all “brothers”... “Homeless brothers”. WE care more for us than THEY could or would ever. - Meanwhile, Kendall’s having his own night of alcohol-soaked bliss and, like about a week ago, is making plans for more (drinking). BUT... his little plans get cancelled when we, those who actually care about and obviously FOR him, through our own “planning” (and scheming of course) manage to get and hide his shoes and phone, cash “removed” from his person and put out of his sight, he’s “escorted” to his bed and another “watch” commences. For all it’s worth, there’s a remarkable camaraderie in this place. It’s a shame that the world can’t function like this. What a wonderful place we’d have. We “residents” know almost nothing about each-other, and it doesn’t matter. We’re “here”, in it together. Honour amongst out-casts. - Well, right now, my Advil is taken and my thoughts are of hopes for a peaceful and sleepful night. HEY! I don't have much “hope” for anything else in my existence these days. I may as well “hope” for sleep.

Thursday 27 November: 105/74

“Thanks (for nothing) giving”. The Holidays “begin. BANG! 3:00pm at bed Nr. D18. Who the Hell really cares? Really ! - Here I sit, dressed. Over-cast out-side. The plans to go home, Gaston, the Fort, dashed. Done. Beard trimmed. Shaved. Here I sit. It’s been “a day”. It was a night of deep sleep. From (I think) 11:00pm to 9:00am. I hear I slept through the 2:00am “bed-check”. Good for sleep. Bad for not being aware. “Aware” is necessary at all times in here, especially lately when there are “Over-nighters”, those who have no “assigned” shelter or bed, coming and going. Some of them are “regulars”, they come into the shelter at night, under the guise of being Homeless and needing a place to sleep, and all the while, what they truly want, is to get into the shelter for a while, just long enough to either search the place for anything we, the residents, may have left on

a bed or locker so they can grab it and run out the door... not to be seen again... until their next "visit". Others come in looking for particular "targets", somebody against whom they have a grudge, somebody they may have had a run-in with "out in the streets" and are coming to "settle a score". "Aware" is what keeps a person alive and un-damaged. I slept through all of this. But, I slept! I'll accept that for it's own merit. - The one we know as "Muscle Guy" or "Tony Muscle" knocked on 20's door today to check on him. A few of us stayed here through the day. Some went to dinner at the Bowery Mission. Some partook of the "Holiday Meals" here. Some have gone to friends or family. I don't understand: friends and family... who let these guys stay in a shelter? They KNOW these guys are Homeless and in a shelter and offer them nothing better. And yet, these guys keep their connections with these people. I don't understand. Invite them to a holiday dinner and send them back out to a shelter. There's a lot that's wrong there. But, who am I? Nobody. - But "Tony Muscle" is a truly wonderful fellow of about, maybe, a young 50 years, shorter than I (which isn't saying anything particular at my height), dark-skin Black guy with a disposition that is absolutely wonderful. Mostly rather cheerful, talks good sense, and is, obviously, compassionate. Certainly non-threatening at all, not even in the very least. One of the nice people... "people" on this floor... in this "ward". - Ah, but this day. This morning, I showered and such and certainly didn't rush to my 10:00am appointments with Ms. Emaly. I signed her "list" at about 10:20am or so, sat in that alcove off the hall that they call "the lounge" and waited. At about 10:40am she called my name... "Kessluh!" she barks from half the way down the hall. "I have good news for you. Your case worker has returned. You sign on her list over here." As she blithered, Ms. Simpson called me into the office. She is short, heavy-set, and speaks with such a mumble that she's almost unintelligible. I was sweet. I was charming. I did the "ego-stroke". We begin almost from the beginning... again, with my history of coming into the shelter, my "goals" the policies of the shelter and all the rest. But now, my weekly appointments are Tuesdays. I can go to services if I so choose! Even to Rockaway... if I so choose. Let's see if I so choose. I'm just wondering what sort of social worker this Ms. Simpson is. No matter. I don't trust her either way. I don't trust ANY of them at all! - 4:31pm I've had my turkey sandwiches which I threw together, opening a package of the cold-cuts I'd kept in my locker over-night, onto the rolls I kept in my locker over-night, with some mustard that I'd kept in my locker over-night. And I slapped it all together so that I wouldn't be seen eating in the room, and ate them between checking that nobody was coming down the hall. That was my "Thanksgiving turkey dinner". Now, I'm having a peanut butter and honey sandwich. Geo just left to go to be with either some friends or family for the holiday. Rey's been gone all day. He's off to have dinner with his family. Brindou left

early this morning. Kendall will be leaving soon. He too, will be having holiday dinner with family. All said, the entire floor is dead silent. Well. Here I am, as always, as usual, alone. Imagine? Thanksgiving... alone in a shelter for Homeless men. Alone, in the shelter, on Thanksgiving, eating peanut butter and honey on a roll. Thankful? Me? Oh yeah. Very. Uh huh. Right. OK. I've never been much of one for "holidays" and that sort of thing. Holidays of my child-hood were atrocities, the old man usually getting drunk, beating the Hell and Life out of Mum and then careening down the road to go be with his "Mommie". And then, as years passed, holidays were so ruined through-out child-hood that I dodged them at every chance I had, declining invitations, feigning illness or, when possible, working. But THIS, being HERE? It's not that I'm not happy to have a place of shelter, nor is it that I don't appreciate the fact that I DO have something to eat. But being HERE and knowing that there are people "out there" who know I'm here, people who repeatedly have called themselves my "friend" to my face... and here I am... in a shelter... Homeless, eating cold-cuts and sitting on a plastic-covered mattress, on a metal bed... in a shelter. Yes, it DOES get to me... only a little, but it does. - Other-wise, I've washed some socks and my under-shorts. I'm still dressed in shirt and jeans (but bare-foot). It's becoming evening already. Too late to head anywhere. With trains running the Sunday schedule, I couldn't make Rockaway in under 2 hours. As I pointed out to Geo: 2 hours there, 2 hours back with no stop in between? Round-trip, I'd be back at 8:30pm, just in time to sign for the bed. Why bother? What I think I WILL do is nap. Sleep is something I haven't gotten much (or enough) of lately. Sleep whilst the place is calm or forever lose your peace. - Somehow I don't really want to sleep. But I don't want to stay awake either. This is the closest I've been to my own life-style in months: quiet, alone, inside, on a holiday. - What is a "holiday" anyway? A lot of nothing, really. An excuse to do nothing. A reason to spend money that one either doesn't have or can ill-afford to spend to impress people who don't care and don't matter at best. And so? That's what I'm doing... I think I'll wash my jeans... - 9:24pm And so I did; hand-washed my jeans in the basin in the wash-room across the hall, and now they're on the locker. Also washed 2 pairs of socks and my under-shorts. Accomplishments for the day. - Well, I'm signed-in for the night, have taken my Advils early. - Midnight... Rey came back in first this evening so I sat up talking with him until 11:55pm! I like talking with him. He's one of the very rare and few voices of any reason and intelligence in this place. So, in summary of this "Thanksgiving Day": It was a very quiet day. It was a very good day. Gave me down-time. No sense being concerned about tomorrow. It will take care of itself when it gets here.

Friday 28 November: 106/75

11:37am at the Far Rockaway Library. I was up this morning with the alarm. I don't know exactly how, but Brindou started his snoring shortly after the lights went out last night. My stomach knotted, my anger rose. The stress level hit the roof... and I drifted off... maybe thanks to the Advil. 6 hours of sleep. But, so far, it was enough. I'm functioning. This morning, before leaving the shelter, I talked with Rich, Rey and Kendall.. that "crew". And what a crew they are! What a great beginning to a day. Good people. - I hit the rails by 8:00am, got to the post office by 9:43am. There was a cheque for what is now, a "full week" of work (for all it's worth). Stopped at the corner market in Rock Park and got "The Wave" and grabbed the bus at B118th Street on the Boulevard. It's a glorious, slightly over-cast day in Rockaway. A bit of a chill in the air but just the kind to make me heart-sick at the prospect of leaving. - On the bus to get here, a few stops after I boarded, I hear "How the hell are you?" It was Debra! A wonderful addition to the "Home-Coming". We sat on the bus, talking about agencies, hours, rates, housing, Section 8. We talked all the way to Mott Ave.! She's a charm, and such a part of what I know as "Home". WOW! It did my spirits so much good to see her and hear her voice and talk with her. It's a link to "home", to a place of sanity and purpose, to a place where I "lived"... even for a short while, and even under a tree. But it's a place I love and she is a part of that. I have connections here... in my little town, as it were. - And so, at the end of the bus line, Debra and I parted, I came into the library and I got my time in on the computer and "blogged" the second day of September on-line. What a trip down the old memories, back to where this Hell began. It's actually getting difficult to enter because it really was the beginning of the "end". Makes me wonder who will ever get to see it... and if anybody will ever get to see it. And if anybody who DOES get to see it, this, I wonder if any of this will mean anything to any of them. I wonder if anybody will ever understand it. I wonder if it will ever do any good, if it will help the Homeless who follow me. I wonder if anybody will ever give even half a sh** about US... we PEOPLE, HUMAN BEINGS. I seriously doubt anything will come of this but, if nothing else comes of it, at least there's a record. My past journals are gone. They didn't mean anything to my sister. SHE and her husband and my brother tossed them into a storage bin... and then... let some strangers buy them at an auction. My "past" is now, more than likely, little more than landfill, along with old, rotting left-overs, pee-filled disposable diapers, and rotting remnants of other bits of this world that mean nothing to anybody. This one? I'll protect it. I'll put it on a computer, out there, some-where, and if anybody cares, they can see it... one day... if... anybody... cares. - So, by noon I was on the train to Rock Blvd. OH! The ocean was beautiful as the train rolled along the elevated tracks! I didn't want to leave and Fate stepped

in to help: the bridge to Broad Channel was open! We sat for about 10 minutes at... of all the places on Earth... Gaston! And I certainly didn't mind *that* at all. - I actually made it to work and clocked-in at 1:00pm exactly! H. was in good spirits. M., his daughter, said it was the best he'd been in days and said that he'd been asking for me. How charming. (Sadly, I almost wish I cared about her words, but I truly don't. I care about getting her father well enough to regain some independence. THAT is why I am doing this work.) I got *some* good work in with him today and told M. and J. that I believe he really does want to walk again but he just *can't*. I'm thinking Parkinson's or something. They're talking of extending my time. Not increasing hours though, just extending the length of this contract (so I'll be forcing more from PIC or going with Rock. Home Svces.). When I left this evening, I felt good about what got accomplished. But... I'd eaten half a Cadbury bar before and too many cookies during work. My blood sugar was WAY off on the train to The City! I wanted to sleep, the fatigue of eating too much sugar. I actually couldn't get up from the seat to get off the train at Broadway Junction so I stayed on and rode along. And even at 14th St. it was a great effort to get up! But I managed to get to the L train back to 1st Av. and onto the M15 bus. My original plan was to cash my cheque tonight but... nope, that was impossible in my condition. SO... I came to the "Hotel Hellhole". - NOBODY at the entrance to the building and the lift was mine, all alone! Almost "normalcy" of the out-side world! (But nothing to eat for "meal". Probably OK since I can't move my bowels for about, oh, a month now?) - Managed to wash 2 T-shirts. The *Dor Chadash* shirt, my favourite, won't come back to white any more! My clothes are being ruined! I don't have any more than what is on my back, and a few pieces in a black plastic trash bag that has become my "luggage". Well, then so too, is my life, I suppose. But there are other things to note (at 10:14pm): The old guy in 20 is looking quite a bit worse now. He really shouldn't be in this sh**-hole. He needs proper medical attention. He's bone and skin and his breathing is heavily laboured. It's a perfect scenario of in-humanity and apathy, watching a human being waste away and slowly moving toward death. And, imagine, in a Homeless shelter... with nobody in the world... except other Homeless people. "Friends". "Family". Right. But the guy down the hall actually brought him his dinner. We do tend to take care of each-other in here. Sh**! If WE don't, no one else will. For all the evil this place represents, there's some truly wonderful goodness and kindness in here too. To wit, I've got Geo's jackets, shoes and back pack in my locker. He was already bombed when I got in this evening. He's pulling his "nights out" *way* too thin lately so we (we?) decided to try to keep him in tonight and taking and hiding his clothes and back-pack was the only way to do it. It's working well. It's 10:31pm and he's out cold in his bed, asleep. How we'll do it on the week-end is another

story. But he's in, safe, asleep for tonight. What's best is, he doesn't know who took his things or where they are and everybody's taken the blame: Me, Rey, Rich, Kendall... the crew. Ah... I'm feeling like a "parent". But, why not? WE actually CARE what happens to Geo... AND to each-other, un-like the "staff" and those "friends" and "family" on the out-side who've turned their backs on us in our time of greatest need. - On my way up here this evening, the lift passed the 5th floor (mine) and stopped on the 7th. When I got off, Ms. Pax was in the sign-in office so I stopped to say hello. She appeared glad to see me. We spoke very kindly and briefly. (More ego-stroking. They'll remember me when I'm gone... for nice reasons.) - 10:38pm Rich and Rey are doing push-ups in the hall. Bed-check's been done. I have no sleep aids for tonight. Am thinking of maybe trying for services tomorrow if my 2.99\$ black pants pass for "appropriate" wear. I'm thinking of going to either Beth El synagogue in Rockaway or the one on 23rd Street. We'll see how/IF I get any sleep tonight. (As I write, Brindou is already starting the snoring BS so it may be a sleepless night. I need to find out *why* this bleating African sh** is here! And I *will*.) Rey's coming back. My book-light is going dim... so are my eyes. Time to try for a nap until...

Saturday 29 November: 107/76 3:33pm

Well, another Saturday of "observance"... FORCED! The bleating snoring began around midnight. At 12:05am Rey, Geo and I were still very much awake. Geo reading the paper by the light of the hallway. Rey and I were talking about roads, towns, etc. in the Hudson Valley. How strange to meet this fellow, here, who is, essentially a stranger in this country to begin with, who knows the roads I drove and walked as a child, in a relatively obscure part of this state. And, how odd to recall and remember that part of my child-hood... with a stranger. Well, we were awake... and talking. *Everybody* needed to be awake! As it ended... this morning I woke at almost 10:30am! The day was screwed. Lost. (3:57pm and I'm still in my blue scrubs that I sleep in. Haven't showered. Didn't brush my teeth. Ate some peanut butter and honey. The day. Shot! - At about 6:31am I woke, briefly (because my alarm woke Rey who woke me). Geo stepped out for a quick smoke and I returned his clothes, nice and neatly whilst he was away. As of even now, he's not sure who pulled "The Kendall" on him, though he has his suspicions and I admit to nothing. But, as much as it actually hurt me to keep him in last night, I know it was for the best. Even Kendall told him: "They do it because they love us." True, that. None of us wants to see another getting into trouble, or worse, losing the meagre shelter and bed that we have. I do suppose it's a sort of "love" for one-another. Hell! We don't get it from those who CLAIM they "love" us, or even care

about us. Again, WE are ALL we have now. - Another one for the book: Rich had to see Ms. Emaly this morning. After the usual “appointments” and the sitting and waiting for them, the “Case Workers”, he gets to her and she coldly tells him “I am no longer seeing people on Saturday I have 15 new cases so I will have to see you another day.” Rich says “OK. What day?” She asks: “What are you doing now?” He calmly replies: “Nothing. I’ll sit and read the paper.” And so he does. 10 minutes later, Ms. Emaly comes out of her office, looks at Rich who is sitting in the little alcove, reading the paper and she snaps at him: “*Richard?* Why are you still here?” I told you I couldn’t see you today.” True. But she never told him what day she *could* see him. I note this because THIS is one perfect example of what the entire system is. The absolute distillation of complete and pure stupidity. Is it any wonder that this City is so bad off? Now, what I’d like to know is: Who’s letting these morons get these jobs AND who’s letting in the home-land African failures? We have a major problem... and this one ain’t “US”. Well, Rich has been here long enough... he’s riding along with it. As it wound down, he DID get to see her. What came of it is anybody’s guess. But again... he too, like me, just rides along with what happens. Questioning it only leads to utter confusion... and possibly, ultimately, insanity. WE could become just like THEM! - And so the day, what was left of it, went along. Quiet, peaceful, calm for truly the most of it. Yes, there were brief moments of some little out-bursts (most from the Latino down the hall who talks, argues, and fights with himself, walking along the halls, chatting and arguing and sometimes cussing at, to and with himself, just as, I’m sure, MANY others have done before him in these very halls.) But aside from that? Just quiet. - This evening everything changed for a while. The place came alive again. The sun went down, everybody either returned or woke up. Saturday and Sunday are the only 2 days we can catch-up on sleep and many do just that, sleep-in for all or most of the day. They’re the only 2 days we don’t have to hear: “Good-morning! Time to wake up. You have to be out of here by 9!” And so, we sleep. At sun-down, we gather in the hall. We talk, mostly about the misery of our surroundings, or environment, the abuses we’ve taken... taken in silence... from the refugees who are our “captors”... those who bark at us like mad dogs, perform their inquisitions, probe (needlessly) into our personal lives, tell us we must get out of here and “back into society, meanwhile knowing that we are the only thing keeping a roof over *their* heads and food on *their* tables. But there’s also talk of troubles with each-other (snoring, yelling, absent hygiene, those who pee on toilet seats or sh** on the floors). Tonight there was talk about Harry: taken out by ambulance, admitted to Bellevue hospital next door. There was talk about the ageless old man in 20, how much longer he’ll survive here, why he isn’t being cared-for in a proper facility with medical, how completely screwed-up is our system and our

world when a man can be so neglected and abused and so obviously in need of so much more than this place gives. But, all the while, we, who have so little to offer, give all we can, when and where we can. And we laugh. We laugh about and at our position, our situation and the BS. We laugh at and about our tribulations. We laugh because if we don't laugh, we'd murder... justifiably... somebody else or... ourselves. We laugh... Then, the day comes to a close as some little idiot comes down the hall screaming "Bed-check!", accompanied by one of our finest "security" guards. Two noses probe into dorms where guys are trying for sleep, getting ready for sleep or chatting with room-mates. In any case, "Bed-check!" is designed to make certain we each know that THEY can, will and DO disturb us as much and often as makes *them* happy. - Little Geo is out for another night tonight. A shame. Good kid gone bad... going terribly worse. Tonight? We let him go. He doesn't learn and so long as there's somebody in "administration"... his "Case Worker" in particular, who will enable him, our efforts are useless. - Rey and I hope for uninterrupted sleep but we both know... that's not going to be. Brindou will make certain we suffer through the night. We've registered our complaints. Now we can be certain: He's here to ensure that we don't ever get enough sleep to work successfully to get out. He's just another bleating African, planted here, by "them", his fellow refugees, to ensure misery. Unfortunately, he is successful.

Sunday 30 November: 108/77 7:25pm

At about 12:08am, indeed the infliction of misery began. Snoring. But, for some reason, I managed to sleep through it after a brief period of contemplating the demise of that filthy, foul smelling, mal-odourous, ill-mannered, "I KEEL YOO!" Trrrroo Ahfreekahn" piece of sh**. Sleep is now taking over sanity, and sanity comes with utter exhaustion as my body simply collapses in on itself and I sleep. - 2:18am and Geo returns. I only very briefly note that in my mind and again, return to sleep. He's returned, gets into his bed and the room is "normal". We don't have to be concerned about who (or "what") will be thrown at us in Geo's absence. - 6:30am. Awake for the day. Awake to the day... to the RAINY day. Awake to another day of botched plans: I'd considered a trip to the Bronx Central library (Muhammad, the self-professed Muslim "Imam", is walking in the hall, shuffling his slippered feet, be-decked in "silk" pyjamas... shorts, bottoms, flamboyant, and he's "mock-belching". A perfect portrayal of what it is to be "Muslim", I suppose.) Today I'd hoped to log as much as is possible in 45 minutes. Then head to Brooklyn Central for 30 minutes and out to the Fort for the rest of the day. What I got was: Rain. The

Woodlawn train ran local all the way up-town, so I decided to take it to Kingsbridge, where I could get the Bx9 to the library. Turned out to be an excellent decision. But when the train came up at 161st Street, it was revoltingly disgusting! This was the train of my child-hood, through the neighbourhoods of The Bronx that I knew best, for, well, to be honest, all of my life. It's been many years since I've been over here, on this elevated train, and today I "return" to see the atrocities. There are TWO COMPLETE Yankee Stadiums (stadia?) and NO PARK! The new stadium is packed tightly into what used to be quite beautiful open space with beautiful trees. As we continued toward Woodlawn, the scenery worsened. Graffiti. Tags. Old buildings on the verge of destruction! I was disgusted and ashamed to be associated with the place. The "element" that moved in over the years has certainly succeeded in destroying the place... from the nepotistic Rican government to the Afro-what's-its. Who let them in in the first place? Disrespectful human waste. That's all they are. The buildings, stations, streets, just everything is a trash dump. I'm thankful to be old, getting older, closer to death and out of here. The glorious past is gone, and at this point, will never return. It's time for those of us who lived in the "beautiful" days, to take our leave, from this place... from all places. - At Kingsbridge, I got off the train and stopped to buy a pack of cigarettes at Duane Reade store and got out just in time to get the bus. Not one seat on the tandem was clean! Every one had that black glob on it! 9:00am on a Sunday morning, in the rain, and this! So I stood all the way to the library where it got even more "Rainy Sunday-ish". - In the library at last, I got computer Nr.4 on the 3rd floor, immediately and happily, got a couple pages logged in the 45 minutes and TWO time extensions on my appointment. As I was typing for the 3rd extension, the PC crashed. After some ado, an appointment on Nr.6 on the 4th floor. I ran up there, Nr.6 had crashed previously. I re-booted. It took longer than 5 minutes. I lost my appointment. More "ado" at the desk when I reported the incident. I got Nr.10. Much more logged but by now it was just afternoon... and still raining. What to do? Bx9 bus to Kingsbridge. Shopping (food) at Associated/Morton Williams market. 26\$ later, back on the train to 14th St., to the L train to 1st Av. to the M15 bus to arrive back at the "Hotel Bellevue" (Choke! We have a multitude of names for this shelter) by about 2:00pm and some. - I was THE ONLY one coming into the building when I arrived! - In the dorm? Sleeping Geo, Nquoan Brindou, true, his name, busy washing clothes (in the sinks). Imagine THAT! He doesn't bathe, but to see him washing CLOTHES? THAT was a bit of a shock. I got to cleaning my locker, making my sandwiches (cream cheese, peanut butter and honey) and eating, quickly and rather secretly. By 3:00pm I was napping. A rainy day. I'm exhausted because Nquoan Brindou snores all bleating night. I napped, grabbing what-ever rest I could possibly get when the time to do was available. - I woke just past

6:00pm! No light. Needed sleep. A nibble. A nosh. Not much else. - Kendall came by the room to tell the latest about Harry. Harry's still in hospital, complaining about it and wanted K. to help him sign-out AMA (Against Medical Advice). Rey and I talked him out of it. (They moved Harry to another room and he's on 1-to-1. Psych. It would seem dear Harry is out of the shelter system as he wanted, but not to *where* he wanted. Alas.) - And later this evening? Kendall comes into the room with the Harry Updates. Their chatting turns to sex, as it does. I've yet to encounter anybody so totally preoccupied with sex as these two. Their talk, language, thoughts, ideas, ideals are base and disrespectful. But the way they enjoy their talk, the laughing and such makes the experience more like being part of high-school kids' bantering. It's childish. And these are "men" in their 50's! Well. Better they should go about it this way. There are others who are simply evil and threatening... Nquoa Brindou as a perfect example. - I got into conversation with a guy from next door on THAT subject: Brindou. It seems that Brindou is enjoying some sort of "Political Asylum" in the shelter. He's allegedly quite capable of murder, and all that *would* happen if he'd be transferred to another shelter! We've begun to doubt that the name he's using is his at all! The way I see it, it's time to figure a way for him to be "out"! Gone! Even the fellow next door told me: When he complained that Brindou threatened him (with murder), the shelter moved HIM and NOT Brindou. It wouldn't surprise me to learn that ALL of these African rejects are together somehow: from Social Services through "security" and all along the lines. The advice on how to deal with and handle the situation? To leave him alone, wait until he attacks and then go for self-defence. Me? I've got other options. Especially since that mal-odourous bastard brought that hook into the room and got away with it! WE shall see. - Otherwise, we, the rest, laughed on into the night and by about 11:15pm... it, the day, and another month, was over, done, closed.

05. December 2008

Monday 1 December 2008: 109 Days of Homelessness/78 Days in the Shelter:

10:54am back at the Mid-Manhattan Library. It's too early to go to work. It's too late to head to Brooklyn Central library and today, all of the Queens libraries open at 1:00pm today. I could use a nap! I did manage to get my cheque cashed and got next week's MetroCard for transportation to and from work done. (I've even done my little "Budget" list for tomorrow's weekly Case Worker interrogation meeting... to cover my "assets", so to speak.) But waiting to get into the library here this morning I have to put up with... "Do you read the *taylmood*? They have one across the street." A guy named Daniel, claims to be a Texas Jew, sees me at the shelter and wants to talk! And I'm in no mood (nor condition for that matter - this morning my bowels want to burst but can't. I'm wondering where the food I eat is going, where it is and why it's not coming through!). I'm, only just sufficiently civil with him. It's all I've got lately. Sh**! I'm tired. Running down. Run down. It's December (Happy Birthday Dear Bette Midler!) and I want to be out on the ocean... *DEAD*! A limp and lifeless corpse bobbing and floating on the waves of an open sea... in *PEACE*! OK? OK then. - Meanwhile, it's gotten to be 11:30am and I'm getting out of here. So big bleating sh** there! (Good way to close and entry. Yes?) - 10:22pm, "Back at the bed" again and Geo's been blasting his radio for the past 2 hours or so. Brindou had left earlier for about an hour. He's laying in his bed now, seething. He *hates* the radio! (I know because he told me, back in the days when he had something to say to me.) And me, I'm enjoying the fact that he's so miserable. Yes. I'm *enjoying* it. The radio *is*, in fact, too loud, I'm not particularly fond of what's playing, but, it's pay-back... to the "Troo Afreekan"! How lovely! (I do believe this is what is known in some circles as a clear case of "Schadenfreude", and it's delightful! - Well then, I got in at about 7:30pm this evening. When I left the job, I hit 3 different "99cent" stores by Lefferts, looking for a cheap ledger book to record my spending (for tomorrow's interrogation). Not one! Came into The City and went to Jack's 99cent store on 31st Street. Nothing there, even on 4 floors of store! So I bolted out the door, down the stairs to the D train up to 42nd Street to try at Jack's

on 41st Street. Nothing! Staples store on 42nd Street. Nothing under 8 dollars! I figure I spent 99cents on this journal, I'm NOT spending more on some book that I need only for the whores, bitches, sluts and sh**s in this bleating prison, and that's truly putting it most politely, I must say. So, I caught the M15 bus on 2nd Ave. and tried the RiteAid store on 30th Street. Nothing. It was late now, so I headed back here... I came in ... starving. Low blood sugar. When I got in, once again, I threw together 2 sandwiches: turkey and chicken (the usual pre-packaged cold cuts) with mustard. The food made a large difference. You see... tonight, for some reason, as I stood at the N.E. corner of 30th and 1st, I looked at this shelter and all I wanted, *needed* to do was vomit! Truly vomit! Today, it, the place and all it's realities, got to me! I'm disgusted with it and all it is, and all that it represents. But, I took a seriously deep breath and... it passed. I walked, in no particular hurry, across the avenue and, after a relatively brief wait through the "security" entrance and having to all but force my way on to the elevator, I was upstairs here, at the locker. Didn't even bother to wash my hands... as I undressed, I slapped together my 2 sandwiches. The food made a little difference in mood. Just a little. - (Continuing today's story on Tuesday at 8:28am) Geo was sh**-faced when he came in at about 10:25pm. Rey said he'd been out only 2 hours, so either he drank a lot very quickly or he drank and there's something else going on there. Tonight, at time to go to sleep (of course) he woke up and the booze did what booze will do: his mood went from manic to *crash*. It's actually a regular course for him. We talked about him, his "place in Creation" and again, I tried, to impress upon him that he takes life and existence all too seriously. I know what that's like and how silly it truly is. I don't like to see anybody suffer because of their existence. I might not be correct in my point of view or position on life but, the best I can do is make somebody else a little less burdened. I, myself, am not "less burdened, but hopefully *they* can be. It's unfortunate, but he's another one who won't help himself. I do what I can. It's all I have. I don't like life... existence. Maybe somebody else's will be better... because I was... here... "was". We talked until he fell back to sleep, and at that point, I got under my own covers, put my head on my pillow, closed my own eyes and...

Tuesday 2 December: 110/79

8:41am and WELL... At 8:17 this morning, I arrived at the "Social Services" office to find that there was no list for us to sign for our appointments AND no Ms. Simpson! I got a chair in the holding area (what "they" call, the "lounge", the little alcove off the hall-way) and journalled the remainder of last night's events. At 8:21am, Ms. Simpson appeared at long last. And so, here I sit,

appearing calm, letting her do what-ever she believes she needs to do to give herself importance and authority. Mr. Valley is roaming the halls, and I do mean “roaming”. Even the supervisory makes themselves appear to be “in potent” (important). And all the while, the only thing they maintain is their incompetence, their insignificance. If it wasn’t so sad, it might be humourous. If they weren’t so pathetic, it might merit some pity. But, they make themselves appear to be so terribly busy doing something that appears to be so terribly important and all the while, those of us who have watched this act repeatedly, over a period of time, have come to *know*: they’re impotent and incompetent. They serve no purpose other than to generate little blue folders of paper. It’s what they do. It’s what they are paid to do. That’s the beginning, end and in-between of it all. And so, I sit, apparently calm, and wait until Ms. Simpson does what Miss Ms. Simpson does to give Ms. Simpson a sense of purpose in her other-wise useless existence. I am, only slightly amused... - 8:56am I just got up and took a little stroll down the hall to find... No sign-in list. Madame Simpson is sitting at her desk, staring at her computer monitor. It appears... important. - 9.06am AND... The list is up. Missy’s hour are “9-5”. How charming for her. But, in spite of the fact that I’ve been sitting here for so long and when I got here, there was nobody waiting for any of the Case Workers, some-how, some sh**-baby signed before me! It’s the way of this hole: “sh** first”... just like an arse-hole. WELL! WHAT A DAY IT ALL BECAME! - At about 9:30am, Ms. Simpson called the guy whose name was on the list ahead of mine. He wasn’t there; so? Me! My turn! In I went to be greeted some-what kindly enough. It was Ms. Simpson and a “new face” seated beside her behind her desk. A ‘White’ face. Youngish woman. Ms. Simpson introduced me to her and she, the “new face” introduced herself as “Jaimie” First Name! Hmmm. (“She must be fresh out of the text books!” I thought to myself. “She doesn't know any better, yet, than to become 'friends' with the likes of some of us. How cute!”) I asked what her “position” is in all of this and she told me “Social Work Intern”. Social Worker! My mind flashed-back to “Liz”! Oh no! Another one of those true bleeding hearts who SO wants to “save the world” and “spread the wealth and joy” and “make good, the lowest of the low”! So I told her about Liz, her degree, her job currently as a library clerk in a small town up-state. I wanted to settle the issue of where I stand with Social Workers (which is NOT even in the least bit “friendly”). Then came the “business” part of our meeting and Ms. Simpson tells Jaimie “I think I’ll give you this one.” (meaning to pass me along to the intern. What? I’m a trinket? Oh good luck Ms. Jaimie!) We had to review my *entire* chart/file. Ms. Simpson does all of her “work” on the computer and, of course, “all” was missing so we had to *build* my history. But all through MY appointment WE had to deal with interruptions: “Code 3’s”, acronym explanations, policies, etc., explained for the sake

of the “Intern”. Did I mind? Not at all. It actually showed me how much of their system I’ve learnt, and it showed Ms. Simpson how much (*almost*... NEVER let them know “all”) I know. Although she did, this morning, put me wise to the “60 per-cent savings” account: If I chose to have my own account, rather than give THEM the money to save, it MUST be separate and used SOLELY for savings... no with-drawls! Well, this should prove to be some fun. I’m just hoping that I’ll be able to open the account in 4-5 days. I don’t want THEM handling MY money! Anyway, meanwhile... We all 3 had some good laughs about most of what goes on around the place. Ms. Simpson says she’s going to push Medicaid (“You have COPD!” “Yes.” “Are you on medication? Doctor’s care? Have Medicaid?” “No.” “You NEED Medicaid!”) She says she wants to commence the “housing” part of my file. We’ll see what she gets to actually “do”. Especially if I’m handed-off to Jaimie. As the old tune went “But it’s all, in the game...” They want to “play”, so, we’ll “play”. - By 11:17am, I was back up on the 5th floor, in the loo, with Kendall. I needed a smoke. I’d gotten my linens whilst waiting for my “call”. So I went to the dorm, got me together, shoved the “fresh” linens into my locker and tried to salvage the day. - All said: the morning went delightfully well. Let’s see where Ms. Simpson and her Jaime go from here. - Out the door as quickly as possible and on the M15 bus down to 14th St., walk to Union Square for the Q train to Sheepshead Bay... Brooklyn. 99cent shopping! It was chilly and damp out so I took my time browsing in the other-wise warmth of the store. Managed to get a book to track spending, calendar for ’09, pencil sharpeners, soaps, air freshener. Necessities in existence, sad as that might seem. Then, I didn’t know where to go/what to do. Back to the Q train. On the trip back I decided to browse “Pearl Paints” artist supplies on Canal Street. Funny thing: when I came up from the subway to the street on Canal, I was on the “Uptown” side of the subway. It turned my sense of direction all wrong! I’ve always come on the “Downtown” train! How programmed, ingrained it all becomes to us over time, taking certain trains in certain directions, over and over again. But, again, here, in the store a casual browse, I got what I wanted and left. - As I started walking East for the bus up-town, I decided to try calling Angel. What do you suppose? I’m all the way down on Bowery... He’s up on 34th St.! We decided to meet on 3rd Av. at some point. He was walking. I grabbed the bus. I don’t know how, but he managed to make it to 14th and 3rd in the time I took the bus to get to 24th and 3rd, bought a pack of cigarettes and walked to 30th and 3rd! I phoned him again and we agreed that I’d meet him on 14th Street. “What side of 3rd Avenue are you on?” I asked. “The left side.” “East or West?” “I’m facing the traffic. It’s going in... SHIT! It’s going in both directions!” he said. “Never mind.” I told him, “I’ll find you when I get there.” It struck me as truly quite stupid of a “New Yorker” not to know which is the “East” and which is the

“West” side of an avenue. But... I walked this time, briskly and truly rather fatigued. Well! The reunion at 14th Street was just spectacular! I was *SO* happy to see Angel there and opened my arms to hug him and did I ever get a hug in return! THIS, dear Creation, IS “*FAMILY*”! Neither “has” or “has not” in the common sense. But what we DO have is a mutual bond of survival, respect and *abandonment*. Those who once claimed to care for and about us, those who professed some “love”, those whom we loved or cared for or cared about simply dropped us into the Great Pool that is Creation and left us alone. We had nothing, no one and no where to go and ended-up in an un-human, and inhumane society of the public shelter system... where we have... each-other (those of us who are fortunate enough to find each-other). It was *wonderful* seeing him again. One of his first statements was “I miss you, man!” And that was a mutual sentiment. We are more than “friends”. We’re *Comrades*. We walked down to E.3rd Street where he is now “assigned”, and we talked. He’d been walking all day, looking for work. (No easy tasks: walking in the cold and looking for work in this economic void.) I wanted to make certain he ate. As it was before, when we were both at the 30th Street Shelter, *he* wanted to make certain *I* ate. Well, I’m eating what I can and as often as I must. Now, I needed to know that he was doing, at the very least, like-wise. He invited me to come into “his” shelter, to eat with him. I declined on the grounds that I had food in my locker. (I just didn’t want the hassle of going through the machinations of metal detectors and security there AND back at 30th Street. It gets on the nerves, being scanned and checked and the likes. Once in a day is more than sufficient.) I waited inside the door of the shelter for him and watched the routine of a different shelter. It appeared more civil to me. Less vulgarities (although Blacks will be Black and incapable of civil communication no matter what or where. A White woman chastised a Black man for his repeated use of the word “f***”. He behaved as if she was insane. They just can’t comprehend. Stupid bastards.) I talked with the “guard” about the differences between there and 30th St., exchanging “pleasantries”, I suppose. About an hour later, Angel returned. We strolled over to Washington Square Park to sit on a bench... on a cold December night... to talk a little more. He’s sad that I was alone on Thanksgiving and will be for Christmas. I told him how and why I’m better off away from “family” and “friends”. As I told him of my own history to Homelessness, he told me he’s still writing his own life’s story, in spite of spelling troubles. But he understands why I feel better alone and, after a little encouragement from me, it seemed he felt a bit better about being by himself. Hey! I don’t try to destroy other people’s sentimentality. I only try to make it easier to live with. - He walked me to the bus stop on 1st Ave... the bus arrived (too) quickly. A firm hug and the day was done. - On the bus ride back I wanted to cry: He has family! How bleating

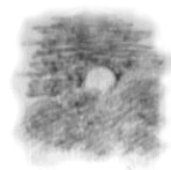
miserable of them to let him be in a shelter! Me? I'm so very fortunate: no "family" and no "friends... no "attachments" and no disappointments. I'm so very fortunate. - Back at 30th, it was the regular: The room smelled awful! (The air freshening gadget can't compete with Brindou's odour!) Geo came in slightly drunk. He put on the radio. Brindou finally left (he hates the stations Geo puts on). I enjoyed the fact that Brindou was disturbed. Kendall came by to tell the latest news of Harry who is still in hospital. We all talked about our concern for the old man in 20 (his room is still the way he left it!). The ambulance finally came for him, so he's hopefully under better care now. We shared some talk about "the need to get laid" in a half-joking and jovial manner.

we got some laughs did some bitching. A pretty good balance. The evening rolled on into the night and "Sign-in", "Bed-check". The end of another day... and for all it's worth... a splendid day.

Wednesday 3 December: 111/80

7:58pm at D18. I don't know how, but I slept last night! But I woke from a dream, yelling at Cyndi!

DREAM: Angel and I had come to attend a wedding that she (my "sister" Cyndi) was orchestrating. We'd both been invited. Angel came dressed in a suit. Cyndi disapproved of his clothing and attendance. So, as he came in, she snapped at me: "Look at him! Dressed like that! Is he coming to the wedding?!" I yelled at her "No you ass-hole. He dressed like that because that's how we dress in the shelter!" (I woke myself saying "No you f***ing ass-hole!")



Rey heard me yell "No" and "f***ing..." something, but he just figured I was dreaming. And so, the day began and rolled along the lines of: Mid-town library for another logged day from this journal followed by a bit of French look-up for vocabulary and the likes of things I've forgotten over the years of not speaking it with anybody. I happened across a book on the history of "Canadian French" (due back Christmas Eve!) and borrowed it to read. Then, off to work for a non-productive day of coffee and sweets. I have to admit, being there is rather nice in that respect: being able to attend to the father and when all the "attending" is complete, we all get to sit, as human beings, at table, have coffee and cake and chat about their history, the present situation and make goals for the future. The clients are extending my 9 weeks! I can't go on like this working on 9 hours! I have to change it somehow. And, I will. Yes, it's nice, but with this assignment, the best I can hope for is another assignment in the morning hours that won't conflict with this one. It'll be difficult if it happens... but I'll get through it. I'd rather have a full 8-

hour shift at one place, but, at this juncture, I MUST do what I MUST do, no matter how difficult it might be. - At the end of the shift, I came directly back to the shelter to do some wash: 2 t-shirts, 4 pairs of socks, by hand, in the basin, as usual. - I'm exhausted. it's quiet in the dorm and it's only Brindou and I here. It had better be a good night's sleep! I've got travel plans and libraries tomorrow. The forecast is for rain. Of course it is!

Thursday 4 December: 112/81

10:14am and I am ensconced at the Bronx Central Library on Kingsbridge Road. How odd, when I think about it, that I am, today, sitting in a contemporary building, a library, almost directly across the street from where, some 70 years ago or so, my Grand-father, newly immigrated to this country, owned his little restaurant. There's no sign of it having been here. But I know... I do know. But, as I type this morning... I'm jumping ahead of myself in this journal here because the recent events at the shelter are coming too close to violence and I want this on-line in case... Nquoan Brindou is certainly not to be trusted, and added to that this morning, some idiot came into the room, must have been about 2:00am or so, after knocking at the door and yelling "Bed check!". The fact is, he didn't come in to check the beds. He just knocked on the door and yelled. Rey got pissed and confronted him. The idiot actually had the balls to tell Rey to go "f*** his mother"! Well, I too, would have taken a real offence at this and certainly, Rey did. SO he pursued the matter and apparently, the situation came to threatening. I was only some-what half awake when I saw the moron come into the room and to note Rey's bed number! This morning, when I got back to the dorm to dress to leave, I asked Rey about it. He said he was going out to meet the idiot and take care of the situation. The idiot actually told Rey "You won't be on this floor tomorrow night." (meaning tonight). - This whole situation is coming to the point where it looks like we have to start watching-out for our health and well-being in general. I'm not afraid of anything happening. I'm just cautious about the whole situation. There are some terribly disturbed people in this shelter and the administration does absolutely nothing about it. I don't know why I was subjected to a "Psychological Evaluation", as were others, I see. I wonder if those performing the "evaluation" have ANY idea, ANY notion of or about "Psychology" and if they do, then why to they make it so that the "insane" mingle with all the others in this building... FREELY! - Meanwhile, there are Africans wondering about, demanding money from people (the one in D19 for example), taking the whole situation for granted, talking like foul-mouthed gutter trash and not one person does anything along the lines of stopping any of it. It becomes obvious,

at least to the rest of us, that there's some kind of plot about all of this "preferential treatment" of Africans, and we don't like it at all. - On another note: The ceiling in the shower room (5W) has been leaking all night. This morning I had to clean the damned floor before taking a shower. There are people on staff who are getting paid to do this cleaning and maintenance work (the idiot "Bed check!" bastard of last night, for one) and who are leaving it all up to the residents. There's a policy that points out that we are not to be forced into working in the shelter. This is forced labour, no matter how you look at it. The rather sad bit about it is: WE see what needs to be done, from cleaning to repairs, and WE DO IT! - All said today, this situation is teaching me to be less tolerant and less kind to a great many people. There are, and this is blatantly obvious, those who SHOULD be eliminated in order to bring the world to peace and harmony. There are those who SHOULD be gotten rid of in order to bring the world to a better stance. And those who SHOULD be eliminated are very obvious! - Meanwhile, I return to my logging my written journal from along the way. I'm only on 2008.09.09 this morning and there's much more to be done.

DECEMBER 4 THURSDAY.

3:48pm AT THE FAR ROCK LIBRARY. I'M TYPING THE EVENTS OF THURSDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER (HAVING FINISHED WEDNESDAY THE 10th THIS MORNING...) WITH MUCH MENTION OF EVON AND AS I'M TYPING HERE, I HEAR "EXCUSE ME!", A VOICE FROM SOME-WHERE BEHIND ME. THE WOMAN BESIDE ME ASKS "ME?" AND NOTHING ELSE IS SAID. I LOOK UP AND WHO DO YOU SUPPOSE IS STANDING AT THE COMPUTER IN FRONT OF ME TO MY LEFT? EVON! FROM THE PENINSULA HOSPITAL! WELL!!! INDEED!!! What a delight to see him again, even if he IS rather drunk and talking much drivel.

Well... here, to get back to the Journal and try to keep this day's events in order.. it's 6:00pm back at the "hotel" and time for a bit of a re-cap of the day... as I recall the day and before I forget. - When I got in this evening, the room was empty, so I came in, settled me a bit, got comfy(ish) on the bed and began to write my thoughts on the day as they whirled round in my head. Shortly after settling-in, Charlie came to the door, peeked in round the door-frame and coyly said, "Oh good! You're alone." I could have and probably should have been suspicious or at least maybe the slightest bit "concerned" by this, but I was actually amused. "Alone". Yes, I am. So what? So he came into the room, sat at the foot of my bed and we chatted... about his past, this present of ours and "ponderings" of the possibilities for our future. Charlie's a sweet man, in all actuality. Yes,

he's base and gruff and can be rather demanding, but, he and I talk rather regularly and I HAVE to say that in spite of where he's been and what he's been through, he's rather bright and truly, very kind. It's probably not in my "best interest" but I've taken quite a liking to him, and he, apparently, to me. We're so opposite from each-other in so many ways, and the guys here, in the shelter, find it a bit amusing that where I am, Charlie's usually not too far away. But you know... it's rather nice. And there aren't many who actually give him much notice or even time. So? it is what it is and if there's some sort of "friendship", that's just fine by me. - As he and I chatted, the fellow across the hall whom we affectionately refer to as "Tony Muscle" (so as not to confuse him with another "Tony" to whom we refer as "Tony Drama" because every time we see HIM, there's something "terribly wrong"... even if there really isn't) popped his head into the room. I was on the bed and bare-foot and in a REALLY amusing sort of way, Tony Muscle made a reference to my toes and, smiling said "You didn't know... but I have a foot fetish and they're looking SO delicious!" Whether it was true or not wasn't the issue at this point, but WOW! did we ever make one of those rare "good times" of it! I mean, he wasn't threatening in any fashion, and the three of us actually made light of it and enjoyed the moment's laugh. Not only do we need moments like this... we deserve them... more than most other people, to be sure. - Well then, both Tony M. and Charlie left, and in the quiet I had to myself at last I got down the following account of this morning's episode that I've already noted briefly. In a bit more detail:

I'd been asleep (between breaks in sleeping) when the knock came and the voice yelled "Bed-check!"... but nobody came into the room to "check" anything. Next thing I hear is Rey, in the hall, talking about "working people" and asking why somebody, who has no authority to do bed-checks would knock on the door and yell, in the middle of the night. Somehow, I drifted back to sleep in spite of the screaming. (I suppose I'm either getting used to it or I'm just breaking-down from fatigue... no complete sleep.) Then, when we were actually up, at about 7:30 this morning, Rey tells me that the response to his statements was a "security" guard telling him to "Go f*** your mother!" When Rey responded, the fat-arsed prick who started the incident came in to get Rey's bed number and told him "You won't be on this floor after tonight." - So this is how the day began. The most shameful part of it, as I think on it all is that it's so common-place that I almost have no interest in recording it. It's just one incident of abuse in a barrage of so many and all days have some. The exception is when somebody on staff treats or addresses any one of us with any respect, courtesy or dignity. Meanwhile, we're now faced with being concerned about retaliatory BS taken by the lard-arse and his "security" moll. We, in room 101, get along. Our immediate concern is Brindou. But we know what his story is. Nobody wants to have to deal with

new BS. But, the administration has only one way to amuse itself or exercise its authority: move/displace/re-assign the residents... and they're quick to do that... often, for no apparent or logical reason. - Time will tell.

That noted and recorded (and let this be the end of it, I can hope)... More? There's a leak in the ceiling over the toilet in the shower room. Last night, the entire floor was covered by about 2cm of water! I left the floor in the shower-room as it was. Rey insisted that somebody would come to mop it. Nobody did... until I did! At 8:00am, or so, there I was, mop and bucket, doing somebody else's JOB, for which somebody ELSE is being paid! At wit's end am I? Yoo betcha! But, the floor was clean for morning shower. And I knew it. - Shortly there-after, I was out the door, into the world. Away from the madness. Into the insanity. Away! - I headed up-town to The Bronx (HOME TURFF, land of my ancestors AND my own history) where, from 9:00am to 11:00am I logged this journal, on-line, at The Bronx Central library. At 11:00am, I was back out, on the streets for a quick stop at Associated supermarket on Kingsbridge Road, primarily for coffee. (2 dollars cheaper per jar up here than in the Manhattan groceries!) and DuaneReade for a pack of cigarettes. On to the Woodlawn train, down-town and to Brooklyn to Nevins Street to the 2 train to Brooklyn Central where today I learn that there are new Brooklyn library cards and we've got until March to change over. But I need official something with my address! So... We'll figure it. I don't want to and can't afford to lose ANY library privileges, especially now, being Homeless, and computer-less. (And, I will note, so thankful and bitter to my dear, sweet "friends" and "family" for this experience.) - From Brooklyn Central it was back on the trains. Another trip on the Franklin Av. shuttle. Oh! Hurray! (and sh**), and off to Far Rockaway to continue logging on a computer there. - Although I've taken the liberty of logging this "item" already, it's worth the mention here as well: I'd no sooner completed the entries mentioning my being into to Evon, back in the "Peninsula Days" and was somewhat lost in the memories associated with that event when I hear "Excuse me!" I ignored it. The woman to my right responded to whom-ever had said, "Me?". Nothing more was said but I caught, from the corner of my eye, her staring at me. I looked up and there, at the computer across and left... "Steamfish" (Evon)! "It's good to see you, man!" he said, with a big smile. (If he only knew.) I finished my logging because, well, I had a mission and that was to get this on-line and off the paper pages! We chatted. We exchanged e-mail addresses. He asked if I still had all the information he'd given me when he left Peninsula. (I do.) "Because you never know. Yunnuhstanwahmsayin?" He reeked of alcohol. Nothing's changed. Nothing's changed. - (Continuing at D18 on Saturday at 10:55am) Well then... I was back at the shelter by about 6:00pm, a bit proud of the land I'd covered today and exhausted. But

there was wash to be done, a nap to be taken. I did both. - At one point, Charlie came in, looked around and said "Oh good. you're alone." and made like he was going to close the door. Rape? Robbery? Murder? I just smiled. None of the possibilities would have changed much of anything, especially my out-look on everything. - Charlie drives me to nap with his machine-gun ramblings about everything and nothing, and then he leaves. Next? "Tony Muscle" comes in. "I never told you, but I have a foot fetish and I came down the hall and saw those (my feet) lookin' so good. I almost came in and took a big chomp out o' them..." - Ah, the things that are said by those who have no clue. - And so, wash done, quick eats, a shower, sleep... or, what's come to pass as "sleep" these nights... NONE is ever uninterrupted.

(The accounts from one day to the next here are the same, with a bit more detail, and so worth the duplicating and not editing the little highlights out. They show the tragedy and the comedy of this "Homeless life" and this shelter, and BOTH deserve to be noted when they occur. They bring the tears of memories... the good and the bad. And I'll never forget either... and both.)

Friday 5 December: 113/82

(Noting on Saturday, 6 December at 11:46am) After an on/off night's sleep, I got up this morning, showered, etc. and was on the rails to "Home". And to the post office. NO CHEQUE! It's a small one, thanks to the family of a client who became an "admit", admitted to hospital, which meant that I didn't work. But not getting a cheque is too much of a reminder of how this all got to be... this "Homelessness". It ripped at me... PHYSICALLY. It took my "all" to stop the physical pain: my joints, my cells. It was an awful pain. It was draining. If I didn't have anything I wanted to do, no place I had to be, I'd have dropped to the sidewalks or simply, silently, gone back to The Fort, to "my tree", laid down on the ground, curled into a ball and waited to die. It would truly have been debilitating, destructive. it just goes to show how fresh and open the wounds of this truly are. Panic! Depression! Despair! Painful despair, and all because ONE pay-cheque didn't happen to arrive when I thought it should. But I still have carfare through Monday on my card. I can still get to work. Ah, "work". Friggin "work". And no pay. I need to change that... soon... now... drastically! I have to make certain that I never miss another pay-cheque... no matter what the circumstances! For now? Move forward... just keep moving... forward, onward... keep moving, don't allow any time for "thinking", for pondering this event. - I got to the library and another 2 pages logged on-line and was off to "work" and ANOTHER non-productive day. H. isn't making any progress, and I've got 2 more weeks of this. Mary's talking of extending it even more. I don't

want to. I need more hours than these. I need to see improvement. I need money! None of that will come by staying there. And nothing will come of it since H. doesn't want to "improve". I can't perform miracles, and although I like the family and him, I just can't see my way clear to go, for those hours, to sit and drink coffee, eat cakes and that's it. "Ethics"... I have them... perhaps too many and perhaps too strict, but I have them and this works against them. (And too, as I say... this assignment precludes me from getting more hours and more income and out of this "Homelessness"! And THAT, in reality, is THE issue here.) - After work, I called Kristin at the agency to ask her what my last date on this case is. "I'll let you know when the last day comes." What in Hell's name is THAT about? I need to plan, to KNOW! This sh** needs to GO! I ask you a civil and pertinent question and you give me a civil and pertinent answer, other-wise, you take your agency and shove it! And, as we spoke, there's no news of more hours. So? I simply headed back to the shelter... where they, at the agency, do NOT know I am residing, thanks to the BS of the previous "agency". - Thankfully, at the entrance to the building this evening, I came right in, came right up to the room and finished my "food" in the locker. Tomorrow is going to be another Saturday of fasting, and again, not by choice! But THIS Saturday, I'm going to do what I want. Another attempt at "21st Century Jewry" in the plan. For tonight? Laundry! Catch-up. Sunday requires clean clothes. And so, the wash got done, I "ate". - Brindou's "chum" came by this evening and made a point of making a little "announcement", as it were. "I see you guys in here. You're all cool. You get along. Why you pick on this one?" says he, pointing to Brindou's bed. In response, I calmly made it abundantly clear: I pick on no one. *We* pick on no one. I mind my business, do what I must do for me and don't bother with other people's problems. I have no "sides". And it's true. All of it. I have neither need of nor use for enemies. Especially not in here. With-out a further word, "chum" left. Whether or not my words made any sense, reached even a crumb of brain matter, I don't know. Frankly? I don't give a sh** either. What was said needed to be said and so it was. Period. - Afterwards, Charlie came by, Keith came by, Rey came back from where-ever he'd been. Brindou came back. Geo came in, went and signed for his bed and left. People came. People left. - At one point, Charles, a young, quite heavy fellow from, I believe, the 3rd floor, (and not to be confused with "Charlie") and I got to singing Gospel in the loo. Great acoustics in that room. It was rather pleasant. I got compliments on my voice and on knowing "Gospel" songs. But I find that I have to truly make an effort to sing any more. I just don't have "music" in me. Dead... But it was a nice break from the routine of things in this place and apparently, the "show" was enjoyed by all who heard. - As for the rest of the evening... it rolled into what has become "usual"... the gatherings of guys in the halls to chat, catch-up on their latest

news until the clock wound-down the day and all dispersed, back to the appropriate and “assigned” chambers for the night.

Saturday 6 December: 114/83

1:00pm! Sometime after midnight, some fat-arsed Black bitch came down the hall shrieking “Bed-check!”, reached into the door for the switch, clicked the lights on, came into the room and stood there, looking. Noted Geo’s empty bed and walked out, put out the light and went on with her annoying shrieks. I’d refer to her as an arse-hole but that status is too high. Arse-holes are necessary and help with specific functions. This moron is useless. There’s just no reason nor cause for the yelling, and there’s really no reason for turning the lights on and waking people who are other-wise asleep. I swear they do it to give themselves a sense of “power”, or “authority”... pathetic creatures that they are, in fact. - True to form and place, it was another night of broken sleep. But I’m getting better at falling back to sleep when the interruptions end. - This morning, Brindou was on his phone at about 4:30am. I couldn’t make out what he was saying (he was mumbling and muttering in French) but there was reference to “cutting”. What? Who? I don’t know. But I don’t like it. And, at about 10:30am, some “security” thing came to get him. A case-worker wanted to see him. No. I don’t like any of this. - And so, I over-slept until 8:00am! No going to synagogue THIS morning. No post office. I cleaned my locker and then mopped the floor in the area around my bed. Charlie came by, gave me 45cents for a cigarette. I’ve got 4,50\$ left! The radio is on. Geo is asleep. Rey’s been reading the paper. I’ve completely cleaned edibles out of my locker. We’re sharing the joy of sleeplessness with one who keeps us awake through the night: radio on, generally going through the day, when he, Brindou, sleeps most often. I have a set of scrubs to wash and when they are, ALL my laundry (to speak of) is done. - The weather report is saying SNOW for tonight and tomorrow morning! Winter is coming. - 4:13pm I AM Showered! Laundry is done. - Charlie’s become a complete mooch. Cigarettes this morning. Then comes in to borrow a mirror just now. Something. Always something. It wouldn’t be so bad if he’d come to GIVE something. As it is, he’s no different from those who got me here: take, ask, take... never offer, never give. I’m empty, damn it! Devoid of “things”, cash, emotions, energy... VOID! EMPTY! GONE! - At the end, I finally got up, got out, got food. Over-priced, low fat cream cheese, yoghurt, butter-milk biscuits and a bag of “Dirty” chips from Louisiana. The D’Ag market: sh** selections, miserably high prices. Now, my food stamps are low. Cash is low. The thing that pisses me off most? D’Ag has no selection of anything,

it's miserably over-priced and everything is low fat! As if I need "low fat". But, I ate today. And I got out of the building... for a change. I needed that the most. - As for the rest of the day, evening, night? "Routine": sign for the bed, get back to the room, lay on the bed and wait for somebody to put the lights out... and hope for a night's sleep.

Sunday 7 December: 115/84

(It's been a rather "non-stop" few days and I'm a bit behind on my entries here, so this is my "Recounting and Recapping" on Tuesday.) FLURRIES!!!! Nothing too much to notice... but FLURRIES!!!! SOME SNOW! The crispness of the air. Empty streets. Blustery winds. Winter's comin'! (And, had it not been for the heart and soul of Angel, A109, I would be out here with nothing warmer to wear against this, but a corduroy shirt and a well-worn hooded sweat-shirt. Un-knowingly, he's saved me from freezing. Today I know, all too well, that when the Homeless are in true "need", the very first to give... are the Homeless.) And I was up and showered, out the door and on the trains and up to The Bronx... at the Central library, by about 9:30am. On the rails, first thing in the morning. Moving. Moving. Moving. Always moving. - The ride up Jerome Ave. in The Bronx, on the elevated train, is misery for me these days. How the recent "residents" in this borough that I've known as "home", my "home-town", have managed to trash it! Paint! Paint! Paint! Tags. And just more pain all over. It's a slip-back to the 60's when the subway cars were covered with graffiti. Today, the pandering and patronizing pricks in the borough government have made it a haven for their lowest-life vermin to breed and destroy. It all just reminds me of cancer cells, multiplying, unchecked, uncontrolled, destroying, disgusting and depressing. If my family had come to this country at this time I believe they would never have stayed. To think this place, The Bronx, the place I "lived", the place I've left and returned to over the years of my existence, the place I'm so far from now was once the place I called "Home" and was the place I'd always gravitated to, from so many other places in the world. Now? It's a place that disgusts me. My links, my ties, my "life" are all severed. It's a tough reminder to me that it's time to move on... Time to move along. This is no longer "my home-town". - And so, I got my time on the computer. Logged another few pages on-line and I was off and away to Rockaway. Back on the trains. - Smooth trip! Woodlawn line to Nevins and out to The Junction to the bus and out to the Fort. - The sky over the Fort was broken: cloudy, clear. The wind whipped at me, against me, around me! It was the Rockaway I'd known from the beginning. It was truly "Home". I saw Penelope's car in front of T6. But today, these days, there's no more jubilation. No more

looking forward to seeing her. It's all changed lately. I'm detached from the "Alliance", from the people there. Somehow I'm above and beyond it... them. But, as I thought, my dues are paid through this month... I'm entitled to participation and a place to sit until the dues expire. It's a rather empty feeling. But it's what it is. I don't care and have no desire to change... especially not back to as it was. I didn't dump them or disregard them. I owe no apologies. Concurrently, I expect none. - The reception by Penelope was "typical"... the effort she made to be her glorious, jubilant self was so very transparent. She welcomed me, without leaving her chair, as boisterously as she would ANYBODY. She forgets that I'm fully aware of her pretences, put-ons, fabrications, lies. She's no more happy to see me than she'd be to greet her alleged "*Nubian ancestors" and I know it. (**Note: Penelope had a DNA trace done recently. She'd always taken great pride in claiming that she's 100 per-cent pure Greek. However, when the trace showed that she was descended of "Nubians" she suddenly and sternly began to identify with Black people and became quite radical about it, even, at times, referring to herself as a "Black woman".*) But, I return the pleasantries of the moment. It's useless to be other-wise. - I "settle in" a bit. There's a cigarette butt in the ashtray on the table. I light a cigarette. "Be very careful who sees you smoking in here. They reported me and complained." she says. (OK Penelope. Kick one. Your point.) I continue my smoking and the front door opens. Tommy comes in, neither too happy nor disappointed to see me. Good greeting. He asks if I'll be at tomorrow's general meeting and holiday party of the Alliance. When I tell him I won't, he asks why. Rather than going into the curfew (again) I just blow the subject off. (Truth is: I don't feel a camaraderie there any more and have no particular interest in participating in some "do" I don't feel particularly welcomed at and bringing in any details of the shelter? Useless.) T. leaves. He's working over in T149. He comments that there's an "Access A Ride" outside the door. (I know who it is! I just KNOW!) I get up, go to the loo to finish my cigarette... in the bleating LOO! The door of the studio opens. Penelope whispers "Look who it is! Don't get caught with that (cigarette)!" Moron that she is, she didn't know who it was... A fat thing hobbling with a "Rolator", over-bundled, walker over-packed. Albert Green! Yes! I KNEW it! Come to play his guitar! No escape. Head-banging, screeching strings. He fancies himself as a "star guitar player". I remember the late nights of him and his noise. Horrendous at best. But I don't care any more. (Ah. What I've learnt about not caring, from my days at the shelter... for which HE is quite and mostly responsible.) Neither greetings nor acknowledgements of his existence from me so I don't know if any came from him. Not that it matters. HOWEVER, as I was preparing some hot tea water for Liz G. (with whom I enjoyed the day tremendously), lard-brain Green comes to the table beside me and says "So what battery are you living in?" (*He's referring to the rumour that I am Homeless and*

*living rough in an abandoned military battery on the Fort... showing again, the compassion and concern of others this pile of useless sh** lacks.*) Maintaining my own dignity, and simply for the sake of a reply so as to let the obese retard-in-breed know that I actually heard him I softly said “This one.” And let it go at that. The sack lumbered away to the corner where it situated itself on its Rolator, playing for the sympathies of the fools, idiots and un-knowing, preparing for what was the perfect demonstration of stupidity that only a Green of that species could carry off. - Dan G. tried a few songs on his own guitar. A guest guitarists who sounded like some mixture of Leonard Cohen and Gordon Lightfoot attempted to entertain. Both songsters were soured by the horrific overly loud, terribly audible twangs and off-key plucking of the moronic imbecile, Green, who situated itself behind them. It was an atrocity second only to any historic genocide of worldly proportions! Green obviously had his own agenda as not one string he plucked gave a tone in tune with anything else played. - Well, I still thoroughly enjoyed Liz G’s company. We talked about writing, *The Wave*, for which she works and reports, politics (of Broad Channel), play on words, art, you-name-it. She’s a fascinating and delightful person, and magnificent company. - Readings: 4 of us got our turns. I read 1 “Rockaway” piece and 3 gutsy “pissed” pieces including “On Monday” and the piece on “Presumption”. I got my point across... even if it was missed by most listeners. - Penelope had left at about 1:30pm so, at 4:00pm, Dan and the rest of us were expected to clean up. We “tidied”. I was offered rides (to the bus). I declined the all. My association is diminishing. I want nothing from anyone “RAA”. My “membership” has done nothing for my art. It was a year’s membership to provide an education in what is NOT necessary. - So, as the sun rapidly took the day-light with it as it retreated somewhere out beyond Breezy Point and New Jersey, I boarded the Q35 bus outside the gate to the Fort, to the train at The junction to return to the Hotel Hell-hole. - As I recall this evening as I write (Wednesday the 10th at 7:39pm), the return was a “typical” evening of stench from Brindou, George blasting the station *KTU* on the radio, Rey trying to nap, me grabbing something to eat, sign-in, bed-time. - But, all said? What a bleating day! - I’ve decided: The Greens are too active and participatory in the RAA and, considering I’m in this shelter because of them, primarily, and likewise have lost my computer, CD’s, files, books, clothes, etc. primarily because of them, I will NO LONGER support the organization with my dues but will use the premises as I need to when I’m in the Fort. Hey! I wanted non-affiliation in Rockaway anyway. I’d moved out there to get away from the fallacies and deceptions of humanity. There it is. Here it is.

Monday 8 December: 116/85

(As with some other days in this journal, details for this date were never written or recorded. Many are the day when, following sleepless nights and waking early in the morning, to get out of the building before being told to leave, riding trains, walking the streets most of the day, working and coming back into the shelter... I'd come back in, wait for "sign-in" and having accomplished that, would, all too simply, get into bed and collapse into sleep. A shame, really, to lose this time in this Journal, and worse, to absolutely lose a day, any day, in the shelter. But considering how it all was, over all, even what has been documented is quite an accomplishment. Anyone who has ever been Homeless, in a shelter or other-wise will attest to that fact. And so.. I continue with my recorded matters...)

Tuesday 9 December: 117/86

4:11pm and right now, I'm at the FR (Far Rockaway) Library. It's been a DAY! I should be logging the written "Monogram" but so much is happening at this juncture that I can't... I have to get this down as it happens... - This morning, CW (Charlie) was back at his recent turn of affections. I was miserably tired, having gotten not nearly enough sleep last night and really wanting to turn back and go to sleep, rather than wake up. But I was supposed to have an appointment with Ms. Simpson (my CaseWorker) at 9:00am so I had no choice but to wake. And so, coffee taken (made last night in a plastic bottle, as usual), and no BM at the crapper, I headed for the shower. Brindou somehow beat me to that and so, I had to wait... in the loo. After a while, Brindou leaves the shower and I head in. - Shower done, I got to the dorm, changed and headed for the "lounge" to wait for Ms. Simpson. Well, an hour passed and still no sign of Ms. Simpson but Jaimie was there, at Ms. Simpson's desk so I signed (when the list finally went up on the wall, at some point after 9:00am) *her* list and waited longer. - It finally got to be after 10:00am. I have things to be done and there was no sign of Jaimie or Ms. Simpson so I went to the door where some old guy told me that Ms. Simpson wasn't coming in and that nobody was taking her cases today. (Thankfully, my "Meal Ticket" is good through next Tuesday so I don't really NEED Case Workers at all... A good feeling...) I went back to the dorm to get ready to leave the shelter for the day. CW showed at the door... waiting for me. I talked a little to Rey who commented the truth (as he and I see it so far): CW appears to be a very little child caught in a very large body. To me? CW is, as he puts it, lonely and vulnerable and probably coming off some kind of long-term high from who-knows-what. (I keep this in my mind at all times. It's not that I don't trust him... it's just that I don't trust him... and why should I? He's on parole. He has appointments with his P.O. (*Parole Officer*) I don't know what the particulars are and I certainly don't see him as a "Relationship" of sorts. Still... if

any-one were to ask me about him, all that I could say is that he's always been kind, courteous, and, to an extent, rather quite the pleasure to know and to be associated with.) So CW waited and walked with me across to 30th St. and Madison Av. and we talked. He says he'd had the one fling with the mother of his daughter. He's 50 and the daughter is in her late 20's as I recall. He says he doesn't know exactly why he "chose" me to be-friend, but he just felt a "magic moment" and a "sparkle"... and he trusts me. (He trusts that I won't discuss our talks with anybody else and of course, I don't.) He acknowledged that the shelter is no place to conduct anything toward anything further but that there may present some situation or circumstance where we might be able to at least sit, get affectionate and he's looking forward to that. (Well, truth be told, me too.) He talked about getting a single dorm and we could spend some time together. - OK. Facts here... I don't trust him. I know he's hardened by life and turns. I know he's capable of some pretty petty and hard actions. (He felt no remorse about taking some guy's cell phone and using it as his own and I'm sure it would go further... even to things of mine if he needed to do so.) I also believe that he's probably thinking of what HE can garner, financially or otherwise, by a liaison with me of any kind. I believe that most of them in the shelter think that I have resources and that I have the capability of busting out at any moment. I believe they all think that there's some financial benefit afforded me some-where. And I believe that CW believes that too. Ah... if they only knew how stupid those presumptions are. Meanwhile... I gave CW a hug in front of Levine's bookstore on 30th Street and I went in. He walked away, back toward the east. - Now for some GREAT NEWS! I HAVE MY SIDDUR (*prayer book*) BACK! Levine's had it, soft-cover (as I discovered last night when, after work, I'd stopped by to check and see if they had the one that I wanted) and so, today, I bought one. Why? Because I feel a little closer to "whole" with it. I feel a little closer to "value" with it. And I'm happy with it. The purchase left me with only 10 dollars to my name until next pay. But I feel that it was one of my greatest investments in ME! and my life. Today, I'm one step closer to getting back to my life the way I want it. - Siddur in back-pack, off to Brighton to the beach for a stroll and a good mind-clearing. Then, to the library where I got my "new" Brooklyn library card. I'm "official" there again. No loss. And right now, I truly do NEED that place, especially on cold days when we're expected to be out of the shelter (or, at least, sitting in some common area with other residents, which is something I do NOT do. Not because of any dislike for any on them, but I know that, given an opportunity, SOMEbody's GOT to start some violence, even if it be a shouting match and being in that environment does no good for anybody at all. I keep my personal distance. - WELL! here at the Brighton library, I got a 30-minute session on the computer and was back on the train to here where, as I walk in the door to leave,

who do I see? “Steamfish”! Drunk, as usual. He’s telling me that I’m his “bro” and that I’m a good friend. He’s glad to see me. He brought up the incident with the attempted murder (from our Peninsula Days). He tells me that Brian’s wife stabbed him (Brian) badly but that he doesn’t know where he is. Alas. And he’s pushing this book “The Secret Servant” by Daniel Silva again (as he did the last time I saw him at this library). As I waited for the computer here, he had me all over the place, following me and chatting, so I had to wait a bit longer for the computer. - As I’m waiting, a Jewish guy comes up, strikes up a conversation, tells me he wants to start a book club of sorts here in the Far Rockaway Library and would like to have me join. He says I strike him as “Post yeshiva”. Well, the nice lady at Levine’s and I got along swimmingly (she, Orthodox and appreciative of the Conservatives) so maybe my presence will actually do some good. We shall see. - So that’s the day. I’ll probably note more in the written journal and post it here. But I had to get this part done before it disappeared. - (Continuing on Wednesday10.12 at 9:07am at the Mid-Manhattan Library) When I got back to the shelter this evening, there was a queue, of course. But it went rather quickly and I was glad for that because my Food Stamps had been posted and I did some shopping at Associated (Far Rock). FOOD! I thought I would have to go with-out. Anyway, I made it through all of the “security” and x-rays and hand-held metal detector-wand, the “normal” entry into the building, and I did so with no trouble. As I climbed the stairs to the 5th floor, I passed Brindou. He was dressed in a jacket and slacks and was carrying a bag. Quite a novel event, that... him, dressed as a civil human being. When I got to the dorm, George had the radio blasting! He was in rare form... he claimed that he’d managed to have Brindou re-assigned to some other bed... on the 4th floor! Well! *There* was some elation but, as is usual for the lesser of brains, they never thought about what might come along to occupy the bed he'd occupied. As 'tis said: You know the devil you've got but you don't know the Hell you might get. Sure enough, it wasn't long after, a 60 year old White guy comes in and proceeds to tell of his “quad by-pass” surgery and shows us the scars. His name is “Rich”, he's one of the group who stands, chatting in the echoing halls. He asks me if I mind classical music, played low on the radio. Of course I don't mind... played softly. He has a radio. He “gets together” as much as he can these days, and settles-in with his radio playing softly. This displeases Rey (of course). “Are we going to have to listen to opera all night now?” OPERA? OK. No class. No sense. No brains. I point out that it beats having to listen to that *KTU* BS all night AND... as we were talking, Rich put HIS radio on... classical music... NOT “opera”, “classical”. I would have thought that Rey would know better. Well, I lost it, I have to admit. I went into a small tirade about the music reflecting the general mentality of people in the shelter, both as residents AND staff, and some-how, in my relative anger, I veered

into how the working class in the shelter are paying taxes which pay for the shelter while the others, who won't work and pay taxes "Ride the Jew", pointing out that that's also the mentality of too many here, and in general... the blatant anti-Semitism. Yes, it was, in hind-sight, a bit inappropriate to an extent. But it was the "plug that got pulled" and ALL sorts of thoughts and anger came spewing. All said though, I think I got my point across. After all that, I went for a smoke across the hall... I came back... I was exhausted. I tried for some sleep... hoping for some sleep... It was NOT to happen...

Wednesday, 10 December: 118/87

9:13am at the Mid-Manhattan Library - It wasn't much past midnight when "Useless George" came in, drunk, as is common. Bang! Bang! His locker opens. Crumble. Snap. Crinkle. He opens some sort of package. Mumble. Mumble. Mumble. He and Rey are discussing the music playing on Rich's radio. It disturbs Rey. Too bleating bad, eh? It's fine when the music appeals to one or two in the room, and, honestly, Rey and George, having "seniority" because they're in that room the longest, fall into the general fault of people: Longest here, I rule, my way. Well, let us keep in mind: ANY ONE of us could be pulled out of here at any moment. "Seniority" might be a nice thing to have, but bottom line: nobody's got any "authority" over anybody else because of "seniority", nobody is vested in this place, the entire shelter. So, like it or not, no ONE person "rules", ALL must have their time. That said, I'm hearing Rich's radio, ever so softly until... Useless George goes to sleep, at long last, and then it begins!!!! SNORING!!!! Just like before! ALL BLOODY NIGHT! FROM 2:46am THROUGH UNTIL, IN COMPLETE EXHAUSTION, I PASSED OUT TO SLEEP... UNTIL 6:15am WHEN MY ALARM WENT OFF!!!! NO FRIGGIN SLEEP ALL NIGHT AGAIN! The useless, the jobless, the effortless, the worthless get to rest and the working-class suffer. So, as I type this, I'm miserable. I'm tired. My head throbs. I could fall asleep right in the midst of this typing. These are the times that remind that we MUST get out of this dump... quickly... SOON! - Well then and so... here I am, ready to kill something, on general principles, and the whole day is ahead of me. I'll be off to Lefferts when I leave here and then to work. Tonight? Sleeping aid! Early. I have to eat something too. Let's see. I don't dare to hope that any of this will move along smoothly. How ridiculous to even ponder the notion. - 7:46pm Just waiting to sign for the bed. I managed to rapidly ingest 2 sandwiches, 2 PopTarts and an orange drink. Washed 3 pairs of socks. Talking with/to no one. I'm exhausted! I just hope these new "*Rest Simply*" tablets make me do just that. ALL night. I got them at the 99cent store so it's a

bit of a “trail” with them. - CW dropped by for a brief moment earlier. - On that note, I could use a smoke. Let’s see how THIS night can become yet another screw-up. (Hey! I wonder if my “Ride the Jew” comment offended anybody. As if I care a crap. Truth: I’m up every morning and most morning’s I’m off to work at a job that I have, not “like” but “have”. I work for an income that’s taxes. I don’t volunteer my taxes, they’re ripped from me. I WORK to pay them. Those taxes, in turn, pay into the pot that pays to provide this shelter. Those who don’t work, benefit on the backs of us who DO. Screw that!) - Oh. Note. I nodded right off at the client’s today! Sh**! This fatigue is getting to me! I was sitting there, for a moment, in some silence and suddenly, my head dropped forward, I woke realising I’d been dozing! NOT a good thing, especially since the family is always present in the house. But they’ve NO idea what I go through all night, so it would look rather suspicious to find me dead asleep at a time when I should, in fact, be working. - 10:16am A little something for the Journal. Every week-night, round-about 8:00pm, the (or “a”) cleaning crew comes round, pretending to “clean” the loo. Between 5 and 7 Black men (tonight, a young woman accompanied... Why? In a MEN’S shelter) come with buckets, spend between 3 and 10 minutes yelling, laughing, banging stall doors and such in the loo and they leave after dumping bleach on the floors, passing a few mops about, having general fun, as it were. These are the “Wildcats”, a group of folks, shelter residents who are paid for and are expected to clean these loos. Truth of the matter is: If we didn’t have Rick, no cleaning would ever get done. Rick’s “purpose”, it seems, is to clean. He told me once: “I didn’t grow up in dirt. I’m not going to live in dirt. Just because I’m Homeless doesn’t mean I have to live in dirt.” Even in a public shelter, there are remnants of dignity. - So tonight, I’ve eaten my “meal”, washed my socks, taken my 99cent sleep aids.. Tonight I hope for sleep. - CW has disappeared for the night. Geo, I wonder about. My recent rant: Was I not enough? Too much? Ah well... - (Thursday, 11 December, 10:00am at The Bronx Central Library, continuing...) At 11:46pm I was still awake, lying in bed in a sweat. George was reading his paper by the light from the hall, Rey was quiet, Rich (Brindou’s replacement) had awakened and was rattling plastic, banging about in his locker. Out in the hall, the niggers (and there’s no endearment in that term*!) were yelling, cussing and complaining. I laid in the bed, silent, trying to figure where I could go, on a rainy night, to get sleep. Trains? Parks? Beaches? the Fort? As I pondered, I dozed off. I’d taken the sleep aid at about 9:00pm and here, now, 3 hours later? Still awake! And pissed. (*Note: *There were many of us who had taken to addressing each-other by the very term, and, as I learned, it had many connotations; a term of camaraderie as well as, indeed, the way we were treated here, more often than not.*)

Thursday 11 December: 119/88

10:10am at The Bronx Central Library: Bowels are BAD today! Painfully cramping! But I made the best of what I had of a day of rain. I was out of the shelter and to The Bronx Central library from 9:30am to 11:00am, logging the journal on-line. Then, onto the trains and out to Brooklyn Central for another 30 (or so, or less, give or take) minutes. Out to the rain again and on to the Nr.2 train to the Shuttle to the A train to the Far Rock Library and another hour of “blogging”. - In between all of this? As I stood waiting for the Bx9 bus, Kristin called to give me a client... right around the corner from the client I've been working with! Another “3-hour” day, but I was glad to have it so close to the one I already had! Of course, things being what they are, by the time I got to the A train *from* Far Rock, it was cancelled! So, instead of 18 hours' work I'm back to the 9 hours per week that I already have. The doors keep closing, the windows keep opening and I keep getting shoved out of them. One step forward and a half-mile back. (And I'm writing this on Friday, 12 December at 7:23pm) So? As always, I plod along. But, much blogging was accomplished today. I take comfort in that. - As the rains subsided tonight, so too, did the temperature. Winter is trying its best to conquer. Thank you Angel, for the jacket! - It appears I'm on some sort of sh**list in the room here at the shelter. I get a silence or, when I speak, blunt replies. Too bleating bad... for them. No doubt it has something to do with my “those who don't work” comment. Fact is, there's no reason why George and Rey don't work. Geo is young enough and in good enough health to “hang out” all friggin night. Rey? Rey's in top shape, good enough to be pulling push-ups in the hall most nights. The way I see it now: I'm working, paying taxes that pay into this “shelter system”. All I get from this “system” is a place to lay down at night (not necessarily to sleep) and a place to shower. I ask for no more. I receive no more. Meanwhile, they eat, sleep, drink, clothe, get fresh linens regularly... FREE AND CLEAR! Riding on *my* tax dollars. Screw them! I didn't even get the help I was promised with getting back to work! - When I got in this evening, and through to almost 11:00pm, Geo had his radio *blaring*. I don't even get “calm” after a day of being on the move. So? Yes indeed... screw the Hell out of them! The day will come... *My* day will come. - Kendall's been talking about leaving here tomorrow. “They” found him a studio in Crown Heights Brooklyn. His departure will leave a very large, very noticeable void in the every day life around here. He left his phone number. I'll try to keep in touch with him. I say “try” because, once out of here, it's anybody's guess whether or not he'll want to keep in touch with us... never mind, whether or not he'll get out and make a success of his new “home” and such. But only “time” will tell us... only “time”. - I got to see and talk with CW this evening, for the first time in a while. He said he made himself scarce because he wasn't feeling well and

didn't want me to see him that way. In the conversation, he mentioned something about clothes. When I said I too need good clothes, he spoke of going to the bars, hooking up with somebody for a night and acquiring necessities that way. OK. It runs through my mind and at moments, I actually feel almost entitled, considering the ways I've been through. But, but, butt... I'm always thinking: he's into me for something... more than the companionship. So, that's fine. I'm not into it for "Love" of any kind. And if I'm wrong about it all? Well... I'm wrong. That's all there is to it. His comments about the bars? I have to admit that, at this point in my own existence, I have to entertain the notion. I've been tossed around since my child-hood: a father who resented me from conception, then regularly walked out on wife and family and left *ME* to attend to them while Mum had to work several jobs, I was the "father" of *his* children... and I was only a child myself. Then, at the age of 16 years, I'm told that I *need* to get out of the house before he *kills* me, and when I go, I get no more than the one month's rent I needed to move. The other 3 children? At their leaving home, each one got a paid, furnished place to move into... rent, security and utilities all settled, and furniture as well as food in the cup-boards. Am I *resentful*? No. Never. Good for them. Seriously. But I will admit, I'm *bitter* and will be forever. And the very siblings who got the "Royal departure" when *they* left home, knowingly and purposely turned their miserable little backs when *my* time of need came round. So? If this is how "Life" is to be, how the "World" is meant to turn, perhaps CW's view is correct: find a situation and take advantage of it... Hey! My siblings did and I don't see any particular retribution. At this point, I look around me and I seriously ponder... seriously. Now, if only I could take all of my "ethics" and dump them *OUT*-side the door! If only I could... - At about 8:00pm, I took 2 sleep aids. The night didn't close until past 11:00pm. I put my head on the pillow and with great difficulty, drifted off...

Friday 12 December: 120 days Homeless(about four months!)/89 days in this Shelter(GOING FOR 3 MONTHS!)

7:59pm and I am SO BLOODY EXHAUSTED! When I got in from the day, the only thing available to eat: 2 rolls and some orange drink. I wolfed that down even before getting out of my work scrubs! Then, changed into blue scrubs which have become my "house-clothes" and pyjamas, got water to fill by water bottle that I keep in the locker for over-night and to make my coffee, wash some socks and under-wear, hang the wash, grab a smoke. My eyes are burning. I'm EXHAUSTED! - Ah, the day... Beginning with something around 3:00 this morning, Rich (the new Nr.16) starts moaning in his sleep! Next thing, he's in this locker, banging sh** about and

dropping more on the floor. I don't know when it finally stopped but it went on for a while. Me? I finally drifted back off to sleep. Exhaustion and perhaps, in some little way, the little "sleep aid" pills. - BRRRRRRRING! BUZZ-BUZZ! The alarm went off at 6:15am... I woke at 6:45am. I forced myself up and out of bed, across the hall for my sneaky morning smoke in the toilet stall, tiny bowel movement, brush teeth, hot shower, dress and bolt for the door OUT of this building! Plans were: Post office in Rockaway, Lefferts library, work, cash cheque, back to the Hotel Hell-hole at day's end. Plans were blown to bits! - I took my normal route to Broadway Junction, Brooklyn, but this morning, out of curiosity (and believing I had the time to do so) I stayed on the L train to the end to... Canarsie. And in Canarsie, the *real* day began: 8:43am, a telephone call from Kristin. Do I want a morning client? Well, YES! ANOTHER 3-HOURS, 2 DAYS PER WEEK! Howard Beach. OK. Fine. 6 hours more is 6 hours more. Time? 9:00am til noon! OK. I'm on my way... AFTER I drop by the post office. I got back on the L train to Broadway Junction to the A train train to the Shuttle to RockPark post office and... NO CHEQUE AGAIN! 6 cigarettes left in my pack and NO CHEQUE... AGAIN! AND ONE DOLLAR to my name. Oh well. Depressive defeat and nothing could be done about it. To the Q21 bus to to Howard Beach which was, at this point, quite close by, just across the Jamaica Bay in fact. - It was just past 11:00am when I arrived at the new client's. I'd told Kristin I was on the train when she called but I would get there as quickly as I possibly could... and I did. But... Ah-hah! No "Care Plan". No Nurse. No nobody. No anybody! Husband and wife only. No staff from the agency present, no assessment, no notes, no information. Well! Out of "position", I spoke with the wife, did an assessment, told her of her rights and potential increase of hours and coverage if necessary. They didn't seem to be too thrilled that I was there, for what-ever reason they had, but we agreed that I was there, the husband needed help and "care" and we all may as well make the best of it for the day. I got to business and as I'm "engaged" in some Home "Care" (to put it delicately), the Nurse arrives! I continue... with MY duties whilst Mrs. Client and the Case Nurse discuss in further detail, the items I'd mentioned. Results? 4 hours/day, 5 days a week! BINGO! 20 HOURS MORE PER WEEK! Next week: 29 HOURS! (I'd phoned my other client before getting to the new pt. this morning, and daughter Mary said not to come at 2:00pm today. THAT WAS another "gift" of the day. If she'd wanted me to come, I'd have been working until 6:30pm or so and not had accomplished... what-ever.) At 2:30pm I clocked out and off the new case. Kristen had called to confirm the new hours of Monday through Friday, 8:30am until 12:30pm! Everybody's happy BUT... as I clocked out, Mr. Newclient (Mr. G.) took a massive, major dump! AS I CLOCKED OUT! I could and should have simply left and let the wifie handle it, as I'm sure she did before I

was dumped onto this case but... I worked an extra hour (at no pay, of course). But too, in all fairness I have to note that Mrs. Newclient sent a neighbour out for coffee and she paid my coffee AND a toasted bagel with cream cheese. So? So. It was a kindness I haven't experienced in a long while and I was (and am) truly most appreciative. I finally left at about 3:15pm for the Q21 bus back to The Rock. At the post office (at about 4:00pm) THE CHEQUE HAD ARRIVED! Elated, I got the train into The City. - My god! The sun-set was truly magnificent! Not the regular red-orange but brilliant WHITE, gleaming on the bay! Breath-taking! (Homesickness painfully grabbed my chest. Nobody knows how deep and how severe the pain is when I leave here.) - Back at the "Hell of Manhattan", I cashed the cheque, walked to Hotel hell-hole, got a pack of cigarettes en route, came in. Nobody at the "security check-point". When she appeared, Fujardo ("security") was actually pleasant. (There's a full moon tonight I have to note. Changes in personalities?) - I got into the room and ate my rolls, changed into my "room scrubs", did my wash. - When I came back from the wash at 7:23pm, the stench in the room was just putrid! Rey seems to believe that his little game of flatulence is acceptable. Well, perhaps in his little island home "his people" enjoy inhaling the odour of each-others' bowels, and perhaps they all agree with it. If so, he should return. Meanwhile, I wonder if it's not some act of aggression against me. If so, not much of a problem, it's what I deal with all day at work. I don't "like" it, but after a while, it becomes, well, "the norm". Besides, I'm hoping to request a room with "Working Class" people at my next meeting with a case worker (tomorrow morning). I need sleep! I don't need children. - Enough of that. At 8:30pm, I took my sleep aid. (It's 9:35pm now). - At 9:20pm, "Ripley" (a fellow in the room next door who got the name because of the "believe it or not" stories he concocts and amuses us all with) came by to inform Rey that Brindou is on the floor for some reason... perhaps a re-assign! - Kendall is getting his hair cut in the hall. "Muscles" is doing it. Kendall's looking quite "clean". No Geo. No Rich. Peace... for the moment. I've faith that Geo and Rich will both be back to ruin a night's sleep. Rich is about the building somewhere. He's signed for his bed. Geo? I'm fed up with the sh** he pulls all night, disturbs sleep and lays in bed all day! I'm just fed-up with most of this sh**. So if he's here, so be it. If he's not here, so be that as well. - But, it's time to read the *Wave* and try for a nap tonight. - Hey. No sign of CW. He went out (or so he said he would) at 11:30pm last night. Well, I do what I must to make certain that I have my bed here, and what the rest do is none of my concern. I have to look-out for ME, and not them. - I almost forgot: A letter from Chex System arrived today... MY NAME'S CLEAR! MCU HERE I COME!!!! A new banque account and another step toward regaining my life (for all it's worth) away from here!

Saturday 13 December: 121/90

10.39am Almost unbelievable! A night's sleep last night! Up at 8:40am. Rested! A brief shower. Very brief. After, a quick encounter with Ms. Simpson about Tuesday next. Clear skies. Very brisk day. Now? Out of here and "wing it". - *NOTE ABOVE. MEETING WITH Ms. Simpson. On Saturday. She'd told me that we wouldn't be meeting on Saturdays. More "BS". But that comes as no particular surprise in here.* - "Winging it" today consisted of getting on the train to the Parkchester Library, up-town in The Bronx to find Ginette, a security guard I'd met at The Bronx Central library and with whom I'd become good friends. I was really looking forward to seeing her today. But, when I arrived and asked the charming moron at the desk for her, Ms. Moron snapped "She don't work here anymore." Well, what did I expect? I was being "Revolutionary" by being out and about on Shabbat, wearing my kippa. Zap! I got it. Still, I wasn't destroyed. I simply headed back to the train. I called Ginette and left a message. I hope she's OK. I hope she's got a warm home, a way to pay her rent and food. I care. - Whilst on the train, I decided to hit the Midtown Library just to do a bit of research on "Speech Therapy" and post-stroke therapy for Mr. G. (Mr. Newclient.) the new patient. Six books later, and not much info, it was 4:25pm and I was walking to D'Ag's market for cream cheese, yoghurt, V8 juice and cookies (meal-time). It was cool, not too cold. Great walking weather. I enjoyed it. Until... - It all came to being back at the Hotel Hell-hole. 5:20pm or so, the door to the room was open, lights were out. I flipped the light switch... the 3 of them, fast asleep! Bloody Hell! Not one of them has a job. Geo had been out all night and now, here it is, sleeping? I left the light on, came in, opened my locker, prepared my sandwiches and ate. (I finished the whole bottle of V8 too.) After eating, I washed 2 T-shirts, pillow case and towel and, as I was beginning to settle down? BM! Emergency! One of these "clean-outs". It's uncomfortable but I'm happy when I get one where I can just "go". - And so, CW came into the loo. He'd been sleeping too. He's bummed because he's got no money these days. I'd give him some (car-fare) but he managed to go out the other night. These guys are interesting: They never have money but can always manage to get enough to get drunk or high. Meanwhile, I'm working and can afford car-fare, a pack of cigarettes and not much else. I've learnt one thing though: I DON'T HAVE SO I CAN'T GIVE anymore. Period. It's a tough lesson for me because I've ALWAYS been the one to do what-ever to help whom-ever, even if I have to suffer for it. But I'm learning to change... every day... a little more. - And now, at 7:55pm, I'm on the bed, stomach grumbling. Rey is fumbling about, Rich left a few moments ago, Geo is laying in his bed. It's relatively quiet, so far. And I'm anxious about tomorrow night and sleep. Ever since the days of the Cow, that old woman I resided with for the longest while, attending to her needs 24/7, sleep

has been important... and rare. - I wonder if my “emphysema” that they diagnosed, will grow to lung cancer. I wonder if it will take me down in about 2 years. I wonder if I could be blessed and it will take me down much sooner. (I doubt it... ME? Blessed? I'd laugh, if I cared enough to.) - When I came in this evening, I had a nice chat with Vivian, the Greek security guard on the floor. She's “a piece of work”. I like her. We had the nicest chat, and that's one of the important little pleasantries in this place... “nice” anything, especially “chats”. - Well, right now I could use a nap until sign-in. I wonder if I'll be afforded that luxury. Or is it reserved for the non-employed? - 8:42pm and there was no nap. I signed for the bed for the night though. Stomach still churning. The unemployed are here... and awake... of course. The hall is a-buzz. They do nothing all day, all week and then do their best to keep the rest of us down.. awake, un-rested. Ah, the life. So I took my sleep aid and will try to try for some sleep during the night. Will it happen? I doubt it... I always doubt it. Hopefully this situation won't be much longer. And, as I've said (written) in the past... I have my “Option” and 8 days to Winter! Ah... the beach... and Winter, some pills, a martini, to sit at the ocean's edge as the tide comes in... the tide goes out... and takes me with it... around the globe... in peace.

Sunday 14 December: 122/91

After a night of limited sleep, I got up this morning, bolted for the door, out to the street to a chilly Sunday morning in The City. How I've come to hate being here. But by 1:00pm, I was out on the grass of the Fort... and no Penelope! Oddly, I was a bit happy about that. As I walked across the Parade Field it came to me: My membership expires at the end of the month and I have no intention of renewing. It's done me no good, being a “member”. No exhibits. No “promotions”. The 25 dollars would be better spent on a weekly MetroCard or the phone. I'd been *so* happy when I joined RAA a year ago. I still don't know why my membership payment never got posted to their books when I gave the application and cash to Penelope but, it won't happen again. - In T6, Janet and 2 women (“sitters” for the current exhibit) were there. I took my pencil sketches to the “library” room and sprayed them with some fixative. Sadly, it was too late. They'd smudged. But they're still OK. Janet asked me when I was going to exhibit. I felt like telling her the truth: when the board members take the elitist stick out of their arses and face the reality that 25 dollars is a hardship for the “common artist”, not to mention the little extra fees that are charged for participation in said exhibits here. But, as is my general belief... it's not worth the effort of saying. I let it blow over. - Geoff. came in... He'd gotten a haircut! Imagine. He told me that Penelope has

strep throat, mentioned something about me calling her. Right. Just as much as she called me during my 3 weeks in Peninsula. As is said in Montreal: “Fukdat!” What a new me! A “new attitude” as it were. - Speaking with the 2 other women I learnt that one was raised in Tel Aviv! She told of the old Ramat Aviv (open, open spaces) and how all is built up now. Herzeliyah, Netanya... high-rises, Israel has become “American”. How very, very sad. - The day went to evening. The Writers’ Group met. I attended but didn’t read. Martha K. did. An old piece about food washing up on the beaches of Breezy... something I’ve now heard for the 3rd, maybe 4th time. When Dan suggested “Spoken Word” events at openings and receptions, Martha shot the idea to death, favouring the RAA! A Breezy retard elitist. What a crock of sh**! She wants the Writers’ Group to be separate, keeping the RAA “pure”. And me? I’m “Rockaway” enough to resent it. Well? Yet another reason to keep my “dues” to myself. Nepotistic in-breeds. My original intention of going to Rockaway was to get away. I’ll go back to Rockaway, and stay away from the rest. But that month of “living” and “residing” in The Fort gives ME the “upmanship” that the rest don’t and never will have. The Fort will always be “home” to me... without them. - And so, at 6:30pm, as I walked out toward the bus, waves crashing against the beach off in the dark, the Fort really was “Home”. - Q35 bus to The Junction. On to a Nr.2 train and suddenly... As the doors were closing I HAD to jump! *My bowels were about to give way!* Up the stairs, down the street, into the near Target store. Quickly almost running up the long escalator, charging (silently and trying to appear rather “dignified”) into the loo... and... JUST IN TIME! The fatigue and stress are taking a toll on me. Malnutrition too. Got to the toilet and was afraid I’d never be able to leave! Painful. Bloating. Pressure. About 20 minutes, and all but unable to get up. Little by little I’m falling apart. Little by little. - Finally, back to the train where I tried to nap, tried to hold my bowels which continued to churn, even after the “event” in the store. - By somewhere around 8:00pm I was back to the miserable reality of the Hell-hole, needing sleep... I tried. I took 2 of the sleep aids I’d bought this morning at the 99cent Limit (Yes, that right! I’d gone there before going to the Fort! - I’m journaling this on Tuesday at 9:51pm. I’d gotten soap, sandpaper - for my feet - a package of cookies to eat. Then took the B36 bus and Q35 bus to the Fort. How could I have forgotten? How? I’m EXHAUSTED!) - Meanwhile, the 3 sh**-heads of 5W-101 managed everything possible to keep me from sleep tonight, between chatting, banging locker doors, moving beds and the likes.

Monday 15 December: 123/92

IF I got 3 hours’ sleep all night last night, it was a lot.. Geo and Rey chatting. Geo SNORING on

into the night. Rich moaning, tossing, and in and out of the locker. Snore. Click. Clack. Bang. ALL BLOODY NIGHT! When my alarm went off at 4:51am this morning, I could barely sit up in bed! Geo won't work. Rich can't work. Rey doesn't work. None of them seem to WANT to work. And so, their nights go on and on and in complete selfishness. A group of utter waste! This place is another attack, attempt to kill me off! And what a lesson on the failure of humanity. Worthless. The lot. - But I managed my morning and was on the 6 train buy 7:06am and on the rails to work. I clocked-in at exactly 8:30am! at the new patient's. Mr. G. was glad to see me. Mrs. G was relieved. It was a "heavy" day of work. My heart throbbed and my eyes burned from the fatigue of sleeplessness. It was, physically "Miserable Misery"! But I made it through. - When I left Howard Beach it was terribly warm. I was glad that Mary (my other client) cancelled today. I was sweating... from the warmth of the day, my jacket and FATIGUE! I looked forward to getting to bed... BUT... somewhere along the line I decided to try to open THE account at MCU whilst I had the opportunity. So, at Broadway Junction I grabbed a J train to Chambers St. and into the credit union I went. Well. Journal news for today: CHEQUE AND SAVE AT MCU! It took some time but IT'S done! I'm relieved! Truly relieved. I have the two accounts I need: the savings for savings and the chequing for the card for purchases... and "direct deposit" so no more hoping that a cheque will arrive in a timely fashion only to find that it doesn't. Of course, now I wait for the US Government to grab the accounts too. There's always that albatross around my neck. THEY will NEVER leave me alone... even though it's been YEARS since I tried to prove them wrong about "undeclared income" back in 1988. Well.. let them then. Let them pull what little I have. I'm HOMELESS, for sh**'s sake! Not that this country gives a sh** about that. Oh well and... But for now, for the while, let's see where this goes. At least THIS much of the steps toward "normalcy" are taken. - After the credit union, I grabbed a train to 23rd Street. Quick food shopping at Morton Williams market on 23rd Street and after, I walked up to the sh**-hole. There, sitting on my little metal bed, head ducked into my locker, I ate... ATE, ATE! - Of course , I wanted to sign-in at 8:30pm this evening and go to sleep but the Useless in the room wouldn't permit that... At 11:00pm, George decided to stroll in and bang about in his locker. And the rest of the vermin in the halls decided it was "Chit Chat" time. ANOTHER BLOODY BLEATING NIGHT OF NO SLEEP! So, I put into the journal, the basic Truth and Fact: The butt-holes who are employed here will insist that residents must find work to re-establish their independence and lives. BUT, THE ENTIRE SYSTEM IS RUN TO THWART ALL EFFORTS AND ATTEMPTS BY PLACING THE WORTHLESS WITH THE WORKING SO THAT THE WORKING CAN'T POSSIBLY HOLD A JOB! I MEAN: HOW CAN ANYBODY HOLD A JOB WHEN THEY'RE SLEEP

DEPRIVED? I AM BURNING WITH HATRED FOR ALL OF THIS AND BITTER TOWARD THE REST OF THE WORLD! WHY I SURVIVE I DO NOT KNOW! BUT I DO KNOW THAT I'M SLOWLY MOVING FROM BEING HATEFUL TO BEING "HATE"!

Tuesday 16 December: 124/93 *SNOW!!! SNOW!!! SNOW!!!*

(I've been SO tired and SO sick that I can muster up only enough strength and presence of mind to jot briefly here: It was a day at work... a FULL day at work. At 10:25pm, George is reading his bleating paper, Rich is frigging about his bleating locker, Rey is on his bleating phone, the bleating light is on and I'm going to have to bleating try for bleating sleep A-BLOODY-BLEATING-GAIN! TO-BLOODY-BLEATING-NIGHT! And... for some "Margin notes": 9:59pm Geo eats. Rey on Phone. Rich just in, in locker! - Coming into the building after work this evening, "security" puts my bag on the scanner belt and as I'm coming through, another "guard" yells over "Tell him to shut the f*** up! because there's a "resident" making all kinds of fuss about being checked through all of this. - I was also supposed to have a meeting with Ms. Simpson today at 2:45pm... I was at work... WORK!!! No doubt there's going to be HELL to be paid now! "Work" is no excuse for missing a meeting with THEM.)

Wednesday 17 December: 125/94

Up at 5:51am this morning. No BM. No time. Run to trains. Arrived at my morning patient's appointment 15 minutes late! WELL! "Good morning" then. - This afternoon? LATE to THAT patient by half an hour! But, nothing's changed there. No progress. I can't really care since the family doesn't. I just don't have what it takes to care anymore. I'm exhausted! Not enough sleep. Not enough to eat. - Too much coffee at the afternoon patient's though. Nauseous en route back to the shelter this evening. Took L train to 1st Avenue and M15 bus to 23rd Street. Stopped at the Morton Williams market on 23rd and got chicken nibblets, hot dog rolls and *Fage* Greek yoghurt. With groceries in bag, I walked up to the shelter. - When I got in, Rey and Geo spoke this evening! Both talked about being depressed... generally because of the shelter. Rey claims that George is looking for work. Well maybe, but one wouldn't know by the hours he (and Rey) stay awake until with the lights on! This morning, somebody put the light off at about 1:00am! Tonight AGAIN, after 24 hours of little-to-no sleep, more noise and what-ever it takes to keep people from sleeping in here! THIS is killing me! Work, travel, no sleep. The whole system is an insulting farce.

Thursday 18 December: 126/95

11:46am and I am at Mr. TG's (Mr. Newpatient, as it were). This morning, he was really rather abusive, hollering at me and his wife, calling HER all sorts of filthy little names, most of which were shot at her in Italian. This is the part of this work that most people never hear of: the abusive patients who, when they get angry or perceive anything not to their liking, either due to dementia or their general nasty personalities, will lash out at family, friends and Caregivers. Names are called, accusations are made, even threats of violence. Ah, but we put up with it. Me? It's not much different from being in the shelter sometimes. This is why I handle the shelter the way I do: they're ill, and I can't take any of it personally. It doesn't make the situation easier, it just makes it more appropriate to ignore (as much as possible). Luckily, Mrs. here, took some time and left the house (at my recommendation). I sat, in silence with Mr. for a bit over an hour, not saying much of anything. There really is nothing TO say. And if I did, I don't know (yet) if he's in his right mind or not. No matter, anything I might say might be twisted round and used against me... and I'm on a rather "probationary" period here with this new job. I've already lost one job because of lying BS. I'll NOT put up with another. So I remain calm, removed, silent. But of all the days! I'm exhausted! Not being able to sleep is killing me! Killing me. - After a bit over an hour, Mrs. returned. Calmer. She'd gone to church. Escape. How nice for her. Me? I'd LOVE to attend services but haven't been to services in months! I haven't had the luxury of time to go. And even if and when I've had the time, I've had no energy. SHE gets "church" and I get "no synagogue". Oh well, as Oma used to say: Such is life. It makes no sense thinking about it. - Well, this morning I got here at 8:23am. Transport is tragic. Undependable. I was sick. I was tired. My bowels are painful. When Mr. went off and Mrs. left, I contacted D., the RN on this case, to discuss the matter with her in the hope of getting more information on the patient and the situation. WELL! According to her, the violent out-bursts are "typical". Are there more to follow? No doubt. This one's going to the right pain in the arse, but I have to hold this case! I need the income! "Trapped" in insanity at the shelter and now, at the job too! The whole bleating day of potential violence. VERY soothing indeed. (Maybe the stress will slam me with a heart-attack some trip on a subway or something. At this point, THAT would be a blessing!) - OK! I left there at about 12:40pm but as I'm at the door to leave, Mrs. wanted me to help her hoist Mr. up in the chair! These people always "more time", and at the last minute... and after I've clocked-out. The other one in the afternoon does the same thing. But I squelched this one today and am doing the same with the other one. No more! No more extra time! No more "freebies". I'm there for 3 or 4 hours and everything just rolls along. This "last minute" sh** is done! It's down-right abusive and

I get much more than my share of abuse at the shelter. I'm in these homes to help and give care... NOT to be abused! - I got out, got to the Boulevard and grabbed the Q21 bus out to Rockaway. At the post office, the box rent comes due on the 31st. ANOTHER 43\$ to pay out! Fare hikes. More taxes. No pay rise. It's getting to me. There's no sense in any of it. I'm working. I'm dying. My clothes need to be washed. I'm friggin HOMELESS! - I strolled over to Waldbaum's market. The quiet of the store was so welcome but their prices have increased! More taken from my pay! I was hungry. Tired. I got pre-packaged meats, rolls, donuts, *Little Debbie* Bavarian Crème rolls, *Fage* yoghurt and was out the door and to the shuttle back to The City. The L train is running slowly! As it rolled along I'd eaten the 6 *Little Debbies*. Too much sugar. No sleep. No rest. - I thought that when I got back in this evening, I'd nap, do a wash, go to the library since I had the afternoon free. I ate and was asleep by 4:00pm or so. THANKFULLY nobody came in to toss me out of the dorm or the bed! WHO is watching over me today? No matter... I'm thankful, truly thankful. - I woke at just past 8:00pm, filed my nails, signed-in, had a smoke and came back to the bed to sit and wait for the din'n'drone of the "natives" to calm down for the night. - 10:01pm I took my sleep aids. The lights are on. George is asleep, fully dressed. Rey is on his phone, slamming the window screen. 16 (Rich) isn't in YET! CW's been bugging me about not seeing me in the morning. You know? I don't care. I'm so exhausted that I CAN'T care any more. I just can't! - The weather forecast for tomorrow is rain. Clouds on Saturday. Snow on Sunday. - All I'm hoping for now is to pass out cold and deep and all night. My cell-phone is charging. Alarms set for the morning. I'm hungry. Sleepy. There's a new idiot on the floor: screeching in the halls. These idiots yell the length of the halls all into the night. - Tonight? NO NOISE PLEASE! I'm exhausted. I need sleep. Leave me alone and let me sleep!

Friday 19 December: 127/96

(Margin notes: Barbara, Debra, Dennis!!!! 17h19 Rich tells me Ms. Simpson is looking for me. Socks, T-shirts washed) 10:18am at G's again. Mrs. is out to "get us kawfee." She's got SUCH a stereotypical "New Yawk" accent. In a way, it's almost endearing, reminding me of "New Yorkers" when I was a child. Mr. is at table, having finished his breakfast and morning medications. This morning, I'm in a LOT of lower back pain and in no mood to even chat with him after the outburst. BUT THERE'S A FLURRY! THE PAPER FORECAST SAYS 3-5 INCHES OF SNOW DUE TODAY! I just wish I could be out in it, to enjoy it. But last night I slept through right up until just before this morning's alarm. I'd taken the sleep aid on time I suppose. By my hand-writing for

yesterday it appears I was groggy, it's almost illegible. So, sleep was had for one night. It seems that I now need to adjust to functioning on one night's sleep for a week. - Today, in the "elements" (snow), I'm hoping to make the post office and then to this afternoon's client all on time. Hope. Ah, screw me now, I'm delirious... thinking "hope". No sense in not trying. If I don't try, I'll only regret not knowing whether or not I could have pulled it off. - Of my own concern lately is: If only I could move my bowels regularly again. I'm in more pain that I care to tell. I either "go" or I don't. When I do, it's horrible, emergency, RUNS! And when I don't, it actually causes back pain. My insides must be a complete disaster area at this point. But there's no time to stop to check, and I can't afford to have anything checked anyway since I have no insurance (and even being Homeless, I don't qualify for "Medicaid" as I've already learnt). And even more important, I don't WANT to know if anything's wrong. So, what I don't know... it better left alone. - Leaving the shelter this morning, I left in great time. No stress. I could get my buses and trains according to how THEY ran and not according to how my insides usually wrench and try to rush in panic. - CW is still upset because we don't meet in the morning before I leave. Me? I'm happy. I have no time... no time. He's "attached" himself to me for some reason. Honestly, it seems that these guys in the shelter see me as some kind of "peaceful spot" in the mayhem. The place is all but killing me out-right, but I keep it all to myself. I see no sense in making any issues out of anything because there's really nobody who wants to help change anything and the truth of the matter is: the only one who CAN make any difference is ME... and if I just let loose and rant, the only thing I'll accomplish is turning into the rest of them and getting nothing accomplished. No doubt, that's a large part of my pains and sicknesses. But, no sense dwelling on that either. - 6:29pm back in the dorm and on my little metal bed numbered D18 and... IT *SNOWED*!!!! I made it out of G's by 12:30pm. Mary, Mr. Afternoon-client's daughter, phoned to say that, if I couldn't make it to them, I shouldn't worry about it. Apparently she was under the impression that travel was a horror. I thought I'd try to get to the post office and to her this afternoon, but I told her I'd try to see how it went. WELL... I walked up to 157th Av. for the Q53 bus and the snow was coming steadily. I ducked into the recess of a store-front for some little bit of protection. A guy ducked into the recess immediately beside and lit a cigarette. "The smoke's not blowing in your face?" he politely asked me. I smiled and said "Don' worry about it." (I heard my own "New Yawk 'merican English". It wasn't impressive... But it was appropriate... to "Howid Beach", as the locals pronounce it, anyway.) "Thank you." he replied. The bus arrived in short order. Oh... The crossing over the bay was great! Snow and clouds and the bridge. Broad Channel was a little holiday card: snow all round. Rockaway was a heart-ache. SO BEAUTIFUL! In a decent world, in a compassionate

world, I would have been headed “Home”, to a hot lunch, big blanket, music, working on a water-colour, rest, peace. But those worlds don’t exist any longer, and so I was rushing through the place I call “Home” and am being kept away from. At B92nd Street, I looked up in a rather empty bus, to see BARBARA! A FACE OF HOME!!! (I met her on my trips, travels and visits to the Seaside Library in Rockaway. We started chatting, and became friendly.) She said she’d seen me get on the bus but couldn’t catch my eye. We talked about the weather. She told me there are rooms available in the house she lives in out in Rockaway! Not much of view out the window, as she described it “... view of a brick wall, 4 feet away...” I asked “Waterproof?” She laughed. “Yes. Waterproof.” (Good time to “Home-hunt” now.) “No tourists or seasonals!” I thought.) We rode to the end of the line. She was going for some lunch. “It’s awfully good to see you.” She said. How she should have known what a tonic it was for me to see her, and in this snow, after these past couple of hard and difficult and painful days. And in the sleet, we parted ways. It was 1:11pm already. I headed, alone, to the post office as the snow continued to fall. - As I walked in the door, there, queued for the service window... DEBRA!!! ANOTHER face of “home”! “Winter miracles” today! A hug. A kiss. She told me that Edlyne, the bitch from Premier Agency who was, in quite the way responsible for the situation I’m in now, screwed her out of 12 hours’ pay! Bellanton is STILL getting away with her incompetence and BS games! Debra has to make the rent up somehow because of this sh**. How familiar! How I wish there was something I could do to make Edlyne Bellanton pay for her BS. How I do hope and pray that she suffers Homelessness and severe hunger, for many years to come. Not just for me, but for each and every person she’s screwed. SHE pulls this BS with other people’s income and, no doubt, toddles and dances on her merry way, unscathed. Life... what a sh**-pit. Meanwhile, WE, the ones who WORK, provide income for the agency that pays HER so that SHE can live happily and comfortably. No, it just doesn’t and will never settle in my soul... nor in my gut for that matter. I wish her nothing but the worst of all WE suffer... and more. - But by god! It was just so beautiful, seeing Debra. And to add to the delight of this Wint’ry day: In my post office box was my pay-cheque of 9 hours AND the MCU debit card! How about that? Income AND the evidence that I am on my way BACK! - Debra and I parted... she to Waldbaum’s and I to the shuttle. - I called Mary to check and see how her dad was doing. “Do you get paid if you don’t work?” she asked me. “No. But don’t worry about that. Do you need me?” “No. It’s nasty out now and it’s going to get worse. Go home. I’ll call Kristin and tell her I don’t want you to come.” Another “gift”. I got the train and headed for cheque-cashing. - Today it was *exceptionally* difficult leaving Rockaway but... but... - A bit later, I’m dozing on the A train as it pulls into Grant and I hear “Judah!” WELL MY GOD, MY HEART, MY

LIFE! Dennis B.! The first fellow I met when I got into the shelter! The guy who got transferred out in the middle of the night. The person with whom I shed tears when he parted on that subway train, off to destinations then un-known. Dennis!!! On the A train! He looks great! Gained weight. We talked about things “on the inside”. He’s seeing a White girl in Port Jervis! Port Jervis, part of MY past. He’s still so polite and courteous, just as he was “back then”. And it was so uplifting to see him. (I’ll never forget the Dennis I walked to the train that night he got transferred out of here. Good. Kind. Sweet Dennis.) I rode to Broadway-Nassau with him (instead of getting off the train at Broadway Junction as I normally do). We talked some more. He said he’ll call me after 9:00pm tonight and maybe we can get together Sunday and talk. I won’t plan on it... but I will hope. A sincere hug and we parted. - As I headed to the Lexington Ave. line it struck me: As warming, wonderful, truly miraculous as it was to see him (and Barbara and Debra), my heart doesn’t flutter or dance for Joy any more. Where tears would flow in times passed, only dry eyes now. There’s a part of a sensitive heart that’s GONE! I’m not so happy about that. I’m hardening... like the rest of the world. I’m dying... like the rest of the world. I really AM “bitter” now. The toll has been taken. But, in any case, in any event, the SNOWS brought BEAUTY into my existence today. People who have *NOT* hurt me. They’re out there, and it’s good to see them when I do. Good people... who have *NOT* hurt me. The *SNOWS* brought them today. - I got the 4 train (the train that runs to Woodlawn... where my happiest moments of my child-hood still dance on those streets, the happiest moments with my Mum, together, on those streets, on this train) to 14th Street to the 6 train to 33rd Street. Cash! A MetroCard for next week. The “return” trip was hardly “usual” because I took the 6 train at 33rd to 14th Street to the L train to 1st Ave. Stopped to get a pack of cigarettes and then got the M15 bus back to “reality”... back to Hell. But at the corner, as I waited (and waited, and waited) in what was becoming slush instead of snow, for the bus, 4 kids were playing with the snow. 3 Asian girls and an Asian boy. Snow was flying every-where! (And slush was falling from the sky and filling the streets. The storm drains in this city/hole don’t function. Mass transit doesn’t function. It’s a cesspool of “non-function”.) These brats were throwing it at each-other and it was hitting me and a rather elderly woman who as also waiting for the bus. Ah... When snow/slush hit me for the 2nd time, I went over to the little girl, tapped her on the shoulder. “Miss. Look at this! If you don’t stop right now I will do what your mother should have done a long time ago. And believe me, some people are going to be very un-happy.” Point made. It stopped. I returned to waiting. The elderly woman turned her head ever so slightly in my direction and gave me a “thankful” glance. - It was something around 4:30pm when I returned to 5W-101 to find those THREE sleeping the day away! How bleating charming!

How bleating charming. *They* sleep comfy now so they can keep me awake when it's MY turn to sleep! - I ate! And as I finished, at about 5:19pm, Rich, from down the hall (not the one in our room... this one's civil, a delight) comes by. "Your case worker Ms. Simpson?" "Yup." "She was looking for you." OK. Thank you. I went to wash my 3 t-shirts, 10 socks and under drawers. She's looking for me? I've been here... *HERE*... for an hour. She doesn't see anybody after "4"(4:00pm) she told me sternly. I saw her Tuesday evening. She sends people to tell me she's looking for me? I'm working Ms. Thang. We have an appointment for NEXT Tuesday. See ya then! Sh**! - And so, at 8:03pm, the room is a most delightful empty. George is out (getting drunk as he does regularly... no doubt). Rey went to dinner and hasn't returned. (Dominoes on 4?) Rich is suffering a miserable cold and went for some treatment or something. The Spics are yelling in the halls as are their Black comrades. Me? I'm looking forward to my sleep aids, sign-in, maybe a call from Dennis, sleep. Tomorrow? It will take care of itself now.

Saturday 20 December: 128/97

5:59pm I come in at 5:30pm: Room in darkness. Rey and George, asleep. I'm hungry. Rey woke up. He tells me to put on the light. It's no sooner on, CW comes by. He's been in all day... sleeping. I fill my drinking water bottle in the loo, prepare my sandwiches... Charles come in, walks right to the locker, he's surrounded by the stench of urine, starts with "What do you get when...?" I ask to eat in peace. He asks for "2 chips". I actually said "No." Me! I said "No". I told him it's all I've eaten all day. He says OK and leaves. I mean: SHIT! They lay in bed all day, getting up for FREE HOT MEALS! I'm out WORKING and going and moving and running AND USING MY LITTLE BIT OF FOOD STAMPS for food! I should *share*? I ask for nothing. I get nothing. I give nothing. The oddest bit? The fattest one asks for food! Margot? You and Charles should be together! Creation wouldn't stand a chance! She too, morbidly obese, lazy as could possibly be and ALWAYS GRAZING! And GOD FORBID you should be any-where NEAR her with ANYTHING edible... she all but created road-slicks with her salivating! Where do these people come from? WHO or WHAT do they think they are? And ME... at LEAST 60lbs UNDER-weight and they come to ME asking for... FOOD! No! I used to give... GIVE, GIVE, GIVE! I truly CANNOT afford to any longer! - 8:25pm OK. I've eaten, gotten my blue scrubs washed. I even mopped the floor in this room! It's supposed to be done weekly by the aforementioned "Widcats" or somebody but, the fact is... it doesn't get done that often and, well, I, for one, do NOT want all sorts of little rodents and vermin scurrying about the floor at night and nesting in

my bed during the day. (It's bad enough that there are filthy sh**-bags who wander about the building during the day and when they find an empty bed, in an empty room, will simply lie down in it... FILTHY as they can be!) And this evening, I even managed to "sand paper" the calluses on my feet! (The coarsest paper worked wonders! I should have done this years ago!) - The day: I slept until about 8:00am, from about 10:00pm last night! Only one interruption during the night when Muhammad's (our resident, self-proclaimed "Imam") chum got caught sleeping in a single dorm down the hall to which he was NOT assigned (as I've already just mentioned happens). He barred the door somehow so, when "security" came round, the bitch couldn't open the door and so she called in the troops. Tee hee hee. Big t'doo about it for a bit and back to sleep. The "chum" will get a chewing-out and perhaps tossed from the shelter and transferred to one of the "worst" shelters else-where in The City. As for the "security" crew? GOOD! It's about time some of them actually worked for their pay. They do almost nothing all night... except yell at each-other across the echoing halls, or pop into dorm rooms in the middle of the night yelling "BED-CHECK" when it isn't called-for. So? Nobody cares about them having to confront somebody... in the middle of the night. - At about 10:00am this morning, shower and CW who surprised me by being there. By 11:00am, I was out the door and en route to the Far Rock library where I got about 1,5 hours on a computer and could have had more but I thought I'd go to The Bronx library this evening for more logging. (I didn't though.) By 3:11pm (on the A train at Mott Avenue) I was tired and hungry. Went to 14th Street to the L train to Union Square, transferred to the 6 train to 23rd Street where I walked to Morton Williams market for food. As I was shopping, from the speakers in the ceiling, Cyndi Lauper sang "Early Christmas Morning". My bitter hatred grows all the more all the time. I used to SO like that song... I used to SO like holidays. Today? The music made my soul wrench tight into itself. I finished my shopping and left the store. - I walked up to the S-hell-ter where we had to come in now on 30th Street instead of the "back entrance" via the dark, plywood plank alley-way. When I got to the usual entrance on the avenue, the fat little Black guard, who spread across almost the entire width of the entrance, just muttered "30th Street" as I tried to enter. So? So to 30th Street, which is the original main entrance to what once was "Bellevue Psychiatric" and where I was "wanted" and *brought* to the metal scanner. My back pack, full of my shopping at the market was a bit too intimidating for it all and so they tossed it through the scanner and made me pick it up when it came through. Finally in the building, I climbed the stairs to the 5th floor. - In the "lounge", 4 or 5 guys sitting or lying about. One of them stinks to the point of gagging a passer-by. SO many of them don't bathe and come into this shelter and continue to refuse to bathe. The stench of urine,

faces, sometimes vomit, dead and decaying flesh... all on the one body, truly DOES pull the oxygen out of the air and closes the air passages of another person! THOSE “Homeless” are not “us” and WE Homeless want NOTHING to do with THEM! - And so, that brings me to where I opened... - 8:49pm and CW’s here talking about women, shorts, string thongs. The man has major troubles. Yes, he did say he’s bi. But I really don’t need to know nor do I care to know. There truly and honestly are things about others that are none of my business and about which I give not a sh**. - Actually, I just want to sleep.

WINTER 2008

Sunday 21 December: 129/98

6:33pm This was one of those days of playing the role of the “lazy Homeless people” and really getting nothing world-shaking accomplished. But hey, considering how many here do nothing all of the time, and what I DO all of the time, I think I should take a day and DO nothing. - However... As the day ran... Rich, our new D16, got talking about his time in Attica, his panhandling “business” (and to him, that IS his “job” and career), his ailments and illnesses. I can't help but have no sympathy or compassion because the only place I “vent” or “air” any of my own “ailments and illnesses” is on these pages. To the rest of the world, I'm just a calm, collected, peaceful little sh** who's just happy with the World. Oh well. So be it, really. And yet, all I wanted to do today is journal. But, I do suppose life is about helping each-other in here and if listening helps my room-mate, then I can't begrudge him the time. Ah, but when anybody gets talking about “friends” and “family” I begin to wonder. And there are too many times when that becomes the topic of a chat session. These guys are in here, in a shelter for the *Homeless*. Where are the “friends” and the “family”? Me? I'm thankful to be in here, *away from* “friends” and “family”. I've no obligations to any of them and they've no obligations to me. I'd gone to them in time of need, in time of TRUE need, and, well, this is where that got me. In fact, in retrospect, and now, as I think of it, these are, quite honestly, some of the *better* days of my life. This year I honestly don't care if John is making his mortgage, if Joe is warm in his garage, if Cyndi is working 1, 2, or even 5 jobs, and Tony is paying the bills. I don't care one way or the other. I don't actively wish them harm either. I simply do not give a sh**, one way or the other. What I *do* know is that I don't feel any obligation to send any of them any money... or anything at all. I did that nonsense and didn't get so much as an insincere “Thanks”. Sending money, going out of my way to visit and leaving money about the house, worrying that they were doing well... in spite of the

fact that their starts in “independent life”, away from “Mama's apron strings” were all picture-perfect and none of them had to lift a finger other than to walk into their new “homes”... paid for, furnished and stocked with food. And so... there we have it. These days, all of the folks I'm surrounded with an by are all, pretty much, on the very same page of the very same book, and, for the most part, all we have is us. So if “us” sticks together, “us” can be of some help, and where one can't, another can fill that need... even if it's just sitting and listening. This morning, I listened. - Last night? It was another night of good sleep. In fact, I woke early enough for *work* without the alarm! (On a day when I don't have to go to work... imagine that.) I looked at the clock, rolled over and went back to sleep. But by about 9:30am, I headed out, into a cold rain and went up to The Bronx Central library. Today I got about TWO hours on-line! And I managed 2 or 3 more pages on the “logging”! In my “spare time” on-line, I found a crochet pattern for kippot. Now all I need is the cash to get the supplies... thread and hooks. Something else to DO whilst laying on a bed doing nothing. (As if...) Stopped at the market on Kingsbridge Rd. and got meals for tomorrow: cream cheese, mustard and relish. FOOD for today AND tomorrow, to be added to other things, of course. I was back on the trains at about 2 or 3:00pm. - When I got up to the street from the L train on 14th and 1st, the sun was shining! THAT was a great mood lifter. - Back at the Hell-hole, the entrance at 29th was closed again. Coming in from 30th Street this time, I got to notice how beautiful this building truly is, how marvellous the architecture is. What a shame that it's gone to such disrepair. I can't help but think of how magnificent it must have been when it was new, how impressive it's bulk, the pillars, the carvings. But it, like the world, is allowed to rot because of stupidity, ignorance and general arrogance... not to mention the greed of those who constantly want “more” and “larger”, and those, of late, who believe that they're “entitled” and take such horrid advantage of absolutely everything and everybody around them. This could be such a beautiful place if given even a little care. But that's what's missing in Creation... “Care”. Alas. And so, coming in was a breeze, in spite of having back-pack and jacket rifled through by “security”. They were pleasant enough about it though. More often than enough, there are some on that “staff” who truly believe that they're “above” and “better than” us. “Us”, the useless Homeless failures who, in our despair, come to this place and other places like this, for little or nothing more than protection against the elements, and, in our misfortune, provide them, the “security staff” with gainful employment so that THEY don't need the very services (or dis-services) they provide here. More than too often enough, bags and parcels are brutally rummaged through, pulling zippers apart, ripping the almost-thread-bare fabric of back-packs and totes and other such things that might hold a person's last and final remnants of

worldly possessions. We, the residents, in their esteem, aren't worthy of any respect, for person or belongings, and so, we're addressed in condescending tones, given a shove here and there now and then, snapped at as if we were mere stray dogs, and our few belongings are banged about, tossed about like a day's trash. Respect and kindness are the exception, and when that happens, I, for one, appreciate it more than anyone will ever know. - But the funnest part of coming in today was the travel pattern of the lift. It too, functions rather like the rest of this nightmarish farce. I stepped in, pressed the button for the 5th floor and the pattern of our journey went: 1st floor to the 4th... stop... Doors don't open and in a moment, we begin to rise... 5,6,7... stop. Doors don't open. 6... stop. Nope, the doors still won't open... 5,4,3... stop and we're STILL rather trapped... 4,5,6 and, at the 6th floor, AT LAST, THE DOORS OPEN and I got out rather hastily on the 6th floor and walked down the stairs to the 5th floor and into... EMPTY ROOM! (But not to be enjoyed for too long...) Immediately, I opened my locker, made my peanut butter and cream cheese sandwiches (2 of them using the whole block of creme cheese because, well, by now I was hungry and because I can't keep creme cheese in my locker... no refrigeration.). No sooner had I gotten my sandwiches thrown together when Rich came into the room. I simply disregarded him and ate. He rather disregarded me and he ate... at his locker too. When I'd done eating, and feeling quite the better for having done so, I went across the hall to the loo and in the basin, washed the teal scrubs and today's socks. - CW came by. He was in a sparky little mood. Still, it's fun and games all round here. And another interesting fact: no heart in any of it. No heart in anything at all! Everything fun and not-fun is simply a matter of "the moment", respond, react according to the moment and nothing more. Oh well. Bound to happen. Beat something long enough and it either dies or hardens. I've hardened at this point... who knows if or when the death will come along. Who knows? - So, now, at 7:40pm: No Rey, no George. Loud Spics in the hall. But it's kind of settled and peaceful over all. - Oh, Before I forget: Tonight is the first night of Chanukah! (I didn't bother going to the lighting of the chanukiah on B116th at 4:00pm. And... I don't regret it at all! These days, I'm not feeling so much a part of much of anything... except "the Homeless community". And, quite frankly, that's more than fine with and for me.)

Monday 22 December: 130/99

(Catching up on Monday's events here, at 10:00am on Tuesday, at a doctor's office on the Cross Bay Blvd. in Howard Beach with the morning patient, Mr.TG.) Quite the busy day today. I got to work with both clients, TG and HT! Thankfully, last night, I slept through the night. - TG this

morning was a somewhat typical day. Mrs. is quite disorganized, high-strung, no patience, and insists upon doing things that I'm supposed to be there for. But it isn't getting to me. I'm not sure if the shelter helps the work or the work helps the shelter or if I just don't give a sh** about anything any more. But, it doesn't get on my nerves any longer. He's abusive, generally nasty, calls me all sorts of horrid names, is combative and he's even tried to throw a couple of punches when I get him out of the bed. I duck and let him behave like the little beast that he is. It makes no difference to me. I know that I'm there to help him as much as possible. Whether he appreciates it or not isn't my concern. Yes, I need the job and the income, and no, taking his abuse personally isn't part of that. As long as he's in good physical condition, I've done what I must. His mood? Now that I know that his violent out-bursts are "common" and that they've been noted even before I got this case, I'm satisfied. Let the punches fly... so long as they never actually make contact on MY person. Sh**! I have to watch my well-being at the shelter and NOW? I have to watch it on the job? Yeah, right, well, what-ever. I do what I must... and that's the extent of it. - As for HT in the after-noon... today, again, was a day of coffee, cookies, schmooze. One thing that keeps going: Joey and his inappropriate remarks about Jews. Once again, I simply blow the BS off. They're the ones with the serious mental issues. I might be in a shelter, but at this rate, I see myself as being one HELL of a lot better than this calibre of what-ever it is that they are. I could very well throw in a few comments to their faces, comments that are none too pleasant. I could make reference to them being adults and not married, and still living off of their parents. Three of them.. It's obvious that their father doesn't need the three of them there to care for him. Their mother gets around quite well, in spite of her scoliosis and being literally bent almost in half. The house? Always full of cookie and coffee... but could certainly use a nice cleaning. It's tidy enough, but with the three of them, it should be immaculate! My opinion, not a judgement, based solely on observation. But I keep my mouth shut. This is my job, I do what I can at this point, I try and do my absolute best. I'd LIKE to see their father get up and mobile again, if for no reason other than to get away from them. But, if he won't work WITH me, I can't work FOR him. So for as long as this assignment lasts, I'll stay on it, make what I can from it and move along. Honestly? I almost pity both families. I don't "feel sorry for" them... it's actually pity. - That aside... It was quite the cold day too. 13° (Fahrenheit!) at Rock Blvd this morning. Windy too! Waiting for the buses between cases was *brisk*. But sunny skies made it a little more bearable. There was just the slightest bit of warmth in the sun-shine today, even if the competition of the wind was stronger. - And at the end of the day? The 29th Street entrance is re-opened this evening but the idiots and morons were bunched inside the door making for some chaos. What would a day be without

chaos? There has to be chaos. Sometimes one has to admit that there are other reasons for some people being Homeless... like a complete absence of any trace of sense. I mean, in this case: Rather than queue in civil fashion so that everybody can simply come into the building in turn, go through the scanners and general sh** routine of “security”, move along and be on their merry way, they SHOVE themselves into the little “foyer” (or anteroom) to the point where there's no distinct line, it's simply a packed room! Nobody can tell who was in before whom, and nobody actually gives a sh**! It's a mess! Just these guys shoved against each-other, so tightly they can hardly move, and they yell at each-other and one-another, whether they're standing right beside the other or across the tiny room! I don't quite know if it's ignorance, stupidity, arrogance, organic mental retardation, a deep sense of being entitled to some privilege of being in there with an before anybody else... honestly, I just can't figure it out. But one thing I'm certain of: that kind of sh**-bag doesn't really deserve to be “sheltered” with others. THAT kind of sh**-bag should be locked in a cage, out of sight and sound and reach of anything “human”. Homeless? Oh yes, I can see why... idiots and morons, senseless idiots and morons. - Ah well... at rather long last I did get into the “foyer” and through the next door, through the “security” check (quickly too because I have a feeling they know, too well, that I have NO intention of pulling any sort of sh** to get myself OR anybody else in this place into any trouble), and on MY merry little way. I had one stop that HAD to be made before climbing up to my “chamber” today... I needed toilet paper and since that's one of the “give-aways” in here, I avail myself of it. So I had to stop at the “Operations” office to request my “roll” and there, a wonderful delight (truly)... The woman who helped me and remembered my name back in September was at the desk! Truly, it was so heart-warming to see her. How I wish it could have been under better circumstances. Still, it did my mood a world of good! Gave me strength to carry on. - So up in 5W-101 for the usual, regular, but un-remarkable evening of another end-of-day in the delightful “Hotel Hell-hole”. Nope, nothing to note. Just another night of dealing with it all. I think it's becoming “common-place”... or I'm actually slipping, mentally, into oblivion. But it was “routine” (and I can be thankful for that much anyway).

Tuesday 23 December: 131/100 DAYS IN THE SHELTER.

After a night of good sleep *without pills* it was a morning of perfect timing. From leaving the building to train to train to train. I got to Rock Blvd on time to catch the bus, but it would have gotten me to work too early. So I let it pass and waited for the next bus. *Mistake!* True to form of

New York City Transit, the next one was LATE, so I got to TG's late! And that's when it all went to Hell! TG was in an exceptionally argumentative mood this morning! Mrs. is *so* disorganized. Mr. had 2 doctors' appointments this morning and Mrs. made travel arrangements only yesterday. Getting to and from the doctors was a horror! One of their neighbours, a fellow named Ronnie, helped with lifting Mr. out of bed and such, but it was difficult, to say the least. Mr. yelled, hollered, almost thrashed about and complained about every thing we did, in spite of our trying to make it all as easy on him as was possible. - When we got to the first doctor, which was actually just a matter of several streets away, he, the doctor (Belgian I think: he was on the phone speaking French but his name is some-what German) had the most miserable piss-poor manner, was terribly gruff and went about the business of the appointment (changing a urinary catheter) as if working on a bit of machinery! OH! And before I forget to mention, simply for the purpose of "setting the mood" and to never forget: *I* had to go into The City yesterday after work, to get the catheter! The doctor didn't supply one! How fortunate for these people that I know where to go and am able to do so. NO other "HomeCare" person would have been able to do that for them. And yes, in cases such as this, that responsibility is the "Charge Nurse" on the case. Just goes to show the extents I go for the sake of my job... and, OK, for the client. But as 'tis said: "No good deed goes un-punished" and this is no exception to the rule. - WELL! By the time we got back to the house I was ready to quit. So that just set my daily mood and attitude the wrong way too. So, trying to accomplish anything in a disorganized house, on all the carpeting that made moving a wheel chair and a Hoyer lift all but impossible, and Mr. howling at me and Mrs. snapping at me in between his barrage of insults, I was drained and ready to run. Of course, at time to leave, Mr. decided to take a dump and, as I do (and yes, admittedly resent) I gave more time to these ingrates... for *free*. It's more out of "responsibility" on my part and my sick set of "ethics"... and yes, it's to keep this miserable job at a miserable salary which is better than no job and no salary at all... for the time-being anyway. - Well then, day done and I was out in the cold for a Q41 bus, due to arrive at the stop at 12:44pm and, as fate and the NYC Transit would have it, it doesn't show until AFTER 1:00pm! I've got to see Ms. Simpson today, this very after-noon! And the commute didn't get any better... as if I had to pay for the "fluid" morning commute, the A train was late, the L train was slow. I got in to the "Social Services" office, back at the shelter, at 2:49pm! I signed the "sign-in" sheet, *ran* around the corner for linens, *ran* to the dorm-room to drop the fresh linens on the bed (under the other linens so that they couldn't be seen and taken, as was very possible and quite probable) and never took the time to take my jacket off! And then.. I got back to the "lounge" alcove and I sat and I waited. Ms. Renice came out of the office and saw me

sitting there but never really acknowledged me. So, I sat some more, and waited some more. Half an hour or more went by. A guy from a dorm down the hall comes along. He signs the list. On the list of names, I'm 10th he's 11th. He tells me Ms. Simpson is sitting at her desk, laughing with the other "case workers" and doing nothing. I'm not in the least surprised. She wouldn't do a thing at all, if she could get away with it. He asks me to go to the office with him and when we get to the door, he knocks and calls Ms. Simpson, who sits at her desk, annoyed about the knock, looks up and says "Who is it, knocking on the door!?" I lean in so she can see me. She tells me to come in. So now it comes to: We have to sign the list, keep our eye on the bleating cow and go to her all the time. It used to be a matter of signing and waiting to be called. They're making their job (job?) easier for themselves. They don't actually want to do a damned thing and they strive toward that... to success, for the most part. What this one doesn't know is that I recall, all too well, having signed that list for Ms. Emaly and having her document that I'd signed and left! I'm supposing they're all wise to that stunt: Don't call us and then document that we'd signed and left. Makes them look OK and makes us appear to be dishonest. Anyway, I did go in and almost fell, tripping on the chair that was in front of the desk. There's no room to get in and sit down. Ms. Simpson barks "Don't fall *there*." I should. I *really* should, just lam myself into the floor in front of her desk. But it would only injure me and make not one bit of difference to anybody else. They'd blame ME for not paying attention instead of her or themselves for stuffing that room so full of desks and file cabinets and general sh** that it's become a hazard. But I just move the plastic bag that somebody had placed on the chair, to her desk. She mumbles "Did you bring me the receipt from your banque account? And proof that you opened one?" I calmly answered, "No." "Why not?" she snapped at me in the tone of voice that a fed-up parent might use toward a recalcitrant brat-child. Well, I thought to myself, I haven't had a chance to get to the post office lately because I'm WORKING. AND... you didn't tell me you wanted those bits of paper! (But I had my pay stubs and passport as HAD been discussed at our previous meeting.) "You were told and I wrote it down that you have to bring me the receipts from your account. You didn't do that so I have to document that you're out of compliance." Realising that she was off on some little tangent and miserable attitude, I blew her off, relatively ignoring her and gathering my papers and documents to toss on her desk. I give her my pay stubs, passport... I find the deposit receipt for 5 dollars. "Where's the rest?" Of what? "The paper-work for your account?" In my mailbox at the post office. "What's the account number?" I don't know. I only have the deposit receipt that I gave you. (Besides, the account number's none of your bleating god-damned business! Do you believe that I'm THAT stupid? You have my Social Security number, date of birth, I should give you my

ACCOUNT number too? Go *shove* it! “Compliance”? It's a matter of “trust” and quite honestly m'dear, after all of the BS I've actually witnessed in this mad-house, “trust” is something I wouldn't even bring in the door!) “I need...” I blocked the rest until she went to Mr. Valley, a supervisor. She tells him I'm only bringing in the 66 dollars per week and that I'm paying my own car-fare out of it. She asks if I'm supposed to save 60 per-cent of the 66 dollars or 60 per-cent of what's left after carfare. He asks how many hours I'm working and rate of pay. I tell him. He seems to ponder this information and then he tells me to save as much as I can, bring in receipts for MetroCards/car-fare. (That's so they know I'm not partying or drinking away my pay. As Mr. Valley told me “You can tell us you don't do that, but we have no way of knowing...” and I truly had to agree with him.) At that point, I pulled-out *all* of my MetroCard receipts. Ms. Simpson says to me, flatly “You're a receipt saver.” So I told her “For every one step *you* take, I make sure I'm 10 steps ahead of you.” All she could say was “Good. That's the way to be.” So, she gave me my meal ticket until next Tuesday. One friggin week. Her “Power Card”. She knows what Hell I have to go through to keep that little bit of paper up-to-date and “valid” and that I won't be allowed back in, should it expire. This is her “leash” on me, in her mind. I also made certain to tell her at this point: “I make sure I get to work every day, in spite of getting 45 minutes of sleep most nights because of somebody who couldn't take a job if you handed it to him because he has to go out every night and comes in at 1 or 2 in the morning, drunk, banging his locker and chatting on the phone, and another one who claims he's too ill and fragile to work. But, I stay where I am and do what-ever I have to do because I know the devil I've got but I don't know the Hell I might get.” And so, Ms. Simpson copied my pay stubs (those that I gave her), the MetroCard receipts AND MY PASSPORT (for what-ever reason she needed THAT, since I've already been photographed when I came into this place). With that, I was “dismissed”. - The remainder of the evening? I changed into my jeans, walked down to Associated (Morton Williams) on 23rd Street. En route, a stop at the Duane Reade for a pouch of Bugler so I have cigarettes until I can get my cheque. At the market, I got prepared chicken patties for tonight and tomorrow, pre-packaged cold-cuts for Thursday, rolls yoghurt and jelly donuts. A walk down. A walk back. - Back at the dorm, it was a matter of eat and chit-chat with the crew. As we try to do as often as possible, we got in some laughs at the staff (and some of our fellow “residents”) as well. CW came by a few times. At one point, when the room went empty, he came in, sat at the foot of my bed and he said, quietly, to me, “I'm not a very likeable person.” No, he really isn't. But hearing him say so bothered me terribly so I tried my best to tell him why with-out hurting him. I explained the need to “ask” people for things and not “tell” them. I told him that the reason

people don't speak TO him or WITH him is because he tends to simply ignore them when they're speaking to or with each-other. I tried to impress upon him that people WILL talk with him and that yes, some of us actually DO "like" him... but that he needs to give us a chance to say so, or to show it. He seemed to understand what I was saying and said that he'd try my suggestions. I was relieved and went across the hall to "sneak" my smoke. He followed along. As I was standing by the window, trying to have my smoke and dodge being discovered doing so, he came over to me and said "I don't know what it is about you but every time I see you... it's like 'Hello!'" I chuckled and said "I don't know why. But it's a great compliment." And yes... it certainly is. I'm old, Homeless, bitter, dishevelled and not feeling too terribly good about myself. But if something I do or say is or can be appreciated, then good. It's not that I particularly care whether or not I'm "accepted", because honestly, any more, I don't. But being appreciated for "me" is, no matter what, a compliment. - Well, this day rolled along, rolled down into evening and rolled along to lights out. DONE! AT LONG, LONG LAST! The only thing left to do was... HOPE FOR SLEEP!

Wednesday 24 December: 132homeless/101shelter

8:18pm 5w-101 D18 Christmas Eve. A quick and easy morning commute to the richness of Howard Beach and Mrs. TG over-whelmed by being ill-prepared for everything associated with the "Christmas" holiday tomorrow. Mr. TG was less argumentative today, imagine that. Mrs. left us in the house for a while and went out for some last-minute shopping and while she was gone, Mr. had a friend drop by. The friend phoned their son on a speaker-phone. I sat in the next room and heard more vulgarities from the son and the friend than I hear from the trash in the shelter! Imagine that! I make no claims to having the "sweetest" vocabulary at all times, I can sling some damned colourful terms and phrases, indeed, but to sit and hear this? And from "church-going", "Italian Catholics". It speaks TOMES! But the morning went right along. I avoided Mr. as much as possible so there was peace. I'd arrived and clocked-in at 8:20am. I clocked-out and 12.28pm. Period, and end of shift. When I left their house, it was still raining but not so cold. I wasn't too happy about the rain, but the warmer temperature was appreciated so much today. The Q41 bus came at about 12:45pm and I got to Rock Blvd at 1:03pm. The wait between that and the connection to the next bus brought me to HT's at 2:48! No matter how hard I try to keep my appointments and work hours, the worse it becomes. As if this city it doing all it can to keep me right where I am. There are moments when I SO regret breathing the next breath. I try... I'm

helping those who need... I'm doing my best and all the while, there's something working diligently against me. But I keep going, never understanding why, but I keep going. - The "visit" at HT's was the usual delight. Cookies and coffee. Mary prepared me a bowl of "toepfel-noodle": pasta with cottage cheese, salt and pepper... served hot. OH DEAREST GOD IT WAS SO DEElicious! Especially since it was HOT food, instead of my usual room temperature "chicken patties" from my locker, slapped into a roll. H. and I chatted. Steven and I chatted. Joey threw in his usual inappropriate remarks and got in a few jabs at Jews. (Well, after all, they're Austrian Catholics, Christmas Eve... what else would one expect?) But I've come to realise that, for the most part, the rest of the family enjoy my visits more as a friend than a health-care person. Truth be known, I enjoy the association with "Germanic" people. It's a comfort to me because this was my family... the German. I don't have that family any more. The ones who mattered are now, all dead and gone. So being able to talk about "things German", even with an Austrian slant, is heart-warming. - As I was leaving, M. handed me an envelope with a card. "It's just a little something from all of us." I accepted it most graciously remembering something that I was told some time ago: "You love doing for others because it's what you do and it makes you feel good when you know that it's helped somebody else. When you refuse to let others return your kindness, it's unfair to them because you deny them the same pleasure you get. When somebody offers something to you, accept and say 'Thank you'. Otherwise, you're just being cruel." It touched my heart... no matter what was or wasn't in the card. How kind... how truly and wonderfully kind of them! "Kind"... something I haven't experienced in what feels like a life-time. I waited until I got on the L train to open it and to my absolute utter and complete amazement... a crisp 50! The card made to "Dear Judah". Truthfully and truly, my heart is still alive. It hit me. Here, these strangers, think so much of me. Not my family. Not alleged "friends". But THESE people... THIS family! How wonderful to be appreciated! How magnificent. I'll never be able to express the appreciation and gratitude. It's awesome! I was humbled and so, SO thankful! - As I came to the shelter, Rich (16) was standing on the avenue just at the entrance. I stopped to chat with him. To think: not so long ago I bolted in past that entrance so as not to be seen or discovered. Today? I dare the world! I dare them all! Yes, come see me, and watch me going into this "Homeless shelter" where I now reside, and comment or ask me questions. I'm not ashamed, I'm appalled by YOUR arrogance, ignorance and prejudice based on complete stupidity. Yes, I'm here, and Homeless and working, and doing for others, even after being turned against in MY time of need. So come, say something... I dare you all! - Once in the door of the shelter, I was in the lift with some gnat-brained Spic who held the buttons for 5,7 AND "Door Close". Of course, we passed the 5th floor,

and the miserable sh** got off on the 7th floor. The lift went down to the 6th floor, some idiot got on, the door closed, started down and the damned thing passed 5 and I had to get off on 4 and walk up. Well... I was relieved to be off the damned thing in the first place and happy that I had only one floor to walk up to. Many have been the times I've had to walk from the first floor up. One floor wasn't all that difficult... even after a day's work. - Finally in the dorm, before eating, I went across the hall to the little face basin where I washed socks and under-wear. - Keith came by to chat as I prepared the 2 left-over chicken patties from last night (splitting 2 rolls, applying a bit of mustard from the squeeze bottle, slapping a pattie on each... and calling it "my daily meal"). Geo had made ANOTHER arrangement to be out all night, his "Case Worker" telling him, as usual, that he'd "hold" his bed. Meanwhile, Keith had requested (a while ago) a pass to attend a wedding of some close relative, It would involve some travel so he'd have to travel to, attend the wedding and travel back and it would require a day or two away... and he was told that if he left the shelter for a day or so, he'd lose his bed! And that would mean, essentially, starting the entire process of coming into the shelter, from the beginning. Ah... but when I went to sign this evening, Rich was at the desk with the sing-in sheet and I saw that HE signed for George! Let *me* try once to skip a night and see what happens. I'd be out quicker than can be explained! Now, I've nothing against George other than his selfish and immature BS of coming in drunk at 1 or 2:00am, banging about his locker, talking on the phone and such, but, enough is too much and privileges need to be evenly distributed or stopped completely! What to do? I don't know. But sh**. This will be on-line. The "Case Worker" Mr. Dimski is to blame as he's holding the bed repeatedly and obviously engaging in favouritism. Let George WORK for the bleating favours! This is pure sh** and "f***ery"! I'm fed-up with this nonsense. Truly. - 8:58pm and the Russian retard from next door is back at the loo, smoking, yelling in the hall and slapping some shoes together. Every evening he does the same thing, making as much havoc as he possibly can. Rey (17) is on his bed, on the phone. Rich(16) is out of the room (and probably out of the building) again. There's been no sign of CW. Him? I hope he's OK where-ever he is. Me? I've taken my sleep aids. Hopefully they'll be able to work through the whole night, with-out interruption. I've set my alarm (my little cell phone alarm) for 5:30am tomorrow morning. No "holiday" for me. I have to get to work, and on Christmas, the transport runs on some "holiday schedule" which means WORSE than any and every other day. - And so, this is Christmas Eve in the Bellevue Men's Shelter. Where's Jesus Christ now? Where's the "Messiah"? Who died on what cross for what reason and for whom? Yeah... Right. Homeless people... Homeless people, in a Homeless "shelter", on Christmas Eve. Does it get any better than this? I doubt it.

Thursday, 25 December: 133/102

10:05am Back at work, “early Christmas morning” (to quote a Cindy Lauper lyric) at TG’s. and Mrs. is out for coffee. Morning ritual of “Dunkin’ Donuts”. I’m with Mr., alone. He’s dozing in his wheel chair at table. I don’t speak at all, so to avoid confrontation. I’m in no mood this morning. - Christmas? What the Hell? What the difference? None. I haven’t the time, the place, the patience nor the mood. “Peace on earth, good will toward...” whom? This isn’t “jaded”, nor is it “bitter”. This is simply... the “fact”. While others “deck their halls” there are thousands of us, out here, with no halls or, for the fortunate ones, sleep in halls. And as I sit here, watching these people making merry, I can’t help but think: Homeless... and they have no idea, no clue, and I say nothing about the matter. If they knew, if anybody knew, I’d have no job, and no chance of ever making my way out of this. And I’ve no doubt, at all, that I’d be thrown out of the very houses where I go to “help” those in their time of need. Their “Jesus” was, to be honest, “Homeless”. But that was him and I am me, and the Homeless today are a scourge. Oh well... Thus is the world today. - Meanwhile, there are things to be done, work to complete, “care” to be given. - This morning, I woke at 5:30am with the first alarm. (I have several set, at different intervals, to make certain that, no matter how little sleep I get during the night, I’ll be annoyed enough to wake with even just the minimally required time to get the HELL out to be to work on time. - By about 9:30pm last night, I was asleep. I slept through the night too. Thankfully. This morning, I managed to be showered, shaved and such and was out by about 6:30am. - There was nobody on the streets on the way to the trains. If I hadn’t been in The City, it would have been quite beautiful, most peaceful. But, it was, it *is* The City and, well, I appreciated the quiet. Immediate Nr.6 to a 10-minute wait for the L train for a 5 minute wait for a LOCAL A train that made EVERY stop along the line! (The rest of the City observes a holiday and to Hell with those of us who need to run “normal” lives.) But an immediate Q21 bus to get me here. I arrived to work at 8:20am. I woke a half hour early this morning to arrive at about the same time I would have arrived during the week on a “regular” day. Even in a commute, there’s no “catching up”, no “being ahead”. It’s almost a reflection of my “life”. - The skies are clear. Cool breeze. Warm temperature. I should be on the beach... alone with the open sea and the memories that this day really is set aside for! Not here with this unappreciative “Swamp Guinea”. *(It’s a term particular to this neighbourhood. Before the area here was developed, it was a back-water swamp on this little bit of bay side land. Then, the Italian immigrants came, built little shanties at first, then built houses, and much was drained and further developed. Over the course of time, what was once “waste-land” has become “prime real estate” and the Italians have managed to hold on to it. Yes, it’s a rather derogatory reference to the residents,*

but one that has been in existence for so many years that no one actually takes any offence any more. In fact, SOME actually accept it with pride.) I can't really muster up too much respect, particularly for this little house-hold. Mrs. calls me *Judith* and refers to me as "the aide"! The ignorance where the name is concerned is repulsive. "Good church-going Catholic" with no sense of their own history as far as my name is concerned, never mind the gender! And as for "the aide"? Nothing more than the "hire help", something to have round the house for times of need. A reminder of "my place". It gives me headache just being here (for a bleating 12 dollars per hour!). - But this morning, when I got out here, to this charming little neighbourhood with all its million-dollar mini-mansions, many behind "8ft high, solid brick walls, the streets were empty and rather calm. Even Cross Bay Blvd., the main and major 6-lane thoroughfare. Such serenity! But I'm not allowed to enjoy it. Christmas? What the Hell. eh? Well in another 2 hours this trip will be done and a dust-collecting bit of the past. I just hope I can hold out. - Oh, a note of reference for myself so that I don't forget: Nancy, the Physical Therapist, asked Mrs. if I've been exercising with Mr., and Mrs. told her "No." I clarified that no instructions were left for me, and that, without them, I'm not supposed to take "therapy" upon myself or make any decisions about it. Now I get to wait for this *Nancy*, whom I've never met, to contact me with some nonsense, I've no doubt. Oh well... part of the job... part of the life. - 6:58pm (Back in the shelter) I *escaped*, as I see it, from the client's residence, at 12:30pm to a beautiful day. As I waited for the Q21 bus at 162nd Av. on the Boulevard, I rang Jocelyn. She was getting ready to go to work (her too... going to work on this "holiday", a fact that too many others fail to recognise). Said she'd been wondering if I'd been sick because I didn't call *her*. Yet another one: I'm supposed to do all the keeping in touch. It truly would be comforting, especially these days, to know that I at least cross somebody's mind and am worth the effort of pressing 7 little buttons, 7 little digits, even if the caller happens to be sitting at the toilet. "Hello? Hi! Yeah. I was just sitting here, taking a sh**, and I thought of you." With or without the ass-ociation, it would be nice to know that I didn't simply disappear... even as a "memory". But... Yes, well... Another one. - In other lines of thought... It would have been a perfect day to pass on the beach, strolling along with thoughts, clearing out the head and heart, finding a nice spot to sit quietly and maybe sketch, write, think. But transport was slow. By the time I'd get to the shelter, change from scrubs to clothes and travel out, it would be time to get back to the shelter. So? I simply got the bus to the trains to the bus to the shelter. - George was still very much asleep when I arrived at about 3:00pm. I made 2 peanut butter and cream cheese sandwiches (the cream cheese from when? Tuesday?) If I'm sick, I'll know that cream cheese doesn't do well in the locker for that long. (By the way, Mr. TG was quite ill this morning.

Stomach cramps, the runs, very thirsty. I don't wish such illness on anybody, not even him. But imagine what he's experiencing and what that family will have to handle today... on "their holiday" of "merry". It might be kind to say that I care... but when I look round me here, the locker, the metal bed, the empty walls, the echoing halls, the lunatics... to say that I "care" would be a blatant lie, and, after all, 'tis "Xmas"! Perish the very thought of lying... today!) A bit of some kind of chocolate drink to go with and wash down the sandwiches. And so, the menu for this "Christmas dinner". - Well then! Rey came in and George woke. Rey said Rich, from down the hall, was asking if I'd worked today so I dropped by to chat with him a while. CW was no-where to be seen. I came back to my bed and decided to nap. And so I did... til just now, as I write. - Christmas... in a shelter... Christmas. - George and Rey are here. The floor is just as usual. I was thinking of doing some laundry. I thought. I didn't do. I'm just tired and perhaps a little lazy. But I don't care, really. It's like that now: I just don't care, at all, about too much of anything. - Tonight I thought of a song that was played on the Spanish FM station, on Christmas night, many years ago when I lived in New Prospect, up-state, in the "rurals", quite nicely. I'd recorded it (several times) on a cassette and I SO enjoyed it. All instrumental. Very relaxing. Tonight I think of my afghan, large enough to cover a king-size bed, hand-crocheted over MANY months, by me. Heavy, huge, comfortable, a pure delight and a source of pride in my tenacity and hand-work. I think of "Noel" (*the cat who'd appeared on Christmas Eve, in the middle of the night, at my door, in the snow, who'd given me so much JOY when I lived up-state, on a mountain-top, alone*). I think of art work, photos, souvenirs. Tonight I think of the Chanukia (Chanukah "menorah"), made by Peter, a gift. Tonight I think of the dregs, the sh**, the worthless cretins my mother gave birth to, the useless, miserable waste that is them who set themselves on a crusade to take and destroy (or sell-off for their own gains) these things that I remember, and no longer have. Tonight I pray that they are repaid for the horrors they caused their mother, for the lies they tell about her, for the disrespect they give her. She kept them housed, clothed, fed and cared-for, often at her own peril, exhaustion, health. When they moved away from "home", she made certain that they had a perfectly comfortable place to go to. And over the years, since she's now dead and unable to defend herself, these ungrateful bits of waste speak of her in nothing less than "evil" ways. And so, tonight I pray that they experience the painful side of my existence... for which, in many ways, they are so responsible. Christmas... - 7:28pm and George is reading the news paper. Rey is on the phone. Rich16 is still not around. Keith came in earlier, on his way out for a "40oz Budweiser night cap". No sign of CW even as yet. And me? I'm looking forward to signing-in, taking my sleep aid and hoping to sleep through the night. Tomorrow is Friday... a double day of TG in the

morning and HT in the evening... and rain in the forecast. No rest on Saturday either: out to the post office. And another week gone. Next? Comes a “new year”, with old tortures and terrors. 2009. From then to August of 2010. Look how close to 55 years old we get! It’s just there... on the horizon. I can see it! - This morning I thought: How lovely that those who’ve loved me so much for so long haven’t even looked for me. To them, I’m dead and gone. To me, I’m dead and alone. Here, these idiots keep in touch with “friends” and “family and at the end of each and every day, and yet, this shelter is where they lay their head. Loved so much. What bleating BS! - Now I’m sneezing and my tummy’s cramping. No time to be sick! I’ve done (almost) a 29-hour week WITH holiday pay! I’m going for a brass ring! Screw and to Hell with the world! “If I should die before I wake...” I won’t miss tomorrow! - Merry frigging Christmas and to all a good riddance.

Friday 26 December: 134/103

2:10am! At 12:57am, (middle of the night, mere hours after we put out the lights and laid down to sleep for the night) George came stumbling in. BANG! The locker gets opened, padlock on steel. A few moments later, BANG! Sh** falls out of the locker. Next! Rich(16) is awake. Moments later, George is mucking with his cell phone: blip, blip, beep. Now Rey is awake. It’s time for the “chain of command” to go down. Mr. Dimski and all. Now it’s my *job*, my *income*, my *chance to get out of here*. Now the “War” is declared. - I have a 3-hour nap left to this night. I hope to simply fall back to sleep and I decide I’ll try for it. Then? I need to figure how to be quick, sharp, effective in reporting this nepotism that’s interfering with my attempt at getting out of here, that’s making necessary rest impossible. While the rest of us scramble to follow the rules and regulations of “curfew”, and others lose their beds if and when found to be “non-compliant”, this one gets to “trip the light fandango”? I don’t think so! I could start with the director of this sh** hole, accompanied by a mayoral note, and watch the sh** trickle along. Israel fights it’s wars quickly and effectively. It’s time I did too. - I’ve got hick-ups now. Time to finish this game. - 10:30am (at TG’s... at work... at my *job*) I got up to go pee and told George that I’ve had enough. Now his inconsideration is screwing with my income and so it is now “*War*”. He didn’t even acknowledge me! I told him that the “Holds” on his bed and the false signatures on the “sign-in” sheet will be mentioned. He continued to ignore me and muck with his phone. I went to pee. When I got back I tried for the nap of a few hours I had left to the night, but I couldn’t get back to a full sleep. At one point, in a half-sleep, I dreamt, as it were:

DREAM: I am working in hospital. I had to get to work but was too tired but tried anyway. Got the bus but it ran too late so I started walking to work. Along the way, I had to climb some old stairs that brought me to somebody's front door. As I climbed each step, the ground under it crumbled. (This part happened twice in the dream!) At the second climb, I told the owner of the house that I could fix the stairs for them. His wife showed me their gardens. Purple passion growing all over. Some was twisted in wreaths, some of it was growing on stakes. I was supposed to go to work but didn't want to because I was actually feeling weak from fatigue. I felt that I had to hide from people from the hospital, to find a place where I could sleep, or at least not be seen in my state of exhaustion. Some-how, I got to the bus stop. It started to rain heavily. I thought about going to work but was just too tired. I woke up.

It was 5:39am when I gave up and got up for the day. I gulped half of my coffee, that I'd made before going to bed, and had in the plastic bottle in my locker. I got my cigarette and shower toiletries and bounded for the loo. My stomach cramped and my head head throbbing, my eyes were burning! I managed a quick shower, back into the room to dress and... Out! Keith was in the hall as I left the room. He commented that it was 6:30m. I told him I'm fed up and done with the BS of being awakened by the bleating drunkard in the middle of the night when I have to work. Yesterday Keith had told me of how he asked for passes to family weddings and was told that he'd lose his bed. This morning he said he has a form that goes to "Operations" that I could use to report George's BS and he'd give me a copy. Well. I'll file it! What the Hell? Maybe I'll be reassigned. At this point? I don't care any more. I run the risk of being put into a dorm with 15-18 beds, which increases the chance of worse, and I run the chance of being assigned a "single" room where the only interruptions during the night are the "Over-nighters" coming in to check if the room is empty, or hitting me in the head with something to knock me out and take what-ever isn't attached to the walls. But at this point, "risk" and "chance" seem to be better than staying in this situation. Well, I have the day to ponder until I get back and get the copy of that "form". Right now, I need to get on with the commute and get to work... ON TIME or as close to it as possible, and TRY to manage my way through another day. - I was at Rock Blvd by 7:45am! The connecting bus came almost immediately. My guts were in knots from fatigue and anxieties and it was actually painful. - By 8:15am I was at TG's and clocked-in. - Oh, he was very down today. It honestly hurt me to see him that way... the verbal abuse isn't pleasant, but the timidity and his withdrawal just didn't seem "right". The physical therapist came today and put him through her program. He did the very best he could but being so arthritic, his joints popped and snapped. It

hurt me to hear it. But he tried, almost in silence, in spite of the popping and cracking bones and joints. When I left today, Mrs. TG said “God bless you” and “We’re gonna miss you over the week-end.” It brought tears to my eyes to leave them today. I don’t necessarily take the words deeply to heart because I’ve learnt from this job that these people will say what they feel at that very moment and then, when I’m not around and they get the opportunity, they bitch. I’m also aware of the fact that some of them will be “sweet” to my face because they know that I could sign myself off their case and they’ll get somebody else who’ll probably not care or, as Mrs. described to me, the former “Caregiver”: rob them blind. Still, after last night and this morning, it was nice to hear even shallow words of appreciation. It was nice. - Well then, I got to HT’s by about 1:30pm. I couldn’t thank them enough for their generosity of the card and cash but they responded as if the 50 was just due me. They gave me 2 slices of “New Park” (Howard Beach) pizza (which was quite wonderful, I must say), cheese cake, cookies, coffee. (They could never know how incredibly delicious and welcome “real food” is to me these days. They could never know.) I talked and laughed with H. through the day. They’re becoming “family” and treating me as such. How strange. I know it happens, but it still has a strangeness to it. Sometimes, in this line of work, a certain type of “bond” develops and the “patient/caregiver” relationship changes to something more like “friends” which might move on to “close friends” and then, sometimes, “family”. It’s good when that happens, so long as both sides stay in touch with the reality... and that seldom does so as it becomes “better” it also becomes potentially hazardous. But I maintain a bit of “distance”... especially here where I know there’s a strong “anti-Semitism” in the heart of at least one of these people. I’m on my guard, no matter what. Still, coming to this house is my only connection to a “home” any more and I am, indeed, much more fortunate than most of the others in the shelter in that I have, during the day, a house with people to keep me connected to being “domiciled”. It also gives me the strength to endure the BS, knowing that I’m working toward returning to this life-style... of the “Domiciled”. - When I clocked-out tonight I put in for 6 dollars transport. I’ve done a 29-hour week too. It’ll be interesting to see what I *net* from this as far as income is concerned. - The trip back to this sh**-hole (it’s 9:06pm now) was a horror. I actually dread coming back into this place, this building, this room now. “Hate” is more the word for it. But I’ve resolved to speak only when necessary, to set limits, to establish boundaries. No more being “friendly”. And... when I got to the dorm, the drunk was in. I went immediately to washing my t-shirts and socks because that’s something *I* needed to do for *me*, immediately. While doing so, the drunk (George) (who was, at 6:30pm, drunk AGAIN, already) was being given the “fight Satan” lecture by Rick. In his own way, Rick is trying to get to Geo, to turn him around.

They were together at the previous shelter, so Rick knows Geo rather well and he tries to snap the little sh** back onto the right path. Why Rick even bothers is beyond me. But then again... I suppose it's not really different from me and what I do at work: trying to get the invalids to dance... as I think of it. In this case here, it obviously didn't work. The sh**-drunk doesn't have the guts to fight anything. Just so useless. Disgusted, I finished my washing. - CW came by. He was looking for 2 dollars for carfare to get to The Bronx. Ah. So. It comes around at last: I'm working so I've got money. BUT when I told him that I had none, he let it ride. So I wonder... He's not as impossible as the others see him. Yes, a bit annoying, but not impossible. And we did get to sit quietly and talk. Just about likes and such. What happens and where this all goes is to be seen when the time comes. Meanwhile, I'm still flattered by it and I appreciate it. - Tonight's really great news: I put the fresh linens on the bed tonight. I should shower to be clean when I get to bed, but am too lazy right now, admittedly. - WELL! Tonight, *Rick* signed for the drunk because the drunk was out cold, snoring. But, at 9:06pm "it" woke, got on the phone, yelling "Oh sh**!" repeatedly. That's a "normal" behaviour when it's drunk... the repetition of "Oh sh**!" Meanwhile, I've already taken my sleep aids with some "chocolate milk" which was made with a bit of chocolate powder mix and water. I'm not hungry and haven't eaten since this afternoon at work but hopefully, the cold-cuts in the locker will be OK for tomorrow... and hopefully the weather will be good enough for lunch on the beach. - My left hand is painful tonight. My stomach and bowels too. It's 24,5°C in here and I'm sweating. The sweats come every night now, just before it's time to get to sleep. It's the anger and anxiety of anticipating disturbed sleep. And the Spics and other sh**-trash of the cesspool that is this place are doing what they do: yelling in the hall. Do-rag, one of the guys from next door, just strolled in looking for Rey. Says he (Rey) went out this morning looking for a job and he's *mocking* him for it! "Lesser" people would be (and are) pulled down by all of this BS, nonsense and madness in this place. There are those who are worth nothing but are being "kept" in this cesspool, this septic tank, coddled and encouraged to remain generally worthless. Me? I will NOT see my existence end here, like this, like *them*. *I fight for my Mum, who Loved me, cherished me, suffered for me. For her, I'll win and move on.* - 9:29pm and Rey's back. I hope he has good news... for his own sake. He too, aspires toward getting work and getting out of here as soon as it's at all possible. He makes the best of it, but I'll suppose it does to him what it does to me. Me? I have this journal. Him? I wonder... - And the dregs in the hall scream on and it echos up and down, back and forth. - I'm learning *selfishness* here. *Ayn Rand* said it's good to be selfish, it's necessary for survival... I'm learning that she's right. - Last night I read some prayers for sleep from the *siddur*. They were answered with the misery that was this morning.

Tonight? I do not pray. Rather, I take it into my own, will do what I must for me. Tomorrow, at 5:30am, the alarm will sound and I'll be back out and on the rails, to... away from here, away from the Spicsh** and useless dregs that inhabit this septic tank. For my Mum, I'll make it out of here. For me, I will NOT become part of the bacteria and viruses that are crawling the halls here. Now, I'm working and paying taxes. I'm paying my way here. Things are changing, things will continue to change... for the better. - It's going to be a difficult night (again). But, as my Mum would say: This too, shall pass. - When I left Mr. TG today, he said "Thank you." When I left H. today, he said "Thank you." Thanks... expressions of gratitude for even as much or as little as my presence. That assures me that I'm still not "bad", nor am I "lost"... yet.

Saturday 27 December: 135/104

7:35am and on the L train to Rockaway. AT 7:15am THIS MORNING, ON THE CORNER OF 29TH AND FIRST, I SAW A ROBIN! They're supposed to be the herald of Spring! WHAT is wrong with this world now? Even the robins are behaving peculiarly. There's trouble in the air, m'thinks. - 7:36pm and here we are, back in suite 55W-101. It's 26,5°C in here! December? Where did it go? My head is like a lead weight on my shoulders, my left hand is cramped. I slept for 2,5 hours when I got back in from my wanderings and journeys today. Ah, when I got back. Now there's the story for today... Meanwhile... I got out to the post office on a dreary sort of morning. The silence of Rockaway was a magnificent tonic for my soul. A few people were at the service window at the post office and in my little box, several pieces of mail... amongst them, my pay-checke for 158 dollars and 70 cents! I'm *finally* working for some kind of money again. Not very much. But some kind. It's not enough to help be bounce right out of here and into the rest of the world. But when I think of how long I've been completely with-out, and how long I've worked for less (even 80\$ less that this), seeing 3 digits of ANY denomination to the left of the decimal is, well, encouraging at this, my low-point. And yes, I do admit, this is rather pathetic. But I see it as a step in the right direction. More steps will follow until all the steps necessary have been taken and then, the *next* step will be the one OUT THE DOOR and into the rest of the world again! - Included in my little stash of mail was an envelope from PIC with a pocket calendar for '09, another with my PIN for the MCU card AND a REJECTION/DENIAL from Medicaid. This rejection is about the 4th this year. How the useless, lazy, worthless of this world get it and I, who want to work for a salary, can't get it... It's the way the system works. It's the way the *System* functions. I could see this as a "failure" or... I could see it as encouragement to do what *I* can, what

I must... FOR *ME*! and to bloody *HELL* with the rest! I could... and right now? I *WILL* simply work toward what I want, *me*, alone! I'm working, doing what I want for *ME*. The rest? I'll hope that Karma does what Karma must. Besides, the rest of them don't matter to me, at all, not any more. From here on in it's ALL about *ME* and getting the *HELL* out of this shelter-life - Well? It's going for the new year of 2009. 12 months of that and 8 months of 2010. Only 20 more months to go, and then, to *go*. 55 years of age was enough for my Mum to put up with the BS of this existence, this world, this "Creation". It's MORE than enough and fine for me. I don't want to see the 56th year. Quite honestly, I don't want to see the next 56 minutes, but there are things to do in the meanwhile, and I'll do as much of those as I possibly can so that when I shove off and shove out, I can do so with peace in my heart and a song in my soul. No sense fretting any of it. And so, to Duane Reade for a pack of cigarettes, a package of lighters and a bottle of vitamin C. (I'm hoping it will help me to feel a bit better, give me more energy.) - How charming! Thirteen bloody dollars for the same sh** I paid 5 for only months ago! I still think something's wrong with the store. I'll have to check the local stores, that's just too bloody much of an increase in such a short while. But if that's the price, vitamin C is out of my regimen from now on. (I'm wondering if cutting it out has anything to do with the fact that my gum, upper right, feels like it's simply rotting away. Oral cancer? I can feel, with my tongue, so much of one tooth back there. And it feels, the gum, rough. "Head and Neck CA?" No way I'll "survive" that! No way I'll live with it either. I'm beginning to break down. No complaints. The time is due. Time to leave all of this behind anyway. I am SO ready to "go".) - Onward and to the Q21 bus to Pitkin Ave. and the craft store. I had 25 dollars of the 50 from the HT's gift and with about 13 of that I got 2 crochet hooks and thread in black, ecru and Royal blue to try to make my own kippot. I do need more than one and they're costing between 25 and 60\$ which is something I truly cannot afford. I know how to crochet. There's no reason I shouldn't make my own. (I've since tried to work with the black and with the ecru threads but the lighting in here is miserable. That, and my headache and the heat, and a crochet pattern that does me no good thus far. I gave up and took to the journal. At least I don't have the old cow of Riverdale pissing around me, making nasty remarks and comments and then telling me "I will ask you to..." what-ever it is that she finds to distract and annoy. See? A good point for the day!) The craft store here is OK. I prefer *Michael's*, it's neater, cleaner. So now I know. I've passed the place many times on my many trips to and from work and Rockaway and have often wondered about their stock and prices. Today, another "live and learn". - To the Q41 bus back to Rockaway Blvd. to the A train. How odd: On the Q21 I passed the TG's; on the Q41 I was at the corner not far from the HT's. Work... I know the area all too well now. To think:

Queens was, for so many years, only distant memories of Michael Hill and a midnight run from 232nd Street in The Bronx to the end of the Flushing train and a rather healthy walk to bring him chicken soup in the dead of Winter. That has to be at least 30 years ago now. It was my first trip to this borough and my last until these days. And even at that, I was no-where NEAR where I am now. How the world, my world, has changed. (As if it makes any difference at all.) - A direct trip back to this sh**-hole where CW came by to ask for a quarter. Well, to "borrow" a quarter. I gave him 25 cents from my honey jar that I keep in my locker (hidden, of course) and put my change in to keep it safe and available. What the Hell? Why not? 25 cents. It won't kill me, nor will it make or break my leaving here. - 11:06pm and yes, I'm still awake. Headache is gone. I had coffee. That did it. Imagine? I've sanded my feet down to "skin", no more calluses. If I die, nobody will know it's me... no tough feet! Well, better late than never. In 5 days it will be 2009. It's only a year, only a date, but nice feet are fashionable even in the grave (or urn) (or ocean). Oh and I had a refreshing shower. - But I have to include the highlights of the day before retiring: When I got back from my running, Rey was in, alone. He asks me what the slamming of the locker was about the other night (Friday). He *knew* why. He even asked, as he pointed to George's bed? "about him?" When I said that I'm fed-up with being jolted out of needed sleep because he (Geo) comes in drunk, he (Rey) said "Did you talk to him about it?" Hell no! I told him I've done what I have to do about it... request a transfer! "We all here to always talk about things. Why don't you just try to say 'Listen... about the noise...'" I lost it! I told him "SCREW the talking! SCREW him. SCREW them all! If I hurt a patient because I'm tired, I'm fired! I'm the newer one in this room. You 2 were here when I got here so instead of changing anything, I'm leaving." It didn't go too well. He's concerned (rightfully so) about what will come in my place. Well. That's my point. Let some snoring, non-bather come in. Let them deal with it. That's all. Then he tells me that he's concerned because George was talking about killing himself last night. "So? he's got so much money and time to get drunk, but no time to find work to better his life? If I could afford it, I'd buy him a one-way ticket to Tarrytown and get him to his Tappan Zee Bridge myself so he could jump!" "You don't mean that. You'd feel terrible if he did." "Yes. oh *yes* I *do* mean it and *no*, I *wouldn't* feel terrible. All you've ever seen is the quiet, sweet side of me. Now you're getting to see the other side. This is the side that has plans and goals to get out of here and won't let anything get in my way." He couldn't believe that I could/can be so "cruel". Tough sh**! So, it was pretty much left at that with a brief talk about disgusting people in this shelter and the agreement that this room is good, in general. 4 of us look-out for the room, we bathe, we even mop the floor (though, I do so more often). If one leaves, there's no telling what will come along. So, as of now,

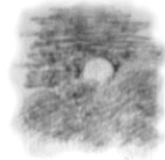
when I speak with Ms. Simpson on Tuesday, I'll pursue the options of relocating to an environment of "Working Homeless"... This situation needs to end... promptly. - For now? *All* are here. Rich(16) is pfutzing in his locker. George is reading a news-paper. Rey is listening to music. 27°C. George's fan is on. I'm going to try for a nap. Hopefully I'll get to The Bronx library tomorrow. I'm really rather exhausted and ready for some well-earned, well-deserved rest.

Sunday 28 December: 136/105

10:29am up-town at the Fordham library in... The Bronx!: After all the running and moving and trains and travel, and waiting for a computer, I got only one 45 bloody-minutes session on the computer and accomplished just about nothing where putting all this on-line is concerned. What a day this will be! Accomplishing nothing at this rate. I've got too much that I want to do these days, yet, inside I know that none of it really matters in the long run... in the end. I keep this journal, writing the experiences and general activities of the "common Homeless dreg" (that I am), trying to keep it up to date, I don't know why, but I do. And I know, from previous experience, that these little note-books in which I write and sketch, my "friends" that they are, could, like people, disappear at any point in time. So, putting these words into "digital", on-line, on "servers" some-where in the world, out of the reach of "people around me" gives me some sense of protection. And, considering that the "digital" format is accessible to the world, and not just those who are near (and dear?), I can't help but hope that some-where, some-day, some-one will see them and know the truth about my existence AND, since my life isn't any different from all the rest, the lives of the Homeless... especially the Homeless who WORK, legally and legitimately and all the while, "reside" in second and third-rate buildings, along-side others who will not and cannot work... but who will simply take all that's simply handed to them. I can hope for that much. I don't expect that much. But I can hope... some-how. And IF others see these words, it won't change my own lot in life, nor will it change my circumstances and conditions, but maybe they'll touch somebody in just the right manner, and MAYBE it'll make a change for the better for those who follow. Maybe... but I doubt it. Still... on I go. - Meanwhile... On the Woodlawn train to here today, I thought: WHEN WE DIE, WE ARE SEPARATED FROM ALL WE ACQUIRED DURING OUR LIFE-TIME. WE ARE SEPARATED FROM PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS THAT GAVE US JOY, PLEASURE, EVEN PAIN. ALL IS GONE AND NONE IS TAKEN WITH US. NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM WHERE I AM THESE DAYS. EVERYTHING I WORKED FOR, EVERY LITTLE THING THAT BROUGHT ME ANY PLEASURE IS GONE.

JUST GONE. AND I CAN'T GET ANY OF IT BACK. AS IT IS WHEN PEOPLE DIE, ALL THINGS DISAPPEAR AND, OVER TIME, EVEN THE MEMORY OF THE PERSON GOES. MY THINGS HAVE DISAPPEARED. TRACES OF MY WORK ARE GONE. NO ONE CALLS. NO ONE TRIES TO CONTACT. EVEN THE MEMORY IS GONE. THEREFORE, I MUST BE DEAD. THIS MUST BE SOME HELL IN WHICH I MUST MAKE AMENDS FOR SOME EVIL DEED DONE. I MUST BE DEAD. - And so... last night I got to sleep at about 12:00am (midnight) under only a sheet. It was so hot in the dorm! I can't complain about that though. The truth of the matter is that while I sleep on a bed, with a mattress, under blankets, out-side, there are people, human beings, lying on sidewalks, or in alley-ways, on the ground, or on park benches, with no protection against the cold and damp except the clothes they wear. Others, a little more "fortunate", have layers... of old news papers, old blankets, bits of fabric "yardage" (as I had when I was under my tree). No roof over-head, no walls to break the winds. No, I cannot and will not complain about being "too warm". Instead, I note it with gratitude. Indeed... I do. - In spite of the late hour to sleep, as it were, I woke with the cell-phone alarm (on vibrate only, the phone stuffed into my pillow case so that it wouldn't slide off the bed and so that it didn't wake anybody else in the room) at 5:30am BUT I went back to sleep until about 7:30am. And it was the "usual" sort of morning: sh**, smoke, shower, dress. Apparently Rich(16) is not speaking to me. He came into the loo, looked, said nothing. As if I should, could, would do give a flying rat's arse one way or the other. - When I got back to the dorm to dress, George was lying in bed, head at the door for the light from the hall, reading a book. I didn't speak to him, I gave him my book-light. He just looked up at me, said nothing. (Unfortunately, the batteries went as he was reading. But I had replacements but he'd gone back to sleep before I got the chance to change them.) - Well, I'm probably on a major sh**-list now. But the fact of the matter is that I truly don't care. I want to work, make money, get out of where I am. That's it. That's all. And if it requires no connections to anybody, so be it. I wonder where this person I am has come from: Truly Bitter... to the very core. I didn't believe it could happen. But it has... AT LAST! - Well now, to figure out what to do with the remainder of the day. The 45 minutes on-line have thrown me off. There was more I needed to get done and I was hoping to get it done today. Silly me... "hope"! The SHAME! I should know MUCH better than that! - It's a warm, wet, cloudy day. I guess I'll just go, move, walk, train, what-ever, and see where it all ends up. - No direction any more. And all goals and destinations are a blur. How charming is my existence today. Take away my "job" and my brain just goes into hibernation. But at least the weather isn't snow, wind, hail, sleet, slush, blustery, miserably bone-chilling cold.

OH, I must record this morning's DREAM:



I don't recall the people or the place but in the dream I had this morning, between 5 and 7:30am, I dreamt I lost 3 teeth. They simply fell out. No order to the teeth. Nothing specific about any of them. As I spoke to anybody, each one loosened and came out. (As I walked to the train this morning I thought: In Italian superstition, loosing teeth means death of someone close. 3 teeth, 3 siblings. Is all now gone at last? Wouldn't that just be wonderful? Of course, I think of it as a metaphor for the "death"... the separation from them, final and complete. And yes, that *would* be wonderful... the thankless, conniving, self-serving bits of malice that they are.) - OK then and well then and at 6:24pm in the hole. Alone to jot the remainder of the day's events: I walked from the library to the market up on the Kingsbridge Road and there, I got my coffee, cold cuts, PopTarts, puddings. No *Bustello* instant (the one and only that I truly do enjoy). *Caribe* at the same price but I wasn't leaving The Bronx with-out *my* coffee. And the puddings were on sale, 2 for 3dollars (on sale at that price) . Food stamps are getting low and 2 more weeks to go before any more are to come. I depend on them completely these days. If not for them, I wouldn't be able to eat. Breakfast in the shelter is 5-7:00am and I'm already up and showering and need to be out the door and on the way to work by then. Lunch is at 12:30pm and I'm AT work. Dinner is at about 5:30pm and by the time I get back FROM work, it's done. If not for the bits of sandwiches that I make in my locker, I'd have NO time for ANY food. So I have to be careful how I use these Food Stamps. Anyway, to the streets where I stopped to transfer coffee from jar to Zip-lock plastic bag, dispose of the glass jar (because anything glass is strictly prohibited in the shelter... and I can understand the reasoning for that) and then to the Bx9 bus to the Target store over on Broadway for... HANGERS! 4 for 2.49\$ I got 8! The heavy white plastic hangers so that now, instead of folding everything or laying jackets on clothes in the locker, I can hang a shirt (and my scrubs). A pleasant purchase there and back to the Bx9 bus, back to Jerome Ave. and back on the Nr.4 Woodlawn-Jerome (as it was called in my child-hood), "Lex Express" train to come back to the Hole of Misery. - All the while I travelled today I was, I felt, detached, dissociated, not here, not some-where else, not any-where at all. As I climbed the stairs to the train, all I could do was tell myself to just keep moving toward what I wanted to accomplish today. Just keep moving forward... just keep moving on. I actually had to consciously think that. I couldn't focus on anything. I didn't have my usual intestinal cramps. I didn't have the usual constant urge to pee. I didn't have headache. I just didn't "have". At one point, by Fordham Road, the world went "3-D" and I felt my-self lost in the whole of it. Just lost... and dead... and dead. I had to keep telling myself, mentally, that I was on the train, I

knew where I was and where I was going and that I just had to keep “moving forward”, no matter where I was headed, no matter where I was going. - When, at last, I got in at the Hole, the dorm was empty. I pulled things from the locker, put things on the hangers. (I have 3 empty hangers! Well, 2 jeans will go on one. NO complaints. This is the first time in quite the while that I've had hangers... and a place to use them properly!) George came in, not speaking, thankfully. I told him that I didn't mean to give him the book light at the end of the batteries. He simply looked at me and continued getting ready to leave again. Not a word. Ah well. I truly don't care. I've got tonight's sleep and tomorrow's work on my mind. And, I'm actually quite happy the rest of them aren't speaking... I'm quite enjoying the quiet. - CW came by, complaining that I left with-out him this morning (not that any plans had been made to the contrary) but, he was just now going for a walk with the (pseudo, faux?) Muslim (Mohamed, from the 18-bed dorm down the hall). *I'd* wanted to go for that walk with CW! It was a warm day. It would have been a great opportunity to talk freely. But the day was against me, as I've already written, from the start. So, when CW toddled out the door of the room, I ate. - After I'd eaten, I got ready to leave for a walk of my own but, on the stairs, I changed my mind, turned round and came back to the empty room for a nap. *That* was at about 4:00pm. When I woke, only a little while ago, I peed, had a smoke and came in to crochet a bit. - The “Security” guy did a double tour of the “ward” after my smoke and even made a room-check. This one popped his head in and actually spoke: “How y'doin?” They usually come walking in, stand in the middle of the room for a few seconds and leave. I guess it's to remind us that we're not human and certainly not deserving of dignity and that they represent those who have “control” over us, our surroundings, our comings, our goings. I, sitting up on the bed (since there are no chairs in any of the rooms), looked up at him and nodded politely. There really wasn't anything I'd wanted, needed or should have said, even in reply to his question. - 6:50pm and happily, I'm still alone in the room. Finally, there's a bit of a cool breeze blowing in and through the room and the whole floor is relatively quiet. How nice. (The sh** will come when it's time for sleep of course.) - Had a chat with Craig, the fellow across the hall, earlier. We got to talking about the food served here and how one could but wonder what it is. He claims there are no pork products in the food served here... “because of Muslims and Jews” says he. I can't be too certain of the “no pork” but I most certainly doubt it has anything to do with any concern for Jews. Muslims? Oh yes. But certainly not Jews... certainly not after the nasty snap I received when I'd come in here. At any rate, I enjoy talks with him. He happens to be rather bright, knowledgeable about many things and interesting. And he's been in here somewhere around a year! There's much I can learn from him, and much I'll pay attention to, indeed. - Well,

time to make a little wash for tomorrow. I could stand a haircut, beard trim. But let's see what actually gets accomplished. I'd really like a walk with CW and sleep. But I know better: what I'd like doesn't matter in this Creation.

Monday 29 December: 137/106

7:28pm at D18 No mood for "poetry" tonight, to make with "pretty" entries here. I didn't get to *try* for sleep last night until after 11:0pm and this morning, I was up at 5:30am and the usual morning routine. Then, out the door, on the Nr.6 train by 6:50am. Rock Blvd by 7:45am! Immediate transfer to the Q41 bus. I got off at 157th Av. and bolted into CVS for cigarettes. The "Swamp Guinea" at the counter *ignored* me, standing right there, me in front of the counter, her standing behind it, paying NO attention to my presence! Then, they didn't have my brand of cigarettes! She tried to sell me menthol and as she offered, I walked out quietly, saying nothing at all... ignoring her, as it were. Walked briskly to the Rite Aid at 160th Ave. and there, they wanted 8.35\$ plus tax per pack! Nope. I had a few left in the pack on me so there was no emergency. - Well then... at TG's by 8:18am and Mrs. took the phone to make a call! I had to call the agency on my phone! I'm not supposed to do that because the telephone number I call to clock-in/out records the telephone number I call from, and it's supposed to be the client's number! I no sooner finished clocking in when... THEN Mrs. Hangs up! She KNOWS I need their phone, she's been told and it's in the information packette they receive when we start working there. But, it's all part of their inconsideration. We are nothing more than "the aide". - Mr. was in discomfort this morning. Constipated. He stayed in bed almost all morning and then, at about 11:30am, he decides it's time to get up. Add to that, VNS, the "Charge Nurse", shows up at noon for an evaluation and to finally complete the documentation that SHOULD have been there the day I arrived to start working. She commented on Mr.'s improved speech. I simply clocked-out for the end of my tour. But Mrs. tells me the other Aide that she'd hired "private duty" was getting 115\$ per 8-hr shift she worked for them (14,37\$ per hour!), *PLUS* 30\$ per day for carfare! (She claims she had to stop because she couldn't afford it any longer.) When I was asked my per hour, I said 10 dollars (when, in fact, I'm getting only 9)! No more and never again. Imagine, pulling all this work, some of it OFF THE CLOCK, just to be "kind", and putting up with the physical and verbal abuse, for almost nothing? Oh no! The abuse stops now and so does the "nice man" BS. I won't get more from the agency, but now I give in work what I get paid. And that is the end of it. I need the job and the income. I do NOT need the additional stress and aggravation. - OK then... out of

there and on to Mr. HT by 1:37pm. Today, he has the runs! I was no sooner in the door and diving into sh**... literally. I only got one bout to deal with, luckily. The rest of the shift was coffee, cookies and CNN coverage of Gaza vs. Israel on the TV news. I was out by 4:30pm and by then, I was most ready for death... and actually praying for a heart attack as I walked to the train. No sleep at night. The aggravation of inconsiderate morons. And that in addition to the never knowing if and/or when somebody will come creeping in (or storming in) to the room to rob or beat you, perhaps to death or worse, just cause permanent damage to body and soul. Yeah, a heart attack, falling face-down into the side-walk, that would have been SUCH a relief! But... no such luck. - Great connections on bus, A train and L train though. I only JUST missed the Nr.6 train because some fat-arsed Black-ass in knee-crotch jeans slowed me down. THEN the excuse of "a train with brakes in emergency at 59th Street"? I'm at 14th Street! Seriously? So it turned out that I had to take a Nr.5 "express" train to 42nd Street and then a down-town Nr.6 train to 33rd Street where I cashed my first "real" cheque. 158.70 dollars. - 25\$ carfare, 43\$ post office box rent, 8.50\$ to treat myself to a pack of cigarettes and 82.20\$ to deposit! GONE! The whole damned thing... GONE! Just like that. So much for the sleepless nights, abusive days and sh** for pay. POUF! GONE! And people wonder how people here become Homeless. AND... employers here have the frigging audacity to list 9\$/hr as a "desirable" or "competitive" salary. Such distilled BS. But... here I am, doing it because it beats the alternative of no employment and no income. It's a stepping stone... for now. - I walked back to the shelter, feeling both happy because of my first cheque and a little down because of how quickly it all went in addition to my destination and the constant wondering about what I'd have to face when I got there, from the "security" at the door to the what-ever in the room. Well, I'm no sooner in the dorm when CW comes to the door "Gimme a cigarette." "No." He took it well. I told him I'm in no mood. He actually backed off a bit. Yes, I feel a little poorly about the blunt "No." But I'm getting better at taking care to take care of ME BEFORE trying to take care of the world. It's not that I didn't want to give him a cigarette, and it's not that I couldn't afford to give him a cigarette, but instead of asking, he went right into the "Gimme" and that set me off. (He later told me that he was kidding but when he saw how upset I was, he didn't want to press anything. Honestly? He's a sweet person. Just very sharp round the edges, and I'm sure there's a perfect reason for that. And I'm sorry about it.) - And so, 2 turkey cold-cut sandwiches, 3 little puddings, I've washed 2 pairs of socks. It's 7:45pm (1945 on the military time I record these entries in!) Tomorrow will be a mad dash from TG's to Rock Park post office to pay box rent and back here to Ms. Simpson. That's Manhattan to the end of Queens "main-land" (as they call it in Rockaway) and then to the very end of Queens, which is the end of

the U.S., quite actually, and then back into Manhattan. A LOT of ground to cover... and no dependable or reliable transport. Oh well. "Common stress". Nothing new. Then to make my deposit at the banque. - OH, MEANWHILE, Anna, PIC HR is bugging me because she can't confirm my previous employment. I'd put down that I was employed by Rock Home Health, which, indeed, and in fact I was and am but she can't get a confirmation from "Margot" there. She (Anna) wants me to call her (during her strange and sporadic business hours) "ASAP". Right! Hell! Just as I start to work decent hours, I'll loose THIS job too? GASTON TIME! Push me world! Go ahead. Push! I'm at the very end. There's no more to hold on to. I worked hard and did without to get what little I had. It's all gone now. Nothing left to hold on to. Push! I'm SO out of here! Lose this job and I've got absolutely nothing to stay here for... NOTHING!

Tuesday 30 December: 138/107

4:32pm WELL HELL AND TODAY I KNOW WHY I KEEP THIS JOURNAL AND NOW, I KNOW WHY IT NEEDS TO BE ACCESSIBLE TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE, AROUND THE WORLD! * After busting my guts to get to Ms. Simpson, Ms. CaseWorker, at the shelter by 2:47pm and having to sit and wait for her incompetent sh**-for-brains, fat, lazy arse to call for me, some 15 minutes later, SHE HAS THE AUDACITY TO TELL ME THAT MY JOB ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR HER SUPERVISOR, THAT I SHOULD TAKE TIME AWAY FROM WORK TO GO APPLY TO SOME SLOP-HOUSE AGENCY ON HER REFERRAL, TO FIND "SUITABLE" FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT! IN OTHER WORDS: NOW THAT I'M BRINGING IN OVER 100 dollars/WEEK THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES WANTS ME TO QUIT THE JOB! When I asked her how I'm supposed to find time to make an income *AND* go job-running, she told me "I'm not going to figure all that out for you. You have to figure it out." When I mentioned how some people have time and money to get drunk 7 nights a week but my efforts at making an income and going to work every day aren't *good enough*, she *scolded* me by saying "*You have no right to make any judgement on anybody!*" Judgement? Not when I see it every bloody day! When I asked about conditions suitable to people who work she told me about "Working Shelters" and "3/4 Houses". The latter has been found to be illegal, ILLEGAL, but that doesn't seem to matter to her, or to DHS. When I commented on those who do nothing but get drunk every night and manage to sleep in their bed all day, she admitted that it's probably Welfare money supporting the drinking, said she doesn't understand why *I* don't receive cash benefits (but she never mentioned such a thing before, nor has she ever done anything in the way

of doing anything to help me apply for those cash benefits - nor has she done anything toward helping me with Medicaid, although *SHE* said that *SHE* would because I *SHOULD* have Medicaid since I have COPD.) She gave me a new Meal Ticket dated 6 January 2008. When I pointed out the error, her flat reply was "Well, I guess you won't be eating." and literally SMIRKED at me! Eventually, and ever so slowly, she did write out another meal ticket with the expiration date of "1/6/2009". BUT SERIOUSLY... I should QUIT the job that I have... because THEY didn't get me into it? I should take time off from work that I HAVE, to go to something else that THEY have connections with? I SHOULD be receiving "cash benefits" and this same cow told me that she would HELP me with them, AND I SHOULD have Medicaid AND very same cow told me that SHE would do what needed to be done to see to it that I got that much... and SHE does NOTHING about ANY of it and then has the audacity to tell me "Well, I guess you won't be eating." You miserable bitch! Useless, vulgar abomination! Oh... and PS you nasty bit of blood clot... YOU don't know it because you're not bright enough to check the list against meal tickets, but I DON'T eat your damned food anyway... I WORK and I don't have time. So your "Meal" ticket? Worthless to me from the beginning! Nasty, insulting, miserable sh**.) - Now, to figure out how to get this to public attention.../ RAPIDLY. Jesus! It's not bad enough we have to feel miserable about our selves, we have to put up with THIS abuse, degradation, insults? And the likes of this thing, this morbidly obese, nasty thing has the audacity to say such things to somebody who's doing everything... AND MORE... to get out of this situation? Really? WELL! Truly and honestly, THIS is the kind of thing that NEEDS to get to the public. It isn't bad enough we Homeless have to put up with the public's insults... but these things are getting PAID to dole this insolence out and to attack us. No! It NEEDS to end and it NEEDS to end... YESTERDAY! OK. Deep, silent "cleansing" breath. The voice in my own mind as I wrote that was so loud, and even now as I continue to write, my ears are hissing from the pressure of my anger. But, as I sit here, I'm calm, focused, quiet and appear to be most serene. And that's as it usually is with me. Nobody knows. Nobody sees. Nobody hears. Nobody. Nobody... Nobody. - So, last night again, George came in after 9:00pm, drunk, but quiet. I'd had a talk with Rich D16 about my displeasure in the room and my chat with Rey (where I voluntarily took the brunt for slamming the locker on Friday past, since I'd done it anyway and he, Rich, was still "new" to the room). He concurred with me. We (Rich and I) were in for the night before 9:00pm. I think I finally went to sleep at about 10:00pm when Rey turned off the light. - This morning, I was up at 5:30am. CW was up when I left at 6:39am. How odd it is that there's someone expressing an interest in me and I'm not interested in perusing it, have no feelings at all on the matter and, although the "company"

might be pleasant (even though it's oft-times annoying), it's burdensome. I've become "Bitter" and all but heartless. The soul will go next. Then? Nothing will be left. - At "work", Mr. TG was quite lethargic and in pain. Mrs. admitted that she still employs the other Aide even after telling me that she couldn't afford her! Am I being taken for the fool here? - At 12:20pm, I bolted for the Q21 bus and out to Rockaway where another 6 months of post office box rent is paid! I'll get mail. - PIC-DA (the agency I'm working with now) wants a copy of my W2 from the Postal Service! I haven't worked for them in AGES and... It's gone! GONE! It's part of what my darling siblings managed to dump! The agency can't get verification of employment. I'll probably lose this job shortly after January. It's my fate. - I've had nothing to eat all day. There's nothing in the locker. I'm a bit hungry. I'll get food... just because eating will make me more comfortable. - TO BLOODY HELL WITH ALL OF CREATION! - Well, I did... I never got to finish this so I'm moving on to... A MarginNote: Ms. SIMPSON ALSO HAD THE NERVE AND AUDACITY TO TELL ME TODAY: FOR THOSE WHO DON'T DO ANYTHING AND DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING, THEY HAVE THE MOST PROGRAMS TO OFFER THEM. "YOU KNOW THE SYSTEM, THE MORE YOU'RE WILLING TO DO FOR YOURSELF, THE LESS THEY'RE WILLING TO HELP YOU." That was in response to me telling her, and not kindly, that I work now, I do my best in spite of transport and other issues, to get what I need to get the HELL out of here, and all I get from everybody else is blank and empty promises and out-right lies! Yes... that was her response.

Wednesday 31 December 2008: 139 Days of Homelessness/108 Days in the Shelter (System)

(I'm recounting on Friday 2 January 2009 at 8:09pm) This was quite the day. Not quite the good day, how-ever. I woke and was up at 5:30am for the usual morning routine: coffee, smoke and dump in the loo, on to the shower, dress for work and out the door in plenty of time to catch trains and buses with no stress. The connections this morning were unreal: one right after the other. Buses to trains, trains to buses, one right after the other. It was truly incredible! I should have known it meant me no good and it most certainly did NOT! - At 8:22am I was at TG's door. There were no lights on any-where in the house, the door was closed and locked. Normally the light is on in the kitchen and the door is un-locked for me. I rang the door-bell... no-one came. I rang again and waited... no-one came. Thankfully, I had time enough on my cell phone to ring the house phone. Well, I heard it ring, but no-one answered. Next? Ring Mrs.'s cell phone.. Again,

no answer. As I stood there, at the door, in the back yard, locked out, not knowing what had happened, wondering if they were just not answering because they didn't want to be bothered this morning or if something terrible had happened in the house over-night... It began to hail. There I stood, my bladder and bowels on the verge of bursting, in the cold as the hail fell stronger and harder, and of course, there was no porch, no little roof, nothing to stand under for protection. I couldn't have felt MORE Homeless than I did at that moment in time: Needing a bathroom, standing alone in a hail storm with no place to go for shelter against it. My mood was beginning to spiral into an abysmal black pit! My mind and my emotions were beginning to shut down because of the disbelief of the situation and to avoid it in some manner. I was truly facing "Homelessness" now, in the storm, the cold, needing a bathroom, being pounded by hail and wind, and there was no respite, no reprieve, no "shelter", no protection against this cold and wet. Standing out-side this locked house, I rang the agency. There was no supervisor to take my call. It was too early and they wouldn't be in for at least another half hour. Now, I was alone, very much, alone. "Well" I thought, "I can go to the McDonald's on 160th Avenue, get a coffee, sit inside for a while and wait." I did want a coffee, a hot coffee, something warm. I didn't need a coffee, not with my insides feeling as if they wanted to claw through my body. I left quietly through the backyard gate and up the empty streets, in the pounding hail to go to the only place of refuge I could think of. On the way, I was thankful that I had just enough cash with me to get a coffee this morning. I walked as briskly as my exhausted body would move and when I got to McDonald's, I went in and got my coffee, took a table in a corner and began slowly sipping, and waiting, and sipping, trying to stretch one coffee over a 30-minute period of time and I waited and pondered my option and the ramifications of this event. - At about 9:00am I rang the agency and got a supervisor who told me that indeed, yesterday, Mrs. had phoned them to say that Mr. was being admitted to hospital. Imagine, the agency knew yesterday but never bothered to let me know! I could have avoided all of this, had I known then. I wouldn't have had to be here at all. Ah, but this was how the agency handled such matters: we, the people who actually perform the work that pays *them*, amount to nothing. She, the supervisor, told me that I would be reimbursed for my car-fare to the house and back "home"... that was all. Not the hours of commuting to and from, nor for what now amounted to almost an hour of standing in the storm, waiting for the "authorisation" to leave. That authorisation required yet another phone call, to the "Charge Nurse". I had to ring her to verify the situation and receive clearance to leave the premises, lest it be recorded that I "abandoned" the case. So, that was my next call. When I spoke with the "Charge Nurse" she told me that the case was now officially "closed". Mr. was admitted to hospital

and my services would no longer be required until he was discharged! My 29-hour week was GONE, and with it, my added income! Once again, work and income vanished just that quickly, in a matter of moments, out of my control. Alone, sitting at a table in a McDonalds, alone, in silence I sat, feeling empty, useless and already exhausted, I sipped the remaining half of my coffee and the “emergency” struck... I needed the “rest room” and I needed it immediately! I bolted for the men's room, grabbed the door handle and... LOCKED! To my left, however, was the door to the women's rest room. At this point, a “toilet” is a “toilet”, I needed one NOW! Cautiously, I tried the door... it was un-locked, so I carefully opened it, checked to see if there was anyone in. Empty! I went in, locked the door behind me and just in time! This morning, the tension, stress and anxieties all took hold at the same time. My body felt as if it was emptying itself of life. It was truly painful. But... I was so thankful to be in a loo, and not in the streets, on a bus, on a subway train. I was... relieved! - When at last, all of this morning's panic had finally passed, I left the rest room, walked along past the tables which were now filling with other people who were beginning their own day, out the door and back into the street. The hail had stopped. I went to the corner for the bus and to call for the “Charge Nurse” so that I could get the necessary permission to leave. - Unlike earlier, with the supervisor, the Nurse answered. I gave her the particulars of the situation as I knew them, she confirmed that indeed, Mr. is in hospital, my services are no longer necessary and she said that either she or the agency would contact me when he returned. I was “free to leave”. “Free to leave”, simply dismissed. No appreciation for exercising responsibility, for venturing out into this morning's storm that had now left me standing alone, on a street covered with ice. Dismissed, dressed in white scrubs, with the rest of the morning to do with as I rather pleased. Well, there we had it. I thanked her as the Q21 bus arrived, going in the direction across the bay and out to Rock Park. Almost on instinct, I boarded with plans, at that point, to take it to transfer to a Q35 bus... to the B3 bus to the B3 bus which would take me to the 99cent store in Brooklyn. I had the time, the weather was clearing just enough to make the trip rather un-eventful, and all the while I would be out of the cold. Ah, but as this morning would have it, the Q21 arrived at Rock Park AS the Q35 departed and I knew that, this being another “holiday”, the next bus to leave wouldn't be for quite the while so I quickly decided: from here, I'd take the shuttle train back across the bay and onto Broad Channel island, transfer to the A train to Utica Avenue where I could take the C local train to the Franklin Avenue shuttle train which would connect me to the Q train and that would bring me to Sheepshead Bay and... the 99cent store! I know the transport system and I know how to use it to travel quickly and I know how to use it to fill time. I know how to use it as a Homeless person who is looking for shelter against storms and

protection against the cold. This morning, now, here, I needed the protection more than anything else and there it was. My stomach, my bowels were still churning, but I had a “plan” and I would be sitting for the most part, and I could handle the rest. - The “plan” worked rather well, indeed, and in a matter of just over an hour later, I was strolling through the aisles of the 99cent store, not comfortable because of my “intestinal discomforts”, but warm, dry, and with a bit of “purpose”. I managed to get bath soap and other “stuff”. Oh, and I had no reading glasses with me! 3 pairs to my name and not one with me! In my haste to leave the shelter this “holiday” morning, I failed to put even a pair into my back-pack! But here, I found a pair costing not 99 cents but 2.50\$. I grabbed them to do my shopping and when it came time to go to the register, thoughtlessly, I put them into my jacket pocket and went to pay. Then things became “interesting”, so to speak. The 5 items I'd put onto the conveyor belt came to 5.36\$. I gave the cashier 5.56\$ and when she counted the cash, she looked at me, quite annoyed and she yelled at me! “It's 5.36\$! Why you give me 5.56\$?!?” Softly, I looked her directly in the eye and said: “So you can give me 20 cents back, stupid! Learn math!” She looked at the money in her hand, looked at me, turned abruptly to the register and after several moments' time looking at the cash in hand and the cash in the till drawer, she counted out 2 dimes, put them on the conveyor belt, tossed my purchase into a plastic bag and began serving the customer following me. I just left... in silence, rather perplexed, for the briefest moment, by this young woman's distress. People... none of them makes any sense any more, these days. - Back into the out-side world, the wind picked-up again and with it came the SNOWS, whipping about in a bit of a squall. Quickly, I headed for the Q train. Now, at this hour of the day, I had to repeat the trip I'd just made, in reverse to get back almost to where I'd started from Mr. TG's, but now I was on my way to Mr. HT's, my afternoon patient. No problem with that, it would take me all of the time that I now had at my disposal... and I'd be out of the snow, out of the cold, rolling along, on the move, on the go, on the move, moving, moving, forward, moving. - On the train, the phone rang. Mary T... Father's got the runs and is exhausted this morning... Let's cancel today. OK. So NO WORK AT ALL FOR TODAY! Just when I need the income the most! So, now feeling completely “empty”, thoughts of being the likes of an animal, trapped and alone, I rode the Q train to 14th Street to the L train to 1stAv to connect to the M15 bus that would take me back, back to the shelter... “shelter”, where this nightmare of the morning began. At 14th Street, I stopped to buy a pack of cigarettes. The snow had stopped falling at last. I was exhausted, and down in a mental pit of darkness. Since I was close enough and had the time, I boarded the up-town M15 bus to 23rd Street and did a quick, light food shopping for tonight and tomorrow. Food Stamps were now down to 30-

something dollars that would have to cover me for the next 10 days, and each time I shop it's usually about 9\$ per day for my simple sandwiches. More "hard days" with-out food are coming. It wouldn't surprise me if I get cut off fro Food Stamps now. That would be normal for my life. - Shopping done, and now wrapped in a shroud of true despair, the morning's storms passed, I walked up to 30th Street. - Arriving at the shelter, I had the pleasure of an "immediate in". People from the shelter were leaving the building and none were entering, and when I arrived back at the dorm, it was empty. I took advantage of the "alone time" and made a quick, but small laundry and when that was done, I returned to the room to lay down to "settle". I half-waited for CW, expecting him to appear at any moment for some reason. He never came by. - During the course of the day, Rey came in, Rich came in. All present and accounted for. No. Wait. No George. How stupid of me not to remember "No George". Just the 3 "Sane Boys". (Sane? Comparatively, yes, sane.) Today is the "New Year" holiday, an evening associated with much celebration and making of "merry", but here, in this room in a "shelter" for the Homeless and, for the most part, "friendless" there was no great call for either. None of us had even the slightest notion of going out tonight. The weather forecast was for quite cold and none of us was in the mood for crowds.* - The day passed, afternoon into evening, and for the most part, we three rested. I did my best to shed the emptiness that had, over the course of this morning, become "me" and to do what I could to rid my bones of the chill. I journalled, keeping the saga of my morning to myself, where it belonged, venting only in ink, on these mute pages. There was no need and no sense in discussing it. Each of us has his own saga, and no room for another's. We napped, made ourselves "occupied" as we could, and the hours passed to sun-set. - At one point, the news came: this evening, "sign-in" would begin at 6:00pm instead of the usual 8:30pm. Special "arrangements" were being made for those who were planning on "stepping out" for this evening's festivities and a "notation" would be made on the list for the occasion. "Meal Tickets" were required for early signing. "Meal Tickets"... the paper of identification, giving permission to be present in the building, affording and awarding a bed on which to rest, a place to weather-out the cold. A "Meal Ticket". A birth certificate and "citizenship" document in its own right. Again, none of us in the room at present had any intentions of "stepping out" tonight, but the idea of singing early and being able to come back and relax, perhaps get in some much-needed and, in my own opinion, well-deserved extra rest seemed a wonderful and most welcome notion. At 6:00pm I strolled down the hall to the office where we all signed-in every night. Thinking that the "regulars" would be at the desk, them knowing me on sight now, I didn't bring my "Meal Ticket" and WHAT a mistake THAT became! When I glanced into the office at my turn to approach the bench, as it

felt, there sat Mr. Jimson, one of the “supervisory case workers”. I’d had run-ins, I call them, with him over the course of my “residency” and, considering that the staff knew me (mostly because, well, I’m neither Black nor Hispanic and I’m tall... AND I’m the only one who wears a kippa), I had no reason to suspect any difficulty with the sign-in with-out the “Meal Ticket”. OH! How WRONG I was! Respectfully as always, I walked up to the desk and as I went to sign, Jimson gawked up at me with his bulging frog-eyes and “liver lips” and stopped me. “Where’s your meal ticket?” he growled. “I’m in D18.” I said, with calm and respect, as always. “I don’t know who you are!” he clacked. Well, no sense arguing, I quietly, calmly turned round and left the office to go back and get my “Meal Ticket”. Ah... BUT... when I got back to the room, a mere minutes later, a NEW announcement: The “rules” had changed again and the early sign-in was revoked. It would resume at the regular 8:00pm. No real surprise here. “Rules” and “regulations” in this place change on whim, at a moment’s notice (if notice is given at all). So, I re-settled onto the bed and waited for 8:30pm which was my “normal” hours to sign, when, WITH Meal Ticket, I returned to the office and the desk and Mr. Jimson. This time, I simply dropped the pink paper Meal Ticket on the desk, face-up in Mr. Jimson’s direction, in silence, signed beside my printed name, picked up the “ticket” and left to return to the relative comforts of my little metal bed. - In the calm of the place this evening, calm in spite of those who were “stepping out” (and risking their place, space and bed in this House of Mayhem) strolling by from time to time, I settled-in with crochet materials and worked on the first hand-made kippa and ignored the time as it ticked away. - It was 11:47pm when Rich(16) made the announcement of the time. Geo was out, gone, some-where and quite honestly, none of us cared. We chatted briefly about whether or not to stay awake for the change of year, and we all (3) decided on “lights-out”. Just before midnight, no fire-works or fan-fare, I, being closest to the light switch, got up from my bed, shuffled over to the door and, turning out the lights... Click. 2008 was closed. Tomorrow we would wake to a “new” year... still here, still Homeless. It made no difference, no matter at all, to any of “us”. Click... 2008 was closed.

06. January 2009

Thursday 1 January 2009: 140 Days of Homelessness/109 Days in the Shelter

(It's Friday, the 2nd of January, 10:37am at the Mid-Manhattan Library. It's one of those days that tend to happen where, I acknowledge my situation and current condition, and in my mind there's the voice of terror yelling: "*This can't be happening to me!*")

140 days of Homelessness. Almost 5 months./109 days in the shelter. Almost 4 months

It's the first day of this "New" year and nothing's "new" about it. It came in very quietly. The day at the shelter was very quiet. And there's been no sign of CW. He left on Wednesday and hasn't returned. I hope he's having a good time and that he's covered so he doesn't loose anything here. If we miss only one "sign-in", we lose our bed. If we miss more than one, we run the risk of losing the bed and needing to begin the process from the beginning, being treated the same as the "Over-nighters", bounced from bed-to-bed, room-to-room. Another possibility is being "barred" or "banned" from ALL shelters in The City, if the administration here feels that we've violated some policy. For example: leaving to be out to get stoned, drunk or high in any fashion. I can, I suppose, understand that, because, after all, there are too many like me who actually NEED this bed, this place, in order to get back on our feet. If the shelter is being abused, used simply as a free place to "crash" in between drug binges, than one isn't Homeless by misfortune, one is Homeless by intent and that's not what the system was created for. Those others need either find other places or find treatment. It seems heartless to say, but there are guys here who actually are working, and trying to improve our lot. We're not here for a free ride so that we can slack-off. - But this morning there was no need to wake early. Mr. TG is in hospital and there's been no reply to my several calls and messages left by phone. It's not a HT day. So, I "slept-in" until about 8h or so. Ah, the beginning of a new year, here, solo in the world, solo in a shelter. A small, steel-frame bed, a thin, plastic-covered mattress, a thin, plastic-covered pillow, industrial sheets and blankets. No one to consider "family". No-one to consider "friend". My world, my being in a steel locker. And daylight struggling to penetrate filthy windows and disgustingly dusty screens. A cold

morning. January. Honestly? I had absolutely no sentiments on the whole situation. Nothing funny, amusing, entertaining, depressing, up, down or other-wise. All was simply a matter of fact and no particular feelings or opinions or observations were warranted. It was 8h on a different day. That's it. That's all. My emotions are shutting down, shutting off. I'm certainly not complaining. Now, to be rid of the pangs and gnawing desires to force siblings and acquaintances to feel and know, fully experience, the pains they've caused me. Cyndi, Joe, Tony, Margot, Penelope... the list. - And I still think of the 20 years! It took me 20 years to collect and record all that music that was my life, the simplest pleasure, my main pleasure in life, of a life-time.. from the music of *Mr. G's Roundhill Lodge*! I'll never be able to replace that. It was a concerted effort of those who knew that juke box, so much music, so many memories of good people, good time, safe times, times of knowing that I was protected from the barrage of beatings from a father who was hell-bent on murdering me. (My own Mother telling me, matter-of-fact: "If you don't leave, one of these days he WILL kill you.") I remember too, the nights I walked in there, battered and bruised, and being told "You're staying here for the week-end, you can't go back there. We've got rooms. One of them is yours." I was safe there. And all that music was my safety, consolation, the refuge. Gone now. And with it, the collection of Baroque, African... GERMAN, QUEBECOISE... old music, new music! GONE! The books! College texts, Kafka, Tolstoy, psych. GONE! Photos. Journals. Clothing. Furniture. Work. Art... my own work! Some of which took a week or more to paint. Internet work, web-sites that I'd built: The Bronx site, The Newburgh site... Research! Records! GONE! The days of hunger, thirst, exhaustion, hot, cold, wet, silence, depression, anger. Nobody cares! They did it. They've moved on. For them, it's done. For me? It will never end. My past is being erased. Today, right now, I'm a number... a 7-digit number. And this is how I begin a "new year"... a number with-out a home, friends, family, along with other numbers who wander the halls here, and the streets of this city, and nobody knows. - 2009. A new year, alone in a shelter. CaseWorker is away. George, Rey, Rich(16), gone. I washed (by hand, in the small sink in the loo across the hall), socks, under-things. I mopped the floor in the room. I've found the bucket and mop in a utility closet here on the floor, thanks to Rick who usually does the toilet and shower rooms and the hall here. So I use them in the room now. Imagine: we, the Homeless, clean our own room. Ah, but in this room, it's only me who does it. We all benefit, but only one actually does the chore. I don't mind though. It keeps the potential insect and "vermin" count down and I feel more comfortable about that. A regular day. I have 3 room-mates who had someplace to go to, somebody to spend the day with. I spent the holiday, like all holidays, alone. But Craig, from across the hall, did bring a smile to my face when he saw me coming down the

hall with the mop and bucket and started to chant “Mop mop here, mop mop there and a couple of tralalas...” (that’s how we pass the day away in the merry old land of Oz). No matter what, no matter our circumstances and situation, as often as we possibly can, we try, at the very least, to brighten things up with a smile at least, an out-right laugh at best. - At about 1:00pm, I finished last night’s chicken-pattie-things on 2 rolls. Ate the turkey cold-cuts. I sorted the locker. Repaired the broken strap on the umbrella. I also got to cut my hair at long last. A plastic garbage bag on the floor, one mirror hung on each locker door for front and back views. The charge on the clipper went whilst I trimmed, so I had to use the scissors too. The job is OK. Not good, certainly not great, but passable for now. Showered. Ate. It was a lazy sort of day, spent, mostly, alone in the dorm. See? Nothing’s changed. Nothing’s “new”. I kept busy. I kept occupied. - The day was unusually quiet in the shelter. Some found places to go to. Others did what I was doing: keeping busy, taking advantage of a day when we didn’t get thrown out onto the streets. Still others just slept. 2009. A new day, new year, new calendar and the very same sh... - I napped a bit, but not long. I could do that, nap. I was alone. - This evening, the other 3 returned from whence they’d been. George came in (sober! I add in honest shock), Rey came back, Rich came in. They all returned “to the roost”, as it were, and they all came in in relative silence. I always think: they’ve got “family” and “friends” to visit, but not one will give them escape from this Hell-hole-Hell-On-Earth. How stupid are they. Me? There’s nobody, nothing, no-one to visit. And in all honest sincerity, I just don’t care at all. I just, simply, don’t. I’ve no negative feelings or thoughts, and no positive feelings or thoughts... nothing at all. - And so, that’s how it went. If there’s more, I don’t recall. - This afternoon, Ms. Simpson didn’t come back. At 8:17pm I rang Ginette and left a message. - Tomorrow is a work day. Tonight? Just the “same old same old”, including the hope for sleep. - Oh Oh Oh! I finally reached Ginette! She’s at the Sedgwick library, in The Bronx now! I said I’ll see her Saturday! - And so... The day came. The day went. And nothing new, nothing changed.

Friday 2 January: 141/110

10:42am Mid-Manhattan Library: You see? Nothing’s changed. I’m back in the library in the morning... passing time. I’m not caught-up with putting the “Monogram” journal on-line yet. That’s still in September. But I’m trying not to fall behind too much on this current journal. Besides, it’s a new year (BIG friggin deal! Eh?) My guts are bound. I did have a BM this morning but it’s the rest of the BS I’m putting up with. I need more hours to work. I need more income. I

need to get the Hell out of the shelter! I need to get away from the chaos and bedlam that is the Homeless system. I just need to get away from ALL of this. But here I am. - Last night somebody asked after CW in the hall. There's been no sign, no word. Why do I care? I probably don't, really. But I just hope he's OK where-ever he may be. - For now, I have 7 minutes left on this computer and it's almost time to get running again. So, this put in, I'll close and go. It's supposed to snow then rain today. Supposed to be cold and not so pleasant over the week-end. Perfect for me... not-so-pleasant... - Over-all, I was up at 6:30am with the regular morning routine. At about 8:30am, a dickhead "security" idiot came pounding on the door. "Time to wake up!" He went to D19, the room next-door, and pounded there but the reception of his stupidity was quite different. Banging. Slamming. Door. Yelling! Cussing! I only wish that it had gone to where he'd been beaten. The staff in this place treat and address us as if we're some kind of animals. I often think of how it must have been for the "patients" who originally inhabited these rooms, these "chambers", back in the days when these doors would be locked, bolted shut, and any-one IN the room couldn't get out. I wonder if we, today, are being treated any differently. There are rumours that all of the "medical equipment" from the "Psychiatric Hospital" is still in the building. One can't help but wonder: If we're documented as having been "non-compliant", do they take us "down to the 're-hab' room" for a jolt of electro-shock therapy?" One can't help but wonder. I doubt it would surprise anybody if that's just what they do in here. Anyway, the situation in 19 didn't escalate any further. I just let it all ride and soon after, I left the building for a walk to the Mid-Manhattan Library. - There, on a computer, I spent 45 minutes of checking ALL e-mail accounts and not much else. That done, it was time to be on the move again. (One doesn't dare stay at one place too long, lest one be "discovered"... a "Homeless" person sitting! NO! Must NEVER be that!) Out the door and to the trains... A casual D train to the A train to Lefferts. The Lefferts library was full! So I went shopping for flip-flops at the local 99cent stores. The size 14s were gone so I got Colgate Total toothpaste and some tote bags instead. - Walked to HT's and arrived at 1:15pm. A chat with "Joey the Jew-hater". A day of sweets and coffee. This evening, as I was leaving, Joey tells me he wants me to consider more hours... cash! That would be wonderful in so many ways. More income, being paid the FULL amount; cash that wouldn't have to be reported to the shelter that I could put into another account to be saved toward my escape! Ah... But I most certainly doubt that he was even slightly sincere. More than likely, he's trying to play a little game. Well... children can and will be children. I won't give it another thought until the first dollar in cash is deposited into my account. - Tonight though... CW! I reached him by phone at 8:43pm. He was on a train on his way back. He wanted to know if his "sh**" is still here?

Would I sign for him? It begins. *Would I sign for him?* I told him that I couldn't because of the obvious: Me, a 6ft White man in a yarmulke, and him, a 6ft Black man... period. What I didn't say was: Not only would it not work based on those facts, but the truth of the matter is that I don't want to because it's time *YOU* took responsibility for *YOU*, just as *I* take responsibility for *me*. But I didn't bother saying because, well, it would be of no use. - At about 11:40pm, I was trying for sleep. A tap on my foot. CW had returned. BFD! (Big Freakin Deal) Did I sign for him, he wanted to know. I told him I hadn't. He took quite the little attitude. Well. Call it the "new" me. Call it the "improved" me. Call it the selfish me. But now? It's about *ME* and *MY* survival. Favours? If I can with-out personal ramifications. Other-wise? No! I'm learning: Nobody's here to care for or about me. I must do what I must do for me. I have no intentions of participating in this life any more. I'm here. I do what is necessary for my own comfort. No more. No less. Happy new year.

Saturday 3 January: 142/111

1:41pm and I'm at the Sedgwick Library, in The Bronx... my "home-town"... a long, long time ago. I got here at about 12:43pm a spot at a sunny window, where I'm trying to capture the past few days' events whilst waiting for Ginette to come to work. She said she starts at 1:00pm, but I'm hoping to be able to see her before she has to being. - I've got to pee! I want a smoke! I'm a bit hungry. I'm quite tired. No sign of Ginette. - Well, this morning I was up at about 6:30am. Rey left before me. George came *in* shortly after Rey left. Rich(16) went out to somewhere. George and I spoke for a bit. Nothing deep, nothing too serious, nothing worth speaking about, really. In short order, I was out the door and off to Rockaway to get to the post office this morning before the rest of the day. Well... the trip was worth the time and effort, there was a good pay-cheque there. And I got the chance to stop at the corner store and get a copy of *The Wave*. There isn't all that much to that paper, but it's my "connection" to a place called "home". With paper in hand, I was ready to face the rest of the day... the A train to W4 Street for a connection to a D train to... the Sedgwick library. I got here by about 11.20am! Fantastic timing but no sign of Ginette. The clerk here said that security doesn't come on until 1:00pm, so I went up to the 2nd floor and got my 45 minutes on a computer. With the time, I managed to log more "Monogram" notes on-line, searched for more free CNA classes. If I can register for that, Ms. Simpson had better back the frigg up off me. I'm improving my chances of full-time steady income and, on a selfish stand, improving my chances at a very hasty escape from the Hotel Sh**-hole. Ah, to be out of it, done with it and away! What a relief that would be! - Having some time, I got to journal, and when no

security showed by 1:30pm, I headed for the stairs. I was a little disappointed to think that I wouldn't get to see Ginette, but I wasn't too terribly hurt. Something must have happened that kept her from making our meeting. There would be other times. She's a good kid, and I count her as a good friend, no matter what. She's been very sweet and kind to me, and that means more to me than anything any more. - I got to the first floor, at the bottom of the stairs... G! It was heart-lifting to see her! There are so very few people left in my existence who mean anything at all to me any more. So very, very few. As I think of it, even Dennis, the very first "love" of my life, has diminished. Pookie? Haven't heard from her since I can't even remember when. Nope. G. Real. No BS. - And so, HUGS! We talked. We caught-up. She took her break. We went for pizza. PIZZA! Hot food! I tried to tell her how much "hot food" means to me these days. She said she understands, and I wouldn't doubt that she does. She insisted upon paying both hers and mine. I tried to give her a 5 but she wouldn't take it. A "friend"... She doesn't have room in her house but she has room in her heart, and she gives of herself in something so very important to me now: a hot lunch. "Friend". - She looks so much better than she did when last I saw her. Fuller face. No darkness about the eyes. She sounds better. Clear voice. It did my heart so much good. GOD! It did my heart so much good. - I stayed at the library until 5:00pm when it closed and we walked up University Ave. to Tremont and up to The Concourse. Yes, it was cold. But it didn't matter to me. I was in the greatest company. It was so difficult to leave her, but I can find her again now and that's important to me. She tells people I'm her "uncle", and to me, she's like a daughter... "Family", indeed. - WELL! The trains back were a terror! D service ran on the 8th Ave. line, in segments. No Flushing (Nr.7) trains. Packed platforms. Miserable L train service. More packed platforms. I walked from Union Square to the market on 23rd Street, 12 blocks, for some food. - It's disgusting being here, in The City. There's too damned much history... too bloody many memories: Once upon a time I shared an apartment on 22nd Street. Once upon a time I shared an apartment on 24th and 3rd. As I passed Rolf's German restaurant, I recalled that, once upon a time I ate there. Once upon a time, I flew to Montreal. Once upon a time I was crisp, clean and tidy. Once upon a time, I cared. Once upon a time... Now? In The Bronx, University reminds me of my Mum and her stories about boy-friends who lived in those neighbourhoods. The Jerome El (*elevated subway line*) reminds me of riding it with her down-town to Takishamaya. This area in The City reminds me of more affluent days. It all reminds me of all that's gone and how it's so late in life that there's no sense in even trying to get any of it back. And it all reminds me of how it all disappeared. Quite truthfully, I hate being here, in The City. I need to get out, get away from it all or else? Or else I'll just break, just break! - At the end of the day, it would be nice

to just go “home”, have a little bite to eat, something to drink, a little dessert. Have a smoke. Sit. Relax, These days I need to be concerned about coming through the security check. Will the DHS cops be doing their job and getting people through efficiently? Or will they be laughing, giggling, pissing and moaning as the queue snakes round the dark, cold court-yard? Will I be standing outside, in the cold, listening to the “ignorants” yelling profanities, wanting cigarettes, trying to jump ahead of everyone else? How many drunks, loud, filthy-mouthed, staggering drunks will there be yelling, screaming, swaying or just making me ill with their foul, vulgar, odour? How many newcomers will show with enough luggage to holiday here for 6 months or more, requiring 20 minutes or more at the security check as bag after bag is scanned and then hand-searched? How many simply refuse to follow the general protocol? How many will wait for the last second to empty pockets, remove jacket? How bloody long will it take me to get into the building? How many Blacks will jump ahead of me, almost daring me to say something and how many “Hispanics” will pretend they don’t understand English and jump the queue? How long will it take me to get inside? And once inside, will I have to walk up to the 5th floor (again) because the lift isn’t working or because 5 idiots have shoved ahead of me to get into lift that can’t handle more than 5 people at a time? And at the dorm, who will be in? Will music be blaring? How many fools will be yelling in the halls? Who will come by to interrupt my one meal of the entire day? - No peace. And above ALL else, I wonder: will there be a notice of transfer on the bed or locker telling me to pack-up and get ready to roll out into the night to another shelter, farther from work in a night-marish neighbourhood and all because Ms. Simpson got a bug up her hole and decided I should be the next one out? - No Peace. - But the day is done and I’ve shoved food down my throat as Charles blocked the door in his urine odour clothing, asking *Trivial Pursuit* questions of Geo, Rey and me. I simply looked as Dana Do-Rag came in at about 11:30pm, saw that Rey was sleeping, that the room was still, and banged on Rey’s locker simply to wake him to say “Ah... go to sleep.” It’s the end of another day at the beginning of another year. - I need to get away... somehow... anyhow.

Sunday 4 January: 143/112

2:52pm at... D18. This morning, I slept until about 8:00am. There's no more rush to this day now. It's too late to rush, especially when there's nothing to rush to or for. So today, I mended my gloves in the early morning dim by the book-light, straightened my locker, went across the hall for my daily BM. After that, I journalled a bit whilst I ate my donuts. Right now, I'd like to work

on a kippa but truthfully, there's no time now. I also want to get to the Mid-Manhattan Library which opened at around 11:00pm. Will I? I don't know. - Rey was out by 9:00am. Geo and Rich(16) are STILL asleep! They sleep ALL BLOODY DAY! Any wonder they keep Rey and me awake all night? There was just some kind of confrontation in the loo. "Security" yelling at some guy who yelled back. A smoking issue: "Nobody wants to smell your cigarette smoke, your crack smoke, your smoke smoke..." "FRIGG you!" Gee. I do wonder what would happen if I tried that reply. Well? Well. An older guy from down the hall is mopping the hallway! Chit-chat-blah-blah-yaddie-yah in the loo. Tony (Muscle) laughing. The air smells nice from the mopping. I need a pee, smoke, shower, escape. It's 12:20pm! Time to go... somewhere... anywhere... ELSE! - Got side-tracked today and WOW! What a beginning to a new year THIS day became! - CW showed up at the door before I got to the shower. I asked if he'd like to accompany me to the library today. I've been looking for an opportunity to talk with him, openly, personally, privately. He agreed. I said I'd shower while he went to lunch and meet back at the room and we did. Of course, the day's plans went from "Me" to "We" and so, I never made it to the library until WELL past opening at 1:00pm. My wait for a computer was over 2 hours for a 20 or 15 minute session. I decided not to bother with either. (Although CW said he'd wait while I waited... how thoughtful?) We left the library. - A guy from CW's room had told him of a "Health-related" lecture being given today. 2:00pm, Madison Avenue and 45th. So we walked up that way to find the building. He obviously wasn't interested in attending because it was already about 2:30pm on a sunny Sunday. Since we couldn't find the building, and he didn't have an exact address, we decided to go back to the Hell-hole. - As we slowly strolled down Madison, I quickly lost my mind: I've wanted to get CW out to The Fort, but in warmer weather, yet, just now, just then, I decided to take him "for the ride". If nothing else, the ride across the bay at sun-set would be nice. (From the way he talks about getting his life back, together, having been dumped by brothers and sister, etc., I thought I'd take a little risk, make a little investment, go to the beach, see how "calm" he truly can be.) I had some cash. He (claimed) had none. 4\$ for his transport? Worth the try. I asked if I could "take him for a ride". He agreed. Asked where to. I said he'd have to trust me. He said he did. To the Q train we went! To the A train to Rockaway! - We had time to sit, relax, snooze, talk along the way. For me, it was a trip "Home" to a place of calm, quiet, respite. I watched the bay beneath us, watched the sun's glimmer turn the ripples in the water into scattered diamonds. It was lost on him. For him, it was just another train ride. I suppose he'd been out this way before, but, oh well... Rockaway was "my home-town" so I saw it all from a different perspective I suppose. I was a little disappointed but what mattered more to me was going "Home". - We got off at B105th Street. I

was going to go over to the board walk and take a stroll along the beach and ocean, but, as we got across Rockaway Beach Blvd. I saw the Q22 bus coming, heading West. I said "We're taking the bus." I'd planned, at that point, to go to The Fort... Well, to the beach at B169th Street. - CW just went along with the rapidly changing itinerary. The bus ride seemed lost on him too, in spite of the complete difference between Manhattan and Rockaway. But, as is "me" these days, I enjoyed just being back in the Rockaways. At the end of the line, we left the bus and walked South on B169th to the beach. There was breeze, but it wasn't cold at all. A woman jogged North-bound past us. "Happy new year!" she called. People. Humans. Consideration. "Home". - I looked over to T6. Geoff's truck was there. There was no going over there for any reason anyway. We went to the beach for a stroll West-ward. The sun was setting but still quite bright. - I brought CW into the back building off the Hero Rd., the one hidden by years of over-growth of bayberry and poison ivy, where the fat man would linger and lurk on hot Summer days, where, for the most part, few people would tread because of the remote location, and because it was rather hidden in Summer by the shrubs. The sun was setting, beautifully as it does in The Fort. We walked out past T9-6. G.'s truck was in front of T6. Thankfully, he didn't come out as we passed (or even as we left). I've nothing to say to him, really, no interest in small talk. My membership is expired and I'm not re-newing, particularly after that comment about 25\$ membership fee no big deal to anybody. I can visit as a visitor, it's federal property, but membership days are done. - We got the Q35 bus for The Junction. He (CW) didn't remark on the view as we crossed the bay. He was sleepy and hungry. I was feeling badly because he'd miss dinner at the shelter and I figured that he probably depended on it. At The Junction, I needed cigarettes, so, when we got to the RiteAid store, I got a pack (NINE DOLLARS! Expensive!) and some junk-food. I gave him 5 dollars to get something. He didn't use it there. I got for both of us. He stopped next door for a soda. And onto the train, back to Hell. - As soon as we'd arrived, he immediately disappeared into the mayhem that is the Shelter. All simply returned to as it was, as it is, as it always will be at the Shelter. And I had no feelings on the matter of the day or otherwise at all. Me? I'd been "Home". That's all that mattered to me. Nothing else.

Monday 5 January: 144/113

(Recapped on Thursday, 8th January, at the Brighton Beach Library, Brooklyn) I've been making quick notes from Monday through Thursday, just things to keep up with in this Journal. Here, well, the fill-ins: This morning I was up and out to cash the pay-cheque first thing! I had a

mission this morning: to make a deposit, to satisfy the heifer (CaseWorker), to put in my 60 per-cent, “mandatory savings”, so I don't have to listen to THAT story on Tuesday. - From cheque-cashing, I was off to the subway for the next MetroCard. Transport! Above and beyond ALL else! Transport! For work, for escape, in case I need to sleep out of the shelter at night. Transport! - Down to MCU to learn how to make deposits (“learn how to make deposits”... they have all sorts of “special ways” to do things there) and verify that there are TWO accounts and that direct deposit has been arranged for one so I can transfer from one to the other. The “60 per-cent savings” can't have any withdrawals, so I have to have direct deposit into an account that I can live off of. Nothing like adding to the “stress of being Homeless”. Indeed, there are TWO accounts and into savings went 5\$ more than the required 60 per-cent. Hey. It's for my own good as well. Not yet enough to get me out of the Hell hole shelter. But a beginning. Now I'm on the way to “normalcy”. An account. A debit card. Savings. Now comes the nasty notes from the IRS no doubt. They've been trying to grab everything since 1988 when they discovered that somebody got my I.D. and Social Security number (in 1983) and worked several jobs as me. (I've tried more times than I can recall to correct and settle that, but this is America, they're the IRS. I've just given up. As I tell them: I'm not young now and not getting any younger. One of these days I'll be dead and, well, then you'll get nothing from me.) Well, if it happens while I'm in the shelter, the joke will be on the Feds. THEN I'll hit the “Public Assistance” line. They'll get nothing, the shelter will get nothing. I'll get nothing. I've already gone through that, and look here, I'm writing this, so I managed to survive. - As I left from the library after all the morning running, there was a call from Mrs. TG. I called her. Mr. is back home! She wants me back! Truthfully, the news had me almost in tears. It was such a relief to know he'd been discharged. What-ever happened to him wasn't life-threatening. It truly did bring me happiness to know he is OK and Mrs. dotes over him so. Losing him would be a terrible blow to her. And knowing that she wants me on the case is both a major compliment and a financial relief. Now, to get back on the case. - (Back at the shelter at the end of the day...) Even after all of this for this morning, I was on the trains early. Good thing too. I dozed right up to Rock Blvd. and woke just as the train doors closed! It seems I do my best sleeping on the subway these days. Fortunately, I was on the Far Rock A train so, I dozed again to Broad Channel. Got off there and strolled across Noel Rd. to Cross Bay Blvd. to wait for the Q21 bus back to where I should have gotten off the train. What a most delightful way to enjoy a morning: in the serenity that is that lost island community of Broad Channel island. Oddly, it crossed my mind: I know Kristen, Mat, Liz and Dan, people on Broad Channel. But I just have no desire to see or to talk with any of them any longer. After all of

this, I seem to be drifting away from “domiciled” people, especially after being in hospital and the shelter for so long and it seems nobody misses me. It's a hard lesson, but one well-learned. But here, on this little island in the Jamaica Bay, I just enjoyed the eternal wait for the bus... in my own silence. I'm actually cutting away from everything and everybody lately. I'm withdrawing into me. And I'm very much at peace with it. “Me” isn't such a bad place to be... now that it's without “them”. For the moments of withdrawal, I find contentment. There's a peace and a peaceful place inside me. I shut the world out, shut-down and all is well. Maybe it's the beginning of my 2010 count-down when, if there's any mercy in Heaven, I'll be out of all of this... ALL of this. Peace is on its way. - Got to HT's a few moments late... as usual. Another wasted appointment. No matter what I say I'd like to accomplish there, no matter what son Joey tells me he'd like to see his father accomplish, they won't co-operate. I have my coffee and cookies and leave. Sure, I get paid. But it doesn't do anything, there's no progress, no “accomplishment”. But, it's not because of me. So? So... - back at the Hotel Hell, sign-in tonight was another typical shelter nightmare. “King” James at the desk barking at Santiago. Some guy named “White” lost his bed due to having been caught smoking in the dorm. Odd. The fat dirt-bag in D19 smokes in the loo. Just last night (I think), *he* threatened “Security” when that idiot came round claiming “bed-check”. D19 followed the “security” clown down the hall, yelling “I'm gonna f*** you up!” But nothing corrective or retaliatory ensued there. In this asylum, Justice has no scales, no blindfold. In here, Justice is an amputee whose eyes have been gouged out of her head! And tonight, a great many were here, waiting for bed assignments. The “un-domiciled” are increasing in numbers, and I get to bear witness to the fact... first hand! - After sign-in, Robert (whom I haven't seen in a while) came to ask for a cigarette. I gave him one, no charge. But when I went to smoke (in the loo) he'd given it to some nasty, savage arse who'd pissed me off earlier this evening! I simply told him that I won't be giving away ANY more cigarettes any longer. (I've become quite ballsy of late.) - Tomorrow is my appointment with Ms. Simpson. Along with the usual stress associated with this weekly appointment with “it”, tonight I'm particularly anxious and filled with trepidation. She simply can't be trusted. She's incompetent, lazy, useless and will do what SHE feels she can get away with and keep her job. Just one fat presence of misery, she. - At 11:43pm, the lights were still on. Rich(16) snoring. George, reading. Rey, sleeping. And noise in the hall, those with no purpose in Creation keeping everyone else awake. - Good night!

Tuesday 6 January: 145/114

At 2:00am this morning I was awakened by yelling and screaming in the loo and the halls! I've NO idea what the Hell was going on in there other than some kind of "party". You'd think that "security" would intervene and bring it to a stop, since there are "working" people on this floor, but the truth is, most of the time, "security" is part of the party. - Well, the break in sleep just started my sleep-cycle over and I over-slept until 8:00am this morning. I had an appointment with Ms. Simpson today! I made it, of course. One doesn't miss one of those "CaseWorker" appointments because THEY issue the "Meal Tickets" and with-out those, it could mean no entry into the shelter, no bed, lost bed, starting the entire process from scratch. So, in a bit of a panic, I threw myself together and got to where I needed to be... at the sign-in sheet for the "CaseWorker". - That meeting? What a revelation! The woman's an idiot! For starters, she wanted to change our meeting day from one day per week to TWO, from Tuesday to Tuesday AND Thursday. Ah... but a little "sense" and the fact that I'm working those days, she changed the appointments back to just Tuesday. But it didn't end there. Oh no! As is the procedure, I gave her the deposit receipt for my 60 per-cent, along with my pay stub. But when she looked at the deposit ticket she got terribly confused. The receipt read "120-20's" (120\$ in 20\$ bills). For the life of her, she needed it broken-down... all but pictures drawn. And THESE are the people to whom we're expected to GIVE our cash so that THEY can hold it for us? I was warned already that money given to them to be kept tends to get "lost". Now I can see how! Along with this little farce, she began PUSHING the issue of me getting onto Public Assistance! She claimed that she'd *insisted* that I be on PA by the end of December, when, in fact, she never insisted at all. I truly believe she can't recall to whom she's said what. She even went to Ms. Renice with the issue and, I have to say, over-all, Mr. Renice simply blew her off. Oh well. Truth be told, Ms. Simpson doesn't actually "speak"... she mutters, barely moving her mouth and slurring, so there's really not much to "hear" anyway. - As our little "meeting" closed, all was relatively pleasant and she actually feigned "caring". How charming. Too bad I know better. - Well, after that little fiasco, I headed out the door and on with my own affairs of the day. I had no patients to be with this afternoon so I put the time to good use. I'd seen an advert for an agency on 8th Avenue offering free CNA classes so I went over to investigate. Well, there, the nice little lady referred me to another agency in Brooklyn. So, onto the trains and off to Bedford Stuyvesant where, oddly (or not) there were no classes either, BUT another nice little lady THERE referred me back to Manhattan and then told me to call back at the end of the month. - All said, a day shot. - As for the night in the shelter? I'm so fed-up that the best I can say is... it was "typical". I came in and stayed mostly to myself

whilst the rest of the place buzzed about until it was time for lights out. And there we have it.

Wednesday 7 January: 146/115

12:42pm and I'm back at the Lefferts library in the pouring RAIN! PIC had given us all a little umbrella as a gift of their appreciation for all the work we do... How kind... never mind paying us so we can buy food, pay bills... an umbrella. And, strangely (or not) enough... today was the first day I actually used it and... it's trashed. One gust of wind and the whole thing just turned into a mass of mangled wire and some fabric. Just goes to show how much we're "appreciated". Oh well.

- I'm actually exhausted today! For starters, there was a "bed check" this morning at 3:00am. "Security" came walking into the room and because of the way the light comes in, could clearly see that Rich was in bed in D16, but goes over to Rey, who is in the bed directly across from the foot of 16 and asks "Is anybody in that bed?" And they don't whisper. The question is asked as if they have to yell over some noise that must be in their head. Of course, Rey answered with the only appropriate response "You can see for yourself he's in there." Nothing more is said, "security" leaves the room and we can hear him moving down the hall, banging on each and every door along the way. Everybody was in the room tonight... everybody. I told Rey about this journal and that I'm keeping a digital version on the internet. He asked "Why?" and I told him "So that it can be seen by people outside this hell-hole asylum." I'm tired of being treated like something sub-human and I'm sick to death of watching other people suffer too. I explained that I did a little research on shelters, on-line, and learnt much about the other shelters. Maybe, one day, somebody will stumble on this saga. he asked if I was "using names" and I told him that I am, keeping it vague with the residents but specific with the staff. He was both impressed by my thinking and appreciative of my sensitivity to the residents. As I told him: I a resident here too, I KNOW that it's all about. - It's not just the "night before" now, it's a composite of all the nights... the restless nights, the sleepless nights, the nights in the shelter... period. I often find myself walking on nothing more than "auto pilot"... just moving, forward, mindlessly. - OK well... that day went along. (I'm back at the shelter this evening with a bit of catch-up.) I managed to get the bus to HT's at my usual "moments a bit late" but it really doesn't matter any more Today, again, was a waste. Cookies and coffee, yes. But actual "work" with Mr.? Nothing. It's rather disappointing to me, and I'd really enjoy a patient who actually wants to do better. But for now, I settle... for the income and for the pastries (which truly are welcome and delicious and I DO appreciate it all. I truly do). - One other little thing here... Geo is unusually quiet these days, very

much to himself. It actually saddens me to see him so quiet. He's always rather been the "youth" in the room and these days, it seems that something's getting to him in here. I wonder what it is. He goes through periods of self-deprecation, most often when he's been sober for a while. How terrible to be in one's mid-40's and to think so little of one's self. But it's as I say: this place, the system in this place is geared toward ripping and tearing at self-esteem. I wonder, have they gotten to Geo too? - Rey is exhausted as well, from all the BS in this place. It gets to all of us, I suppose, sooner or later... sooner... or later. - And me? I need to wash, really wash my clothes and change the linens on this bed. Things are beginning to get a bit "funky".

Thursday 8 January: 147/116

11:29am from the hallowed rooms of the Fordham Library on Kingsbridge Road, up-town, in The Bronx: *SNOW* this morning... and some sun, and very cold. As if "cold" would be noteworthy... in January. - I got a rather late start this morning. There's no need to "rush" this morning. Besides, I guess it's the general fatigue and such, but I've been feeling rather "dissociated", removed, not quite "at the place and in the moment". Apparently it's been noted because as I left the room this morning, Craig, from across the hall said to me "You're sleeping-in quite a bit lately." I brushed it off with a pleasant excuse of little sleep at night and heading out to work all day... I'm making-up for lost time. - A nice example of being "dissociated": this morning, when I left the shelter, knowing that I was coming here, to the library, up-town, with-out thinking, I walked along the streets toward the subway and simply walked down the stairs and through the turnstile... and onto a DOWN-town train, as if going directly to work. "Automated"... simply programmed at this point, not thinking, just moving... moving and running and going and paying no attention to much of anything at all. It could be frightening, but on the rare moment I stop to ponder, to give thought, it's nothing more than "survival". The less I think about much of anything at all, the better off I am over-all. Well, it was a bit of a "start" when I suddenly realised that the street numbers on the stops were decreasing rather than increasing. Thankfully, I came to reality only several stations later and that at 14th Street, it was just a matter of switching from one direction to the other, not to mention, I got the Woodlawn train which is what I'd wanted in the first place No harm, actually. Just the jolt of "the rut". - An oddity though, on the walk to the train: as I left the shelter, there was no snow falling. I crossed 1st and 2nd Avenues, and all was fine. But at 3rd Avenue... *SNOW!* And *ONLY* on 3rd Avenue. Notable? Indeed. Weather on one

avenue only. - But when I finally got up-town, and the train came up above the street, there was MORE snow at Kingsbridge Rd. Winter is here, indeed. But it looked so nice, I decided to walk from the train to the library this morning. The snow just made it seem all the nicer some-how. - Well, in spite of getting only one 45-minute session, I got another day logged from the notes to the digital. Not too bad. It's going slowly, but it's moving along. - 9:20pm Back at the Hell-hole here and on with the day's "Social Activities". - The sky cleared and I headed out into the rather damp city and toward the trains again. Hungry! And only 13\$ on the Food Stamps card. It's OK. Over the years I've learnt how to make the most out of the least. - For some reason this morning, I seem to have "lost me" though. It's not easy to explain or describe, but I just can't seem to find some integral part of "me". It's as if something dissociated and left town and I don't know where it is. Strange. I don't know, really. - And this morning I noticed, as I was in the library, that my right boot has a crack in the sole! Now I need new shoes! Well, truthfully, these have lasted well over a year and they've gotten quite the mileage. But it only serves to remind me on the many shoes and boots that are gone, thanks to my "I'm so sorry..." sister who tossed everything into a storage bin, told me not to worry about it because she was using it too and would "help" with it. Shoes, clothes, music, web-work... And a good suit, lap-top, winter clothes... at the RPH. Gone. It's really rather odd, when we stop to think: It takes us YEARS to create "Us", to acquire those little things that we need and those things that we enjoy, that bring us pleasure in a world where smiles are becoming so rare. But, trust somebody else, blink, and everything disappears, gone, vanishes... forever, and we're back at the very beginning... with almost nothing, or nothing at all. Me? Today? Every day? I wonder why I take the next breath. Honestly, it wouldn't be such a terrible event if I stopped. I'd simply become part of my "things"... gone. Nobody would even notice. Hell! How long ago was it that I walked out of the Fort? And nobody's noticed that... not really. - Well, it was back to the trains, on the rails and a chance for another 30 minutes on the computers... and by 2:32pm I was at the shore... the Brighton Beach library. There, there are so many people simply in, sitting on chairs, leaning on tables, sleeping. I wonder... are they *all* Homeless? Or wanderers? Or do they live in buildings where there's no peace? I wonder. But it touches my heart, really, that the people, the staff and clients, don't bother them. Yes, the odours from some of them is more than enough to burn the eyes and nose, and sometimes it does wreak as soon as you walk in here, but at least these people, these "people" have a place, even for a few hours a day, to find warmth. and a place to lay a weary head. It's not much, but I know, too well, the difference it can make. I'm one of them. - When I left the library, I stopped by at "Jackie's" store on the boulevard to see if they have any boots and, if so, how much. Well, indeed! My size...

24.99\$... ah... no, not today. So... at least I have boots with soles. A crack? There are ways to work around that; plastic socks! Shopping bags or bread bags over my own socks. See? Life gets better all the time. I often wonder where I got the “sense” to survive this Homeless thing and how to “make do” with what I have available. It's certainly not something I was taught. Very strange, but MOST appreciated. - Since I was in the neighbourhood, I decided to make a stop at the only true “99-cent” store left in the world. With the little bit of cash on hand, I got a bottle of “Fabuloso”, my ever-so favourite cleaner, a package of turkey cold cuts, a small bottle of “cologne” and a spray bottle of fabric freshener. The “Fabuloso” is for laundry and the floors. It makes both smell more of “fresh” and less of “shelter” and that's really rather important. The cologne? To keep the inside of my locker smelling less of “shelter” too. - WELL! Coming into the building *this* evening was quite the experience! The queue at the door was LONG! And there were SO many unfamiliar faces! The snows come and the folks on the streets and in the parks (and from the back-brush in the abandoned Forts) head for the shelter of the “shelters”. I'm supposing this is only the beginning of the rush. And NOW, more than ever before, this is the time when we ALL NEED to be extra careful. With what I've seen so far, it takes nothing to lose a bed. With this many coming in, there's an even higher demand and it won't take anything at all for “Operations” and the rest of the staff to “oops”, make a slight error and off we go... out into the streets. I have NO, and I repeat NO trust in *ANY* of these miserably nasty vermin in here. But, I, being the old “seasoned” Homeless turd, I made it in and up to the room where I immediately went across the hall to the basin to wash my jeans... in my new “Fabuloso”. They're laying on the locker to dry and with the fragrance left in them, they make the whole room smell CLEAN! WHAT a difference, what a delight. AND it actually brings compliments from others. We're “Homeless”, we're not friggin slobs. - Meanwhile, somebody brought food! A guy came by with FOUR dinners, those nasty little plastic trays with “mystery stuff” in them. They were still hot and they were for Rey. Now there's the compassion other-wise missing in this hell-hole! The guys are looking out for him. And yes, he truly needs to put on the weight. It's remarkable, just how thin he is and yet, he keeps going. 49 years old, almost as tall as I am, but he's *so* much thinner! And all the while, he puts on the “tough-boy”, always ready for a rumble or a tumble with anybody. It makes me wonder what his own story is. But, the most notable point is the support of the guys in here. Yes, compassion. - It wasn't moments later when TWO more meals were delivered! SIX dinners! And these in addition to the meal he'd already eaten. He immediately offered me two. Can anybody imagine that. It's as I've come to say: When the Homeless are truly in need, the very first to actually *GIVE* help are... the Homeless. Well, tonight I accepted. I was quite hungry after a day of travel. In the

little plastic tray: broccoli, a mixture of corn, limas, carrots, rice with tomatoes and peppers and a small bit of fish. Not bad tasting. This is the dinner touted as “the best” of all the meals served, never to be missed... the fish dinner. (I suppose it's the one most identifiable, since one can never be quite certain about the meat. There's an “Island” fellow around who, when you ask him what dinner is, he replies, with his “Island” accent: “Sumkinda meeat.” It's become the common reference to the “meat” meals round here now.) Like the “Meals on Wheels” of The Bronx that I've seen at Margot's (as she stacks them eagerly in her freezer and never eats them herself), certainly not enough food to satisfy but relatively sufficient to serve *some* purpose. I ate the 2 offered, Rey ate the fish and rice from the others. Me? I wonder if they'll “clean me out” (all previous meals have given me the runs). But most certainly, I hope they do some good for Rey. It's not nearly enough to put weight on him, but I do hope it makes a difference. - It was a great experience for the heart, all told. - Oh... CW came by for a briefest moment. Says he, he might be out of here tomorrow! “They” found him a place... in The Bronx! We shall see. As he says, he *might* be out of here. We know how “they” work (not). - Right now, it's rather late, all have eaten, the “fellows” are out and around the place some-where. I've signed for the bed (indeed and of course) and it's time to call this day... screwed and done. Only thing left is the nightly “hope”... for undisturbed sleep.

Friday 9 January: 148/117

This is one of those days where there isn't much to report, nothing much to say, nothing much different from all the rest of the days and, of course, another one of those days where I am just about dead-tired. - This morning, since I still have no morning client as yet, I got up, got together, got dressed and got OUT of the building. With the time being as early as it was, I had time to get up to The Bronx Central Library and get a bit more of the note-book logged onto the “blog”. - At about noon, I headed out onto the streets that are so familiar and once were “home” and onto a down-town D train from whence to transfer to an A train and out to work. Ah... but I rather miscalculated today. As is usually the case, when we think we have “so much time”, something in this City comes round to correct and adjust... As I got to the Nr.7 train... the doors closed! I missed it! And, the transport in NYC being what it is, ONE train makes ALL the difference in the world. The timing between trains these days is nothing short of an atrocity and so, instead of waiting the “mystery time” until the next train I WALKED across town to the A

train! - By the time I got to HT's it was 1:55pm! I'm supposed to be there by 1:00pm! (I'm given a little leeway when I have a morning client, but still... THIS LATE! Time is money these days!) But, I have to report ONE really wonderful event: Mr. HT actually STOOD, quite the while, with minimal assist from his maniacal son (Joey)... and he did so THREE TIMES! May this be the beginning of something greater! (I can be silly... I can hope... even a little bit. I don't expect, but I can hope... for now.) - Other than that, it was a "regular" trip back this evening, to the delight of the shelter. The queue coming in was rather longer than the usual, but the nights are colder and the weather "worse". - When I got to the room, the "folks" were out and about, doing what they do. I got me changed from "work" scrubs to "shelter" scrubs, settled in, waited for sign-in, got that done, came back to the room and "snuggled-in" for the night. - These are the nights I wish were every night. (But I know better now... These are the nights where the batteries charge for the next night of... WHAMMY!)

Saturday 10 January: 149/118

Saturday, Saturday... a free day of supposedly little-to-no pressure. Well, for those with nothing to do it is. Me? Up this morning, not quite so early, but early enough to get out before... well... just before anything, out the door and to the trains and OUT of The City! Off to Rockaway! It was, all told, a "solo" day for me and one that I appreciated. I appreciate "my quite time" quite a lot these days. At least I have a better idea of what's to happen and what all is to be. - Made it to the post office this morning and I've received my first "Chequing Account" statement! One more step closer to being a "people"? I suppose. From the post office, I got the Q22 bus out to the Fort where, as I say, "solo", I just spent this wonderful day, wandering and meandering around the "Bakfort", as I call it, checking what is, in Summer, thick over-growth and under-brush, for anything "new". There are SO many bunkers and such out there. Some we know of, but I keep thinking that there's more that we don't know of and in Summer, when everything is covered in vines and thorns, there's no way to discern. Now, with leafless twigs and branches, there's much, much more to search for. And on a day like today... I was quite content to do so... unfettered. I even got out to stroll about my one most favourite "underground" building... "Battery Kessler"... named in WWII for Mr. Percy Kessler whom, I've learnt, is no relation. But how wonderful... to have the name on the beach, by the open Atlantic. It's a calming sort of place too, for me. - At day's end, sadly, sadly, I was back on the bus to the shuttle to the train to the train... back into The City and away from the serenity. On the way, I stopped at the market on 23rd Street for some

food to keep in the locker and strolled, none-too-quickly, up the avenue and back to the place I guess we call “home”. - An uneventful (thank you), typical entrance into the building, the usual arguments on the lift about how many can and cannot fit, arguing about who gets to push the buttons for the floors (these are not the brightest specimens of the species for the most part here). Into the room, change into “shelter scrubs”, pop off for a hot shower, sign-in and settle down. - Saturday... is... done. (It's rather almost un-nerving when being in this place can be referred to as “typical” or “normal”... I catch myself thinking such terms and it almost frightens me to think... *I AM HOMELESS* when this insanity becomes such a part of my existence that it's described as “typical”. I'm slipping into something... and I'm not comfortable.

Sunday 11 January: 150/119

Rundown on the day today because there were things to jot and things to do, places to have been and been there and all that sort of things. (And to think: people believe that we Homeless are a lazy bunch who just sit about, dressed in rags, holding paper cups and beg for change.) This morning was another trip to The Bronx Library where, at last, I've finished logging September's notes from the *Monogram* notes book. Then it was off to the D train to the Q train to the 99cent Store in Brooklyn to buy shampoo and soap. We are, if nothing else, “Well-Travelled”, we “Homeless”. - Returned to the Shelter at 3:00pm and went through the “security” check alone... ALONE! Nobody else. What a pure pleasure! (I'm pretty sure it is for “security” too.) - Upstairs on the floor (in the “ward” that it was) I made a wash. Nobody was here for the longest while. What they all do is beyond me. But then again, they probably wonder the same of me. - Later, when we were all back together, DuRag, from next door came in begging something from Rey. I never did quite catch what it was but it annoyed Rey, and rightfully so. It's one thing to come and ask for something, but this little episode sounded more like all-out “begging”. Imagine that: the Homeless “begging” from the Homeless, as if the “stories” would work. Oh well. Then, some idiot came into the room claiming to have “found Jesus” and insisting that I read the Gospel according to John! I've NO idea what brought that on. Yes, there are those religious freaks, even in a Homeless shelter. I find it more intriguing than anything else, that these people can be in such dire situations and still hang onto all their “salvation” and “fire and brimstone” nonsense. It's tragic, really, because I find that those are the very ones upon whom these “religions” prey... and benefit. Mankind... miserable lot. - Well.. the room quieted down and everybody was out and about on their own and I was left alone at last! As I was preparing to eat something, DHS

“security” came into the room as they do... just walked right in and with-out so much as a word to me, he shone a flash-light into my locker! OK. The locker was open, but seriously... what the HELL is THAT all about? I said nothing. There was nothing to be said (and, much to the moron's dismay, nothing to hide). And, with-out so much as a word, the sh**-bag walked out and into the hall and away. We have NO privacy, we're afforded NO human consideration or respect. We're treated, for the most part, like “property”... of the “System”. It's just one of the aspects that is truly “typical”, being mistreated, disrespected as if these low-lives have been hired to shred human dignity. Oh well. Karma... one of these days... Karma. - Late into the night, as we were all settled in and trying for a bit of rest (if no sleep), some idiot had a party horn and was tooting it all over the place! And of course, it echoed through these solid halls as loudly as could be imagined! - That was followed by general mayhem on the floor, caused by the “new” Puerto Rican trash who's just come to the floor when he had the balls to put a Puerto Rican flag on his door! Seriously? You come here, into this shelter, sponging and leeching off this city's system and taxes and you put THAT RAG up... on a door that isn't YOURS? Well, as we all pretty much agreed... that's the representation of the great majority of them... “them”. No class, no sense, no worth. And this just proved it, once again. It's not like the rest of us don't know where they are. All one need do is look for the nastiest neighbourhood, buildings destroyed, garbage strewn all about the streets and it's guaranteed... apartment windows will be covered with Puerto Rican flags (or bed-sheets) where curtains should be. - (A note to add on Monday morning: Last night, Geo was out again by 10:30pm and returned at 4:18am, came in as he usually does, stoned or drunk or both, BANGED the lock on his locker as he tried to open it, then laid on the bed in the dark and made a phone call! Yammering away as the rest of us were trying to get what little sleep time we had left after the BS of the night before. Oh... did I mention? Geo is “proudly”... Puerto Rican. I say no more.)

Monday 12 January: 151/120

For all it's worth, I had one of my ear-plugs in last night. Since I sleep on my right side, I put the left one in. I don't want to close out ALL sounds because it's not good policy to hear nothing in this place. There's always the possibility of somebody coming into the room at night to go through a locker, or worse. As I think of it, I don't believe I've actually “slept” one single night here. How I miss the nights under the tree. Back then, I'd drift off and sleep deeply through the night and wake with the rising sun. I'm paying for that these days. - But I was up at 5:30am this

morning. Toddled across the hall for a very small bowel movement. I mention that because it's unusual. I wonder what's "blocking" these days. Nerves? Poor diet? Both? Neither? What-ever. It's "wrong" and I try to keep notes on it... just in case. - When I got to the shower this morning, the ceiling was SOAKED! There's a leak upstairs and it's bad enough to actually run down the walls and flood the floor in the shower room. I wonder how long (if ever) it will take before it's discovered and repaired. I don't expect it to be a "timely" repair. After all... we're the only ones who have to suffer with it (should the ceiling drop), and the general attitude will most likely be "Oh... they're only Homeless. What do they want? They get the shelter and shower for free." But it'll be interesting to see what comes of it. I did mop it up though, since I know where the mop is now. We're not supposed to have access to mops and such. But "Operations" should be thankful that we keep this place as clean as we do. If ever there's an "inspection" (I have to laugh thinking that anybody would "inspect" this place), it'll look great, and of course, the report will read that the admin. here takes such lovely care! Oh well. Screw it. It's done. - Ah then... on to the day. I'm back with the mornings with Mr.TG so it was a bus to the trains to the bus again first thing. When I arrived there, Mrs. was actually at the door, all smiles. I put on my best "So happy that all is well!" and "So good to see you again!" face. Mr. was in "good enough" spirits. But with him, there's no telling WHAT the Hell to expect from moment to moment. Still, apparently, the trip out of the house to hospital did him a world of good. There's a part of me that actually does care and is happier when he's in a good mood. I do think of how miserable it must be for him, a once healthy and productive man, to be confined to a bed, needing somebody to wash his nasty butt when he craps all over himself. I wonder how much of this he's actually aware of. I don't truly know how I'd handle it, should it be me in that bed. That's my major trouble: Empathy. It's proven to be my biggest fault and largest down-fall. - The Charge Nurse came by to visit today. They've pulled my visits BACK to only 2 per week! Just as I'm beginning to improve my lot and save! It's frustrating at best. But I keep thinking: I have a job! I've gone through HELL to get this, and there's potential for a pretty good income from it. I've only just started, so I need the background too, for other agencies. Time... that's all I need... time. But this on-off-on-off is plain bunk! Well... hey. After all the "We're here to help you get back on your feet." BS from the "case workers" and nothing, nothing and more nothing. *I* did this, on my own! I'm damned great! - Then came the "stress" part of the day. A message from the agency: They're DEMANDING proof that I'd worked for the post office and if they don't get it by noon tomorrow, they'll pull me from ALL of my cases and will drop me! Well SH**! I don't understand why THEY can't get that information. They can get all sorts of other stuff. But... rather than make THEM actually "work", I

went out of my way to get the information to them. (Thankfully, I had no afternoon client today.) So... at "clock-out" this morning, I BOLTED, full-speed: The Q7 bus to the A train to the Nr.1 train to the Nr.6 train into The City to the cheque-cashing place where, THANKFULLY, I was able to fax the one pay-stub I still have from the old job to the new job! Now, the best I can do is hope that this agency will do what they're supposed to do with it and that there won't be any negative ramifications. I always worry about such things, and quite honestly, I don't trust anybody at the agency. (I don't "trust" anybody any more But then, I don't believe I have any reason to trust anybody... any longer.) - Having the rest of the day to myself, I walked over to the "new" Bellevue Hospital where they have a banquing machine in the lobby for... MCU! And it takes deposits! I don't have the time to get to their branch office on work-days, so this machine is ever-so convenient. Since I'd cashed my cheque already, I got to put my "60 per-cent" into the account and so, more delightful little papers to give to Ms. Simpson, when next we "chat". It makes it better for ME, having all the "papers" she needs. And "ME" is more important than she... always. - Then, a stroll down to 23rd Street to the market for a bit of "meal". I don't differentiate meals because I have only one each day. I wasn't hungry, which is something that concerns me from time to time. If I have no appetite I wonder why. My entire digestive system is "off" of late. But I needed to eat something, if only to keep going where-ever it is I'm heading. Then a quick stop at the CVS store for smokes. HEY! I don't eat, and my cigarettes are my one and only "pleasure" left in life. I had 11\$ left out of the "gift" from Food Stamps, so I spent it on a little something for me. - And... from there, I walked back up to the shelter where "YAY!" I just toddled through the x-ray and scanner and all! AND, the "nice security" folks engaged in "pleasantries" chat. How charming. Actually, I DO appreciate it when they're "kind". Knowing that they don't lump me into the general category of "derelict" is up-lifting for me. The momentary act of being addressed as a "human being" gives me a little more strength to endure the degradation that is other-wise encountered around this dump. - This evening, Geo was in one of his rare "sober" moments and, as is usual when he's not ripped, his talking went back to the "suicide" and death topics. I suppose it must be rather difficult for him, being young enough to be out there in the world, with a nice little job and all, and yet here he is: quite worthless... even in the opinion of his fellow Homeless folks. I try to do the best I possibly can to encourage him toward better self-esteem. I don't know why I do. But I do, and for a little while, it seems to make a positive difference, at least until the evening gets later and he's out the door and back on his way toward getting stoned again. Oh well. I do for me as best I can and I expect others to do like-wise. If they don't, I don't have time for them. I'm too busy with me! - "Santiago", one of the residents, came

by this evening to ask me to exchange a Newport cigarette for a Camel. He's apparently been in the system so long that the shelter has actually given him little "duties" and "responsibilities" and such. In my mind, he's just like the Jews in the concentration camps who worked with the Nazis and garnered "favour" with the enemy. Apparently, for "favours" for the other inmates (Homeless residents), he gets smokes, but not a brand that he actually likes. So, he comes to me to "barter". So I gave him 2 of my cigarettes for 1 of his. It does me no harm and perhaps, it might just help me in some way... one of these days. I doubt it, but it doesn't hurt me to try, at least. - As I wrote the day's events in the note book, that frigging horn-blower was at it again in the halls tonight! It's the trash who put the Puerto Rican flag on his door! They made him take it down (or somebody did it for him... either way, it's gone). So I suppose he's going to be a ball-buster in any way he possibly can. One of these days somebody's going to "take care of him" in "shelter style". It won't be pretty, but it WILL be effective. Serves the dirt-bag right. - Well, it's 11:45pm and time to get down for "sleep" and end this day. - Oh.. it was a year ago today that I got into the RAA/Artists' Alliance out at the Fort... for all the good *that's* done me.

Tuesday 13 January: 152/121

5:45pm at the Mid-Manhattan Library - It was another night with the one ear-plug in the ear last night. It sort of works to dull the noise, but it doesn't block it completely. They're some-what disappointing, in that they really don't block much noise. Still, as I say, one needs to be aware of others, so I suppose they're good enough. - I was up with the 4:30am alarm this morning, exhausted as usual but out the door to just about perfect timing between buses and trains and I made it to work delightfully on time and a good morning's work at that. Mr.TG had his "Speech" and "Occupational" therapies which makes my day all the more wonderful because THEY get to deal with him for that time and I get a bit of a break... a well-deserved and much-needed break at that. And so, after a rather pleasant day at the "TG" residence, it was time to RUN, to get back to the shelter and for the weekly confrontation with Ms. Simpson. And the connections for the commute were great... One note here: On the L train between Bedford and 1st Ave., as we rolled along through the tunnel, I actually fell into a true and DEEP sleep! Just collapsed as I sat there. I AM burning out! But, oh well and never mind that. Not time for any of it. - By 2:02pm I was AT the office and relieved! Since there was no-one actually waiting for her and I had all my necessary "papers", AND I could see her sitting at her desk, doing her regular nothing at all, I

went to the door to knock to let her know that I was there but some old, doddering, nasty, miserable “security” troll snapped at me, forbidding me to knock. “She’s on lunch now. She’ll call you when she’s ready to see you!” You know? It’s not so much what these belligerent bastards say, it’s the tone and accent in which they say it. As if they’re immigrant holes are better than the rest of us. They have their little “uniforms” and I suppose where they come from in Africa (because most of them are obviously from there), that makes them all-important. But they come HERE and get some kind of superiority attitude. Truly? They need to be gone! But there’s no sense in saying anything to any of them. It only makes them angry and they screech like little monkeys which pisses off the rest of the place. So... I brushed the incident off and went to sit in the “lounge” area to wait and record what transpired from that point forward. I figured, if this bitch EVER pulls the “signed and left” stunt on me as her predecessor had, I’ll be ready to toss a few details around the place. I know it wouldn’t do me any good, but at least I’d get the satisfaction of hitting her with facts. - As I sat, and sat, and sat, Rey came by, then Rich and then Keith. We chatted about this and that and the other, and each spoke on the mistreatment we have to endure. It’s our “therapy” to talk with each-other about it. Talking to anybody else accomplishes nothing. Even as we chatted, I noted events and activities, mostly because, as we, the “residents” know, it was typical of the kind of abuse we’re forced to accept:

At 2:41pm, she, Ms. Simpson came out of the office, looked down the hall, saw me sitting here and ignored me.

She simply turned and went back into the office.

At 3:13pm she again came out of the office, saw me, turned away and walked away from me and to the “East Corridor”.

3:23pm She returned from the “East Corridor”, looked directly at me, said nothing and went into her office.

3:27pm Again, she left her office and walked to the “East Corridor”.

3:29pm Returned from the “East Corridor”, again looked at me, said nothing and went into the office.

3:44pm By now I desperately need to go to the loo. I was having cramps from holding, actually in an almost drenching sweat too, and not daring to leave my seat here for fear of missing being “called”. So I got up and headed for the loo... quickly!

Well... Ms. Simpson made it more than abundantly clear to me, several times, that she did not see “clients” after 4:00pm so, by the time I’d gone to and returned from the loo, it was just past 4:00pm. Hey! I don’t want to piss the cow off by showing my person at her office “after 4:00pm”

so? I went up to the room to eat... after all, *I'd* been up since 4:30am, had ridden the buses and the rails and been to work already, and rushed back, considerably. Oh well. *I* did what *I* had to do. *She chose* to do what *she wanted*. As far as *I* was concerned, this day was done and in the time she so wonderfully gave me, I'd even composed a charming letter to the Commissioner of the Department of Homeless Services. In THAT little letter, rather than come right out with slam-hammering Ms. Simpson, I presented my compliments to Ms. Pax and Emaly, mentioning how delightful they'd been and noting that I was now seeing Ms. Simpson (about whom NOTHING kind was mentioned). So I went up to the dorm where I had a bit of a bite to eat, chatted with Geo and Rey about the events with Ms. Simpson, changed from my work-scrubs into street clothes and by just past 5:00pm, DEAD TIRED, I was back out the door and off to the library where this is being noted. - I did manage to get a 6:35pm appointment on a computer. But now, this evening, I'm sitting here sweating, burning up with what I've come to know as and call "Fatigue Fever". Others call it "burn-out". I suppose it's the same thing. Either way... I wonder what the consequences will be in the long run. Not that I particularly care. I just keep moving forward, doing what I must. - Well, it's now after the day and as it all turned out... While I was waiting for Ms. Simpson (or, I should say: "While I was being ignored by Ms. Simpson"), Mrs. TG phoned and left me a message saying that the keys to the back door of her house are missing. I've no doubt they're in her pocket or something. I don't like that she phones ME. I don't like the possible implications. But there's nothing I can do about it now, today. No doubt, they'll "appear" between now and our next appointment. - At the library, I managed to type my little letter of "compliment" and of course, wanted to send it immediately by e-mail but... as it will be with anything in this city... the e-mail addresses that are given as "contact" on their web-sites, for DHS and the Commissioner, are wrong, don't work or what-ever so my letter never got sent... and yes, I was PISSED! But I can still print and mail them a paper copy, and that, indeed, is what is the plan from this point. - That much accomplished anyway, and not much more I could do with the day, I walked from Madison to 2nd Ave, got the M15bus to 28th Street and back to the little Hell-hole to a "memo": According to somebody in the "system", I missed some kind of "meeting" that I was supposed to attend. Ah but... BUT... the reason I missed the "meeting" is because THEY failed to send the notices! Still, *I* was being threatened with expulsion from the shelter, with the "30-day Sanction", meaning, if I didn't respond "immediately" I could be and would be tossed out onto the streets and prohibited from getting ANY bed in ANY shelter in the NY City system! Well then! Rey had already seen the "memo", of course, since it was laying on my bed (there's no such thing as "privacy" or the likes in this place) and when I'd finished reading it, he told me that

he'd had a meeting of some sort previously with a "case worker" who told him that their case loads are now doubled and tripled. The "new" rules and regulations are: 2 notes of "non-compliance" for ANY reason and we're transferred out (which means to one of the most miserable and notorious shelters in the city), miss a sign-in OR a "bed-check" and lose the bed immediately and... they're coming down on the "non-bathers", the ones who come in wreaking of sh** and urine, rotting flesh, dirt, filth and the likes. Don't bathe? Out you go! No questions or warnings... you're gone! (Apparently the "bathing" issue came up because our own dear "Brindou" had recently been physically and actually beaten by his fellow dorm-mates because he refused to bathe and they, like we had, got damned-well fed up with the stench. But THEY, unlike us, took action... and rumour has it, that "action" was quite effective. Hmmm. Oh, and no, none of us has the slightest sympathies... for the others and certainly NOT for Brindou.) Well, there really was nothing I could do about my little "love letter" at the moment. "My"... "case worker" was gone for the day, and those "case workers" who were on duty were, at this hour, busy (busy... there's a laugh) with their own "clients". I'd wait until sign-in time and see what could be done. (As it turned out... I was told to make certain to see my own "case worker" for my next appointment. Yes indeed... "URGENT". Right then.) - This evening was a bit of something, for lack of better terminology. Geo had been playing his radio, as he does of late, and by 10:00pm, Rich had had just about enough of the "dance hall" crap so he *asked* Geo to lower the volume. He didn't snap or demand, he simply asked but Geo being the little dirt-bag he's been of late, for what-ever reason, jumped up and started YELLING "OH! MR. BOSSY!" at Rich. Honestly, it was damned and down-right confrontational. Geo was LOOKING for a fight! Me? I just nestled onto my own bed, picked up the "Tolstoy" book I'd gotten from the library and read. I'm getting SO much better at blocking this BS out. I figured, if they'd gotten into a fight, they'd take care of the matter and if either or both of them got tossed, as should be according to "House Rules", so be it. It wasn't until about 11:00pm when the volume finally got lowered, still not to a "reasonable" level but lowered, and I fell asleep... in the midst of reading, with my glasses still on. - Generally speaking, it was quite a horribly horrid day over-all. - But I'm seriously considering going to services this Saturday at a synagogue I discovered on 14th Street. "Town and Village" Conservative. Nice building, in very reasonable walking distance, I like the name, and I need the peace and serenity of a "conservative" congregation. My head, heart and soul need the "sanctuary"!

Wednesday 14 January: 153/122

A moment to jot this morning at my morning patient's (TG). I got here at 8:21am, just about completely exhausted! And no sooner did I walk in the door when Mrs. went into a tirade about the other "aide" (as she refers to us, who come to take care of her husband for her). She claims she caught the other one sleeping in her bed, helping herself to juices from the fridge, and a list that just went on and on. And yet, she keeps her. I'd offered to give extra time, private-duty, at less than she pays the other one. But now I wonder what's said about me to others. As I've always believed: If this is what you say about them to me, I wonder what then, you say to others about me. Oh well... they're off to appointments this afternoon anyway... and oddly enough, in The City... right up the block from... the shelter. I wonder what would happen if they knew that I "resided" in that shelter. I just wonder. - AT 12:30pm, and I do mean AT that time, I left Mr. and Mrs. TG. Today I have a new patient, in, of ALL places, Ozone Park again. Stomping on Liz's old turf all over the place. Her parents would behaving absolute fits, I'm sure. But I wonder now, where the lived, all those years ago. For all I know, I'm walking past their old house! And I have to almost laugh when I think of it. They've hated me so since my high school days, and even to this very day the hate lives on. Oh well, some people seem to have to have something to keep them alive. I suppose I should be proud that I'm their "hate source of energy". None-the-less, off I went. - The way to the new place would be quite close, were it not for all the highways and byways in between. I took the buses... the Q41 to the Q7 to the Q10. Well! It was quite the journey! I wasn't sure exactly where to get off the Q10 and suddenly, I was at JFK Airport. Not at the terminals, but in some back-water area! As I got off the bus I told the driver who was kind enough to offer me a "transfer" to the Q10 bus back. But since I was on an "unlimited ride" card, it wasn't any trouble for me, other than the anxieties about being late. I waited for the next bus in the opposite direction and THIS time I paid careful attention, got off at the proper street and walked the bit to the house. - Mrs. JS met me at the door and was ever so pleasant, though a bit on the "demanding" side. It wasn't long before I learnt: He's American-born... Bavarian! She's from Luxembourg! And their daughter was there to meet me too... and SHE reminds me SO much of Viv, whom I haven't seen nor heard from in a great many years and have missed terribly! After a basic introduction and review of the paper-work and our own "assessment", Mrs. invited me to coffee for a bit so that we could all chat and get to know each-other. I make a point of telling new patients that if they have any reason to think that this won't be comfortable for them, they're free to say so and I'll sign-off the case. Well, of course it went wonderfully... especially since Mr. and I have a "Bavarian" connection. He needs much held and I'm more than willing to do all that I can.

I learnt that the “demanding” attitude comes from the past people they'd had. One didn't do anything at all but sit on her phone. But the previous fellow would come in and wash dishes, floors, and the rest. Ah... well, that's not what I was there for and we got that settled quite from the beginning. I'll do all I can to help Mr. and when possible, I'll pitch in for Mrs. (at 9\$/hr.) but I will NOT do the house-work. I'm not the “maid”. That didn't go over too awfully well, but we agreed that I would do what I could with-in the confines of my position. And the afternoon went oh so well... until the very last moments when suddenly, Mr. gets the RUNS! ALL OVER himself and the bed! So, we start a new case with “free time”? Not this one. I waited to clock-out until I was done. Mrs. wasn't happy with that since she'd have to pay the agency for my time. Oh well. I'm not going into another “TG” where the free-extra-time bunk runs amok! I explained, as calmly as I could and ironed it all out and... was gone! My time is 2:00pm to 5:00pm and that's more than enough time to have “emergencies”. And whether or not “the others” gave their time is not my concern. It's bad enough I don't get good sleep at night, bad enough I have to start my day at 4:30am. When my day is done... I am too. - And so, as it turned out, I wasn't on the first bus away until 6:00pm! Tired! Exhausted! And, because of all of this nonsense, not hungry! But I needed to get food. - The trip back to the shelter was quite the adventure. I was given “the short way” directions which took me along the streets and the expressway to the A train. Getting the A train was nice but the walk to get to it was, well, rather long, especially after a long day. But, it was better than waiting for 3 buses again. - By the time I got into The City, I was wasted. But I stopped at the market before going to the shelter to get something to eat. Hungry or not, I know that if I'm to keep this routine up, I need to have something to eat. So again, more of those prepared chicken patties and some rolls and some donuts for dessert and a walk from 23rd Street to 29th Street. - By about 7:30pm I was at the “security” scanner and x-ray. I must have looked the sight because it was almost nothing at all for me to pass right along. And, I tend to think they, at “security” already recognise me and know that I have NO intention of bringing in anything that I shouldn't have. As a matter of fact, generally, I get more respect from them than anybody else on the staff at this place. And I do so appreciate it. - Ah... in the dorm... ALONE! ALONE! ALONE! This evening, I made my meagre sandwiches in peace and ATE in PEACE! IT WAS HEAVEN! Truly! By the time I'd finished it was time to sign for the bed and shortly after that, the guys came back to roost. The only one missing was D16 but we figured he was in the building some-where, so we all got under the covers and it was, for the moment, a quiet night, all in bed rather early, and lights out too. - Oh but... BUT... THAT JUST COULDN'T BE!!! At approximately 10:00pm came the shriek... “BED CHECK!!!”, and the un-necessary but seemingly mandatory

slamming on the door! Then, AGAIN at about 11:15pm ANOTHER of the very same! AND THEN, at some time in the middle of the night... a NEW “D16”! Rich had lost his bed! It's not only unnerving because it's annoying when somebody comes into a room in the dark, rustles through the plastic bags that contain the fresh linens, but they have to strip the bed and re-make it. Well, OK. BUT... then there's the wonder who or *what* has come into the room! And these nights, when the demand for beds is so great, and against policy, “Operations” is tossing “Over-nighters” into permanent dorms! These people... as they may or may not be, might be in for the night, looking for something to steal or they may be in looking to settle a grudge or they might be there to “score” some dope. We don't know... and we're never told. So those of us who are already there and some-what established tend to sleep VERY lightly through the night. This fellow, seeing that we were awake, I'm supposing, asked about breakfast in the morning and asked if we'd wake him on time to make it. Well, that's nice... I suppose. - And so, after all that I'd been through this day, I made every attempt to go back to that “light sleep” instead of a relative comfortable sleep. One of the last thoughts I recall was: If you're here to kill, do it quickly and quietly, and if it's me you've come to kill, please let it be swift and painless. Thank you. Goodnight. Amen.

Thursday 15 January: 154/123

SNOW TODAY!!! YES INDEED! SNOW!!! - Mr. “D16” was awake when Rey went to breakfast this morning and he'd not bothered to change the linens on the bed... he slept on Rich's linens. But he did so quietly through the night. My first thought was “How disgusting! He doesn't even know *WHAT* might have been in that bed last!” But as I gave it a little more thought I came to realise: The poor man might have been just that exhausted by the time they, in “Operations” put him through all of the sh** they'd put me through when I first came here that it didn't matter what might have been IN the linens... it was a BED, and there were SHEETS! (He also might not have known that somebody else had slept in them, but I tend to think it was more the exhaustion.) Besides, there's no knowing what he'd been through before he got to the shelter, especially since the nights are now so cold. These are the things we keep in our mind here, in the shelter, Homeless as we are, together. We now “*know*” ever so well, what *might* have been, and what *could* have been, and what could be to come. For some of us, it makes us a bit more compassionate, for others, colder and for others, it makes no difference one way or another. Apathy is apathy... Homeless or domiciled. - But all was well with the dorm and so I attended the usual morning

necessities of smoke-to-shower and out the door, into the snowy, Winter morn. - But THIS morning, as I headed for the M15 bus to 14th Street in the freshly falling snow, at the corner of 29th Street and 2nd Ave, there's been an accident. Laying in the street, and old guy, some-what dishevelled, and I noticed he was in hospital socks. He'd been hit by a vehicle, and was being attended by the ambulance squad. It hit me rather hard, particularly because of the hospital socks. I wondered: we're just by the still-functioning Bellevue Hospital... Was he a patient? Was he a general patient or a psych patient? Was he leaving? Escaped? Or was he a Homeless man, trying to get to the Bellevue Shelter? I didn't know and there was no way I could have known. But the questions rather haunted me. If he's Homeless, he's "one of us". And to see him laying on the wet street, at this early hour of the morning, snow falling on him, well, it pulled at my heart. But the best thing I could do at that point was to let the ambulance crew attend. It was the only thing I could do. He was in the best hands he could get... all things considered. - And as I reached the bus stop, the bus pulled up. Excellent timing this morning! - On the bus I noticed that there'd been a call made to me... 12:45am... THIS MORNING? It was from Mrs. TG, my morning appointment! Mr. has a 10:00am appointment THIS morning... in The City... at NYU! (And NYU is directly across the street from the shelter, although his appointment was 2 blocks up... from the shelter.) Well, I was awake and already on the bus. If I simply didn't go, I'd get nothing at all for the morning. If I went and they weren't there, I'd get, at the very least, the 5\$ "car-fare" and MAYBE an hour's pay. So I waited to call back. - At the Rockaway Blvd. station on the A train, I had to catch the bus to get to their house and as I waited for the bus, I phoned. Mrs. asked where I was and I told her that I'd only just gotten the message. She told me to come to the house anyway and that I could work with Mr. until it was time for him to leave. I arrived at 8:08am only to learn... the appointment got cancelled because of the snow! Fine. More paid time for me as it turned out. Had I NOT gone, I'd have lost the entire day. It wasn't such a "bad" day either, all things considered. It was a "typical" day to be rather exact: Mr. was in a relatively OK mood, neither "good" nor "bad". As a matter of fact, he fell asleep at table shortly after his breakfast and neither Mrs. nor I did anything much to wake him. SHE's concerned about him sleeping so much. I tried to console and reassure her by saying that it's probably better that he sleep than to be in any pain and discomfort. She reluctantly agreed. We had "kawfee" (as she pronounces "coffee" with her thick, Queens-Italian dialect), a bagel and I got Mr.'s bed and room together and we chatted until it was time to go. - As I was heading for the bus to go on to Mr. HT my cell phone rang. It was the agency: They put me in for Mr. JS again tomorrow! A double-edged deal, that. I truly don't want to go to him tomorrow. I want a peaceful Friday for a change, a morning appointment with the

afternoon to get myself together so that I can try to get to services at the synagogue on Saturday! Yes, the income is OK. But it still won't give me a 35-hour week anyway. And with the hours that I have for Mr. JS, if that continues, it'll stop me from getting a 35-hour week! Well, there really wasn't much I could do about it... HELL! I need the income. I'll have to do what's necessary to get it. OK. Fine. - It was only just this morning on the train to work that I was thinking: There are so many things that we must adjust ourselves to, being in the shelter, and it truly does become a burden, adjusting and re-adjusting when the "rules" are changed rapidly and with-out notice. Just last night I heard Mr. King yell at a resident "F*** YOU! This isn't the 7th floor!" Well, so WHAT? It's not the "7th floor"! What the HELL does THAT mean to anybody? If the "rules" are "rules" then they should apply to EVERY floor! But not in this place. I wondered: How do we stay sane through it all, or, have we all gone mad and just don't know it yet? And here, even on this job, assignments come, go, change at the snap of a finger, the passing of a second's time. Move. Run. Stop. Go. Change. Yes. No. Work. Don't. There's no reprieve, no break, no respite. And yet... we... I continue. And nobody notices, nobody sees, nobody really cares at all. Oh well. Do what must be done until such time when it's no longer necessary to "do". - Meanwhile... at Mr. HT's, their son Stephen gave me a brick of Bavarian coffee that he'd discovered and bought at a local store. He said he remembered it from when the family had gone to a coffee house there and they enjoyed it so, and what a surprise to find it here! Well! I most certainly appreciated it and I didn't want to insult him or the family by not accepting but... I've no way to prepare ground coffee... no way at all. I've no way to boil water, and the tap water isn't hot enough to prepare coffee. Oh, how it drove the facts of my life deeper into my heart and head! But honestly, I was both honoured and humbled by the kindness. "Kindness", imagine... and again at this moment, I wondered how they'd react if they knew where I went each evening when I left them. - This evening, they were expecting family to visit for dinner and they invited me to stay and dine with them! THAT I HAD to decline in spite of the fact that I would have SO welcomed a hot dinner, sitting at a table, eating human food as a human being. But on two accounts I couldn't: I'm on a curfew which means I'd have to RUSH to get back if it got too late and it wouldn't be proper, really, for me to dine with them and their family... not to mention, they feed me all afternoon anyway. Still, WHAT AN HONOUR! (And again, I had to wonder: would they invite me to dinner if they knew I was Homeless? Stephen and Mary most likely would, indeed... Joey? More than likely not, and he'd probably have a few nasty verbal punches to toss at me. Oh well... these are the things we go through, the Homeless, and nobody knows... nobody really cares... they don't have to care.) - The trip back to the shelter this evening was quick and quiet. Entry into the building was quick, in

spite of the major confusion of the queue with all the “new” folks and the usual “entitled” butt-wipes who cut-in and push and scream and such. - Now then, in the dorm, I got involved in a “chat” with “Eddy”, our new D16. He's rather nice, seems to be civil, and is just out of “state prison”... “Downstate”... in the Hudson Valley... an area I know all too well and would rather never have anything to do with again, since not only is it a bit of my own past, but it's where those who are known to others as my “siblings” reside. Still, the chat with Eddy was really quite nice. The most and the best we can hope for is that he's got at least a semblance of some kind or level of sanity about him. We won't know until... At any rate, he's not Brindou and so far, he's clean. And those are two EXTREMELY IMPORTANT factors in this room. - So the evening turns to night, we all go to sign for our beds... except Geo. HE was a “no show” (and as it turned out.. ALL NIGHT!). When Santiago came round to do the first “bed check” he saw that Geo hadn't signed and he let Rey sign for him. It wasn't so much a favour to Geo as much as it was to preserve the room and people we have and know in it. So Rey signed and went over to Geo's bed and arranged the blankets and such there so that it appeared as if somebody actually was in the bed... in case of another “bed check”. When he'd done, he (Rey) looked over the lockers between our beds, his and mine, and said “If I could be in a room with more people like you (me) I wouldn't mind being here.” As much as that was an “ultimate compliment” I have to say: Of course! I'm quiet, clean, relatively stable and mostly sane. YOU lucked out when I moved in. Still, it was nice of him to say, and truth be known, the sentiment works both ways. But we both agreed that being out of here is better, but right now, in Winter, being in here is better than being out there. AND... from what we hear of the other shelters through-out the city, we're quite fortunate to be in THIS one. So... we finally managed to settle down and settle in for the night. No radio. No noise. I took 2 “Dollar Store” generic “Benadryl” to help me sleep and to fight the bit of a cold that I feel coming on. - All was rather well... in spite of the TWO bed-checks through the night. All was rather well.

Friday 16 January: 155/124

And... it's another Friday. Not that that means anything in particular these days. But here I am, back at Mr. TG's on this 19°F morning and there's cold air coming into the house from somewhere. And of all the days. My eyes are full of water, my nose won't stop leaking and I'm sitting here with paper towels stuffed in my nostrils to keep the leaking from running all over. Thankfully, I'm in the parlour and Mrs. is feeding Mr. in the kitchen. Honestly, I'm so damned

tired this morning. Tired, run-down and it seems this cold is heading into full-swing. Oh well. Hopefully (I have to laugh when I think of and use that word) we'll have an un-eventful day. Let's just see. - Well OK then! A skip in the time here and the day is done so now it's time to play "catch-up". - I got a reprieve of sorts this afternoon. No afternoon client! Yay, in a way. It seems Mr. JS has been diagnosed with, of all things, "*C.diff*"! How terribly jolly is THAT? I wonder how long he's actually had it (and where he got it from since it's normally associated with being in hospital and not something that just suddenly appears round the house). Maybe it's selfish of me, but right now, it's just another something I truly can't afford to get myself. The poor man! Along with all the rest of his ailments, to have something like this! Well, in a "perfect scenario" (as if that's possible), now that he's been diagnosed, he can get treatment for it, and not have to be sent off to hospital. And, of course, it's not something that I've gotten myself and not something I bring into the shelter. - So I did get through the morning however, and moved right along, taking full advantage of the time off (as it were). I left Mr. TG's and headed directly to the post office in Rockaway where my "regular" pay-cheque of a whopping 66.13\$ was waiting. (How wonderful to think that this is a "regular" income... in "New York City". There's no sense of "reality" any more. And to think, as well, that this is the salary that's advertised as "competitive", WHAT are they competing with? I wonder. Absolute starvation?) But at least it allows me to get the next MetroCard so I'll have transport to continue this farce we call my "life". And I can put money on the cell phone so I can communicate, in limited quantities of time. So, with that in pocket, I bombed into The City to cash the cheque and head to the Mid-Manhattan library where I got a 35-minute time slot on a computer, and, for all it's worth, got nothing "accomplished" other than to spend some time NOT in the shelter, and NOT on the streets. But it passed the time and sometimes that's about the best I can hope for in any given day. Whilst others look so forward to their "week-ends" with "nothing to do", I dread them and wrack my brains to find something... ANYTHING to do. - With "time served" at the library and a bit more to poop away, I headed, with my meagre cash stash, to the nearest Duane Reade drug store and broke down and got some antihistamines to at least, at the very least, stop the wat'ry nose condition. And so now, back at the shelter, a bit more note-jotting here with mementos of this day. - I am, I will note, feeling like absolute HELL at the moment. I don't say so, but I write so. There's no sense in saying because, well, everybody around me has his own "Hell" to deal with. Besides, mentioning it makes no difference anyway. Funny to think though: this building used to be a hospital. HAH! How times, situations and conditions they do change. - Now, our new D16, Eddy, seems to do nothing but sleep. Truly... he sleeps more than almost anybody I've ever met. I wonder, is he making up for

lost sleep whilst in “prison”? Is he on some kind of potent medications that keep him knocked-out? And if that's the case, are they to keep him from some kinds of “episodes”? We've got guys here on parole, for everything from “petty larceny” to “manslaughter”. And considering Brindou and his maniacal delusions... none of us can be certain of what we're in a room with. Oh well. The one “consolation”: Eddy seems to have taken a “liking” to/for/toward me. He likes to chat with me, candidly. Oh, how is it? CW and now Eddy. Nothing but the best and kindest and sweetest people gravitate toward me. ME! Why me? Oh well. At least they don't hate me right off. More than ever and any-where, being “liked” is terribly important... in this place. I count it amongst my “blessings”, if “blessings” is what it is. - This evening though, things got a little on the “interesting” side. Geo went out again (that's not “interesting” since the little turd does it every night anyway, but...) and didn't bother to sign for his bed (not “interesting” either, of itself). But tonight he had the audacity to phone Rey to ask HIM to sign for him! And Rey said “No.” It seems somebody had asked Geo to sign for them recently and Geo said “No.” So this is pay-back. All told, one truly has to bear in mind that what one does and doesn't in this place very well may come back. Not to mention, something as seemingly petty as losing one's bed disrupts an entire room! Geo knows this, so, even as Rey and I agree, this BS of stepping out every night and putting his spot in jeopardy screws round with all the rest of us. So if he has that much disrespect for us, well then, he's got no right to ask for favours from any of us. And tonight, he got none. Ah... but then, Santiago came round to do tonight's “bed-check” and noting that Geo hadn't signed and wasn't in, Rey did sign for him. You see, Santiago, although being the truest “brown-noser”, is actually one of “us”... a mere “resident”, and he knows that this situation can cause Geo to lose his bed AND put the rest of us into the Hell of having to deal with a “new” and un-known stranger being dropped into the room. I suppose, some-where, there's a bit of “fellowship” in Santiago. So, Rey got up, went over to Geo's bed and arranged the blankets... at a glance, it DOES appear to be an occupied bed, somebody laying under bundled bed-clothes. Now we need to hope that it passes for tonight's further “bed-checks”. - It wasn't long after when everything actually calmed for the night. It became, actually, one of the very rare “pleasant” nights round the old place. - A note on the work-front though, as I think of it: Kristin, my “supervisor” wasn't in today so I had no real support and back-up. But I noticed a little something... I should have a 35-hour work week now. I have TG, HT and JS now! (And no, I have more respect for them than to use their proper names. Privacy and confidentiality prevails. I probably do got that much. But, it's MY manner here.) However, Madame “Supervisor” seems to have me scheduled for HT on Monday and Thursday, JS on Monday, Wednesday and Friday! No TG in there. So on one record (mine), I have all this

work, and on another record (theirs) I'm out some hours and missing a client. There's just no telling in this world any more. We can't trust anybody with anything, from work to shelter and back again. Oh well. - On closing for the day, there was another "bed-check" as the night came crashing on us and... the arranged blankets served well! And we pass another "test" of our brilliance. Thankfully. - I feel miserable tonight so, if anybody wants to kill me, please feel free to do so. Thank you and goodnight.

*(*C.diff: Clostridium difficile often called C. difficile or C. diff, is a bacterium that can cause symptoms ranging from diarrhea to life-threatening inflammation of the colon (found at: mayoclinic.com))*

Saturday 17 January: 156/125

What a day! In bed all day! All day! Nose, eyes, running, dripping. Tired. Just a sh**ty day... ALL day. I can't complain though. At least it was Saturday, I had no clients, I didn't HAVE to be out of bed... and I wasn't OUT in the cold! But it's bad enough to feel lousy and have a home... it's terrible to feel this lousy in a SHELTER! AND... no, I didn't even get up to go to the new-found synagogue. Oh well. Better to take care and stay in and hope for it all to pass so that I can continue working... and get OUT of HERE SOON!

Sunday 18 January: 157/126

Delightful day, this. I woke at 8:00am with-out the aid of an alarm to a day of SNOW! Got up, toddled to the loo and returned to my little bed to rip apart the kippa that I'd started and noticed as I went along, that the pattern I'd gotten from the internet either wasn't what it was supposed to be or I'd made a mistake. Nothing drastic. At least I CAN pull it apart and re-commence with-out wasting the materials. The "time" is wasted, but the materials are still fine. We take what little "gifts" we can find in this "life". So I'm starting from scratch with this one. - At about 12:30pm I headed for the shower, came back into the room, put on my clothes and headed for the door and out of the building! (The less time I spend in here, the better off I am, I do believe.) Before I got out of the room though, Rich... our previous D16, came into the room, went directly to the bed there, in the corner, where Eddy, the current D16 as sleeping and... he plops right down on the bed, with Eddy in it, and commences to open and rifle through the locker to get his "possessions". (They never gave Eddy access to the locker as they should have done. Oh! Does THAT ring familiar! Incompetence abounds in this dump! And NOT amongst the residents!) It

was almost funny to see how he just ignored Eddy and Eddy dozed right through it all. Anyway, it seems he, Rich, has been on morphine at the hospital (we never know the pain that others endure, just as many of us never let on to others, the pain that we endure). He looks terrible. But he then asked ME how he goes about getting another bed. I have to marvel a bit when the others ask me questions about the workings of this place. I've been of the belief that I know "nothing"... but it seems I've learnt a lot... a LOT MORE than many of the others have. I'll never know where I got the cunning from, but right now it doesn't matter where it came from, what matters is that it's "in there", and I'm just thankful for it. Well, I mentioned that he *might* be able to get his bed (D16) back. He seemed pleased about that. I can't imagine why though, considering the little confrontation he'd had with Geo before he left. Then again, this is a "good" room with respectable and respectful guys in it. (Well, 2 out of 3 anyway.) When I left, he seemed to be in good spirits. It'll be very interesting to see what comes of his situation. Personally, I think we'd be better off with Eddy... although, one can never be certain... NEVER! - By the time I actually got to leave, it was going for 3:30pm! The day was almost shot all to Hell! AND... as I'm leaving, I see Ms. Renice in the hall! So I mentioned my new "35-hour work week" to her and that it might interfere with my Tuesdays with Ms. Simpson and the first thing she says is that I can see Ms. Simpson on... SATURDAYS! Well, yes, it seems logical. But now I'm thinking: "God" does NOT want me in a synagogue! Oh well... we'll see what comes, come Saturday. - I was OUT of the building! - Strolled up 3rd Avenue, stopped at the Walgreen's store for a pack of smokes and continued on to the Mid-Manhattan library where the best I could get for computer time as a 10-minute slot... at 4:35pm! I let that all pass and decided to use my time at other venues. Indeed, it was a rather cold day out there, but I suppose being "out there" was healthier than being "in here". Back out onto the streets it was. I strolled over to 2nd Avenue to catch the M15 bus down to 23rd Street (the walk from 42nd and Madison to the market was just a bit too much for this time of the day... and the fact that I was still being smacked about with a cold) to go to the market... for some food... and another bloody 16\$ of practically nothing. 16\$ of "frugal" food shopping in this city barely makes it worth the plastic shopping bag to hold the items in. ("Competitive" salary... 9\$/hour. Right.) - Oh and so well, it was a "nice" afternoon out of the building, in the air, and so, being in no particular rush, I walked back up to the shelter, very extremely exhausted, in general and because of my cold and the antihistamines. But the thought of being on a bus was less appealing than walking along the side-walks. And, I figured, the exercise was probably better too (as if I don't get any of that during my normal week... and, to think, I've got a FULL work-week to come!). - Back at the "farm"... I managed to get a bit to eat and a little time of "half napping",

more like laying there, eyes closed, brain open. But it was better than no rest at all... I suppose. Then up again, across the hall to the basin and a bit of laundry, socks and under-things. - 6:39pm My eyes just would not focus all day today and this evening, it's a bit worse. I'm probably dehydrated from the antihistamines I've been taking to keep, oddly, my eyes from tearing and nose from leaking. Oh well. - And now, it's "Chat-chat-chat-yap-yap" in the hall! What I wouldn't give to be somewhere where Spanish is a "foreign" language, seldom heard and spoken and where I'll never hear "*Muthufukkuh*" uttered ever again. I don't know what it is about these vermin, but it's every other word, if not every word. And it's the only way they address one-another. OK. MY vocabulary isn't pure and clean, but enough is enough and this is WAY over the edge of that! Add to it, now I have to listen to Craig, of all people, talking about how "They used us for 400 years!" "They" being the "Whites". "Us" are the Blacks. This is all because of tomorrow: *Martin Luther King Day*. Well! I don't necessarily mean to be any sort of bigot but... I do need to ask: When was slavery abolished? Why is the majority of violent crime STILL Black? The majority of the Homeless? Black. Why can't "*You*" get your sh** together and get over it, get on with your existence and move along as have done countless OTHER peoples and races? BY GOD! It's enough to make any thinking being angry enough to blow a gasket! And to think this sort of BS talk goes on in a Homeless shelter! Seriously? You point fingers... even at the very people you share a "SHELTER" with? And again I point out: The MAJORITY of those in this very shelter... BLACK! So too, the STAFF in this shelter. So when it comes to being "used", you might try and take a look at your own. But I expect too, TOO much! I know that. - Ah, the BS goes on. Stupid is as stupid talks and stupid does. You're in a shelter... January 2009... Blame slavery. Dirt-bag. And as an added item, the majority of those who are whining the most and loudest seem to be equally engaged at the Black man's favourite career around here: being drunk! - If I don't get out and away from this quickly...! I'm most certainly not claiming to be "better" than any others in this cesspool human landfill, but *I've* fallen, come in here, gotten *myself* back to work and *am*, despite all efforts running against me, maintaining my measly little job, managing to collect a little bit toward getting me back OUT of here and back into a bit of a "life". AND, I'm not bitching and whining, whilst eating and "living" freely, on the dole. Sorry... you often get what you work toward and ask for and here it is. - Well! THAT episode over and done, we move along to 7:08pm and I've just had another little "chat" with Eddy who tells me that he's just out of "Sing-Sing"! (Oh how well I know THAT prison... having passed by it so many times over the years on the commuter trains to and from New York's "suburbia". "Ossining Penitentiary" as it is.) He didn't, how-ever, say what got him *in* there. But I imagine 20 years wasn't for theft of a candy bar. He's

another example of how people can and will respond to situations as they are presented. I can assume many reasons for his incarceration, but, as with CW and Tony Muscle, sitting here, talking with them, one would never suspect that any of them were the “type” to have ever seen the out-side, let alone be on the *in*-side of a penitentiary. The guys are, honestly speaking, very much like the rest of us... like just about anybody else we might meet in our life-time. And they're civil, respectful. One “slip”, one “incident”, at that moment, and lives are destroyed. Oh well. And how strange that so many diverse paths should cross, here, Homeless, in a public shelter, where, for this time, on this path, we are all, relatively speaking, “equals”. These are the times of the days when thinking people stop... and ponder. To me, in particular, his one rather “negative” quality which he shares with Rey: flatulence. But hey! It could be worse... it could be MUCH worse. We'll take and appreciate what we can... especially in here. Funny too, are the things that bother him in here: the more recent nightly horn-blowing, toilet-lid slamming, garbage can banging, PR dirt-bags, yelling in the halls and the guys talking on cell phones in the hall all through the night and the bed-checks with lights on. These are a few of our least favourite things, and we share that commonality as well. People... that's all we are... People. - Now, as I'm jotting here I just thought “I really *do* have to get out of here *soon*. My work day begins with waking at 5:30am. Train by 6:45am to get to TG's “abuse” by 8:30am. 12:30pm to bus to get to JS (and *C.diff*) by 2:00pm. 5:00pm out of that for 5:30pm bus. Back to this hole of inconsiderate trash by about 7:00pm or 8:00pm. *If* I get 6 hours of sleep at night I'm blessed. This is going to run me into the ground. By the time I get out of here, I'll be on the verge of complete collapse... mental and physical. - Rich, the previous D16 just came in. He told his “case-worker” the details of his absence and asked for his bed back. He has to check-back with it (the “case-worker”) at 9:00pm. I wonder about him. He appears to be one of the “seasoned” folks in here and yet, there's so much that he truly is so naive about. Well, the best that I could tell him is to go at 9:00pm and see what they'll do. I warned him not to expect much in a way that will make him “happy”, but the only way to learn is to do... that's how I've been doing things since I've been here. He seems a bit amazed that this is my first time *in* and that I haven't been here for very long. He wanted to know how I know as much as I do, so I told him my “secret”: shut up and listen to EVERYBODY because EVERYBODY will tell you EVERYTHING you NEED to know. He smiled and agreed, that's pretty much the way of the world. I wished him, sincerely, much luck and he left. - Well then... as I continue to think, this is my night before a FULL day tomorrow! They, these, let's call them “morons of the system” and be kind about it, claim we're supposed to find work, make money, get out. BUT *they* do NOTHING to assist us in getting proper rest for work. The staff, the security, even the DHS cops

do their best to disturb the night, through the night. And when the dregs congregate in halls and loo, yelling and such in the middle of the night? It just goes on and on and on. Fact: Most of the disturbances are in Spanish. Even as I jot, the fat, pugged-faced lard-head spic from the East Wing comes shuffling along the hall, yelling at some idiot walking right beside him! They're in regular conversation at decibel levels that would other-wise be considered illegal in general public! Jeezus! Banshees and savages, the lot of them. - On a softer note, I'm almost done with my kippa but can't work on it any more. My fingers are too sore! I spend my "idle hours" working on it, reclined on my bed, trying to mind my own affairs and keeping out of the troubles that swarm around and about. But yes, my fingers are sore. Now there's an hour left before sign-in. I've got nothing in particular to read. There's stuff in my lockers to nibble on but I don't want to eat everything tonight so tomorrow I don't have to stop anywhere before coming in. Hopefully I'll be able to just come in, sign-in, get to bed. Honestly? It looks like I'm going to have to start drinking myself to sleep again. The ONLY thing stopping me so far is that, sober, I have SOME control over my temper. If I drink, I just don't know what I might do in this miserable hell-hole. Perhaps not the best reason for sobriety, but it's true, and I'm not ashamed to say it. - The antihistamines are wearing off! I've taken none all day today. Time for more. The cold isn't gone! - 8:02pm and a little catching up with "generalities" here. The halls are constantly echoing with the cacophony of those who (which?.. they're more "what" than "who") won't shut up for even the briefest moment. Those that [sic] have been here for any length of time know, full well, how sound is amplified in these concrete and granite halls. Yet, they mindlessly yell, even in general conversation. Meanwhile, it's 24°C in this room. It's a double-edged sort of situation: It's a warm place, out of the wind and cold, laundry dries over-night for the most part. But it dehydrates the body and provides a perfect environment for viruses and the likes. Even as I write, I'm sneezing and blowing my nose. I've just come back from a smoke in the loo. *Something* lobbed 2 wads of mucous on the floor in the toilet stall! The other stalls are *soaked* with urine. There are 2 urinals in there as well but I'm supposing these degenerates can't quite figure out what they're for. In addition: We've had this one old idiot who constantly walks the halls (sits on the toilet, stands in the shower) talking or arguing... with himself in Spanish. He's known as "Cuba" (pronounced "Koobah"). Last night our "administration" added a Black fellow to accompany "Cuba". Now there are TWO strolling the halls, talking to themselves! To make the farce that is this place even more complete, Kalib (the Moroccan who speaks with me in Hebrew) stops by to say "Shalom". From his sleep, Eddy16 (whose name, I've learnt is Edmund! and so, I would presume is German too, as am I) gets up and joins in the conversation! Out of no-where!

No rhyme. No reason. It just gets more interesting (or insane... which, at this juncture can be one and the same). - OK. back to “now”, at 8:21pm and Geo just came in! Hopefully HE’LL keep his bed. As it is said” We know the devil we’ve got. He loses his bed and there’s not telling what will follow! - Kalib says it’s snowing. Warmer weather to come. (The recent *highs* have been about 18°-19°F!) Ah. And for my morning... the commute... The “holiday” schedule for trains and buses meaning fewer of all and more time to wait in between. HOW de-freaking-lightful! Ah, the trials and tribulations abound. - At about 11:00pm, some monkey came down the hall screaming “BED-CHECK!” at the top of its lungs. I was actually beginning to *doze*! And the moron kept yelling, *repeatedly*. All the way up and down the hall. Then? On to the North-West wing and I could *STILL* hear it! I shouldn't be surprised that people passing the out-side of the building can hear them shouting! If, one night, somebody in this place snaps and lunges at one of these botched abortions, I could almost bet with 100% certainty that anybody who rose to the occasion would be doing so to pull a punch or get in his own kick, and that NOBODY would go to the aid of ANY of the staff around here. In all sincerity, even *I’d* go to get a punch or kick in. - Well. This is my 35-hour week, so of course, anything they can do to deny me and the rest of us sleep. - Meanwhile, Geo is downing “Theraflu”. He's got a miserable chest cold. Rey is sneezing and coughing. - Rich16 came in to ask for toilet paper. I gave him what I could. He’s hoping to get his bed back. Something to ponder... The “hopes” of the Homeless.

Monday 19 January: 158/127

A beautiful morning of snow on all the trees! A perfect day to go walking and marvelling. But certainly not for me. Today, for me, is a “*WORK*” day and a *FULL* day at that! Complete with “*C-diff*”. Ah alas. - At about midnight or 1:00am this morning, Rich16 came into the room empty his locker. *BANG!* They KNOW the lock bangs against the steel lockers, but few (if any) make any attempt to avoid the disturbance it makes and JOLTS everybody in the room up out of a half-sleep, or a doze or, for the fortunate, a full sleep. Well... OK. Wake *ME!* As if his little trial is my fault. He knows what time I get up in the morning. Well, let’s hope he *doesn’t* get D16 back. I’m at the end of “nice”. At the end. I’m just looking forward to getting the money I need to get *OUT!* I’m even contemplating a tent and sleeping bag. When I figure how to shower so I can continue to work, clean, I’m gone... back to the out-of-doors, even in this weather. It’ll be *so* much better out of this Hell-hole shelter. - That aside, this morning I made great connections to Howard Beach. And with the snow on the trees, it was a *magnificent* morning. - The commutes went

smoothly all day! Of course they did. No school. No brats to clog the world. - A good morning at TG's. - This evening? Oh... generally the same thing as any other evening, but nothing at all to really jot about. I continued with my kippa until sign-in, then came back to the room to work a bit more on it, pass the time until "BED CHECK", and, at the end of this day... a quick survey of the room: "Lights out?" A unanimous "Yup". Click.

Tuesday 20 January: 159/128 "The life you've come to know is *dead!* This country belongs to *US* now!" A total stranger, 6ft tall and as black as I could have ever imagined, came "at" me in the hall this evening, just completely out of almost no-where, and staring me straight in the eye, held up a newspaper with Obama's picture printed on the front page, and with determined thrusts, he poked at the paper as he almost spat his words at me.

For me, it was another work day, and a "2-Client" day as well. At both houses, there was much talk about today's inauguration. Needless to say, in an Italian house-hold and in an Austrian house-hold, the conversations were not what one might call "pleasant". There's a great deal of concern now about the ramifications of this election... and this inauguration. But me, trying not to remain out of the political arena where my "patients" and their families are concerned, the best I could say was "Only time will tell where this will lead, and the best that we can hope for is that he's not just another professional politician." And that's pretty much how the day at work went. And I couldn't be happier to note this because Mr.TG was rather "well behaved" which meant that Mrs. was a bit calmer. And Mr. HT was, quite interestingly, ready to discuss the current events and we did so... over coffee and cookies. AND, I'm even happier to note, I got out on time, on the trains and into the building in a timely manner and fashion. Of course, it was to be expected that the Black population here was rather "festive" and "celebratory" since they seem to view this as "their victory", and yes, there were those who believed that now they no longer had to "wait in line" even to get into the shelter. But as always, I have no time for such nonsense and no patience with such true and clinical mental retardation. And I'm certainly not going to risk my own well-being by addressing such ignorance. So I let it all go by as if it wasn't happening. But I DO have to note here, just because it's true, that the folks at "security" at the entrance were wonderful. Really professional. They, as I did today at work, maintained the

general order (which in itself is seldom ever good, considering) as always. They didn't confront anybody, even though there were many who were obviously looking for a confrontation. And everybody was treated with the very same respect (and disrespect) as always. As I went for the lift to come up to the floor, there was a comment made: "Presidential folks first!" which was followed by a group of Blacks shoving into the lift and shoving the rest (mostly Hispanics) out. A brawl began and I took the stairs. Hey, the stairs are more comfortable anyway... fewer people, less stench, and little chit-chat. And, I have to say, no safer nor no more dangerous than the lift. The best part? No wondering if I can get out on my floor the way the lift will sometimes pass floors, or some jackass will hold the "Close Door" button until HIS floor is reached. All told, a much better experience. - So I get into the room and I'm getting "settled" for the evening and ready to wait, as always, for "sign-in time" when Rich (the previous Nr.16) comes into the room and asks me for 5\$. Seems he wants to "buy a watch"! I thought he was kidding me, so I smiled when I told him that I don't have it. (And no, I truly don't, at least not for somebody I don't know and somebody who was irresponsible enough to lose his bed in this room.) "You know how I make my money." he says, rather upset with me. Well, yes, yes I do know. He's what can honestly be called a "Professional Panhandler". He discussed it with me one afternoon. He has particular corners on particular streets in The City where he knows how well or poorly he'll do on particular days and at particular times of particular days. With him it's a profession, dedication, almost a science. AND, he actually boasted of making multiple hundreds of dollars on some days. OK. If you can make "hundreds" of dollars in a day for simply holding out a paper cup, or chatting-up the passers-by, then why can't you keep a place of residence? And why are you asking ME for 5\$? I was polite and respectful when I said "Yes I do. And you know how I make my money. You know I wake at about 4:30 in the morning, am out the door by 5:25am at the latest almost every single day, and most days after almost no sleep all night. And you know how far I travel to get to work. You even know how little I make. So what are you saying? That I make my money easier than you?" He quickly said that that wasn't what he meant and he apologised. I said that an apology wasn't necessary but that no, I don't have the 5\$ to spare right now. Well, the way it closed was really, REALLY civil. Truly, there IS respect amongst the Homeless... for the most part anyway. - Well then, that little "thing" done with, I settled down and worked more on the kippa I'm crocheting and I'm almost done with it! Off-white and green... I think of it as my "John Deere" kippa... for every day wear, stronger thread than the store-bought, and MUCH less expensive! I was getting back into the crochet when... the arrogant "Rusky" from the room next door comes in and *wants* a cigarette from me! When I told him I had only one left (which was

true... in the pack I had handy) he stood there, at the foot of my bed and stared at me... waiting for me to give him my ONE cigarette! Right then. What he DOESN'T know is that I'm at the very END of my "nice days", and with-out another word, I simply went right back to my crochet work, essentially, blowing him off. It took him a moment, but after a bit, he silently walked out of the room and away... with-out his cigarette. Seriously? Some of these folks just don't understand that I learn quickly and well and I've had all of THEM as my teachers. One of these days somebody might get pissed enough at me to take a shot, but truth is: I don't give a sh**. Not any more. Put me out or put me in hospital. I'm at the end of it and I no longer care. But I won't be abused any more, not by some "Homeless sh**". - Time came for sign-in and so, since I was alone in the room, I got up, put my crochet and such into the locker and made certain to lock it after the 5\$ incident and the cigarette bit, and strolled down the hall to the sign-in table. It went as always... with-out a glitch. - THEN, as I was coming back to the room, the confrontation that I opened this account with! Well, I figure, it was bound to happen, it truly is "sadly typical" and yes indeed, these are the days when the Black population of this country has a wonderful opportunity to show its own and the rest of the world just what Black people truly are. These are the days when all can rise... or fall. As for "their leader"... I, personally see no good to come of it. - With that, the rest of the folks of our dear little dorm came back, everybody settled in for the most part, even Geo! There was the 10:00pm "BED CHECK"! followed by lights out.

Wednesday 21 January: 160 Homeless/129 Shelter Days!

I am, literally, ready to die! God awful nauseous all day! I was *exhausted* en route to Mr. JS this afternoon. So bad that I actually half-slept *STANDING*, waiting for the bus! The exhaustion was so intense that it became so painful that I wanted to cry. The morning with Mr. TG was relatively "OK" in spite of my fatigue when I got *there*. But this afternoon, well, I thought, if I could be guaranteed death in a short period of time, the pain of exhaustion would be worth it all. Not only working in an extremely confined area of what it the basement of the house but the wondering it there was to be another "Disastrous Bowel" calamity at the very last moment was a horror! THANKFULLY, the shift passed with only "normal" sorts of work to be done and I was OUT... ON TIME! - This evening, I walked the North Conduit/Aqueduct to A train at the 5:00pm sunset and it actually was a nice walk tonight. WOW! I *need* to get out of this shelter, this City and back to Rockaway! I miss it *SO MUCH* out there. - But by 7:09pm now, I've had 3 knishes and some V8

juice for dinner and I'm feeling just a bit better. Food... Imagine that... FOOD! Now, I hope to finish my kippa before bed tonight... even though *I NEED SLEEP!* - 9:39pm *The kippa is finished* but I don't think it's any good. It doesn't look quite "right". I need to figure a pattern for them. But, it's washed and drying. Tomorrow will tell. - Meanwhile, this room smelled like rampant flatulence when I came back from signing for my bed. Luckily, I have a small bottle of "Fabuloso". A splash on the floor followed by a quick pass with a wet, dirty mop and all smells a bit better. How "me" and my existence": The foul odour of sh** all day at work? And then a night of the same. And as I write, the over-head fluorescents are on, retards banging about in the hall way, and our resident drunk yammering away on the bloody phone in Spanish. Last night I came to think of all of this as my private "Midnight Express", as in the book and movie of yore. This isn't a "shelter". This is a Turkish jail. I wonder what I did to deserve this BS punishment. *Death is the only escape!* - I have to note here too: You can tell when the weather isn't "nice" by being in here. The census increases and the worst of the population arrives in droves. Last night, 2 complete idiots were in the showers... with the shower curtains *outside* the stall. Water all over the floor! Tonight the queue to sign was from the office *through* the "lounge". Chaos. It takes major genius to find a bed number on a list and put one's name on the line beside it, as is the "Sign-In" sheet. The same genius it takes to sh** and pee *IN* a toilet. Obviously, *that* genius is rare around here. - Well. I was going to make a small wash tonight. I'm too tired and fed-up right now. I'm going to get under the covers and *try* for some "rest". Sleep will not come... not any time soon. But 5:30am tomorrow will be *my* hour. It's a shame I just can't make sufficient unnecessary noise. And I don't like the light when I get ready for work. Other-wise, I could make quite the party of it every morning. - I've fallen so behind in this journal. I'm falling so far behind logging the "Monogram". I need the money so I need to work but I miss my library time. I miss my lap-top. I'm sick about all the work my "sister" screwed me out of. I've nothing, nothing, *nothing*. And then this: yelling in the halls, rooming with trash, stench, hunger, exhaustion. It's gone stuffy in here. Eddy16 closed the windows. Cigarette smoke from the loo across the hall is wafting in. I'll take some comfort in thinking: they have the night but I have the early morning. - 9:57pm. Time to just call it quits. Tomorrow, Mr.TG will be going to a doctor appointment at 10:00am which screws me out of 2.5 hours pay. Mrs. only mentioned it *THIS* morning. Nobody thinks about anybody but *self*. It's time I do the same. - Ah, screw this day... and night! I'm going "under-covers" *NOW!*

Thursday 22 January: 161/130

Well I was up and out, non-stop this morning. Arrived at the “TG” residence at approximately 7:45am (clock-in at 8:00am!) to a very agitated Mr. *This* was a “tough” day, full of verbal abuse, defiance, and general mayhem, to put it mildly. Then “HT’s” daughter phoned to cancel this afternoon’s appointment. How the bleating Hell will I get my full week, the money, the bleating Hell OUT of the mad-house at this rate? The harder I try to get ahead, the worse it becomes. I’m at a point where I can’t tell if it’s my general physical exhaustion or being on a quick ride to mental collapse... or, perhaps, both. But I used the “free” afternoon to try a trip from Howard Beach to Rock Park and to “JS’s”. It proved, today, to be good timing via Q21 bus and the A train. I’ll need to do it tomorrow to get paid! (I used 5\$ from the calendar where I save 5\$ bills for emergencies, to get cigarettes tonight. Even with all the work I actually DO get, my “cash-on-hand” is down to where I’m dipping into my “cash-on-stash”. This does not bode well.) Then I was back on the rails and off to the Mid-Manhattan Library for a computer that didn’t print and a library clerk who was of NO help! (Honestly, I often think of how many experienced people there are in this world, in this city, who could benefit from a paid position at a “Help Desk”, people who CAN offer assistance and would enjoy doing so. Yet, it’s the ones who haven’t a clue who get the jobs. It makes no sense to me at all, not to mention the aggravation and frustration of having to deal with general incompetence.) I want to mail the letter to DHS, Mayor’s office, etc. SOON! I’m constantly sick because of Ms. Simpson and her miserable, evil, nasty BS! Daily, I expect some sort of transfer or something that will interfere with my job, money, escape! Truly, I’m physically sick over it. I need to get OUT! - Geo Never showed for sign-in AGAIN tonight. But Rey put out the lights at about 10:00pm. That was a relief in its own right. But I’d “napped” this evening when I got back in... from 6:30pm to about 8:00pm! Odd though, even with that much sleep before bed time, I still crash at some point during the night, into a horrendously deep sleep. It doesn’t do me much good, the few moments of actual sleep. I wake, the next morning, as depleted as I would had I not slept at all. And I wonder, often, when this old body will simply drop. I wonder... and I wait.

Friday 23 January: 162/131

**MarginNotes:*

*I’ve read and studied the stories of Holocaust survivors. These days I live those stories.**

At about 4:00am this morning, “security” came in to check bed 15 (Geo). Of course, there was

nobody there. Now, the bed is “assigned”... or, more to the fact, RE-assigned! Moments later, a rather young guy comes into the room, in the dark, but he didn’t put on the light. Yup. D15 is now *his* new bed. He looked at the blankets, which included a rather nice comforter that Geo had, (something few, if any others, have because such things are not issued by the shelter AND would normally be stolen ever so quickly in here), and the rest of the bed-linens and asked if he should remove them. I said “Yes.” So he did. Geo’s comforter is now gone. Tough sh** there Georgie-boy! You lose, not only your bed, and a relatively good room with good people, but your “special” comfy blanket. And now, because of your inconsideration for the rest of us, the room has to put up with a stranger. I could have taken the comforter and saved it for him, but it’s about *me* these days. I’m trying to get a work routine. Now this! Because of some drunk! No matter how hard I try to get to something resembling the existence I once had, to get out of this hole, to escape this “Dachau”, this “Auschwitz”, this torment, terror and torture, some-thing, some one, some event appears out of no where, some where, any where, drops on me, all of me, crushing me back toward some oblivion, into a blind darkness, closer to some inevitable insanity... that is not mine. I dissociate. I split from the person who experiences these things, these events. From an emotional and psychological distance I look on, look at myself, numb, watching, wondering how that “other” person (me) manages to survive. And I wonder if this isn’t the way my ancestors managed to survive their tortures, torments, sufferings. I wonder... - The “new fellow” hastily removed ALL of the bed-clothes and, as is the “protocol” round here, dutifully dragged and dropped them in a pile, outside the door, in the hall. It won’t take very long and they’ll all disappear. The sheets and such will be dragged to the linens office to be washed and re-distributed. The comforter? I doubt that’ll be there more than mere moments... taken by another “resident” or an “Over-nighter”, perhaps somebody still out in the streets, or perhaps, even a “paid staff person”. In any event, it makes no difference who or what gets it. It’ll be gone from Geo. The scavengers will benefit from his utter stupidity and none in this room will give a turd. When our new “guest” had done with the duties of re-making his new bed, he settled in for whatever time he had left of the “night” to snooze. Even though he only just got into bed, by 9:00am at the very latest, “they”, the “security” staff, will be round to toss him. That’s the way it works here: *When* you finally get your place of “rest” is of no concern to any-one. When it’s time to GET OUT, it’s time to GET OUT! Oh well. The rest of us had to put up with it (except for the likes of Geo, of course). The “new kids” will have to as well. - And so, the day progressed. VNS, the “big boss boys in the biz” rang Mrs. TG while I was there this morning with questions for her about my attendance, uniform, person. Mrs. gave a charming, superficial review. Notably, credit for

observations, treatments, extra care... extra *TIME* and the likes went to the “Charge Nurse” on this case. She, the Mrs., has *no* confidence in what I do or say so today, I’ve decided to become an “HHA” (Home Health Aide... non-professional) there, doing no more and no less than what “typical” HHA’s do (or not do). There’s just no sense in exerting extra when it’s just ignored or not trusted and most certainly not when the efforts are blatantly un-appreciated. - After the little “review”, Mrs. asked me how much I’d charge for “extra” time. Considering I’m certainly not going to *over*-do any longer, I said “10\$ per hour” (I’m not thinking of it more along the lines of “baby-sitting” and nothing more). She said she’s considering going to the beauty parlour on the week-end and might need somebody to watch Mr. whilst she’s gone. Well Hell! I’m supposed to see Ms. Simpson on Saturday, but if I can make more money instead, I’ll go for that! More money means less time in the dung-heap, and yes, I AM aware of the potential ramifications, like being documented as “non-compliant” because I’d most likely miss my “weekly interrogation meeting”. But, at times such as this, one needs to make drastic decisions, and the possibility of more cash in my pocket leading to a more hasty departure from “non-compliance” is tantamount to all else! Mrs. told me she’d let me know what she decides to do when she decides, and we left it at that. - Clock-out and... A “*rush*” hour followed: Q21 bus to Rock Park (to get my pay-check and a copy of *TheWave* for the latest “home-town news”), Waldbaum’s market for bread and 70-cent cold cuts. I got 2 Greek yoghurts for Mr. JS as well, with the hope that he’ll enjoy them and they might help with his “bowel distress” (at 2.39\$... and now I’m spending on my clients... what a total sh**-for-brains I truly am). Then a brisk strut to the shuttle train to the A train to the North Conduit. The 1:30pm shuttle and walk to JS’s house and all this got me to clock-in at 2:01pm on a 2:00pm appointment! Today, I had the opportunity to sit at coffee with Mrs. and the “chore of the day” was a “clean-up” for Mr. He ate one yoghurt and said he enjoyed it. Good. I hope it helps his “situation”. I’m such an idiot... for caring at all anymore. But, as I’ve been told: “It’s the way you are. You can change the outside of you but you’ll never change the way you are.” I just “care”. It’s what I do. As for changing? I suppose not. I’m just too damned stupid to do that. - Ah... clock-out and departure from a relatively nice afternoon and today, leaving was, essentially, a fun experience. Walking along the North Conduit, watching the planes coming into JFK airport, I find that I’m still amazed by them. All that bulk, that weight, floating above, in the air, up there. All the metal and luggage and all of those people, floating about And it was a comfortably warm evening. The walk could have been much nicer if I wasn’t trying to beat the clock to “The City”, but I *SO* enjoyed it for all I possibly could. It’s these “little moments” that mean the most... to me anyway. - Hurray! After trains and buses and such... I made it! Into The

City to cash my cheque, the a “merry bolt” across town to the banquing machine and I made my deposit that brought my savings up to over 300\$! *That* is encouraging. It's most certainly not enough to “*BOLT!*” from the Misery-Hell-Hole Hotel, but it's certainly, slowly on the way. For the moment, it was “encouraging”, and as I say, it's the “moments” that mean the most. - Ah well, “Happiness” cannot last eternally, indeed and in fact. Coming into this “shelter” at just before 7:00pm just brought back the miserable reality of this dung-heap. The stench. The drunks. The foul-mouthed vermin. 5 flights of stairs to climb. And when I got to the room? D15 is now occupied by some young-ish, large-but-White something. Do I want to know? No. Do I want a “dossier”? Certainly not. And I take Geo's irresponsibility as a *personal* affront. (I passed him on my way to the room this evening, waiting to talk with his Mr. Dimski. He's just so out of touch with any sort of reality, the damned idiot. Of course, the system here is no better. They've let him pull his BS so often with-out the ramifications meted-out to just about ever other “resident” in this place. Of course the feeble-minded idiot figures he's got privileges! And being of feeble mind, if any mind at all, he's come to expect those privileges. He probably believes he's “entitled” to them at this point.) Still, even though I noted: All in this room now are “White”, it does nothing for any sense of security or comfort. Race has nothing to do with, no bearing on the calibre of person. It's a fact, and in *THIS* place, it's *MORE* than obvious. That's finished. So is my demeanour. Now, where this will all lead is anybody's guess... should anybody care enough to guess. We shall see... as we have seen before. - Tonight brought a telling talk with Rey. This is all getting to him as well. It's running him down, emotionally, psychologically and physically. He too has lost interest in so much. He too feels he wants to withdraw. The change in the room census is a factor. The “loss” of Kendall, who is now “out there” since “they” found him a place, the approaching “loss” of Keith who has, hopefully, at *LONG* last, been told that the Veterans' Administration *MIGHT* have found him a suitable place that he can call “home”, the fact that it's SO difficult to find a job, and the fact that I go to work... Rey has been my inspiration from since coming to 5W-101. He's actually got ambition, and has been trying to better his lot and situation by looking for work to get him out of here. This is a difficult time for him... for us. How strange, even as he says, we form some sort of bonds with people in here. We get to a point where this experience pulls us out of the world and into another realm where this dung-heap creates a reality that becomes integral, of great importance to us. This is our “Auschwitz”. We are in the Holocaust. And some of us will survive and escape... some of us will be in here... forever, and for those, this will become their “reality”... until their end. - The day today ended with a new “camaraderie”, a better understanding between Rey and I. We are now the “seniors” in this room,

he more-so than I. It doesn't mean for much, this "seniority", but it DOES mean that the previous BS from the others will be cut rather short... by the 2 who have goals which do NOT include THIS place! (Another one of those "moments of comfort"... to end the day.)

Saturday 24 January: 163/132

12:15pm One hour and nine minutes of sitting and waiting "to be called" by Ms. Simpson, who is and has been sitting at her desk, alone. In this time, Ms. Fiord has seen FIVE of *her* clients, each one called in respectful, respectable and orderly fashion. (12:19pm and Ms. Simpson is off on the lift to... food, no doubt; off to graze, as she is wont to do and it's obvious that she does, frequently.) "I hear you have good news for me." she calls to me loudly, from a distance, not giving any recognition of the fact that I've been there for over an hour waiting for her and our "appointment". No, "*Not for YOU... for ME!*" I reply, as kindly as I possibly can as she disappears into the lift and off to... Who-in-Hell-cares! - Well, I finally got to see her just after 2:00pm! OK now, let's count this; shall we then? I arrived here to begin waiting for her at about 11:00am this MORNING and at just AFTER 2:00pm I was "permitted an audience", as it were. *THREE BLEATING HOURS OF WAITING!!! THREE HOURS OF SITTING IN A HALL-WAY, ON A PLASTIC STACKING CHAIR, WAITING. AND ALL THE WHILE, SHE SAT, AT HER DESK FOR THE MOST PART, BUT SAW NO "CLIENTS", NO "RESIDENTS", NO ANYBODY. AND I HAPPEN TO KNOW THIS TO BE CERTAIN BECAUSE FROM WHERE I'D BEEN SITTING... FOR THREE HOURS... I HAD DIRECT VIEW OF THE ONLY DOOR INTO THAT OFFICE WHERE SHE'S ENSCONCED OFF IN THE FAR LEFT CORNER!!!* Now then, I ask: Is there any room for wonder as to why we, the Homeless who have come here for "help" become aggressive "savages"? Disregarded, ignored, disrespected, denigrated, dejected, rejected and disposed of and yet, here we are... trapped for the most part, between this and the painful existence of the streets... or worse and still we remain "almost civil". WE are the ones with the greater strength. WE have nobody but ourselves and our peers to vent on or to, and yet, we continue to remain, when all is considered, said and done... docile. Yes, WE are the ones with the greater strength. (And here, on a written page is the only place I "yell" and scream... then close this book to suffocate the anguish. And nobody hears, nobody sees, nobody knows.) - As if the past 3 hours wasn't enough to shove sanity over the cliff and into an abysmal void... she *insisted* upon flaunting her utter ignorance even further as I provided her with ALL of the "papers" she'd told me were "required" from me. But OH! Just how dense can a person be and still draw the next human breath? I gave her *THREE*

“Assignment” sheets, with days and hours assigned and worked, duly and dutifully, clearly printed, indicated and totalled. She holds all three sheets of paper in her hands and looks at assignment sheet for TG. “This doesn’t come to 35 hours.” she mumbles *at* me, not even bothering to look up. “You’re looking at one page. There are two behind it.” I softly reply. She looks at the sheet with the hours for JS. “This is only 9 hours a week.” she mumbles again, into the paper. “And you’re not paying attention to the third sheet.” I again, tell her, with all the composure I have in my being. And so, as if appropriately speaking with a mentally retarded 3-year-old child, I carefully and calmly explain to her that the total hours indicated on all three pages *clearly* add up to 35 hours for the week, and, in like manner, explain slowly these and the other “papers” for deposits made to the “mandatory savings account”, taking special care to bring to her attention that said deposits are in excess of the “required 60%” of my income... Well, by the time I got back to the room, it was 3:16pm. The day was wasted, waiting, waiting, and... waiting. With nothing more I had to do and little more than I could possibly salvage of the remainder of the day, I took out the kippa (the second one I’m working), for a couple of rounds done, and when finished with those, I napped. Really. Why bother? There was no “good” sense stewing in my annoyance and aggravation. The issue was done and in the past, irreconcilable, irreparable. - At about 6:00pm, I ventured out of the building. Walgreen’s for 2 packs of cigarettes, then to 33rd Street for a new MetroCard of car-fare for the coming week. I stopped at D’Ag’s (the lower, larger one on 3rd Avenue and 30-something Street) for some things to eat. How I *hate* being in The City. And tonight, for some reason, I miss Viv a great deal. So much of my entire 53 years on this Earth is gone, never to be retrieved. And this evening, it hits me hard, again. - What further piss me off: At D’ag’s, a supposedly “high-end market”, I’d gotten *Entenmanns’s* donuts. All stale. Fage, Greek yoghurt. Old. *Snack Pack* puddings. Properly sealed and yet dry! Disgusting! But, I was so hungry, I ate this trash anyway. And now, with 16 days to the next Food Stamps, I’ve got 80-something dollars left! I’ll have to budget my food to 5\$ per day and no more. - And so, the day was done. - Strange, Rey and I are the “seniors” in the room now. Time passed. Time. The general census in the shelter is up these days. New faces. New trash. And I need to bolt out of here! But tonight the temperature goes down to 16°F. Patience. Got to bide it until I’m fully prepared. And all the while, the hatred consumes me. Ashley. Margot. My siblings. Such hatred... it won’t leave me, and it won’t leave me alone... daily.

Sunday 25 January: 164/133

Yet another wasted day spent inside. There was so much planned. More than could have been done. Laundry! My sheets are beginning to smell “not so fresh”. I don't even remember the last time I changed them. Had I known I'd have the whole day in, there was laundry that could have been done. But, it was a “moment-by-moment” loss of a day as tends to happen in this place, this “existence”. Still, I suppose I deserve “a day of rest”, as it were. And there it is. Bad thing, no food. I had 3 hamburger rolls with honey, a small bowl of oatmeal (with a little honey) and one *Snack-Pack* pudding. No big deal. My stomach is bad. For weeks now, very, very small bowel movements, and I *constantly* feel like I need to “go”. All I'm thinking is: no Colon Cancer please! Unless, of course, it's quick, done, death. And the kippa is almost done. Not the way I'd hope or expect. But hopefully a wash will shape it. Hell. The crochet distracts me, keeps my mind away from the immediate BS. Yet, there's always the fleeting memories of all that's gone, all that will never be retrieved nor restored and who stabbed me in the back and screwed me in the open wound that was, is and in all likelihood, will remain. Ah... my existence... done, stolen, lost, non-existent. - This evening, as I “washed” the bowl and spoon I use to eat out of, in the loo, the guy who plants himself in the stall every evening was standing at a sink behind me, talking (to himself in the mirror): *“I had to do it! I had to put a bullet in him. He took my mother's bag! My mother! What chance did she have against him? She was an old woman and he tried to take the little bit she had. So I did my 17 years. But I did what I had to do!”* He turned toward me. *“I hope I'm not disturbing you, Mister...”* I thought of Mama and what I'd do in such a case. Tears actually came to my eyes and the core of my heart and soul ached so! When I looked behind me, there, over-dressed in coat, cap, sweats, etc. this Black man stood, sweating, eyes glazed with tears. A big, very Black man, mourning his mother, defending his defence of her, alone, in this dung-heap. It touched me. It hurt me. I told him to be *proud* of what he did for his Mum and just because nobody wants to understand what he did any way, I said “Look here (I pointed to my own aching heart) and if you know you did what had to be done, let the rest of the world go to Hell.” He thanked me. All I wanted to do is *sob* (but there's no place to do that here.) To think that this immense, scarred, Black man is so haunted and so torn by the loss of his mother and how he suffered because he *defended* her. Well, it touched me to see “humanity”. Something I'm loosing, *rapidly* and daily. - Then, later this evening, I had the opportunity to have a “chat” with Mark, the new 15. He told of having worked in a public “bath-house” in Seattle, had contracted *MRSA! He's originally from Columbus OH, used his last money and some he got from Catholic Charities to come to NY City with the hope of finding work here. (Fool!) Because of the help he got from Catholic Charities he goes to St.

Patrick's cathedral to Catholic mass and wants to convert to Catholicism. I have no idea what his religion is but he believes he's in the shelter because "God has a lesson" that he has to learn, because he has to make restitution for some silly little incident in his child-hood and that "God" will bring him through all of this, help him to purify his soul and bring him into heaven. Hey! If it works for him, do I care? I suppose we all deal with this in a manner that allows us to retain SOME degree of sanity. It this is his way, so bit it. And as for me? Well, at least I have SOME idea of what in Hell's name WE all, in this room, will be forced to deal with, since it appears that here is where dear Mark will be staying, at least for the while. I do suppose it could be worse. But then again, experience has taught me that the "surface" and the "appearance" of those in this place is no certain indication of what lies beneath... and that, only time will reveal. No matter what, we sleep "aware". - So... what a week-end of wasted time, thought-provoking incidents and general BS. - Now, I just insist that my 35 hour weeks continue at least until I've got enough to get out of here SECURELY! - At sign-in this evening, Santiago wanted to exchange cigarettes again... a Newport for a Camel. I gave him 2 Camels for the Newport. It's good to be in his favour. Not that there's a great deal he can do for me, but he is "pseudo-staff" and being in good with *any* of them can't possibly be bad. He tells me Geo (now D89) "wants to go back to you guys". Why, well, off *course* he does. But "we guys" don't want him back. I didn't say so, but... I certainly didn't make any indication that he'd be "welcome". As far as "we guys" are concerned, the two of us who matter at all in the room, Geo has gotten what Geo deserves: OUT of the room and away from us. Let it be. - At about 11:00pm the noise in the hall was so bad, Rey actually got up out of bed and closed the door! What a difference! I drifted off to the muddled sounds that managed to make their way through the heavy door that once closed on this room, keeping the poor, "insane" captives locked securely away, from staff and the rest of the "sane" world. It helped keep some warmth in the room too. It's gone bitter cold again out-side and quite chilled in here.

(**Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)*): Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infection caused by a type of staph bacteria that's become resistant to many of the antibiotics used to treat ordinary staph infections. - <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mrsa/basics/definition/con-20024479>)

Monday 26 January: 165/134

RAIN/COLD TUESDAY - SLEET ON WEDNESDAY - SNOW ON FRIDAY

I did NOT want to get out of bed this morning! After 2 days of "rest". But, I managed to float

through so much this morning that I got to Cross Bay/Woodhaven at 7:26am! Rode the A train to Lefferts, the end of the line, just to pass the time (in the warmth of the train) and came back to Rock Blvd for the Q41 bus connection and arrived at TG's 8:27am. Mrs. went for coffee as she will sometimes do in the morning, and I, with the "quiet time" of the moment, began my catching up. By the moment here and now (10:42am) I haven't done a thing but catch up here in the Journal and am quite ready to nap. How delightful! - Mrs. had to take Mr. to the Emergency Room yesterday because of his Foley catheter. I told her I'd mentioned the sediment in his urine to the appropriate people but... bottom line: she's disappointed in the "Charge Nurse" on the case and me. (But she *praised* Serita, the very "aide" whom only a few days ago she didn't want around because she sleeps on her bed and helps herself to "juices" and other things round the house!) Well, well m'dear, all along I've tried to be helpful but you've chosen to do as pleases *you*. It's a shame, but I've lost interest because you've done away with trusting me. So now? I do what I must, no more, no less. This is the "gratitude" to which we become accustomed... none. And to think of all the extra time I've put in here, off the clock, because of being professional and conscientious. Well, this is all duly noted and, indeed, the information will be passed along, professionally, as is necessary. - As I write now, I'm ready to nap. I catch myself writing strange things as I almost doze. It seems my eyes half-close, the brain goes into some kind of suspended animation and the hand and pen do what they will independently of any thought. Hmm... Melt-down? I shouldn't doubt it at all. - And today is JS after this! It's a "Two Appointment" day. - I wonder why Mrs. TG sees me writing and doesn't wonder what I'm doing. Or, is she pondering something new to whine and complain about behind my back? I shouldn't doubt that either. - Meanwhile, Mr. is coming back to this miserable self. How fun. He's been rather somnolent all morning. I've no doubt he'll pull some kind of "emergency" at the last minute, and, quite frankly, especially in view of this morning's "confession" I'm in NO mood! And I've no apologies. - One of those difficult days this morning. Mrs. TG is completely unrealistic and considers her evening private aide's word above mine and the Charge Nurse. So. Not much to be accomplished here. Tomorrow I'll try to demonstrate proper Foley catheter care for her since she insists upon doing that herself. If she does it, fine. If not, fine. - Well then, I cut out 30 minutes of my commute to JS today. Q41 bus to A train at RockBlvd to the Aqueduct station! The walk along the North Conduit is pleasant... in good weather.... and now I can stop work at 4:30pm instead of 5:00pm! Mrs. JS offered a bottle of beer for me to take along! How sweet! But I can't bring glass into the shelter, can't consume alcohol in the shelter, can't enjoy beer there. (Talk about being depressed!) More reasons to get money and get the Hell out SOONER! - Tomorrow's forecast is SNOW.

Wednesday, SLEET/FREEZING RAIN. Winter is about to come on strong and kick us Homeless folks directly in the face. So, I did a quick food shop at 23rd Street before returning to the Dung-heap. - The D15 and D16 are getting on my nerves. 15 talks about working in “book stores” in Seattle. I don’t need to know about *Miss Thang’s* “escapades”. He’s as Gay as they get and one of those *Prissy-Missies* who has no qualms. “*Out*”, is what “they” call it. “*Annoying*” is what I call it. It’s nobody’s business what one’s “sexual orientation” is. I don’t flaunt mine, nor do I discuss it. Nobody else around here does. It’s a non-issue. But this one almost *demand*s that we take note of his. I’ll never understand why some people, Gay or other, feel such a need to do so. As for 16, I got up at one point, from crocheting, to have a half-smoke. When I got back, the lights were off! It was 9:00pm or so! So I turned them back on and continued to work on the kippa. Nothing was said, and really, no note of it was taken, as far as I can tell. We still have a “bed-check” coming so there’s no sense in trying to put lights out and get any rest before that. (5 more rounds on this one and I’m done! I hope...) Ah, the reasons for bolting keep mounting by the moment. My general patience level is diminishing... rapidly! - Tonight at sign-in, the DHS cops were hauling an old, skinny Black man from the floor. One cop on each appendage, an extra at head and one behind. 5 cops! They carried him, almost crucifixion-style, face-down, through the hall to the lift! The old guy didn’t make a sound. Wingdale! The psychiatric institution where I’d worked for a year, gotten punched in the face, resulting in broken teeth and jaw. The “State Institution” where I witnessed more horrors than I care to recall. How the past keeps returning... but not the good, or happy past. It’s all just repeated “HAUNTING”! - And so went the night. - I asked Rey if he could, to get me linens tomorrow. He said he would. If he does, fine. If not, fine too. Before dozing off tonight I thought, it would be great if I could find a place with enough space and offer him an escape as well. He couldn’t afford to rent, but at least he’d have a better environment. He, like me, is trying to get back on his feet. I’ve been fortunate: Met Council, PIC, working. I’d like to pass along my good fortune... Then too, I got this far by my own cunning and travails. What stops others from doing the same? Bottom line: I have to get ME to where I’ll never have to drop down this low again. THEN I’ll be able to afford to take on others. It’s SO damned obvious. If I don’t take care of me, it’s certain that absolutely nobody else will. But, my heart is still like my Mum’s... caring about others. That’s comforting. Her kindness lives on.

MarginNotes: TUE:27 pain right chest - Rey’s bed - Kippa done

Tuesday 27 January 166/135

Somebody waxed the hallway floors last night as we “slept” (or what-ever)! I wonder who’s coming to visit. Inspection? We’ll find out... no doubt. Surely, it wasn’t done simply for the “residents”. - When I came out of the shower (at about 5:50am), D15 was standing at the door of the room, waiting. Why? It’s not that he (or 16) ever have anything to do. (I leave in the morning, they’re in bed. I come in at the end of the day, they’re in bed!) So why the shower so early? Perhaps to wait and see something? The “wonders” of this place never seem to cease. - I’ve got pain in the right side of my chest this morning. Difficult breathing. Collapsed lung? I should be so lucky. - But there were perfect connections to work this morning. I even let a Q41 bus go by because I was so early! And... last night, a good night’s sleep! As I say, the “wonders”... never cease. - The weather forecast calls for a storm coming tonight. I’ve got a broken umbrella. But, as it all goes along, I’ll figure what I need to do as I face the “what-ever is to come”. It’s how I survive, I suppose. (I’m dozing-off at 10:05am sitting at TG’s kitchen table!) OK. Let’s go. Tummy’s grumbling, a sign of not-so-good things to come. It’s not “hunger” any more. Instead, it usually heralds an “emergency” need for a loo, and most of the time, when there’s no loo immediately handy. - Mrs. mentioned putting or taking Mr. into *Hospital for Joint Disease*. I wonder... She’s in such a blissful state of ignorant denial. There’s nothing anybody can do for him at this point. The best and only sensible thing to do FOR him is to make him as comfortable as we possibly can. But she continues to insist that we do more, push him harder. The poor man. It’s no wonder when he’s in horrendous moods. He knows better... even with his limited cognition. And we, the ones who have the training and experience, in the eyes of Mrs. are incompetent. Well... so be it. No sense belabouring the issue. - And so, the day went: I tried to instruct Mrs. on proper Foley catheter care. She’s very much a Cyndi M. who believes that she knows better, won’t listen, wants miracles, needs to whine. Makes me sick. But I did what I could, and what I should and that’s about all that can be done. I’m wondering if I’ll get paid for all the extra time I put in here now that I arrive early. I sincerely doubt it. And if not? Not much I can do about it. I need to leave the shelter when I do to get to work. Besides, I don’t want to spend any more time “in” at the shelter than I must. So I’ll think of it as time away, in the world, in a “home” and not on the streets and not in the shelter and I’ll be thankful for that much. - At “clock-out time” I did so promptly, said my kindest “Buh-bye” and dashed through the back-yard gate, out and away! - But the sweetest thing happened today: As I’m standing waiting for the bus to HT, a “toot” of a car horn. Mrs. JS and daughter, Susan! They gave me a lift to HT’s and, believe it or not, the trip by bus gets me there in about an hour. But by car? The trip takes not more than 10 minutes! Public transport is

miserable in this city. I got to my next case before 1:00pm! - So today I note here: Mary (Mr. HT's daughter) enjoys getting into debates on abortion. How "Catholic" she is! How brain-washed. Almost interesting to think that people can still be such "followers". But, as always, it's such a pleasure to talk with her... about almost anything. She's a breath of the freshest air really. And she makes my time there such a pleasant visit. It's a delight to be able to "discuss and debate" with people who know things and are open to discussions. Really! It's wonderful! - Today, she too got a call about me and my "performance". The agency keeps calling my clients for reviews. I'm wondering what that's all about. Protocol? Or what? I'm not going to be concerned as long as I make enough to move on! Mary says it's not the first call either. Well, maybe the agency is truly concerned that all is going well with the clients. That's rather admirable, I should say. Still, it's a bit concerning... the repeated calls. Oh... the purpose and reason will all surface in their course. Me? I'll just keep doing what in my heart and mind I know to be correct. - The return to the mayhem tonight was the usual little horror. 15 and 16 in bed at 6:30pm. Mark comes to ask me if his eyes are yellow "yet". MRSA and now Hepatitis?!? And Eddy is, as Eddy always is... laying there. It used to be the booze from Geo and the stench of Brindou that made this room a bit on the atrocious side. Now this. The nastiest part? "White" men being like the dregs. Goes to show you never can tell. The Spic down the hall is in the loo "making pretty" in the mirror and talking about being a proud "Boriqua". None of them have a damned thing to be proud of. Loud. Dirty. Violent. Classless. And he's putting the U.S. down! Free shelter, food, clothing and he's putting the country down? Nothing more than *typical*. Just typical. *Common*. And they bitch because "we" find "them" repulsive. They obviously don't have the mental capacity to comprehend... so there's nothing that can be done to correct or rectify the situation. Best course of action: ignore and avoid... them and the situation. And so I do... both, as much as is humanly possible. - So I finished my chicken patties, tossed on rolls, cold from the locker, for quick meal and then got right on to the kippa which I FINISHED AND WASHED! Finally! A black one for "all the time". A bit of blue and a round of off-white. But, it's done! It's fine! *I did it!* Now to remember *HOW* I did it and do more of them. Hey. It's a diversion and distraction. I need that... VERY MUCH NOW. - Afterwards, I took a stroll over to the "East Wing" to see Geo and show him the finished kippa. He was so intrigued by them and used to stare at me as I worked. But when I got there I found that he's still irresponsible and too cocky about himself and the shelter. In the loo, he lights a smoke and some fat, UGLY old Russian (they call it "Shrek" and for excellent reason too) comes in yelling "NO! NO Shmoke!" It pushes Geo and Geo goes to fight. But I pointed-out the obvious (of course): if he beats the old man, *he'll* look bad... young guy beating the crap out of an old, and

obviously not-so-sane troll. Besides, he *was* smoking. If the wrong people got that information, the situation would be doubly bad for him. So the fighting stopped. Meanwhile, I was almost sorry the ugly bastard-troll didn't touch me. I've been ready to simply punch *something* out. And I don't particularly care what. He'd be my therapy, and I could claim "self defence". How charming it would be. - A tour of the East Wing followed. The ceilings in the halls are tiled for sound absorption. Sure, there's an echo, but nothing like what we have on the West Wing. There are traces of the original architecture all about. Arch-ways in the hall. Some have been "walled" to make extra rooms where there weren't any before. The place yells of its former days as a rather "notorious mental hospital" but it must have been quite elegant at one time. What a shame that people strive for destruction. The place is just sad, sad. - So I came back to my corner and crawled-in for the night. In my doze, I heard shuffling feet come into the room. I thought it was Rey so I continued to doze. But then I noticed the light was still on so I checked to see if Rey was OK. Well! The old guy who got hauled out last evening, "crucifixion-style" was in Rey's bed! I was so ready to jump on the bed and break the old guy's spine, but "sensibility" set in. To do that to the old guy would have been, first and foremost, just NOT the humane thing to do, secondly, over-reaction, and third, just plain stupid on my part. So, instead, I went to get Rey. *He* came in, grabbed the guy and shoved him out the door. Luckily, I still had the linens Rey had gotten for me today so he could change his. The old guy stunk so badly that he left the odour on the bed linens! (No *blankets* are available these Winter days, by the way. Isn't that something? The "Summer" blankets are being "re-called" for the season and yet, there's nothing to replace them. And we're expected to be comfortable with only ONE over-sheet. Oh well... as we joke here: We get what we pay for. Indeed.) - 11:15pm now and no peace. No sleep! But the very idea, that somebody walks the hall, finds a bed and gets into it? What the Hell all anyway? But Rey made his bed and soon we were all down for the night... whilst the trash in the halls and loo carried on. - Tomorrow's weather is supposed to be *bad*. I'll be eating oatmeal, cold. But, I'll be eating.

Wednesday 28 January: 167/136

I AM SO TIRED! It snowed last night into this morning and I made it to work at the usual 8:15am. *I shovelled a bit of the snow away from the back-yard walk to the fence and a bit of the side-walk for Mrs. TG.* (Yes, me... the one in whom she's so terribly disappointed. I note.) She went out for coffee. I journalled. She's returned. I'm journalling and ready for sleep! - This morning, at the shelter, the shower was a mere trickle of water. 15 was up. (Of course, for breakfast... it must eat!). 16 was

sleeping. Rey was already on the move. - I've noticed that 15 tends to walk about the place bare foot! How I wonder what goes through people's minds and now I have no wonder how he (it?) managed to contract all the illnesses, ailments and diseases he talks about. Dense? Well, just proves how some people just won't even learn and others just simply can't. Bare feet on these floors where everything from the streets of New York City is dragged in, and there's no telling *what* else is on them around here. - Me? At the moment, I've got another 2 hours here, then 3 hours at JS's and I *SO* want to sleep! - The snow is now rain. I'm finishing my coffee. Let it be a quick 3 hours this afternoon... and QUIET! - And so... I left TG's in a drizzle. Then, just missed the Q41 bus at 12:30pm! So, I stood in the rain. Took the next Q41 to 111th Street and Lefferts Blvd. for the Q10 bus. What a damned awful farce! SEVEN Q10 buses go by and not one for my destination! They "stagger" them, some to the airport, others to some point between where I am and where I need to get to and then another that brings me to my destination. I got to JS's at just past 2:00pm and right into work too. Almost as if the "crisis" of "soiled bed and clothing had been saved... just for me to attend. - But the rest of the afternoon went very nicely. Mrs. made English muffins and coffee. Mr. admired my sketches in my little book. He called them "impressive"! These folks really do make me feel part of the *family*. Odd. When I first started there I didn't want to continue: Mrs. keeps Mr. in a dark, stuffy basement in a house that they own, she sleeps in their bed-room upstairs and says that it's easier on Mr. to be down-stairs. Yes, perhaps it is at that. But their disposition, appreciation makes me look forward to being there. - And at 5:00pm I left into only a little drizzle, so I walked to the train. AH.... I'd made it all the way to the station without getting wet in spite of having to walk close to the road, and *THERE! THEN! AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TRAIN STATION*... Some moron came tear-assing by, into a pool of water and I got *DRENCHED* just as I closed the almost worthless umbrella that the "dear agency" had given to us all... as a token of their "appreciation" for all of *our* hard work... for them! TIMING! Ice cold water! So I was in a "frame of mind" for the rest of the trip back to a place I didn't want to go to in the first place. - And now... back in the "comfort" of the little room... *So* tired this evening! Only oatmeal to eat but too tired to shop. Just no energy. There was a long queue to get into the building this evening. Some bleating Chinaman blocked us all. He was in front of me at the door. I tapped his shoulder and pointed to the end of the queue IN-side. "Chill" he says. "Too many people in there." Meanwhile, others had to stand out in the wet court-yard because of this friggin refugee. Still, I managed to say (pretty much) nothing. The sense of "entitlement" some human dregs have is... well, enough to make a civil being want to puke! And I've no sympathy, compassion nor kindness to extend to the lot of them! - When I finally got up the stairs and into

the room I got right to eating and changing. Mark commented favourably on my kippa and then we got into how depressed HE is. I gave him the lecture about being stronger than the staff is around here and how I observe them observing me and that I generally don't care what they say or do as long as they don't interfere with my income. I'm such a little "Chabadnik": doing good for so many others (meanwhile, I'd give anything to kill little Mr. Sunshine over there with his "Catholic-ness".) Yup. That's me. - OK, the evening moved along and I've signed-in, shared a smoke with Jackson from down the hall. He talked about surviving in the woods: Heating stones, smouldering twigs for bug protection, cross-bows and the likes. The regular outdoors-man. Imagine... Homeless men have quite a bit in common with the "Woodsmen"! Actually, we're WAY ahead of them... any of them. We survive in ALL situations and under ALL sorts of conditions... and primarily on our guts and instincts. We... the truly "stoic, manly men", us! - Finally at 10:30pm, I got to bed and some turd-head took up whistling, loudly, across the hall in the loo! That, of course, caused conversations and those continued until probably close to midnight. I don't bother complaining. The staff in this dung-heap wouldn't understand, or wouldn't (don't) care or, most likely, would be happy about the inconvenience and annoyance. And talking with the root of all the BS isn't worth the effort because... well... because the instigators are psychotic messes to begin with. Useless, useless all round. Constant incentive to save money and bolt! - Oh, and I had to mop the floor again tonight. Flatulent-boy(16) letting rip. Thankfully I can afford the cleaner that deodorizes and mopping the floor appears as being clean and tidy while putting down and kicking up enough fragrance to kill the offence.

Thursday 29 January: 168/137

10:10am at TG's. I got here 8:03am this morning! Tired and a bit annoyed too. HT cancelled AGAIN today! Second Thursday in a row. Second of my "Should Be" 35-hour weeks. TG is expecting miracles and blaming the "no progress" on us, the "visiting staff". HT keeps cancelling. I need to address this somehow because it's always for "health-related" reasons... which is why I'm supposed to be there in the first place. I understand that the daughter doesn't want to make my work too difficult, but as I say, I'm really not there to keep them company, to entertain and amuse, I'm there to attend to their Dad as best I can, and to make THEIR lives a bit easier, at least for the time that I'm there. But writing this does no good, makes no change in anything. I'll have to try to "introduce" the notions into our next "coffee klatch". - But, at least the roads and streets are clear after yesterday's snow and rain. I'm tired and want to doze n matter what and I'm trying

to figure how best to use my afternoon today. So much could be done... IF I had MY life back! Oh simply and just too plainly... screw me and screw it! And I can't go back to the room and into bed to REST until 4:00pm at the very earliest. - As it turned out... TG kept me late (imagine *that* if you will). I clocked-out at just past noon, and left about 25 minutes after that. Walking to the bus, I couldn't decide what to do with the time. And it was a beautiful day! So I got on the Q41 bus, went to Walgreen's on Lefferts for cigarettes and up to the Lefferts library. Printed my DHS letters AT LAST, checked some e-mails, and the community boards on-line. Got a couple of nylon/polyester laundry bags at the dollar store and headed back to the dung-heap. - Arrived about 4:30pm. A queue to get in! Today's novelty: we now have to remove our belts. There's always a new something that they come up with. But I was in scrubs. No belt! Had groceries though. All went right through. (I sometimes wonder why they let me bring in the groceries. There's supposed to be "no food" in the dorms, and I know they can tell what's in the bags and back-pack as it all goes through the x-ray. But, I'm not asking. If it wasn't for the bit of food I bring in here, I'd NEVER eat again! - When I got to the room, I was alone. *Starving!* But as I began to eat, 15 and 16 came in. No peace. I shoved my sandwiches (chicken patties, 2 patties each sandwich), and then the yoghurt down quickly. Changed into jeans (for a change from the blue scrubs) and was *so* tired! By 5:30pm, I laid down for a nap. - 8:03pm awakened! I'd *slept* through! I got up, finished a box of donuts from the locker. Geo had returned my copy of *The Wave* that he'd asked to see... because he's interested in what goes on out in Rockaway. (Thoughtful of him to return it. I didn't expect him to.) I "re-glanced" it for a bit and then, signed-in by about 9:00pm. - As I was prepping for sleep, Santiago came by for a cigarette. No exchange tonight. I just gave him a Camel. There's nothing he can do for me but he's nice enough, and it's good to have a "friend" on the staff. So I now need to budget *his* smokes into mine. Cigarettes are a form of currency in here... not so very un-like prison. - By 10:00pm all 4 of us were in bed, lights out. Rey's not feeling well lately. I wish there was something I could do to help him. Oddly, not so with the other 2. I truly don't care about them. I truly don't care about many people any more. - 11:00pm... 11:30pm... MIDNIGHT! The yelling in the halls and in the loo. The slamming of stall doors at the toilets. The *slapping* of the toilet seats. Cacophony and mayhem! An actual crowd gathered in the loo! They know better that the noise echos and carries all through the halls and into the rooms, but don't care. The noise keeps us awake! I'll never understand why this sh** is allowed. We're expected to *work* but *denied* proper sleep. Worse? The loudest of the group was Craig! THAT'S been here *3 years*, so he knows how loud it all is but yells anyway. Maddening! It's a wonder nobody's been murdered in this place... yet.

Friday 30 January: 169/138

9:04pm at the dung-heap. Signed-in. The dimmer of all the lights is on, since I climbed to the ceiling and figured how to “repair” it. For all this time, we've had blaring fluorescent lights in the ceiling, but there's smaller lights up there and me, being who and what I am, HAD to get up there and check to see what the smaller lights were for. Well! After a bit of cleaning the covers and getting a couple of incandescent bulbs at the local 9cent store... we can now have lights on and not be blinded. Leave it to me. And I can say that I'm very pleased with myself. (And I've rather surprised the others in the room as well... with my ingenuity. Never under-estimate, say I, with a grin) - WELL! THIS morning the exhaustion and fatigue FINALLY caught up with me in the worst possible way: I SLEPT THROUGH MY ALARM! REY HAD TO WAKE ME! AND HE DID SO JUST IN TIME! I made it to work OK. But I'm still a bit shaken by the experience... and more grateful to Rey than I can express or he could ever imagine! And once again... when it comes to helping the Homeless, the Homeless are the first to respond with the help that's truly needed. We actually *are* more “family” than family. - And this evening there's a “report”: Last night, DHS police (not just our “security” but the “police” had THREE VANS here. “They're cleaning up.” is what the reports are saying. The “DHS police” are actual NYC police, assigned to the Homeless shelters and the Department of Homeless Services (hence, “DHS”). They're called-in on cases where police intervention is necessary and in some of the shelters through-out the city, they're kept quite busy. Not so much at this one though, as a rule. So if they're “cleaning up”, something quite serious must have come in. Well, what-ever it was, they handled it ever so well... since I managed to sleep through the “clean up”, as heavily as I did! And may I never do THAT again! Now, knowing that I might is un-nerving! - Now then, carrying on here for now.... 15 and 16 are turned-in for the night. Rey is next door, chatting with the fellows over there, most likely “Pops” (Keith) and DuRag (Dana, as I'm to understand). He's quite the lucky bastard, out and about, as it were. - Yes, all of this is getting on my nerves. Primarily because I got in at about 7:30pm this evening, tried to get myself un-wound and ready to grab my nightly cold sandwiches and D16 wanted to turn off the brighter lights so “it” could go to sleep! Screw me! Neither he nor 15 do much of anything in the first place all day. They get their 3 free meals each day and I should function in relative darkness so they can REST?!? With all the “calm” I could find in my entire being, I said I'd dim the light as soon as I'd finished. He (16) crawled under his sheets and it wasn't but about 20 minutes later... “Are you finished writing Bud?” he says, with the slightest trace of a “snap” in his voice. I almost got up on the locker to rip out the damned fluorescent tubes to beat somebody with them! Somehow I managed to squash the urge and said “Another couple of quick

minutes. Thanks.” Meanwhile, the halls are coming alive with the noise of the retards and I’m still wondering how the HELL the staff of this waste-land expects us to work to make money to get back on our feet and out of here when we aren’t provided an environment conducive to proper rest. And as I write, 16 is off on some schizoid tangent, talking to itself from under the bed-clothes! Probably cursing me out. Oh well. It's not a matter of I “don't” give a sh** nor is it that I “can't”... right now, I simply DON'T! And 15 has returned from an evening shower, having walked bare-foot across the hall! The Spics are doing what they excel at: making un-necessary noise, yelling at each other and me? I’m feeling more like out-right killing everything in here that shows any sign of life. - Meanwhile, the DHS vans are gone from the premises. Cigarettes are no longer being sold because somebody reported the sales. Even “loosies” are becoming a rare commodity. And belts must be removed for scanning at the entrance. The mad-house has gone insane! - As for the “day”: It was an OK morning at Howard Beach. Mrs. TG says she thinks of me (and the Charge Nurse) as “family”. She's what called in some parts of the world, a “fecking LOON!” The woman's a nut-case on a rampant holiday! VNS called her again for a phone review of me. She responded most favourably, but still not giving me credit for the “Nursing” intervention she gets. I say nothing. Why bother? Just more ego stroking for her too... lying and keeping my true thoughts to myself. I need to keep the assignment! It's now at the point where I have to pull the same sh** at the shelter AND on the job! Jeezus! I have to wonder when I'm going to finally explode from all of this! - When I left TG's the Q21 bus ran *late*. But I got “Home” to Rockaway for *The Wave* and my mail at the post office. W2's from Premier and PIC! And *Direct Deposit* is now in effect so there's no more slamming myself against “Fate and Odds” to dash around the bay for my pay! *And I got holiday pay in this cheque!* The savings is now 455\$! - After all of *that*, I managed to get to JS's by 2:00pm! Mr., as always, was a major delight. Mrs. offered coffee. (Her coffee is *delicious!*) Their daughter, Susan, got pizza for all. I had a slice. And, at the end of the “shift”, Susan drove me to the train this evening! For the afternoon, I actually felt like a “human being”! What a reprieve, what a most welcome and needed delight. I'm almost at the point of forgetting what a “human being” is with all of this BS that my “life” has become. - I suppose I should be quite happy: during my “work” day, I get to be in a “home” environment in the borough I now think of as my own “home”. People are kind to me. Mrs. TG gets me coffee and bagel with cream cheese each morning. The HTs provide coffee and cookies. JSs give coffee and something with. And I'm in their *homes*, living their *lives*, with them. I get out of this dung-hole each morning and return at 7:00pm or so. The others here? They rot along, no direction, no purpose, no sense. I come here to grab a bite to eat, sleep and shower. I have work. I've got an

income. Yes. I'm thankful. Now, something/someone get me the bleating HELL out of here... SOON! - Back in The City this evening, I got off the L train, took the bus to Bellevue Hospital and went to the banking machine in the lobby there and transferred 150\$ from chequing to savings... at the ATM. SEVENTY per-cent savings! Ten per-cent OVER the "mandatory 60%!" Direct Deposit means no more pressure to get to the post office on Fridays any more. (But it leaves me awkward for cash on hand. Maybe I'll save even more this way. More savings means quicker out of here.) - Coming into this dung-heap of rejects and retards was a trip. An over-abundance of *drunks*. The damned place wreaks of booze! Even the halls! (And *I'm* expected to be so *compliant*!) For the entire week I've climbed the stairs up to the 5th floor because waiting for the lift is futile. - But, here it is 9:50pm, and here I am, almost ready to crawl beneath the covers. - Before I forget: I posted my letter to DHS Commish and one copy to the Deputy Commish, and to the *Coalition for the Homeless*. Monday, a copy goes out to the Mayor. - Ah... Craig (who Geo refers to as "Jenny Craig") is screaming in the halls. That voice is like an ice-pick in the ears. And it's always accompanied by others yelling. Tonight, Craig is annoyed because the retards are demanding coffee/tea service and Craig suddenly wants "a life". He's been running a regular little "Deli" out of his room for quite the while, charging people for hot beverages that he's some-how managed to be making in the room... on a hot-plate or something. WE don't get "a life" because of the noise of the idiot element wandering the halls, yelling to and from the "bodega" room. But he wants a life. What's more, WE have to HIDE when we use the outlets in the room (and not all rooms have one) to charge cell phones. If it's discovered, they confiscate the charger! It's all a part of the madness of the Dung-hole. - Well... I need to wash my scrubs. Tomorrow is reported to be a cold day. I've 5 cigarettes to my name and a "need" to see the heifer (a.k.a. "Case-Worker"... *that's* to laugh). Laundry day? Perhaps an early wash, late heifer. - Enough of this day. Enough! Now to try to hope for a bit of restful sleep and to wake with the alarm in the morning!

Saturday 31 January: 170/139

2:12pm and here I am, sitting and waiting again and no Ms. Simpson in her "office". As unbelievable as it is, I no sooner jotted that when she appeared *at* the hall-way from some-where. She took an old guy into her "office" for about 30 minutes and, when I saw him leave, I parked my carcass outside the door and waited, patiently, of course, until she finished her telephone conversation. She came to the door, said "Come." (as they do, as if we're dogs and they're the "masters"... nasty bunch of arrogant b..... I wouldn't even bring them "up" to the level of the worst

vulgarity) and in we went. She looked at my pay-stub, receipts for deposit and MetroCard, commented on how orderly it all is, and, in her mumble, said "I like order". And we went across the hall where she photocopied all the papers, large and small, and I was released. Yes, of course, *something* was noted in my chart, I got my new "Meal Ticket". But the point is, it all took about ten minutes! So, if this little "meeting" went so smoothly, it's a wonder why *ALL* visits can't go as quickly. But there's no sense asking. No sense at all. - And so, today I washed my work scrubs. An accomplishment. - This evening, after sun-down, to be sure, I dressed and went out for cigarettes. I do hate this City! And I hate being in it. And I hate walking about in it. I hate being in the midst of so many people, so much traffic, so much noise. I hate walking and thinking. I hate the familiar places. I hate the memories (good and bad). I hate knowing my way around here. I hate knowing where I have to return to to get out of the elements. - I got my cigarettes (2 packs) and headed to 39th/40th Streets to *Jack's* 99cent store off 5th Avenue. I was hoping to get a few things there tonight, so I could just go to the library tomorrow. All these work hours leave me no time during the week. And I'm trying to keep Shabbat as much as possible (if only for tradition and my own concept of "God"... since Fate isn't worth a mention) (how odd the pen should go empty there as I write in this note-book) in an existence such as mine. Well, true to form, *Jack's* was closed when I got there. I'd walked all the way up there for what? Exercise? So I headed for *Jack's* on 31st and 6th. None of what I wanted (and could afford at the moment) but this one had large, black umbrellas for 5.99\$ and I *NEED* an umbrella, since the "well-constructed" (so claims VNS) piece of sh** the agency gave me has gone to pieces and is completely useless at this point. I didn't have the cash on hand and so, no umbrella, I took the train to 23rd Street where I got a cross-town bus (immediately) to 2nd Avenue for quick, light shopping for something to eat tonight: yoghurt, cream cheese, donuts. Walked up to the dung-heap where, as usual, the ante room was *packed*. - Idiots galore! The lot of them can't follow a queue. The sense of not needing to follow any sort of order in the Black and Hispanic faction is simply notable. As a rule, they won't form a queue and cannot grasp that general regulations *DO* apply to them. They just thrive on chaos. And where there's no chaos, they go out of their way to create it. A simple observation. The proof, the substantiation is in the observing. Very plain. Very simple. Very obvious. As I said years ago of them: You don't have to hoist your flags, we know where you are. - New development at the dung-heap: It's become regular and mandatory that belts *must* be removed. Soon, clothing will have to be removed. But, it's easier to comply than not... A truly North-Western-European concept, that. It serves to move things along as smoothly as is humanly possible. - As I got to the 5th floor (I take the stairs to avoid being confined in a lift that seldom

functions properly... how appropriate to the location... with the likes of which I've just described) I heard the familiar bellow of "NEXT!" from the office where we sign-in! 8:00pm and sign-in began! I went immediately and did so! And on to the room to eat, and sleep. - 8:00pm and 15 and 16 were where they always seem to be... asleep!! You see? Useless comes in a variety of colours. "Ours" come in Caucasian. - So I flipped on the lights, went right to getting comfy and eating too much cream cheese and yoghurt. - By about 9:30pm, our lights went out. Rey is feeling terribly miserable with what sounds like an upper respiratory infection. He's exhausted most of the time lately. I wish there was something I could do to help. Meanwhile, I enjoy the "early evening retirement". - Ah... and before we close the day, we must include Mr. Ed (hey! Not bad. The stench is similar to a horse's arse) and his friggin bleating flatulence! The beast, no, the scum just lays there and lets them roll! I've no sympathy nor compassion. The suicidal moron is an abortion gone wrong. - *Now*, I end the day

07. February 2009

Sunday 1 February 2009: 171 days of Homelessness/140 days in the shelter

8:10pm at D18. The day ends and another bleating month begins. I wonder what little “habits” I’ve developed in this misery that I’ll take with me when I leave. Cold “Hot” chocolate at night? Hiding in the loo to smoke? Watching for somebody to come into the room at night? Half-sleeping, waiting for the lights to be thrown on for some “bed-check!”? Stuffing my world into a space no larger than this locker? Will it become a neurosis? I can’t wait to find out. - Keith just walked into the room with a box of rugelach! Little pastries of dough wrapped round a jam filling. He gave Rey and I one each. I’ve no idea where they could have come from, but the one I had was quite good. (15 and 16 perked right up to look. Keith didn’t offer either of them any. Truth be known, it’s understandable. There’s that “family” sense amongst those of us who have been here for the while, and that’s something that doesn’t exist with the “new-comers”. Besides which, we don’t know what kind of people these “new” guys are. We know that we actually work to maintain this place here, we have invested our selves in it. We give them the benefit of “time” before we form any opinions. Quite frankly, they should be grateful for that much.) - Rick came by earlier to bring 2 dinners in for Rey. He needs more food! He needs vitamins. He needs rest. I think toward the day when I get to leave here. I hope it’s before Rey goes but since he and I get along so well, I don’t like the idea of leaving him here to suffer through this. Sometimes I amuse myself and think of this as some kind of Purgatory. We’re here to suffer for some reason. We’re not quite ready for utter Hell but we’re forbidden to exist in Heaven. We are our souls, hovering over our rotting corpses, looking on in misery. This is “shelter”. - Well, I was up at 7:30am or so this morning. A clear day. So much planned. So much actually accomplished. So much not done. - A moron in the shower got ticked when I opened the full shower, changing pressure and temperature. “There’s somebody in here!” he yells at me. I ignored the comment, took my shower and my leave. As if I should defer MY shower simply because HE’S in the other one. Honestly, the sense of “entitlement” draws even to a place where there are multiple showers. Did he actually expect me to NOT use the available shower, simply because he was in one? (Of course

he did. It truly makes me wonder what these dregs are like “out-side”, in the “real” world, and I can better understand how they came to be here... senseless damned idiots, in every sense of the description.) Back to the room, I dressed, thinking I’d like to go to the Brooklyn 99cent store, then to The Bronx library, Associated market for coffee and food, Jack’s for the umbrella and back here to wash my undershirts for work. It’s a full day. What I manage to accomplish? The M15 bus to 14th Street and a walk to Union Square for a Q train running local all the way! I got to the 99cent store at 10:00am, just as it opened! But I did get almost everything on my list and, because I’d taken money (40\$) out of chequing last night, still had enough for the new *umbrella*! At noon, I was still on the damned train coming back to The City! I wore my black sneakers and they were killing my left foot. Still, I got off at 34th Street, *got the umbrella*, walked back to the dung-heap. The day was shot to all Hell. So I did my wash. I’ll be happier for it tomorrow... I suppose. I had 2 rolls and 2 packages of turkey cold-cuts here, so at 2:30pm, I ate. Started another kippa (which I ripped and re-started already) and napped from about 4:00pm to 5:15pm when “DHS Task”, what-ever that might be (it’s on their uniforms) came bounding in for “routine check” of looking at the room, under the beds, in any lockers that happen to be un-locked and that sort of “invasion”. Yup. The day is gone. - Oh... in “Task invasion”: The idiot came in, saying nothing at all, as if he had as much right to be in the room as we, the residents do, looked in my locker with his little flash light (my locker is open and today and was covered in laundry) and asked “You smokin’ in here?” “Of course not.” I said, in a tone that rang with the sound of “You moron!” “*Somebody’s* smokin’ in here.” he insisted. “It comes in from across the hall.” I calmly, but almost forcefully replied, and I know that at this point, my facial expression told him the thoughts in my head. What a friggin idiot! He comes in. I’m asleep *and* I’m the *only* one in the room. Am I smoking? Brain dead, the lot of them - Since I was awake I returned to the work on my kippa. I was alone in the room and enjoying the peace! The dead-beats had left. They moved! They actually got up and out of their beds and made motions! Imagine? - There are those in here, in this building, who sleep and eat and nothing more and nothing less. What I don’t understand is how *those* get into rooms with others who work, look for work, have ambition. What I don’t understand is why those who work and those who actually want to work aren’t put in some area conducive to those pursuits and afforded good rest, clean quarters, better conditions. The slobs don’t find inspiration in us. And we’re simply annoyed by them. - 9:09pm and still not signed-in. It’s “Super Bowl” night. The emasculated are watching on television, somewhere down the hall. No doubt there will be chaos when the game ends. A night (ANOTHER NIGHT) of no sleep is coming. - Another note: I’ve taken to mopping only the “17-

18" side of the room. Yesterday I moved the lockers to mop. Hopefully it will keep the vermin on the "15-16" side of the room. Neither of THEM do a damned thing to maintain this room. "Trash" happens in any colour... obviously. - 10:26pm The damned-dumb Puerto Rican down the hall has come to life. Rey is in. Mr. Ed is displeased with our open door for ventilation. He wants the door closed at night. We would too, but his "gas" situation makes it impossible! 15 is sleeping. I'm hungry, ready for sleep. But I fear 'twill be a god-awful night. Especially with that piece of complete trash, the one with the Rican arse-wipe (flag) on the door, shrieking up and down the halls all night. When the night comes, this Purgatory turns to Hell.

Monday 2 February: 172/141

8:25am at TG's. Inexplicably, last night wasn't as bad as expected and I managed sleep all through! The little miracles of Hell. This morning, Mr. Ed put on the *low* ceiling light to go to his locker. So the "prison" attitude is now coming through. Keith estimated 90% of what's in here at the dung-heap is convicts, serving parole time. A recent comment from somebody was "I did my time in prison and was remanded to the shelter." Well! If that's how ex-cons feel about this place, imagine how those of us with NO criminal convictions feel about it... especially when we're "bunked" with ex-cons. It's not uncommon to see Parole Officers coming to check on guys here. Usually women P.O.'s travelling in groups of 3, escorted by shelter "security". It's a joke, really. As if shelter "security" could protect let alone save. Most (but not "all") of our "security" force are disgustingly over-weight and the meanest thing about them is their petty attitude of some sort of *superiority*. Otherwise, they're utterly useless. For example: Extension cords that were confiscated on Saturday were strung across the hall again this morning. Extension cords are strictly forbidden in this place, even by documented "Agreements" we sign-off on when we come in. And the flag-Spic down the hall watched his DVD whilst sitting on the floor, in the hall last night, even as "Security" came round. They enforce *nothing* other than chaos (and they do the particularly well indeed). I suppose the only reason I manage here is because I use it all for all it's worth: a place to sleep and bathe. Other than that, it's all entirely useless. Meanwhile, at this very moment, here I sit, quietly, in a relatively nice home in Howard Beach. The sun is shining. It's a comfortable day. A rain bow of colours streams across the page as the sunlight pours in through the glass prism of the candle-stick lamp in the window. I could use a nap. Coffee and bagel will come soon, Mrs. has gone out for that and I take advantage of the "down-time". I need my own "Home". Let's see if HT doesn't cancel Thursday *again* this week. It's all about money now. By

April I want a life back. - 8:55pm At the dung-heap. I've eaten. All dairy (again). - When I left JS this warm evening and began walking to the train, the disgust of where I was headed grabbed me again, bitterly, painfully. It's hate, compounded by hate, topped with more hate, tinged with even more hate, wrapped in hate, perpetuating hate. The weather today was perfect for a return to the Bakfort. But tomorrow promises more snow. The season of uncertainty begins. And here, tonight, Mr. Ed is particularly annoying, in undershorts and "pink-blond" complexion, with a splash of "Prison Palour". 15 has gone to the laundry and returned, depressed and planning on researching other shelters in the hope of finding one that will help him find a job. For him that appears to be a pre-occupation: waiting for "them" to get him a job. He does nothing on his own to find one. And there's a decided odour in the room, in spite of my having mopped (the 17-18 half of this room). And I'm waiting to sign-in... the queue is rumoured to be lengthy tonight. Yes, here, it's a major task to look at a printed list, find bed number, sign one's name on the line beside the number. Stupidity abounds. It might be remarkable to some. Here, it's the "norm". - In the meanwhile, today, after clock-out this morning, I took the Q41 bus to 157th Avenue and walked to JS's today. Left TG and was at the bus stop at 12:33pm. I arrived at JS's by 1:00pm! Not a bad walk.... in fair weather. When, at 4:00pm, I offered to clean Mr., he said "Don't worry about it. My wife will take care of it when she comes down." When I said I'd certainly do it he replied "You don't get paid to do that." How cute! I wonder where he got that idea from. But... believe it or not, I clocked-out and stayed a half hour over to have a coffee! I was invited, I was in no particular rush to get back. I'm hating this City, this shelter that much now that even with the "threat" of having to do more work, I'd rather stay at work... off the clock. But staying for coffee (and cake or something, because Mrs. insists that we can't simply have "just coffee) helps me live on 30% of my pay and save 70%. I'll try making it living off 20% and saving 80% if I can. The sooner I get rent and security and some extra to be certain not to fail'n'fall again, the better. - And so tonight, for some reason again I recall: It took me 20 years to compile the Mr. G's music, to rebuild the music from the juke box and a period of time when I could say that I actually had "friends", some-one who "cared" about me and some-one I cared about and for... gone. There was 10 years of web-work... gone. 9/11 photos and the list of dead and destroyed businesses... gone. Quebec music and books... gone. Covered with "I'm so sorry..." I DO want my revenge and I will have it. Between now and August 2010, I will do what I must so as to leave this all behind with no regrets, no unfinished business... including the RPH theft. (There's never been a reply or response to my letters. Well, as Penelope said, "Sometimes you have to kick Fate in the ass to make some people pay. Justice no longer happens in due course. It has to be pushed.") - 9:39pm and I'm

signed-in for another night in this place. The continuity in this hole is.. well... is isn't. Tonight, they're pulling the "No Meal Ticket, no bed" crap. If we can't provide a "Meal Ticket" to prove that we have "the right" to be here, we can't sign-in. Part of me understands why and agrees. But if it's supposed to be that way, then it should be that way at ALL times, and not just when the whim strikes. And the funk in this room is choking. The horse's arse (16) appears to be another "no-bather". The "DHS Task" is on the floor again tonight. Earlier, they dragged the weed-head in 20 out. Cuffed and screaming, so I was told. Last night they busted him for a room full of people who didn't belong here. He was hauled out, and in a short while he was back. He returned to his "private" room as though nothing happened. Suspicious? Oh yes. Atypical? Not in the least. The only "atypical" around here is anything "typical". Even down to Santiago coming in for a cigarette just now. Ah, what our new goons must wonder about me supplying smokes to a staff member. Let them wonder. It just might keep their... er... brain(?) functioning... momentarily. - 10:02pm And it's confirmed: The horse's arse is the funk. Here we go. Not too much longer and it's going to be bad times in here again. Flatulence and that sweet pung of filthy flesh! GOT to go! One of us or the other. Poor Rey. The trash that settles in that bed, across from him. As he said, "THAT bed is *cursed!*" - The dumbSpic down the hall? Bed number D23, private room, he's the only one in that room. Figures. *I* could certainly benefit from a "private" room, so I could get a true night's sleep, but... - Craig just came by the door carrying a bottle of water from the cooler. The "bodega" room continues. And D20 is back, prancing about the floor. See? Nothing is "atypical" here. Stench. Stupidity. The gambit. - Tonight on the A train coming back to here, as we waited to make the turn toward Rock. Blvd. I wondered why I bother going through all of this... Then I thought to next year at this time and how close to closing it all out I've gotten, and how truly I welcome Death. In Newburgh, some years ago, the year 2010 seemed so far off in the future. We're already in the second month of 2009 already. Days just flash by, *pulling* months into years. I'll go out working, simply because that's how my Mum's family, my name-sake, went. We make our dignity by working to death. We die working.

Tuesday, 3 February: 173/142

8:23am and yet another morning at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. TG. Last night was a good night's sleep in spite of excessive heat and some sweating. My linens truly need to be laundered. It's almost a kind of "interesting" how my own sweat seems to have become disgusting and the bed linens hold a nauseating stench. - 8:16pm Back at the dung-heap. - *SNOW* today. Almost *ALL*

day. And the new umbrella held and passed the Gestapo... that's not fair... to the Gestapo... the baboons of our "security" force. I rather expected them to tell me that I couldn't bring it into the shelter because... it could be used as a weapon. I mean, they can turn anything into a weapon around this place, whether it's a fact or not. But well Hell, Brindou did it. (But we don't mention that.. he's "African"... one of "their brethren". Damned savages, the lot of them.) At any rate, I'm in, did my wash (flannel shirt and unders to go with), changed to "lounge" scrubs, eaten, mopped the floor. The dim light is on, or I'd be working the next kippa. But I'm not complaining. It's the "unusual calm" at the moment. I enjoy it when and for how-ever long (or short) it is. - This morning, at work, I'd no sooner settled to journal this morning when Mr. TG woke and I went in to "chat" with him. He speaks well in the morning, but by the time I was ready to leave, the other side reared it's ugly head. I'll swear it's because Mrs. makes him crazy with her 100 questions: Do you want tea? Coffee? Water? Juice? Cereal? Eggs? Heat on? Heat off? Get up? Stay in bed? I'll make cereal. You like soft boiled eggs. Drink some juice. Here's some water. It's enough to drive ME nuts. No wonder he goes off. I imagine she means well, and does want to make him comfortable, but she needs to accept that he honestly can't make decisions... especially not with THAT many choices. Oh well... she wouldn't listen to me if I told her, and she wouldn't listen to anybody else for that matter. - (OK. So it's Thursday already. I didn't get far enough with this day.) Suffice to say: the day finished well enough at TG's and in the snow, I made it to HT's where I had a coffee, left half of another and half my cookies at "clock-out" time. I'm just not feeling well at all and not feeling comfortable in there either. It's not so "welcoming" of late. Son Stephen is on holidays in Aruba and I just can't stomach Joey and his nasty comments about *everybody*. The schedule for them is down to 2 days each week. It would be great to get JS these 2 days and drop HT. But they were kind and gifted 50\$ for the holidays. I must remember that. (Ah... this is what accepting gifts leads to: They gave me x so I owe them y. This is at a complete halt, to be more than certain.) - When I left, I got a pack of cigarettes at the Walgreen's out there, grabbed a Q10 bus to the Lefferts train. - Wow! Did it *snow*! I'm truly glad I got the new umbrella when I did! "Fate" slipped. I did good. No doubt this "good for me" deed will be suitably punished in due course and a "whammy" is on the way. - And..... As the lights went out tonight, at about 11:00pm there was major screaming in the hall. "TonyDrama"(Queen) got his phone stolen. He'd plugged it into the charger, plugged the charger into an (illegal) extension cord, plugged the extension cord into an outlet... in the hallway OUT-side of his room. WELL! Why not just put up a "Take Me" sign? Obviously though, no sign was necessary and somebody followed the wires and did... take it. Honestly! If I can figure this place out in this much time, it puzzles me why the others,

who appear to be much better “seasoned” can't. OH! But just before that little incident, some DHS turd-bag walks right into this room, puts on the light, “How y’doin’ guy?” he says to me. He walks over toward the window, stands in the middle of the room, looks at 16 and 17, then snaps a quick look into my locker (which I keep open, with my bed situated so that if anybody tried to get into it, he'd have to climb over the bed and me to get to it, and, with no further words, he simply leaves. He *did* put out the light though, I have to give him that much. Still... NO PEACE NO MATTER WHAT! This place is so much like its origins and we're being treated like “mentally deficient” savage morons.

Wednesday 4 February: 174/143

It was all just starting to come together for me; more hours and steady assignments. But “Fate” suddenly woke up and realised that things are going too, TOO well for me and... with-out warning or even a hint, Mrs. TG got Mr. into re-hab! Today! This evening! He'll be “admitted” which means he won't be at home until the “re-hab” efforts are exhausted! TWENTY HOURS EVERY WEEK, RIPPED AWAY! And it's not only the hours being taken away, it's the time I've actually invested in the case, the on-the-clock and the extra time, the time I made it there when I didn't want to be, the time I stayed when I seriously wanted to sign-off the case and tell them both to shove themselves, and all the rest. I suppose it's the nature of the job, but what would have made it better, to a point, would have been a little advanced notice of some kind. A simple word of warning. But I don't suppose I'm worth even that much. Ah... well... the “extras” stop today. I have to make a conscious effort at being less “giving”. It's certainly not appreciated... at all! - When I left this afternoon, AT “clock-out” time, I *walked* to JS. I SO needed the, what's called “decompression time”. AND I made it there, on foot, casually, in about 30 minutes!!! That's about 30 minutes LESS than the bus takes. Yessiree indeed! The transit system in this city is for sh**. - The day went really rather quite well indeed and when it was time for me to leave, daughter Susan drove me to the train. I doubt she'll ever know how much her kindness means to me, especially after a full day of working... and this evening, even more-so! - OK-and-then... Tonight, Mr. Ed (D16, the “cursed” bed) disappears. In the middle of the night, some Over-nighter got the bed. He came into the room, snapped the light on and asked “D16?”. Poor Rey just said “There.” and pointed to the bed. The Over-nighter put the light out, went over to the bed, got in under Eddy's linens and that was the end of that. I have NO idea who or what it was because I didn't see it when I woke this morning, but I DO appreciate that he/it simply got into the bed quietly... and

went to sleep. Now we have to wonder what in Hell's name will be in that bed next! Oh well... that's the way it is in this place.

Thursday 5 February: 175/144

11:40am Mid-Manhattan Library, how about that? Back at the library! But I am *SO* tired! The worst thing about not having work in the morning is that I have the time to experience just how run-down and worn-out I truly am now. But this gives me "Catching-up" time (if I can stay awake). - It's very cold this morning and quite honestly, I need a smoke. I have to be at HT's at 1:00pm today, but that's just fine. At least I have work, and even a little income still. And for a while, I'm back to mornings at the library for more "Logging" my "Monogram" Journal again. As much as it could kill me, I actually appreciate the return to what was "my normalcy". - OK!!! I wrote that much for this morning's entry and *bolted* for the train. Some-how, I lost track of time and timing for the train travel! I kept checking the time, noting it, I thought, and then, truly suddenly, I was about to be *LATE*! It makes no sense: looking at the clock, noting the time and still, something in my brain completely failed to register any of it! I *MUST* be losing my sense! *ALL* of it! GOOD! Maybe I'll just slip away into some Great Oblivion, be stuffed into a Mental Ward some-where where I can rot the rest of my existence away... in insanity. How wonderful. I used to half-joke about looking forward to having a psychotic break... It would be the only "break", holiday I'd ever get in this life. Well, looks like I'm ticketed, booked and setting sail! Anchor a-WEIGH and aWAY! Toot! Toot! Woosh! Woosh! Off we go! Hurray! - But... as "Life" and "Fate" and a splash of "God" would have it, I arrived, as it turned out, at HT's at just past 1:30! Immediately, I got to work helping Mary disassemble the "Easy Pivot" device that was supposed to help get Mr. in and out of bed and chair, but failed miserably, for return shipment. *We* had great fun packing it up. But Joey got on my last nerve today with his anti-Semitic remarks. Today he blamed the Jews for putting Obama into the presidency and for letting him waste taxpayers' money. So, today, I let my tongue go... a little... and told him that his remarks made him appear very stupid and that he shouldn't insult his father that way, making people think that his parents would bring such ignorance and stupidity into the world. I thought it would mean immediate dismissal but, to my amazement, he got up and left the room. Mary actually *THANKED* me for finally coming back at him! Apparently, she's been aware of his remarks all along and they've bothered her. She never apologized but she did tell me that he's got some very serious problems and that she and Stephen want him to seek professional help. Seems he's not simply anti-Semitic,

he's delusional as well. He makes inappropriate remarks all over. Still, tonight I was about ready to call me off the case... BUT I NEED THE MONEY! How bleating miserable and mercenary have I gotten? - Well, departure from the house this evening was almost funny. It might have been to de-fuse the situation, but it did make for a "friendlier" day and evening. - The commute back to this trash dump was time for a little snooze. Nothing worth the time though. I got my bus, got my trains, got the next bus and it was the "regular" nonsense getting into the building, up to the room where for the most part, I simply and blindly followed the "routine" of changing out of scrubs, waited for "sign-in" (which is now referred to as "paying the rent"), and having done, crawling under the sheets and blankets and silently hoping for at least, a worth-while time of some kind of sleep.

Friday 6 February: 176/145

With the morning to myself, I headed to the Mid-Manhattan Library for 10:00am and my 45 minutes on-line. Got a bit more of this to the on-line digital Journal and then headed "Home" to Rockaway and to the post office and my pay advice. Thankfully, I don't have to RUN to get my cheque any longer! - Then, on to JS for the evening. It's become such a pleasure to be in that house. Mr. is such a pleasure to work with because he actually does *try* to work with those of us who want to help him! And daughter Susan is so very kind. It's like "family" and they certainly are better than what remains of the one I was born into! I'd like to go on about them, recording how truly kind, attentive and sensitive they are but my energy level just won't let me. (How I used to *love* writing. How, now, it's actually an effort.) - I wish I could recall the evening when I left there. But I can say that I do enjoy the stroll in Ozone Park these days. The planes. The open space. The open sky. How odd that Queens has become "Home" to me. In all the years that I've been in this city, this was territory I never had any desire to see, except for the brief time, some 30 years ago, when I'd looked for a place to live in Jamaica Estates. And even then, although it was nice enough, I made maybe 3 visits to look at flats, found it to be quite pretty, and never went back. Rockaway was a "double-fare" zone on the subway line and so, I never ventured out there, but always, some-how wanted to. I was intrigued back then. And now, here, today, heart and spirit "belong" here, and I long to get back... soon... very, VERY soon! - As for the night in the shelter? "Common". Just "common".

Saturday 7 February: 177/146

What can be said for Saturdays of late? The mornings are spent like this one. I lounge about, waiting for the misery of not knowing what BS I'll be forced to handle just to make my mandatory meeting with Ms. Simpson. This morning, I worked on a new off-white and black kippa. One to wear with my tallit (prayer shawl worn at services), when I finally return to Shabbat services. My stomach churning all the while, painfully churning, as if at any moment, I'm just going to "blow out" everything inside me... bodily organs and all. Painfully. - Visits with the "Case Worker"... It just can't be a simple matter. She sits at her desk, waiting for "her client" to "Come" to her. All the while, the lackey at the office door denies "her clients" entry. Ah, but today's visit was a pleasant *shock*: When I finally got to see it... her... she copied my pay-stub, MetroCard and savings receipt, typed some crap to my "ILP" (Independent Living Plan), I signed it as necessary, she wrote a new meal ticket and in all of maybe 15 minutes, I was out of the office and back to Shabbat lounging and some more crochet on the kippa! Imagine? She CAN get all things done quickly but her, her sloth and slovenliness and incompetence prohibits most of the time. What a shame. So fat, so brain-dead. And I noticed she's so lazy that she doesn't move her mouth when she speaks! The lips open and the sounds come out. It's almost like having to learn another language. More of my torment and torture. Existence must not ever be pleasant! Not ever!

Sunday 8 through Saturday 14 February:

(This week simply slipped by. I followed my normal, daily routines of library and, when I had an assignment, work. But the exhaustion, the constant pain in my gut and generally all over my body at this point, just made it impossible to keep up with writing. This was the beginning of the worst period when it was all I could do to simply get up in the morning, get myself together, get out, either to work or to the library, get my travels in, during which, for the most part, I slept. Sleeping on the buses and trains, whenever the opportunity made it possible to close my eyes. This is the beginning of losing time... losing my mind, for the most part, becoming a "nothing". Just following routine... moving forward... just forward... moving, moving, moving... forward... with no thoughts about much of anything at all.)

Sunday 15 February: 185(6 MONTHS OF HOMELESSNESS BY THE CALENDAR)/154(4 MONTHS IN THE SHELTER)

6:52pm My bowels are *knotting*. I can't tell if I'll pass gas or blow my intestines out. So much pain and no-where to go to escape, to sit on a toilet and wait for what's to come. It's been a terrible 7 says since I last journalled. SO MUCH FATIGUE, PAIN IN THE BOWELS, RIGHT ARM AND SHOULDER... FATIGUE! And, for a brief period, a new morning patient ("Fish") in a flat FULL of roaches and stale stench, a new D16 who came in to take over with snoring through the night. And... fatigue. I've occupied my time involved in completing an off-white and black kippa which I finished just last night. I didn't have the energy to put pen to paper. Even now, the pain in the right arm takes the pleasure from this. But there is relative calm (for the moment) in the halls, Rey is, I should think, next door, 16 is out peddling his candy bars, 15 is reading a paper or doing a cross-word or something. So, it's time to try and capture 7 days as best I can, whilst I may... I kept little notes in my pocket calendar, so I'll work from that. Probably not much detail will be recorded because my brain seems to be going quite dim. Fatigue, general disgust and developing apathy toward much in every day affairs. But, that aside... (7:45pm) I started to complete the entry for the 5th time when my bowels took me across the hall! Very little comes out these days, but what does is *acrid*. And it isn't done yet. The pain is still there (here?) and I'm exhausted and ready for sleep! - Let's try this re-cap thing again... later.

Monday 16 through Friday 20 February:

(Another 5 days, sadly lost... lost in notes in a pocket calendar, lost in time, lost in the miasma that took my body, my brain, my mind, my memory... Lost... now, forever. Sad... lost... like me, as I am these days... lost. Lost. Another 5 empty days of simply existing, and nothing more. I'm removing me from this "life" of late, "functioning" only as I must, keeping this little horror of mine inside of me, to myself. There's no sense in telling anybody else. The others in here have their own troubles. The people who are "employed" to listen to and try to alleviate such troubles are, in all honesty, out of reach. Besides, I don't really want any "help" with any of this. I don't even have the will to battle any of it any longer.)

Saturday 21 February: 191/160

TOWN AND VILLAGE SYNAGOGUE - Tiferet Israel!!!!

THIS was, with-out ANY doubt, beyond ANY wildest imagination, *THE MOST INCREDIBLY WONDERFUL DAY* I have had in *SO VERY LONG* a time! JUST MAGNIFICENT! And a day that, even though there are no notes written about it any-where, a day that I will remember...

ALWAYS!!! I MADE IT TO SERVICES THIS MORNING! I threw ALL caution to the wind, got up this morning on time, grabbed a cleansing shower, put on the best clothes that I had amongst the almost-rags in my nasty metal locker, and headed out the door into this chilly but wonderful Saturday morning and, although it took every bit of energy and courage I could find any-where in this deteriorating body (and soul), I went... TO SCHUL! AND IT WAS LIKE WALKING DIRECTLY OFF THE EARTH AND INTO A "HEAVEN" THAT I'VE ONLY HEARD TELL OF. The service was beyond description. For the few hours of this morning, I was back in the "divine comfort" of the chanting that brought such PEACE to every bit of my being. It was "familiar". It was as consoling as the caress of a loving Mother. I was a stranger, quiet and reserved, to myself, but I was with a FAMILY that I haven't known in more years than I could even TRY and recall... a FAMILY that I BELONGED TO AND WITH! The melodies of the chants went into and through and around me. From the moment I silently walked into that sanctuary, and the greetings of "Shabbat shalom" in the kindest of voices, through the chanting of the chazzan AND the congregation... I read the words printed on the pages of the siddur (prayer book) and this morning, they had meaning, MEANING! And as I shuckled (swaying as I prayed), it was truly as if I was, at last, in rhythm with everything in Creation, since the very beginning of time! I... WAS... HOME!!! HOME!!! ME! I WAS HOME!

Even the walk back to the shelter was brighter, lighter. And I was more secure in everything... even just "being". I didn't stay for oneg (the light "lunch" following the service where the congregation gathers to eat, drink and keep in touch with one-another each week). I wasn't quite ready for that just today. But... WOW! Just all too simply... WOW! - Even today's "confrontation" with Ms. Simpson couldn't break me! Yes, I still physically felt the pains that have become very much a part of "me", but today, they weren't able to destroy me. Today... I was... HOME!

Sunday 22 February through Wednesday 25 February:

(4 more days... buried under some blanket of darkness, deep away, in a place I know nothing about and don't have the desire to search. Pain... just pain and fatigue. I feel drained to the point of being "gone" myself. "Myself"... I don't even know who, what or where THAT is any more. "Me" is drifting away, inside first. I keep going to bed at night wondering what sort of response or reaction, if any, there would be when they come to yell at me to wake up... and I don't. But, in this place, here, I can pretty much rest assured, what-ever they do, it'll be nothing more, nor less than "protocol". I know I won't be the first... and assuredly, I won't be the last. But I don't... not... I CAN'T care any longer. I just can't. I don't have the physical or the mental stamina

any longer. I just don't. There is only ONE day, in memory... a most moving day. I can only put it in here, for now, because it has such importance that it IS fresh in my mind... what's left of that:

Thursday 26th February, my Hospice case in Howard Beach, died I was with him only a couple of days but he gave me “reason” and “purpose” again... even for that shortest while. I had to inform the family. I'd bathed him wonderfully, shaved him cleanly, cleaned his mouth. He was “ready”. He left. He was in “Old Howard Beach”. I still have the case in “New Howard Beach” to remind me that I'm not in Rockaway.

Friday 27 February

And again, another day, one blink of an eye, and all is gone by, missing, in a dark void... of nothing. Running? Oh yes, there's ALWAYS “running”, from place to place, borough to borough, buses to trains to buses to trains, islands to main-lands, to islands and shores... and back again. And in the winds that are “time”, all is blown about... and blown away, and this one day moves on to the next... different, but so very much the same... the same... the same.

One day out of 5. These days, it's the best I can do. Well, just as 50 years of my life vanished with 3 brief and insincere words in an e-mail... the rest of me begins to vanish. May it happen soon, may it happen quickly, may it happen peacefully, may it happen silently, may it happen.)

Saturday 28 February: 198 Days Homeless and 167 Days in the shelter.

8:05pm and... “Hotel California” *blasting* in the hall. “Jenny Craig” (the “bodega boy” across the hall) has been *cranking* his radio all day long. This morning, we heard “old-time blues”. This evening it was tunes from the 30's and 40's. Rock now. It's annoying at this juncture, but this afternoon, Rick got into a little dance step to “Stuck In The Middle With You”. For me though, there hasn't been much to dance about this month. I haven't had the energy to write. Even today my lungs gurgle, my nose runs and on most nights now, I wake through the night in coughing fits. I'm sleeping on month-old linens, never changed nor washed. It was a strange and not delightful month over-all. Save for finding *Tiferet Israel* on Saturday, the 21st. Services duplicated CSAIR. A few hours of familiarity in a time that is never “same”, never “familiar”, never “sane”. A few hours of *PEACE*. A few hours to escape.

I'm going to try now to recount what I can from the missing days. It's difficult to remember

much of anything, even from a few moments ago. I don't know what's happening to my mind, but it seems everything is “slipping”, and worse yet, I don't want to grab it and bring it back. But here's my best effort...

This month, news is that George (the first D15) got transferred to the “Borden Shelter”, Rich (with whom I shared stories of Ozone Park and such) got an SRO (Single Room Occupancy... “studio” flat) on W.35th Street. We're on our 3rd D16. Mark (D15) is proving to be a strange *case*. (“Wild Horses” is no blasting in the hall. I never liked the song. Tonight it throws me back many years. I know why my music has been stolen from me. Music *hurts* now.) - February has been a painful month. I've been sick for most of it. The relative “comfort” of the “common-place” here has been destroyed. Rey is down, rather depressed. I'm supposing it's because, for the most part, his general “social circle” is diminishing. Around here, one of the most important things is knowing the others around you, creating some kind of bond, knowing the extent of that bond and holding it for as long as possible. For example: When I was at A108, Angel was my “bond”. I learned that I could trust him... to an extent. However, on the evening he actually picked a fight because somebody was in the shower, I didn't defend him. To do so was senseless. Had he waited his turn, all would have been fine. When I came to D18, I was the “new” guy. I couldn't get into the locker because the previous lock hadn't been removed. I stored my belongings under the bed for 3 days. Nothing was disturbed. I learned that I could trust the other 3 in the room and so, I began to speak, to talk with them. Back then, it was, for the most part, Rey and George. Quiet, clean, respectable, respectful. Brindou kept to himself. He and I spoke only to maintain a sort of connection and to establish certain limitations on the situation at hand. As time passed, I learnt that Rey has incentive to get out of here, to move on, make better, George has succumbed to the general malaise of shelter-existence. He's in it for the free ride. But he's clean, respectful, in general... a lazy drunk specifically. Brindou? He and those who have followed him in D16 was the “curse” of the room. Delusional and prone to violence, disrespectful, noisy, dirty, he was the element placed in our midst to ensure that the rest of us would never become so comfortable as to “settle” in. He was there to remind us of our “homelessness” and that the situation and circumstances are to remain “temporary” no matter what. - Rey and George had been in 5W-101 the longest. They had had the time to learn each other, adapt, adjust, bond. Brindou was the 2nd D16 for them. He made no effort to “belong” and they made no effort to change him. When I arrived, I made the effort to integrate and my efforts were appreciated and accepted. Meanwhile, Rey had somehow done likewise with Keith, Rick, Rich and (to a specific extent) Dana (Du-Rag). Over the course of months, Du-Rag proved to be a complete idiot, drunk, druggie. The other 3

showed ambition (to get out) and a great sense of survival. Good alliances. Good support. Good network. But now, at this juncture, the elements are disassembling. Rey is becoming a solo entity even though he and I maintain some sort of “bond”, his “structure” is diminishing. It’s taking a toll... on him and of course, on me. As he’s affected by the disappearance of his “social structure”, I too am affected because he is an integral part of *my* “social structure”. It’s a bit painful but the instinct to survive is remarkable. As the changes take place around me, they take place inside as well. Lessons learnt, experiences, situations, surroundings are integrated and assimilated. Increasingly, my existence is becoming “mine” and the external is becoming less important.

HEAVY METAL IN THE VEINS

THE *LEAD IS “IN”

After 167 days of unknowingly drinking leaded tap water, I was in daily agony, with intestinal cramps, headaches, mood-swings, and such an inability to focus on so much and forgetting just about as much. I continued to go to work every day that I had an assignment, but it was difficult at best. Many were the days (and evenings) of being on a subway train and suddenly, QUITE suddenly, the *need* to RUN to a loo would strike. Quite a few were the mornings when I would ride the A train to Rockaway Boulevard in Queens, get off the train to connect with the Q41 bus and... well, let us say that I learnt how to walk briskly into the nearest Dunkin Donuts, slip, perhaps undetected, and into their “Employees Only” loo, hoping for, at least, enough undisturbed time to empty by pain-riddled body of what-ever it was that seemed to want to explode “me” into either tiny fragments or massive clots. During these times I made a point of noting every store, diner, restaurant, library... any place that might and did have a publicly accessible “restroom”. And I made note of how RARE this common and daily necessity is. It became a “pre-occupation”, and for perfectly good reason: I was, for the most part of my day, on public transport, often for 2 hours at a trip, around New York City, wearing white medical scrubs, often clenching my jaw, breathing heavily and hoping that I could hold my inner-most organs steady until an “appropriate” moment arrived when, in utter painful despair, I could allow the course of Nature to... “flow”.

The entries that follow ere-after then to be sporadic. In re-editing them, knowing now what I didn't know then, I find that the symptoms of **“lead poisoning”* are evident through-out. It wasn't until MUCH after this journal had begun when a wise “dorm-mate”, “Viejo” Cruz brought to my attention that the plumbing in the old building was still the original lead that had been used when it was built in **1931. He advised me to stop drinking the tap water, as I'd been doing since the day I'd come into the shelter . I did. I *had* noticed that on every floor in the building, there were, at the very least, 3 “water coolers” of bottled water, but I'd thought them there for the “staff” (having NO cause to believe that we, the “residents” should benefit from such a “luxury”), and so I never thought to avail myself. Well, indeed, I stopped drinking the tap water, and began filling my juice bottles at the coolers for my daily coffee and drinking and yes, in fact, with-in a week's time, I noticed, that my “symptoms” disappeared. However, this all took place during my “Re-visit”. For over a year previously, I'd been, quite honestly, filling my body with lead.

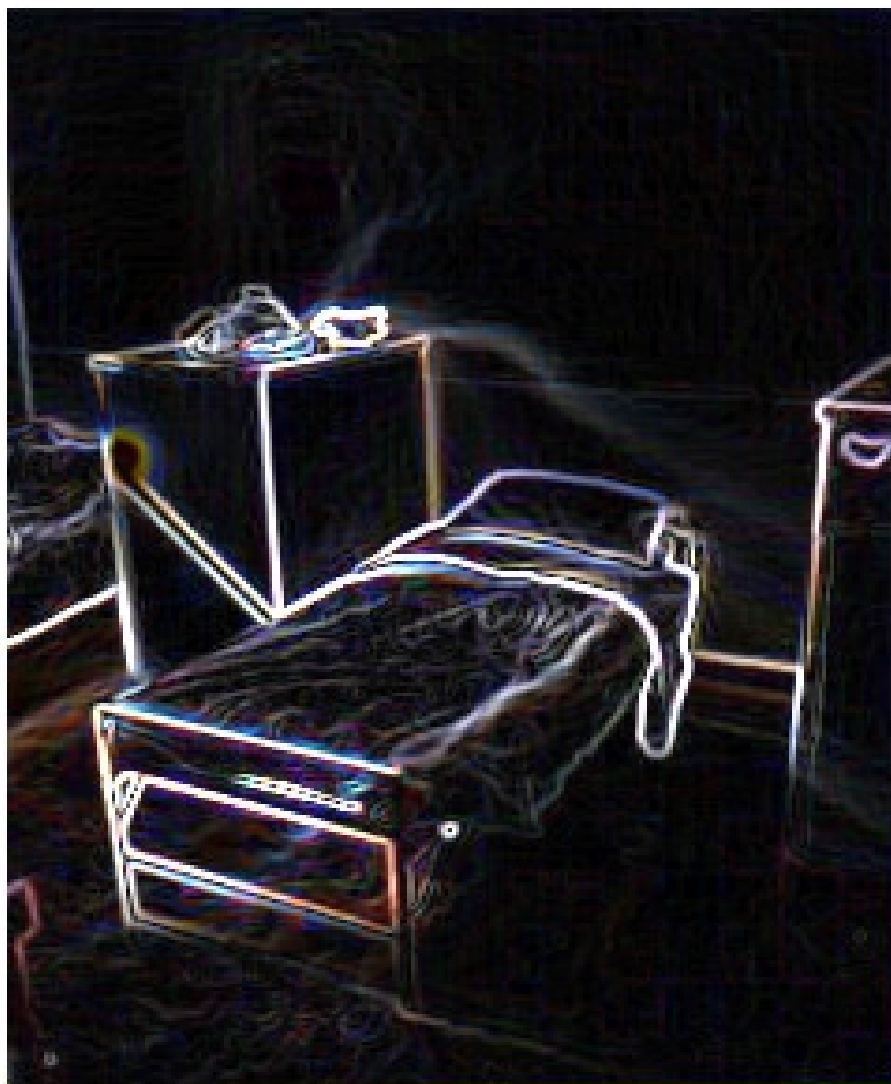
In retrospect, I realise that had it not been for leaving the shelter for a while, *and* for the sagely advice of Señor Cruz, well, I often wonder these days, whether these written words of this Journal would have ever been brought out of their hiding... never mind, to the eyes of the world. And I shudder when I think: My promise to my shelter-mates to publish them so that others may know OUR story, may have never been fulfilled.

There are notes that are missing, gone forever. They were jotted in little “pocket calendars”, little books whose existence and safe-keeping, unfortunately relied on the promises of others... others who referred to themselves as my “friend”, or “BFF” (best friend forever) but who thought them trifle, worthless. Since they're “gone”, nothing more really need be said on the matter. The absence of the calendars tell the full story better than I could elucidate any-where or in any fashion.

But with the notes that have been “saved” and “salvaged”, I continue here-after, staying true to the Journal and even truer to the daily experiences not only of myself, but of my “shelter-mates”, and, more than probably, all too many Homeless persons not only in this shelter, but the world-over. Nothing has really been diminished by the absence of noted days and weeks because, well, what *is* recorded very much covers even the missing notes. Any given day not noted was and is the same as those that *have* been recorded. I won't make commentary on those, I'll let them speak for themselves.

*<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/lead-poisoning/basics/symptoms/con-20035487>

**<http://www.scoutingny.com/the-creepiest-hospital-in-manhattan-arkham-asylum-in-nyc/>



08. March 2009

Sunday, 1 through Tuesday, 31 March 2009:

(There are no notes, no Journal entries for the entire month of March. However... I can recall one event of this month and I include it here:)

This month of March had become rather banal, if one could ever truly use that term with any reference to residence in a Homeless shelter. But the truth of the matter is that by this time, I had given-in to the “routine”, and too, there was the matter of the chronic pain, fatigue, inability to mentally focus on all too much for all too long. Matters of conflict in the dorm had rather settled, and, in a way, I suppose we had all become so accustomed to what-ever happened that, for the most part (and I remember it well), the general atmosphere had turned almost “family-like”. Daily, we would wake in the morning, each at his own time, leave the building for the day during the week and on week-ends, those who chose to remain would do so while the others would leave (particularly me) to do what-ever it was that we did to occupy the day. There was also the matter of our “extended family members” leaving, either because of “non-compliance” with the ever-changing regulations (for example: failure to conform to nightly curfew of 10:00pm, failure to “sign-in” or register for one's bed or being absent on the nightly “bed checks” when, in the middle of the night, some member of the hierarchy of “staff” would, unannounced, walk into the room where we were to be sleeping, take inventory of those who were present and note who was missing... all of which was “punishable” by extradition from the shelter, or, one's bed... one's room.) or having been transferred to a different shelter else-where in the city, and in some cases, having been provided with or having found on their own, a flat, an apartment, a place to call... “Home”. We who remained, felt the loss of comrades, friends, dorm-mates, cohorts quite deeply, and a kind of depression would take hold in the emptiness that once was that person or those people. And in that depression, routines changed or disappeared.

There is, however, one point I recall, and will, in all likelihood never forget because it affected me directly and personally: The disappearance of CW.

He'd been gone from our daily lives for a while... several days in fact, with no word from or about him. The guys would ask *me* about his where-abouts and always say that, of all the people in the Shelter to "buddy-up", CW and I were probably THE most un-likely two that anybody would have ever expected. But the fact was, we were usually seen together, in the halls, sitting together in the dorm, and so forth. When I told people that I had no idea where he was or what he was doing, that seemed to bother them more-so. If *I* didn't know where CW was, then it was most suspicious.

Friday 27 March 2009: 225 of Homelessness/194 of being in the Shelter

In spite of not being able to recall much of this month, as I can *vividly* recall the events of THIS evening. Although outwardly, to my fellow "residents" I appeared calm and rather apathetic, the news of this evening struck me quite hard...

It was approximately 6:00pm (18.00) when I came into the dorm. All was relatively calm this evening, but not in an unusual way. Rey was on his bed, reading, as he would be. The daily news paper was on the top of my locker, closed, which meant nothing more to me than that it had been put there for me to read at my leisure. Rey would often put the paper there for me to browse the Wants and such. So, I noted that it was there and went about getting myself settled for the evening. As I did so, Rey got up and, in a general matter-of-fact tone of voice he asked me: "Did you see your Buddy in today's paper?"

Well, no, I hadn't since I didn't really read the newspaper as a rule. So, I asked: "Who?"

Rey simply replied "Your BUDDY... (CW). He's in the papers."

"Oh! What's he allegedly done this time?" I asked with a bit of sarcasm, expecting what-ever it was to be some petty little prank related to being Homeless and in the shelter or perhaps being arrested for vagrancy or something of the kind.

Rey turned the paper round facing him and flipped through a few pages until he'd found the one page he wanted. Wordlessly, he turned the paper toward me so that I could read the article and he stepped back silently.

Indeed, there was a terrible photo and the article: CW had been arrested for *murder*. I read the particulars in silence, as if reading the weather forecast for the following day.

As I closed the paper again, leaving it on the top of my locker, I went back to what I'd been doing

before being given this news. Rey commented, and certainly not in an offensive tone:

"Your best friend... If I didn't wonder about you before, I think I might wonder now."

"Why....?" I asked.

"Well, first of all, you two are nothing alike but for a while there, you were always together. And now *this*?"

All I could do in response was to calmly reply: "The article says that he insists that he had a toy gun and you know? I can't say he did, I can't say he didn't, but I can say I'd sooner believe he did. Another thing that a lot of people probably didn't know is that he's insulin-dependent diabetic and from the looks of that mug-shot, I'd be willing to bet he was in some kind of bad condition before, pretty much during and surely after the fact."

"Are you saying you don't believe he shot those people?" Rey asked, calmly, in a matter-of-fact voice.

"I'm saying I don't know that he did, and I don't know that he didn't. All I can say about him is what I know, from the time we've spent together in here and out of here and based on the way he was around me. If you were to ask me if I had any reason to believe that he actually COULD do something like that, I'd have to tell you, honestly... No. Sure, he was a royal pain in the arse most of the time. And yes, he was generally obnoxious and annoying. He lacked a LOT of so-called 'social graces' and he rubbed most people the wrong way. He could get on your last nerve and crush it down faster than most people I've ever met so far in my life. But... I doubt that a LOT of people ever took the time to actually listen to what he had to say, and very few ever let him say what he wanted to tell. He's been miserable in here. He's been miserable out of jail. There are some people in this system, as you and I have talked about, who will NEVER be able to function out-side of this system. They're comfortable in here because this is about the only 'life' they know. And there are people who are the same way when it comes to the prison system. CW's one of them. It's tough on the out-side. He was previously convicted of a crime, sentenced to prison and did his time for it. But the rest of the world will never be satisfied, they won't let it go, and the worst of all? They won't even give him a fraction of a chance any more. That's the way it is: Guilty forever, no matter what. He couldn't get a job because nobody hires an ex-con, no matter

what. He's got his diabetes and a bunch of other sh** in his life and, let's face it, if you're not working, you're depending on Social Services... no matter what... and we both know that if you depend on Social Services, especially for health care, you may as well toss yourself off a very high building onto a very hard surface and have done with it... quickly. I mean, look at that photo! He looks just scarcely more than half dead there! They probably didn't check to see if he had any medical condition, and worse? They didn't give a sh**. I'll bet you anything you can think of that that's a truth. Listen, I'm not making any excuses for the guy. I don't know if he did, didn't, what the hell happened. But ask me for the rest of my life and I'll tell you the same: To me, CW was ALWAYS respectful. Because he respected me, I respected him *then*, and *still* respect him now and will *always* respect him. I was lucky enough to see a really kinder and sweeter side of him and that's the way I'll always remember him, no matter what. It's been getting so tough on him lately that he's actually said, to me, that he *wants to go back to prison*. Now I have to say that when 'life' and people get so bad that *prison* is the better choice, it's not *HIS* fault anymore... it's ours... *everybody out here*. And let's face it Rey... not only does he walk around being eternally condemned for something he did, got tried for, spent the time in prison for having done... now he's got the sh** of being *Homeless* on him too! You and I know what just being Homeless does and how people *hate US*... can you imagine how impossible it's been for HIM? "

(And as I run through this manuscript today, *years* after the fact, those statements still hold fast.)

I remember Rey simply responding: "I respect you, man. I really do. And you're right about something: we weren't there, we don't know what happened. He could be innocent. It could happen to any of us. We just don't know."

The dorm was pretty quiet for the rest of that night. In some way it was almost as if people were paying their "respects" for my loss of a "Buddy".

A couple of days later, the news, being what it is, ran a couple more articles on the shooting and it was mentioned that CW WAS, in fact, ill at the time of his arrest, that he DID "pass out" and that he actually was in hospital at the time of the reporting.

Did he shoot anybody that evening? I don't know... I doubt the truth will ever come out. I doubt CW will ever tell. With the way the World treats "ex-cons", I don't fault CW for wanting to return

to prison life and I'd imagine he's better off if he's still there. But I *will* say, to this day, that for all the while I associated with him, he was, in fact, in every way, always respectable *of* me, and respectable *to* me and I will *ALWAYS* return that respect to him.

I leave this entry at that.

9. April 2009

Wednesday 1 April 2009: 230 days of Homelessness /199 days in a public shelter for the Homeless

6:32pm at the Mid-Manhattan Library: This is proving to be a very confusing and difficult month. Obviously I'm still at the shelter. The shelter is still Hellish, save for the link with sanity provided by Rey. There's a THIRD new D16 since Rich left. There have been Over-nighters who have been misery because of their *STENCH!* But there have been 3 "assigns", guys who were supposed to remain in that bed. The 1st (as I recall it) was Rich who decided he didn't like George's music blasting and said so. He disappeared shortly there-after. The 2nd was Eddy who came to us from Sing-Sing prison and decided that life there was better so he arranged to leave (presumably to go back.. he didn't want to be on parole anymore). Then came Baxter: an old guy who had plans for some money he was to come into and he disappeared one night and never returned. Ah hah! THEN came the Puerto Rican who was running a little "bodega" from the locker: Nightly trips in and out of the room with HUGE stashes of candy bars, Cup o'Soups, cigarettes, lighters, etc. He too, suddenly disappeared. Now? Some Black guy who showed up one night and simply crashed onto the bed. Next morning, before sun-rise, he wakes and lights a cigarette *in the room!* I told him, calmly, to take it across the hall. "No problem. Thank you for telling me." he said. But there hasn't been a good night's sleep since. - This Saturday past, I managed to get to SCHUL! It was WONDERFUL! EXACTLY LIKE CSAIR (Conservative Synagogue of Agudath Israel in Riverdale)! I'm looking forward to going back from now on. - Next? I had a Hospice case in Old Howard Beach. I'd been there since Thursday past. He died while I was on duty. When I contacted the agency and the Charge Nurse on the case for instructions, I got no support. I had to tell the wife and son... myself... alone. Just before that, a nightmare case in Rock Beach. "Fish" I'll call him. HE is what gives all Jews a miserable reputation! I actually called my-self off the case. He was impossible and his wife, a chronic whiner and liar about me, about the other staff. I saw a calamity coming and I left before I got implicated. - Meanwhile, at the shelter, the DHS "Task" comes and goes, barging in and out at all hours of the night, waking and disturbing. Lights on. Bang, bang moving about, "slapping" on doors and walls and walking smugly out the door. There have been several fights in the hall. Most

of the guys who are “regular” and a pleasure to be around are being given housing and shipped out. Rey and I will be the only two left here of the original crew in a while. How friggin strange to have “seniority” in the room. - Every day I go to work in Old and New Howard Beach and it kills me. I want, so much to be back on The Rock! To have a place where I can go to at the end of a day and wake in at the start of every morning. A place where I can sit and have a meal, with-out hiding the food, and to have a “cooked” meal. - Every day I remember what’s gone from my life and I want the RPH CLOSED AND DEMOLISHED! And I want the rest of those responsible for their cruelty to be addressed in some appropriate fashion. For every second of my heart-ache, I hope they all suffer an eternity, right here, on this earth, in this life. - Now, tonight, here, it's almost time to return to the cell they call a “dorm”, a “room” at the shelter. This is the end of my day... I hate it. But I’m saving money and will be ready to bolt in a little while. - Meanwhile, I’m so tired every night that I haven’t journalled all last month. Look at this... a new page in my little note book! It MUST come to an end... SOON!

Thursday 2 through Friday 3 April:

(No entries for Thursday the 2nd nor Friday the 3rd. Time lost.. what's happening to me? WHERE have I gone?)

Saturday 4 April: 233/202

4:52pm I'm here, out at the Brighton Beach library. Brighton Beach, Brooklyn. At the end of the City, the end of the land, the end of the continent. In a place where I find “peace”. At “then end”. It’s been so long since I last up-dated any of this. These have been some very tough months and some very touchingly beautiful months. D15 (Geo) has been gone for quite some time now. Marc(Mark?) from Seattle via Columbus OH has come and gone. I told him where to go (basically, to Hell) one day last week. He'd gone into one of his wining tirades about “them”, the staff at the shelter, doing nothing to “help” him. “They” haven't found him a job. “They” haven't found him a place of his own. “They” haven't done a thing to get him on his feet, improve his lot in life, “get and give” him a home. He droned on and on as he sat, crossed-legged on his metal-frame bed, pissed off at “them”. I'd heard more than my mind could handle and I simply and firmly sat up on my metal-framed bed and directly stated the obvious to him in no uncertain terms: Nobody invited him to come to New York City, and nobody forced him to come here. I've taken the time to set an example, having found my own job, and going to it every day. I even

took the time to tell him *how* to go about finding a job here, in a city where, obviously, work is not so easy to find. I *gave* him the information that HE needed to get HIMSELF together and pursue his ambitions. And all the while, he consciously chose to ignore it all and to expect some sort of “entitlements”. I explained to him, repeatedly, that this is not a city of hand-outs, that WE ALL have had to do our own best, to fight for what little we have here. And then I simply told him that I didn't want to have to hear his incessant whining about HE has failed and that neither “they” nor “we” *OWE* him even a damned thing. If he's so miserable here, and things are not working-out to his satisfaction, that he is quite free, at any time, to simply get his fat little arse up and move along, move out, move on and go to some-where else where he can delude himself further into believing that people will be more “accommodating”, kind and compassionate but if he should chose to stay here, he'd better shut the HELL up until such time when he's actually engaged in some manner of SELF help, doing something other than laying in that bed at all hours of the day an night, bitching. The very next night he left the room... he didn't come back. We now have a Juan P. who is one stink bastard who speaks very little English (Puerto Rican), keeps rather to himself and, as I say, stinks. Another “no bather” who fills the room with acrid stench. As for D16? It's been one after the other. Gregory is there now. He's a younger fellow, rather to himself as well, for the most part. In the limited chats I've managed to have with him, he appears to be “OK”, but as with all who've come and gone in that bed, there's no telling WHAT to expect. I can't say that I “trust” him to any degree and that's probably for the best. But so far, he doesn't seem to be a “threat” to any of us (and those are the ones to watch the closest). I can't remember who I left off with in the roster of things and people, but I will have to get back to that. Meanwhile, I've gone through my PPD (tuberculosis test) last week for the agency and results were negative. Considering where I've “resided” all these months, including the time spent sleeping on the earth, under a tree, in a questionably ex-military base, I'm rather surprised... relieved, but surprised. I went through my “re-evaluation for psych” at the shelter and Siobhan wrote that I'm fine. Well, that's not what she wrote but there are no problems (that I cared to tell her about). I've gained weight according to the “physical” that “they”, at the shelter performed on me. I'm now 168lbs officially. But my bowels are constantly in knots. Oh yes! I've been going to services every Shabbat! 14th Street! Beautiful place that reminds me so much of CSAIR! It makes me happy. For a few hours each week-end, I'm actually “happy”, at peace, with the congregation of wonderful people, with the world, and so importantly... with me... for a few hours... one day... each week. - The weather has been turning warmer. Good news, that. At the rate things have been going, I amuse me with thoughts of returning to my “tree”. The only thing I need to work out is

where and how to bathe. Priorities. Silly little things, but important, no matter how it's twisted. More when I can.

Sunday 5 through Thursday 30 April:

(Nothing... Nothing noted, nothing jotted, nothing. How? How could I? Gone... the days, the time... and as things are going... soon, "I" too... but never soon enough.)

10. May 2009

Friday, 1 through Sunday 31 May 2009:

*(There are no entries for the entire month. Time that has passed... into a very dark oblivion... rather the way I feel I am passing. I keep moving along, "Forward" I tell myself, each and every moment of each and every day. I'm losing interest in the world these days and am beginning to understand how it is that these other guys slip into 5, 7 and more years in "the system". It's difficult, most times, to keep focus on goals and ambitions. More often than not, it's easy to believe that the "system" has been set-up to shove us all into a pit of despondency, and then to bury us, essentially eliminate us. And from the constant barrage of degradation, from those who claim to want to "help" us up and out of our miserable lot, the mind and spirit become weaker, less focused on the ambitions we had when we came to them... for help. I'm rather blind these days, to everything and anything around me. The "shelter" has become my place of residence, the little space in the room and the metal locker have become "home" in a certain manner and to a certain extent. It's where I wake in the morning and end the day. It provides protection against the rain, snow, heat and cold and that is all it does... and that is all it seems I need any more. Yes, I go to work, at a job that puts nothing but pressure on me, expectations, rules, regulations and lies. I pour what little "kindness" and "compassion" I have left in me, onto others who truly give less than a sh** about me. I've not told even one, the truth about "me". I too, have become a liar, merely by omitting any "truth" about the "me" who comes to help "them". I do the very best I humanly and physically can for them, appreciating the little things they do, the "just enough" things, and all the while knowing, full-well, that if I made the mistake of telling them the facts of my current existence, I'd be thrusting a blade into my veins, carving my own arteries to slowly bleed myself to an excruciatingly extended pain... that would, in all likelihood would never lead to the peace of death, but would linger on... into Eternity. "Homeless"?!? Miserable, useless failure. That's all they'd see of me. But all the while, each and every moment of each and every day, blindly, I move... on... forward... step after step, toward what-ever "end" there is... just over the edge of some distant horizon. And all the while, the one thing that remains bright in my mind, heart and soul: I'm here... alone, just me, and what-ever happens when I get to that horizon, it will be the result of my own, solitary actions... or... inaction."Kadima"... forward... thrust forward... just forward. One day it WILL stop. One day. ONE day.)*

11. June 2009

Monday 1 through Monday 22 June:

(No entries for Monday the 1st through Monday the 22nd... WHERE AM I DISAPPEARING TO? WHERE? HOW IS THIS HAPPENING TO ME? AND MORE IMPORTANT: WHY DON'T I CARE ANYMORE?)

Tuesday 23 June: 315/284

6:00pm from the 4th floor of the Mid-Manhattan Library. It's been too long since the last time I posted to this "Journal", but the most frightening aspect is that it seems that the insanity of the shelter has become so common-place that nothing seemed worth posting... Until this morning... To begin with, Rey is gone. The last bastion of sanity in the room. I can't even remember what day it was, but he simply and quietly got up, just as on any other day, put a few things from his locker, together in his usual carry-along, and simply walked out of the room... Done. It was just that easy. When he didn't return, and his bed was marked "Unassigned" and then a new name appeared on the sign-in roster, the message was delivered. Gone. Done. - Geo got shoved out ages ago from D15 and that's been a regular turn-over. And I can't recall who all has been in D16 but that's gone to the flaming *nuts!* (I'll have to post about the "Mother-f***ing Jew-ass faggot" statement made by Gregory P., obviously directed at me.) But then, so too has Rey's place. I hardly get any sleep as it is and I'm finding ways to stay out of the room AND the shelter until later and later at night... something I didn't do before. Right now I'm *burning* with fatigue... and looking forward to complete exhaustion. - This morning, I woke at about 5:05am and as I was getting things together for the morning routine before rushing off to work, some shaved-headed guy comes into the room, taps me on the shoulder and asks if I know where there are any empty beds. I told him to try looking on the second floor. Why? I still don't know. But I wanted him OUT of the room (5W-101)! He leaves, I go across the hall to the loo and as I'm sitting there, in the toilet stall, I hear, in the hall "YOU'RE DEAD!" repeated a couple of times. Next thing I know, a guy from the room at the end of the hall (where there are 18 beds and 18 guys... in one room) is in

the toilet room with blood dripping from his head, all over the sink and floor! Free-running blood. How charming! By this time it's about 5:25am or so. From as I heard it this evening, somebody came into his room under cover of early morning dark, and tried to take something from his locker. He woke as the attempted theft was under-weigh and... the next thing you know he's being bashed in the head... with a padlock that had been put into a sock. There are those who think in those terms here: putting a lock in a sock and hitting somebody in the head with it. Well... This morning, it happened... I'll have to see what exactly happened, when I get back there. The more we know, the better we can prepare to avoid. - So I take my shower to get the HELL out as quickly as possible and as I return to the room, Michael B., the new D17 (Rey's bed) has the radio playing! 5:40am and he believes he has the right to do so, to ignore the sleep and comfort of all others in the room. There's absolutely NO acknowledgement of any THING or any BODY other than... SELF! Well... this is my philosophy for this day: Humanity is not "E"volving, rather it is "DE"volving. The animalistic behaviours are returning, as they were in our cave-dwelling ancestors. It's not a racial slur by any means, but if one was to take a good hard look, especially around the entire city of New York (and other towns and villages as well, I'm sure) one can see, clearly, blatantly, certainly, that those who are not of the North-Western European ancestry are multiplying much quicker. In fact, the stats are showing that "White" is dwindling. Reality is proving that as that happens, the increasing population is more violent and certainly less intelligent and civilised. The animals are returning to the world and it's not pretty. Those of us who are accustomed to civilisation are being pushed out. Chaos is the rule and we're losing. So, that said, I'm not looking forward to surviving this one much longer. I thought I'd make it to 2010 but it doesn't look that way. I can't take much more of this in the shelter and it doesn't look like things are going to get much better too soon. So...

Wednesday, 24 through Friday, 26 June:

(No entries for Wednesday the 24th through Friday the 26th. The only real light I see in my existence anymore, is the dimming glow of my mind and my life, burning down and away.)

Saturday 27 June: 319/288

At 6:00am THIS delightful morning in Hell, I was getting ready to go to schul and rather suddenly, and as if this were an empty room, somebody comes walking into the room, goes

directly and purposefully to bed D17 where he takes his shoes off, throws himself on the bed and goes to sleep! I had NO intention of getting involved in any sort of altercation (and certainly wasn't about to forfeit my time away... AND at services!). Had Rey still been in that bed, I wouldn't have stopped to consider, I'd have pounced directly on the "lounger"! But I don't give an eye-blink for or about anybody else in this room these days so, ever so calmly and quietly, I left the room in search of somebody from "Security" to get him out of the room. WELL!!! I walked the ENTIRE 5th floor and there wasn't even ONE "security" person to be found! It's 6:00am on a Saturday morning and NOBODY from "Security" is working! Bottom line and finish of episode? I went back to the room, continued with what I needed to do for this morning, and when I left to start my day, what-ever it was in the bed was still in the bed, sleeping soundly and comfortably. I wonder though: do they know in advance, where an empty bed will be? Do they wander about the building looking, until they find an empty bed? And since they obviously have no bed "assigned", do they simply get into the building under the guise of needing a bed and simply bypass all the people "down-stairs" and come up to the floors to search, stay the while and then leave... until their next "visit"? I wonder... indeed, I do... but only sometimes, and not for very long because wondering tends to attract "Reality"... and THAT'S just too damned frightening, AND disgusting to deal with, especially in this place! - And so, off and out and down the avenue to my TRUE "shelter", my "House of Refuge", my little space of bucolic peace, joy and sanity... for the morning... schul! - This afternoon, dutifully and "compliantly", I had my little weekly "chat" with Ms. Simpson. But as I got to the office, Ms. Emaly was in the midst of a shriek-fest tirade! As she recounts: She had been in the office, alone, this morning, when somebody came to the door, knocked and walked directly in. She was horrified, terrorised! When she went to fetch somebody from "Seekyooritie", she TOO, couldn't find anybody! But then she turned directly toward ME to tell ME that, eventually she DID find... one "guard" in a locker room... asleep, and another one, in another office, behind a copy machine... asleep as well! So? And you're telling this to ME because....? I didn't bother to tell her about my own experience this morning. I am already too, TOO much aware of the fact that "they" don't care, not even in the least bit, about me, nor do they care at all about the rest of "us". So I all but ignored her, and got directly to my own business matters, gathering my "papers" to present, have copied and get out and on with my own day. But I do wonder, just for the amusement: Why would "they", the alleged and self-proclaimed, PAID employees, the "Social Workers" here, need to be in such dread fear of "us", the lowly, useless, other-wise insignificant indigents for whom they are here... to help, guide and care for and about? Goodness me! Is there something that we might benefit from knowing? Some

dark little evil secret that they're pulling *against* us? Is there some element of deceit that would lead "us" to tend toward wishing for or inflicting harm upon them? Guilt! It's a most marvellous weapon, especially when it's "self-inflicted". No, I've not even the slightest trace of sympathy nor compassion. Get your damned act together, do what you're expected to do, what you're PAID to do and you won't have to scream about the place in panic simply because one of "us" has come to "you" in search of some kind of assistance. Meanwhile, isn't it a delight to know that while I am murdering myself in silence, trying to keep a miserable job that pays insultingly, to be abused and all but defiled, these in-bred chimpanzees (a.k.a. "Security Guards") are being paid even MORE... to sleep? "Sleep"! Something I'm denied each and every night... and, in part, because our merry little band of primates refuses to provide the services for which they are hired and paid handsomely... to dodge. They sleep and get paid whilst WE get our skulls crushed with locks, robbed, beaten and the likes. Indeed... yes... indeed. And nobody truly cares. Nobody gives it a thought. Yes, at each and every turn we're shown exactly that we are, in their esteem... worthless.

Sunday 28 June: 320/289

What transpired through the day means nothing, really, when compared to tonight's dramatic presentation of the ultimate incompetence of the staff, the "Security", the "Operations" and the "system" over-all in this sh**-dump! And as I record this, (on Monday evening the following day) I'm not keeping names private any longer. And I'm not using "pseudonyms" any longer. If ever this comes to the eyes of the public, I WANT the names to be known, those that I do know: The room had gone dark and all of us in it were, at long last, settled-down for the night... BUT... as is the normal routine of the place... At about 11:30pm the lights get snapped on and some "Security" jackass comes in, *yelling* at me: "D18! You have to go downstairs to the office!" He's accompanied, by some "Over-nighter" (I know this because of the "Meal Ticket"... it's white, photo-copy paper instead of the heavier, pink "Meal Ticket" that the rest of us, the "permanent residents are issued). On his "meal ticket" I can clearly see the bed assignment and it's MINE! With these bonobos is the one they call "Resident President", the one I've referred to here before... "Santiago". He *knew* I'd signed for the bed, he was at the table with the sign-in sheets when I signed! And yet, he did *nothing* to stop this BS! - Well, of course, when we're thrown from our beds, in the middle of the night, we have no choice but to GO! So when I got down to "Operations" I see that Cyrus, from D19, next-door, is there too! Same BS with *HIM*! The nasty filth-African in "Operations" is *insisting* that we did *NOT* sign for our beds in spite of the fact that

we *KNEW* we DID! So I demanded that I wanted to *SEE* the sheet where we “didn’t sign”. The trash-bastard tells Cyrus and I what we need to go BACK up to the 5th floor! And he’s all but SHOUTING at us! Well indeed, we both went, up to the floor and straight into the “sign-in” office where we both see not only the sign-in sheet but *our signatures on it, exactly where we’d signed, exactly where we were supposed to sign!* The total waste-idiot in that office (on the 5th floor) just tells us to go back to our beds. Cyrus says he wants confirmation that we’ve signed and that all is well. Trash-ass sends us BACK DOWN to the 1st floor again to “Operations” and there, filth-African-boy gets on the phone to some “Mr. Johnson” on the 5th floor. They chat. We’re completely ignored. Nobody tells either of us anything about the matter but Cyrus and I *both* over-heard parts of the conversation: *D118* and *D119* were “unassigned”! In the course of nightly telephone calls and copying information over the phone for the “Census Reports”, the retards of the “System” dropped the first digit off the bed assignment listing for the night! - Meanwhile, there’s somebody in my bed, *my* linens are thrown on the floor in the hall. I’d just *washed* the blankets AND the towel over at the local laundry... and I PAID to do so, and HAD to do so because somebody ELSE had slept in the bed during the day and had left such a chokingly foul odour on everything. And now, everything was on the filthy floor in the hall! - As all this is taking place, Michael Bailey (I’ll mention his name because he’s such an absolute piece of rotting trash) is playing his radio on some *rock* station... LONG into the night! - I didn’t get a bit of sleep *ALL* night. Thankfully I didn’t have any patients today so I’d gotten to go to the beach where I’d slept for a few hours. - Hey! Mr. NYC Mayor (Bloomberg)! What the living HELL? Why isn’t anybody watching any of this? Why the Hell are the friggin *Africans* taking over the show? Get the *ILLEGALS* out! Maybe President Obama needs to get a letter? But I doubt he’d do anything constructive about any of it. These are “his” people. - Me? This is taking it’s toll. I’m coughing like crazy and bringing up all sorts of nastiness. I’m exhausted. I’m mentally and emotionally drained. But I’m close to having only just enough savings to jump ship any day now. I just hope I can hold out for as long as I really need to.

Monday 29 June: 321/290

It’s about 5:00pm and I’m at the Far Rock library trying my best to put all of this together. Imagine this, how “lulled” I’ve become. Once upon a time, I would have been in a mad and insane RUSH at this hour, trying with my everything to get back, on time, to be “compliant”, to make it into the shelter, to abide by the curfew. And now, today, here, I’m typing on a computer,

in Far Rockaway... HOURS away. And, I don't really care. - But, last night was worth coming here to make certain the entry for last night got documented... on-line. But today I'm paying for the farce. - It's 5:15pm now. I have until 8:00pm for "sign in". I have 18 minutes left on this computer and a 2-hour ride back to the hell hole. I don't want to go back there. I don't have the strength any more. It's amazing how much I can take. *I'm stronger than I'd ever have believed.* - And well, continuing here in the "comfortlessness" of my little metal bed in the "Homeless Shelter de Luxe, NYC"... Here now, TODAY'S BS, which I've no doubt is a continuation of last night's BS episode: When I got back from work today, having only a morning appointment and my little "voy trip" to the Far Rock Library, I come into the room to find that my pillows were gone! I had 2 of them in the one pillow case along with some linens so that I could sleep with my head raised enough to breathe comfortably. I'd had them on the bed for *months* now! One of the pillows came with the bed, the other one came from *Rey* (he'd had an extra and had given it to me when he left). But, while NOBODY IS SUPPOSED TO BE WANDERING THE HALLS, "Security" (what a laugh... security) once again, FAILS! SOME USELESS PIECE OF UNADULATERATED ROTTING TRASH (and I'm being as kind as I possibly can at this moment) CAME INTO THIS ROOM, TOOK MY PILLOW AND LEFT! WHERE, in Hell, is the PAID "Security" staff? Oh... I've absolutely NO doubt at all that this was a concerted effort. The population in this place is noticeably changing, and the general colouration is shifting... darker and darker still. Last night, I PROVED the incompetence in this place and probably made too many show their TRUE stupidity! Not to mention, I (and Cyrus) had the freakin' BALLS to "question the authorities"... Proved ourselves right, but DEFIED "authority"! THIS was their response... a little recourse to attempt at putting me in my "proper" place. No doubt... I've been in here long enough to see it for what it is. But, being aggravated and annoyed does no good. There isn't a one of them with enough sense to care. It's simply a matter of me re-acquiring what I need, and what I enjoy... what makes ME "comfortable"... at least comfortable enough to keep going toward my own goals and ambitions. Meanwhile I make certain to get all of this on-line so that it can be found. SO many people NEED to see this and know and stop demeaning and degrading US... the Homeless... and the Working Homeless! - Every night now, for about 8 months, I've signed for my bed as I should. That way I know that I have a place to "try" to sleep and a place to bathe. (Lately it's been impossible to sleep because the sh**tard in D17 plays his radio all night on a "heavy rock" station.) So tonight, since I was so tired from not sleeping last night because of the radio, I signed at about 8:45pm, took my shower and tried to get some sleep in spite of the theft of the pillows.

Tuesday 30 June:

(No entries for Tuesday, the 30th and another month comes to a crashing close! I wonder when I will.)



12. July 2009

Wednesday 1 July 2009: 324 HOMELESS/293 SHELTER

I am having a productive, persistent cough lately. At night, I'm drenched in sweat. My throat is rather sore. It's been about 5 weeks of this now. Five weeks of night sweats, sore throat and SO, just SO damned TIRED... ALL of the time. And right now, I haven't got the energy nor the interest in writing anything. There's nothing "new" to write anyway. And it's late. No matter what, I need to try and rest, rest at the very least. I'm just congested and tired.

Thursday 2 July: 325/294

Today I had to go to Ocean Village (ROCKAWAY!) to get an application for an apartment there. It was "arranged" for me, or, so say the "Housing" folks at the shelter. Do I want to live there? Hell no! But at the rate things are going at the shelter, I want OUT of there and as quickly as I possibly can get out! The idea of having a door-key and a place to lock my-self into at the end of the day, or having a place to go and rest with-out a time constraint is better than staying in the shelter! Being in this shelter is killing me... and not softly. I know "OV", I know it's not the "safest" place out on The Rock to be, especially for folks of "my complexion". It wasn't all that long ago when somebody walked into a Chinese take-away there, opened fire and shot somebody. But you know? When I think, seriously, about my situation in the shelter, it isn't any safer. Besides, with a little flat, I can either stay in and REST for as long as possible, or, I can get out, get right to the boards and walk out to the Fort if I want... and THERE I can rest... even SLEEP if I so desire! AND... I'll be "HOME"... in Rockaway again! So, it was a day of "off on the trains along the coast", as it were. Will I actually FILE the application? Well, I don't know that I have much choice. The situation is "registered" with the "Housing" clowns at the shelter and, according to the "rules", I can't reject a place that's deemed "good enough" for me. If I reject the place or don't bother to apply, it's one of those "30-day sanctions" where-by I get tossed the Hell out of the shelter and can't get into any other one in The City... for 30 days. And right now? I'm just not ready to get back to the "tree" just yet. Besides, THIS could be my most LUCKY BREAK EVER! When Kendall got his place, his rent was/is 50\$ per month for a year, he got vouchers for some furniture and cook-ware. Seriously? For the very first time in my entire life... this might be just the break! I can

adapt and handle the rest... I'm sure of it... I've handled THIS dump of human rot for all this time. And... we don't know what we don't try.

Friday 3 July: 326/295

I *HAVE* to begin with the events of this evening *BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE!!!*

THINGS IN THIS PLACE ARE TURNING... ROTTING... FESTERING...

The one they call the “Resident President” (Santiago), the Puerto Rican arse who believes that he has control over everything (and, of course, DHS here, is letting him run things pretty much the way he wants when *they* give him the opportunity to do so... for example, this...) pulled *QUITE* the stunt this evening... *RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME, AS I STOOD THERE, IN PLAIN VIEW!* (And, I add that I'm witting this in the note book, will put it onto the “digital blog” AND NAME NAMES, because *THIS TIME* I actually *WANT* it to be read, and known! *THIS* is the kind of thing that we, in the Homeless Shelter system are subjected to! *THIS* is the type of “activity” that the “out-side” *SHOULD* be aware of.

This evening when I went to sign for my bed, the one called “Resident President” (Santiago, the one who used to regularly exchange his Newport cigarettes for my Camels, and, who only recently stood by when I was, in the middle of the night, transferred, erroneously, in spite of knowing that I'd dutifully signed for my bed) was sitting at the table where the “sign-in” list was. He *supposedly* was watching to make certain that signatures were legitimate, *supposedly* checking “Meal Tickets” against names on the roster and names signed. Tonight, the table was set so that “C” beds (4th floor) sign at one end of the table, “D” beds (5th floor) sign at the other. As I got to the table to sign for *my* bed this evening, “ResidentPresident” took the listing from me, flipped to the 3rd page and *AS I STOOD THERE, IN PLAIN SIGHT*, as if it were a normal procedure, HE *SIGNED FOR THE TOP 2 BEDS ON THE LIST!* He wrote-in the names of the occupants on the lines where each occupant was supposed to sign themselves.

I said nothing, made no indication that I noticed and signed for my bed, as usual, as always, and silently walked away and came back to my bed for the evening.

Now, I have to note that, earlier this evening I was told that someone in another room had asked if there wasn't something that could be done to rid the room of a rather undesirable room-mate. The ResPres told this guy that, for 20\$, *he* could arrange for the undesirable room-mate to “lose his bed”!

So *NOW* we see how it's all handled around here.

Well then... At 9:54pm, the new guy in bed D15 in "my" room, comes into the room and gets on the phone. As he's talking, he tries to get into his locker, banging the lock about and slamming the locker doors as he's done each and every time he's gone into that damned locker. BUT, I happened to notice a rather interesting fact again this evening at sign-in: D15 has been "Unassigned" for the past 4 nights and still, this "occupant" is allowed to sign for it anyway, no questions asked.

Later, after the lights were out and all in the room should have been sleeping, ResPres comes round and calls D15 to the hall. As I laid in the dark room, but watching and listening from my bed, which is the first inside the door to the room, I caught the following "transaction" take place in the hall:

ResPres Santiago told the guy (D15) that the bed is "Unassigned".

D15 told him: "I signed for it last night. You told me I could."

Says Resident President, "*That was last night. This is tonight.* Do you want the bed tonight or not?"

The next thing I see is the guy (D15) reaching into his pocket and pulling out some cash. I couldn't see how much, but obviously it was enough because the next thing I knew, the two of them went down the hall for a while.

When D15 came back to the room, he not only had the bed but a PINK "MEAL TICKET" to go with it! And the pink "Meal Ticket" is something that the rest of us have to wait to get. It indicates that we're considered "Permanent" residents at this particular shelter... and it takes quite some time to reach that status!

The guy now in bed Nr.D15 is PAYING for this bed... each night and "ResidentPresident" Santiago is collecting!

That said... All during the night (and I mean *ALL* during the night), D15 coughed, *productively*, hacking and rumbling something up and from the sound of it, from deep in the lungs... and *never* covering his mouth. When he'd brought up what-ever it was, he spat it into a styro-cup that he kept on top of his locker or she spat into toilet paper which he then dropped on the floor. As if this wasn't bad enough, he farted, loudly and repeatedly during the night. The stench was so that it kept me awake. I sprayed "Fabuloso", then pine cleaner, then air freshener, all to no good. The *stench* was too strong. So I got up, opened the door to the room as wide as possible just to get some breathable air into the room! - Next thing I know, *D17* comes in, changes his clothes, leaves the other clothes and such on the bed and leaves. (As it turned out, he'd left for the entire night, leaving his clothes on the bed. Normally, anything like that, left on a bed that way, would be

taken, stolen, in short order. But when I left the next morning, they were still there. - Lately, my thoughts are turning *evil*. Something is going on in this shelter, and Santiago is at the root of it. This place has changed, none for the better. It's ever so close to time to JUMP and get the HELL out of here! Either that, or it's time for me to figure my own way to get a "weapon" in here and "take care of affairs" on my own. Oddly enough, the time here has given me the "me" I'd need to do so, and I'd do so with no hesitation... and no regrets at all any more. I survived this long somehow. All of my "friends" are gone now. It's time to make a move!

But to close this day, I leave it behind with the following note:

YAY! FINALLY! AT LONG LAST! With today's little deposit (and a lot of hard-ships to me for quite the while, I must add) the savings account finally reached *2400\$!* Why is *that* so important? I don't really know, but there's something about that figure: at 600\$/month for rent, it's a nice "buffer" Most certainly not a "perfect" buffer, nor is it anything to call a "nest egg", since I'm going to be carrying my own full weight now when I get out of here, but it's quite a bit more than I came into this Hell with. Now all I need to do is find someplace to live in for that kind of rent... and that's almost impossible these days. Average rents for even a "studio" are, low-end, 1500\$/month. And that's just RENT! No electric and such. And now... thanks SO much to my DARLING sister, brother and brother-in-law, I have NO furniture. Not even a chair. So there's something else to consider. But you know? I *CAN* do this and I *WILL* do this... SOON... *VERY* soon now.

Saturday 4 July: 327/296

This morning I went to services as usual. My 3 hours of sanity and peace in a week. When I returned to the shelter, Ms. Fiord helped me with my Ocean Village application, showing me the list of documents they'll require when I apply. She's been most helpful to me and I appreciate it. She's been, of late, the only person whom I can say, in all honesty and sincerity, has treated me with respect, has honoured my dignity, and has, in so many ways, kept me going even when I felt I just wanted to drop dead and quit everything. I'll never live long enough to forget her kindness... never. And I'll hold, in my heart, a very special hope that "Life" treat her with every respect and with all the dignity that she so deserves. - Other than these two items... there really is nothing more I care to say about this day. I'm tired, worn, weary. I'm hungry and yet sick to the core of my being in this room with this rotting, miserable garbage, trash, refuse. The room has a constant odour of "rot". The "residents" I have to tolerate are the epitome of ALL of the

“negativity” of the Homeless, and ALL of the “negativity” of dregs. They truly are the lowest of ALL life-forms. And I'm physically, mentally and emotionally dangling at the end of an ever-fraying rope these days. Either I'll put the rope round my neck and hang to my end, or I'll let the rope go and gently, silently drop into a deep, black abyss. I'm still working on my decision... - Thankfully I have Tiferet Israel... and thankfully I have Ms. Fiord.

Sunday 5 July: 328/297

Oh.... This morning I got up, got me together and almost literally, I *bolted* for the 99-cent Coney Island Avenue 99cent store for some “provisions” (bits of food and little snacks to keep in my locker) and THEN... I headed out to the Fort and a day on the BEACH!!! It's been SO SO VERY LONG since the last time I was on that beach! And today, as I laid there on the sand, beside the dunes where I'd slept in peace all those nights, a long, long time ago, listening again to the whisper of the waves as they crested and the thunder as they crashed into the shore, I kept falling asleep, right there, on the beach. *AND*... today, for the first time in the LONGEST WHILE, I actually went in swimming! I was back in the Great Atlantic Ocean! Me... and the open ocean! It was SO VERY refreshing, of course, but some-where, in my heart I suppose, it was almost the equivalent of my Mother's caress, her protective arms around me. It was as if two of the closest, nearest and dearest Friends in ALL of Creation had been re-united after a long and harrowing time of forced separation. ONE! The Atlantic and I were “ONE”... again. I dove, deep and long, until I reached the sandy bottom under the waves, and for as long as my lungs would allow, I sat there, feeling the water around me, the sand under me. What I wouldn't have given to stay there today, just there. When I came back up, I rolled onto my back and the alt water held me, comfortably and securely. And the ocean, the Atlantic, rocked me and tossed me as a loving parent would a cherished child. I had memories here... some great, some good, some admittedly not-so-good, but today... NONE were “bad”. I went into the water to cool and returned to the beach to warm. In the water, I was calm. On the beach... I slept... SLEPT! ACTUALLY SLEPT! IT WAS AMAZING! REFRESHING! REJUVENATING! RE-CHARGING! I WAS “*HOME*”! again! - I stayed for quite the while today too. I was in no particular rush to leave but of course, I knew that I had to, especially these days when I didn't dare skip even one heart-beat in that truly “God-forsaken”, miserable institution on 30th Street. But before I left this evening, I had my shampoo and lotion with me and so, as I'd done before, I slathered the shampoo on my hair, face and body and RAN to the edge of the ocean and DOVE DEEP into it... and there, in that wonderful OPEN

Atlantic, I did all the bathing I felt was necessary. Rinsed, I came back to the shore to dry in the breeze. I wanted to hold onto as much of this day as I possibly could... forever. - And so, round about 4:30 or perhaps 5:00pm, I headed back, off the beach, over the dunes, along the "Cement/Shore Road" and over the "Hero Road". I passed by my little FRIEND, my confidante, my Protector... my TREE, and stopped to look in on it. That spot on that Fort will, I'm certain, hold "me" in it for as long as that spot remains there. And in my soul, that spot will be alive... cherished and protected, for as long as my soul survives. - As I was leaving the Fort, I noticed that Brian and Penelope were in T7, so I stopped by T7 to chat with them. Why? I'll probably never know for certain. But, to my actual AMAZEMENT, (and disgust, I must add) Penelope actually had the *audacity* to tell me, to my face, and with a tone of pseudo-sincerity, that I should come by and stop for "a cup of coffee" sometime! The same one who, knowing full-well that I was Homeless, residing under a tree just beyond the gate to the Bakfort, told me to make my presence scarce around the place! You know? There are some things in this life that are better left alone... she and her switch-hit personality changes is a major one of those. I didn't dignify the "invitation" with an acknowledgement... I couldn't... I think I was in shock at the very, as I call it "audacity". - Brian left and Penelope did her usual "gathering" of her items and such and headed for her car. As she was leaving (about 5:30pm) I went to her car and asked if she knew anything about the plastic bag I'd left in the tool shed behind T6. "I'd go look now, but I don't have the time. But I'll go tomorrow and look." she said, almost condescendingly. HEY! I didn't ask her to look. I *didn't want* her to *look*. I *wanted* to know *if* she'd thrown it out. So I waited for her to disappear down the road, through the gate and off the Fort, and I went to look... THE BAG IS STILL THERE, WITH SHEETS, TOWEL, AND BLACK FABRIC! It's soon a year since that was my bed, my *everything*. And this evening, it's all still there, and tears welled in my eyes. This evening, all of that time seems SO LONG ago. But right now, the only thing that truly separates the "Then" from the "Now" is one Winter. Still... there's a part of my mind and heart that are removed from then, a part of my mind that keeps it recorded as a story, a movie, a photo, a book I'd read. I suppose that's the only way "I" can handle it all right now. But I want the sheets and towel, but have no place to store them these days. And then the dread set in: I *hope* that my mentioning it to Penelope will be forgotten and she'll leave it all alone! Other-wise, based on the past, it wouldn't surprise me at all if she'd grab it and throw it all away. - Well... the evening drew closer into the night and it was time to head back to the present. This evening I dreaded the present even more than ever before. I pondered the possibility of NOT leaving tonight. Hey! My plastic bags and sheets and "black blanket" are right here! I COULD stay the night.. but no, not

yet. There are still things that I need to do before that. Besides, coming back here is something I DO want to do... but on MY terms this time... not because I have NO choice, but because I CHOOSE to. So I headed down the road toward the gate, alone... very much alone. I thought: Penelope didn't even offer to drop me out-side the gate at the bus stop this time. Hmmm... telling... very telling. But that's perfectly fine. This evening, I don't WANT to be around anybody else. THIS WAS my "HOME"... I spent nights here... alone... and right then, I needed to be back... alone. - The ride back into The City and the shelter was "dull". I dozed for the most part. I can't help but think that it was my mind's way of dodging the "reality" that was passing by me, and postponing the "reality" that I was about to re-enter. - And tonight at D18 was quite tough. With all that I had, I focused on this day, blocking as much of the HELL I was in as best I could... the screaming, shouting, yelling, stench, anarchy, stupidity, ignorance... and tried to focus on tomorrow, and the coming week, next pay-cheques, balance in my savings, and finding a place to go TO and away FROM this sh**-hole.

Monday 6 through Thursday 9 July:

(The days are becoming more of a burden to me than I can note individually. During the day-light hours, I am on the trains to and from work... still biting my tongue and biding my time. At night, I'm no longer sleeping. What has been put into the dorm lately is, well, atrocity and terror. Sometimes I catch myself wondering if I'm being tested to see just how much I can handle, by the "System", or if this is intentional, that they're placing their worst around me in the hopes that I'll either leave or be carried out in a plastic trash bag.)

Friday 10 July: 333/302

Honestly, the only thing I have the energy to jot, and the only thing that's even worth the mention for this day is:

Again tonight I had to ask that D16, D17 and "Rich" (who doesn't even belong in this friggin room in the first bleating friggin place!!!) NOT SMOKE their cigarettes and weed in the room. But *tonight*, the response from D17 was:

"Don't try to be a ruler when you only have 6 inches... Besides, you're still angry that the Germans killed your family."

And I leave the entire day at that.

Saturday 11 July: 334/303

Once again, another day where I don't even want to bother noting anything. It's not that I want to let these times be forgotten. I NEVER want to forget these times! And I DO want to put this out where the world can see it, read it and learn. But I just don't have the physical stamina to write, or the mental stamina to think today. If there's any "good" to be found in my "state" these days it would be that the previous depressions are gone... They're all replaced with *FURIOUS ANGER AND BITTERNESS... WRAPPED IN HORRIFIC AND HELLISH HATE!*

As a bit of an indication as to what is going wrong with me: This morning I left for services in such a hurry that I *forgot to bring ANY ID!* I'd gone to services, as usual these days and for those hours, thoroughly enjoyed the new familiarity. It's a comforting delight to be amongst kind people who smile, not because they're hiding something they're afraid I'll learn, but because, well, because they're "PEOPLE"! - It was on my way back to the shelter when I realised that I had NO identification... *NOTHING! NONE* at all! But truthfully, that's never posed a problem before. I've been in this hole long enough to recognise just about all of the "security" staff, particularly those at the door. And, I don't believe there are too many who don't recognise me now... 6ft tall, Caucasian, and wearing a kippa. Nope... not exactly one of the "regulars" in here, to be sure. HOW-EVER... today when, on coming into the building, the little Black DHS bonobo bastard "security" thing stops me and asks me for my meal ticket *and* a photo ID! When I told him I didn't have it with me, that I'd accidentally left it up in my locker, I *spewed* my HANumber (*Homeless Services registration number*), bed number, room number, case worker's name, substitute case worker's name and my date of entry into the shelter. But no... for this little sh**-bag, all of that information just wasn't good enough. This *arse* had the audacity to tell me "I never seen you before." Friggin liar, this one. (Not that that's novel around here... They're ALL a bunch of friggin, chronic, pathetic liars. But just now, this one was pissing me off.) He's SEEN me almost EVERY Saturday when I return from services! So, since he wanted to play his little game, I simply looked him straight in the eye and told him "I have an appointment this afternoon, as I do EVERY Saturday afternoon, to see Ms. Simpson, my case worker and IF you won't let me in to see her and I suffer any negative ramifications, I'll be damned f**ing certain to give her, and the Commissioner your name..." and I read off his little "ID tag". Then I offered "You can come up with me to her office if you'd like. Or, you can stay here and act all high and mighty for the rest of the day. I'll just come back in when your shift is done, head directly to the Sergeant who's on then, report this sh** there and with operations, the night case worker supervisor and then, on Monday, I'll take a walk down to The Coalition, report to them and stop off at the Mayor's office

while I'm in the neighbourhood. Your choice.” He looked away from me and said “Go! Bring your stuff to show me when you get it.” Yeah... right. Sure Bonobo-boy. Like I have time for that. - Well, up and away... and off to the stairs to the locker for today's Ms. Simpson papers... off to her office for the photo-copying and all the rest. New “meal ticket” in hand, I went back to the room, got my “sh**” together and headed back down the stairs... AND ... I went out one door to come back in the other JUST so I could pass Bonobo-boy, SHOW him my “meal ticket”, came back into the building and left right away. - As for the rest of this day? I truly don't give one f***ink sh**. (And I can't even express it nicer than that.)

Sunday 12 July: 335/304

(Burning out. Running down. Nothing to say. Nothing to write. It's hard enough just thinking lately. But today was just another day of running... away, away, around and away. Running. Moving. Library to log. Running, moving, walking, moving, running... away, away, away... and at the end? Anarchy, chaos, and human waste... vulgar, foul, human waste.)

Monday 13 July: 336/305

THE WHOLE ROOM HAS THE MOST FOUL, “SWEET-ROTTING-FLESH” STENCH THESE DAYS BECAUSE OF D15! He's a drunk (like D17) and he REFUSES to bathe! I couldn't inhale this morning because of the stench. And I can't sleep well at night because I'm afraid of breathing through my mouth and inhaling that crap into my lungs! Even my clothes are taking on the stench! It permeates everything in the room! I can be on a train and smell it... ON me, in my shirt. I *NEED TO GET OUT! NOW!* I'm almost tempted to jump into something I'm not prepared for and really can't afford at this juncture, just to get out of there. But I'm entitled to a lot of financial help (WAP: Work Assistance Program) and I *WANT* that! I have an opportunity and I *WANT it!* Now it's become a true “battle of the wits”... And I'm feeling like getting into a game of murder at this juncture. These days, I'm actually understanding how people turn to that mind-set. There's only just so much the functioning mind of what we think of as “sanity” can withstand and then it simply has to snap! I'm supposing that we're still “OK” so long as we stay aware, consciously, that we're approaching that “snap line”. But once over it, well, as I've come to say: Sometimes the “crime” isn't the one who commits the action... it's the fault of the society, the surroundings that caused it. I'm still aware of where I am, and how clearly my “horizon line” is

that very thing... the “line” between “here” and “there”... “there” being... well... maybe CW is right. Imagine, being shoved to the point where even *THAT* thought comes as a peaceful interlude in a day. Imagine. - Other-wise... It *has* turned out to be a rather “kind” day, all told. This morning, I had to put up with TG. Mrs. has become quite selfish lately and once again, she’d arranged for Mr.’s therapy this morning and I would have been cut out of hours sorely needed... And do I ever need them now! The entire notion of “therapy” for him is ludicrous, un-realistic. She’s in such denial of his deterioration. I know that it’s “typical”, common, really. Maybe it’s her way of coping with it. Maybe it’s her avoidance of some guilt. What-ever the case, I know too, that I have no choice in the matter but to support her decisions. To even try anything else is simply futile. But I put up with it all... actually, the strange thing is that when I get there, I forget my hostilities and just go to work. Well, that’s the moron I am. Or, it’s the “survival mechanism” that I’ve developed over the course of my own “life”-time, to focus on “busy-ness”... to “suppress” and “repress”. I have been told, by some of those who are thought of as “the best” that I do that... and I’ve been told that I do it “amazingly well”. What-ever. (And so far it seems it’s what’s kept me “going”. Good? Bad? The jury is still out on the matter.) - Meanwhile, I’m at Seaside Library, Rockaway Park. Just a pure delight in and of itself. I just bumped into Barbara, who was glad to see me (as I was glad to see her). We got to talking and, lo and behold, in the chat she tells me that there are vacancies in the house where she’s living! They go for about 425\$/month which means I’ve got just a little short of 6 month’s rent right now, in the savings. And she says the rooms are about 9×10 ft. Not “huge” by any stretch, but then I think of the space I’ve been existing in, in the shelter... and the rooms are a delight, in comparison. Not to mention, they have *walls*, and not just some “visual” effect set up by moving a steel locker. Walls... windows... and a DOOR to which I could have a *key*! AND... I wouldn’t have to “share” the space, be concerned about strangers waltzing in and out at all hours of the day and night... and... NO CURFEW! NO “BED-CHECK”! We’ve arranged to meet here tomorrow evening and she’ll take me to meet with the landlord! I’ll take a look! If it means getting out of that shelter, I *could* be very happy (might be very happy... or even a little happy) no matter what. And Barbara says it’s nothing like the RPH with all that crap that tends to happen over there... especially the need to leave for two days every 28 days or so. So...? If we don’t try, we never know. And trying costs me nothing but gives me so much. I’m actually a bit excited about this. It’s not exactly what I’ve been hoping for, and, once again, the Department of Homeless Services would get off easy... having invested just about nothing in me, and suddenly being free of me and any “responsibility”. It’s the final result... for ME, that matters most at this point and if I have to “jump” to get the HELL away, so be it. JUMP I shall. We’ll see

tomorrow. For now, it gives me just a bit more encouragement, and although there's no "hope", it's a bit of "inspiration". - Before coming here today, I managed to run like Hell into the Mid-Manhattan Library to print the letter for JCCRP and then run like mad out to Far Rock to drop it off with Jackie. SHE was delighted to see me and said we have to talk. She even interrupted a client when I dropped in. Although I felt a bit guilty, taking time from some-one who certainly deserved her attention, having been there already, it made me feel "human", to be thought of so highly. It's the smallest of moments now that mean the most to me. Then... From there? On the bus and to Waldbaum's market here, in Rock Park, for "dinner" (which, again, I sat on a bench at the bay's edge at Tribute Park and almost shoved into my mouth and swallowed all but untasted). And... I HAD ICE CREAM TODAY! Little "Ben and Jerry's" cups. But it was ICE CREAM! (It's kicking my stomach left and right now, but it was SO GOOOOOD! My digestive system, my entire body is adjusted to "improper diet" and certainly not having to handle the delights such as dairy fat.) There was a huge, dark cloud over-head for most of the eating period. But no rain. "God" still has love for me (and I have to laugh at myself for even being able to write such blatant blither). And the wind was blowing. It hurts to be here and not be able to stay... actual "pain" these days. The pain starts as a thought and physically manifests right to the centre of my heart. I suppose this is why it's called "home *sickness*". It actually can be a *sickness*. - And so, having eaten something for my deteriorating body to work with, and wanting to postpone the inevitable moment when I'd have to leave this momentary comfort and respite behind (again), I left the park and headed over here... actually for no particular other reason... but I'm journalling in my note-book anyway. And I got to see Barbara. And there might be an OUT coming from this. We'll see. Just think: I get to look forward to going back to that Hell-hole with that rotting flesh, brain-dead idiot and the other two talking "old times" in their *prisons*. Oh! What fun! I wonder why I'm still moving along here? The stress alone should kill me. - By the way. Upper, last tooth, right side, loose, broken, should be coming out soon. Isn't this wonderful? Losing MORE teeth. Old, old, old. Oh, and as I was leaving the library, the phone rings... Some broad named "Stacey" from some "CBE" wants to verify my name and last 4 digits of my Social Security number and to discuss some "business". I told her that I don't discuss *ANY* personal information over the phone and she needs to try a different venue! But, my gut, my heart tells me this has something to do with a collection action. Of course! I've managed to save enough to get me going out of the shelter and NOW SOMEBODY WANTS IT! WELL, IF THEY MANAGE TO GET AT MY LITTLE PIECE OF SAVINGS BEFORE I GET BACK ON MY FEET... LET THIS BE THE DOCUMENTATION TO TELL THAT *THAT* WAS THE FINAL BLOW AND I'LL BE DEAD

LONG BEFORE IT BENEFITS ANYBODY BUT ME! I'LL GET MY SAVINGS, TAKE IT TO THE OPEN SEA AND I'LL BE OUT OF HERE.. CASH IN POCKET, DEAD, DEAD, DEAD! I CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE OF THIS BEING BASHED AROUND! A GLIMMER OF "BETTER" AND SLAM! DASHED AND BASHED! NO! F*** THEM! F*** THE WORLD! - And indeed, at day's end... back on the trains, back on the rails, back on the buses and back... deep into the Hell that has become my worldly "womb"... Hell.

Tuesday 14 July: 337/306

What a day! What a day! *What... a... day!* Since I didn't have any work to do (no clients), I decided to make the best of it that I possibly could. And so I think I did:

Started by going to schachrit (*morning services at synagogue*) at 7:00am and it was *SUCH* a *pleasure* to be at a morning service again after so long away from it. I remember the days when I was a regular feature at CSAIR. How I *miss* those days... those mornings. This morning, in the "new congregation", I was well-received and believe it or not, somebody was taking pictures of the minyan (*the group of men who come to pray*) and I got included in the photos! Unfortunately, I was in my navy scrubs whilst the others were in nice "street clothes". But I suppose that's not necessarily a "bad" thing. It rather shows that I work, at providing "health care" and that, although I have that work to go to, I take time to worship. (In all actuality, I take time to attend to my "culture", my "heritage", my "history", my "ancestry". "Worship"? Well... if one wants to call it that, one most certainly may. For me, for the most part, it's my "Tradition". But no matter... I was there!) - After service, it was off to the rails and off to Rego Park to register with a "Sr. Bridge" agency that I'd found in my "job search" efforts. Truth be told, I've rather discovered that, instead of wandering about looking for places to hide and to hide-away from the weather and other elements, popping in at agencies not only keeps me off the streets and out of the elements, it does me and my "cause"... to get the actual f'ing Hell OUT of that shelter... just a bit of good. Fine, I'll be on every "employee roster" in the great city of New York by the time I'm done... but even that's better than sitting and waiting for somebody at the shelter to toss me a bone (that will, no doubt, strike me, dead-centre in the face... jagged edge first). And I'm rather happy to report that *THAT* little "introductory interview" went *VERY* well. The interview included some role-playing and I *aced* that part. The woman who conducted the interview said:

"You have so much to offer. I want to get you matched with a client ASAP."

I certainly hope they do. I *NEED* the income... more now, with the news of a possible "home",

than I did at the time of the interview... but more on that to follow... - Next was a stroll along Queens Blvd. to the train to Jamaica for the next application/agency. Now *THAT* was a hoot and a general disappointment. The advert I'd seen was for an agency called "Towne Nursing" located on Guy R Brewer, a street that I'd passed or seen in passing but never had "the pleasure" of visiting. WELL!!! The place was a store-front for Mary Kay cosmetics, all done up in pink. "Denise" was the only one there and I think she was more into the cosmetics than much else. The "header" on all of the application and paper-work was for "Amazing Home Care" agency... in The Bronx! But, having nothing pressing at the time, and after having invested the energy and time in getting there, I completed the forms, and was told that I'll be contacted by The Bronx location. Right. I'll probably be contacted by the banque with all sorts of false applications for houses, cars and credit cards in short time and due course not that this place has my personal information. It wouldn't surprise me in the least. But... too late and too bad. (I'm sure my "credit score" is a triple-digit negative as it is. And I truly don't give a what-ever. Let them run amok. There's already somebody with their eye on what little I have. Good luck to you.) Time will tell. I'm already registered with so many agencies that I've stopped keeping record of them. - Oh... another one down and it was on the streets, on the move, on the run again and off to the Q113 bus from there, in a neighbourhood that I *really* didn't want to be standing on the street in. It was "new", unfamiliar and from the other folks on the streets, it didn't "feel" too "welcoming" to a person of my "complexion". - But HEY! The bus ride was really interesting. We went past "5 Towns"... Long Island, and then a spin through the back part of JFK Airport which is beautiful wet-lands! Tall grasses and reeds, patches of open water, and just about as close to "bucolic" as a city could offer. It was like being on a mini safari! (I take my "excitement" where I can find it. If anybody were to read my mind at any given moment of a day, I'd be tied and bound and dragged away, I'm certain of it.) But as we rode along through this lovely little "get-away scene", there came another call from that "Stacey" from the cryptic company with the acronym name! This time, I simply told her that she'd got the wrong number. She insisted, rather rudely I must say, that she'd spoken to the correct party last evening at this number. I told *her* that she had a cell number and left it at that. I was implying that anybody could have picked-up the call. She apparently took it as... well, what ever she took it as, she didn't pursue the issue. Now... It's going to be interesting to see where *this* goes. Meanwhile, I'll eat my heart out and look forward to a quick death on the beach if they take my savings! - And finally, our bus rolled into Far Rock and I strolled along to see Jackie over at the JCCRP office. And it was quite a rather "interesting" little afternoon "sit'n'chat". She needed so much help keeping up with all of the matters she gets herself involved

with and in. So at one point, I offered to help her some-how... she asked me to check her voice mails... and there were SO MANY of them! (It showed me why I could put in calls to her... as could SO MANY OTHERS... and if the cause be an “emergency”... SCREWED! whilst a-waiting a reply.) But I'd volunteered to help her and this was the help she needed. As I rifled through the voice-mails, I listened to her trouble-shoot a housing matter with a client and it made me miss the old days in The Bronx Housing Courts... days when I felt I had and served a purpose... once again, as usual, fighting the battles of others and my own life frazzled and frayed (I AM such a total turd-for-brains... I'll never improve, get over that, move along and get ME on my feet!) I stayed until about 5:00pm when it was time for Jackie and I both, to vacate the premises. She thanked me repeatedly for my “help”. I thanked her in return, for giving me an opportunity to serve a purpose again. As we left, we discussed a bit of my current situation at the shelter and I told her quite a bit of the truth and facts. She said that she'd work on getting me out of there and back on my feet. (I didn't give it all too much hope... especially after seeing what actually goes on in her life... She's another one rather almost like me: trying to fix the world... single-handedly. But I appreciate the time that she does give to me, and she is a breath... and breaths are something I don't have much of these days. - Luckily, I'd gone to Associated market for some quick eats before stopping by to see Jackie and by now I was starving and thirsty and looking forward to having a bite to eat whilst on the move to the next destination of the day. I eat where and when I can any more, and even being on a public bus is preferable over sitting in that funk-box room with the vermin scurrying about... and by “vermin” I don't mean bugs and rodents. Bugs and rodents would be a most welcome relief at this point, in that room! Really! O.K.*THEN*... I was on the Q22 bus to Rock Park to meet Barbara and *THIS IS WHERE THE DAY TURNED*... I got to the Seaside library a bit later than planned and Barbara was still there! The meeting with Barbara was set, but an exact time wasn't. She'd said that we'd meet if I got there while she was still there, but if it got too late, she'd just leave. Well, thankfully, there she was. I took a moment on the computer and got to look up “CBE”, the company that “Stacie” (the mystery caller) said she'd been calling from or for, and I was right... some kind of “collection agency”... they're out to take my savings! So, I'm resigned to making the move out of the shelter and moving out of this life the way I'd planned originally... Imagine, a “collection agency” trying to take everything away from a Homeless person... in a shelter. This world will never cease to amaze with its limitless cruelty. How-ever, and to that end... Barbara and I left the library and together, we strolled over to her house where there was a woman standing in the breeze-way between two houses and Barbara suddenly said, “There she is... Denise.” Ah... This was the Denise

I've been trying to get in touch with all week! I'd phone her and leave a message, she'd return my call and leave a message, and none of the messages had set an appointment to meet. Strangest thing though... I'd had no idea what house Barbara lived in, nor who this "Denise" was, but the moment I saw her, Denise, I had a feeling that that was her. (I need to trust my gut and instinct more... Yes?) We were introduced and we talked about missing each-other on the phone... and she offered to show me the 2 rooms she had available. Hey! It might only be a room, but it ISN'T the shelter... and it IS *Rockaway*! I had the opportunity to return and so I went for it! - The house is *amazing*! CLEAN. QUIET! ORDERLY! Clean carpeting on the stairs and hall. The rooms she showed me are fresh and clean. No bugs! The bath-rooms are immaculate. Two to a floor! It's all so "Old Rockaway", and I was having visions of sitting in a little room with a type-writer, composing "The Great American Novel". You can't help but fall in love with it. And I did... to the point of

AGREEING TO TAKE A ROOM,

ON SUNDAY!!!!

HELLO ROCKAWAY! I'M BACK!

Now, this is going to hurt me a bit because I *SHOULD* have gotten a "Work Advantage" voucher by this time where I would have had to pay only 50\$/month rent and had the chance to save SO much more. But, the failure of the shelter system does not discriminate. (Or does it? I wonder, if I were Black or some other ridiculous "moron minority", I'd probably have had the voucher back in May when the application went in first.) And so I'm screwed to the wall, I'll have to dig into the savings... hopefully well before "CBE" gets to it. I'll have to make sure that I get more hours and more work and more money from this point on. I'll be paying the whole 400 dollars rent every month. But I'll have to budget too. Never mind helping me out here... That just can't happen to *me*. After all, the shelter system is no different from my own family... and they screwed me, cut me up, dropped me flat, threw me out. So why shouldn't the "system" do the same thing? No reason. I don't like it but I can't say that I'm particularly disappointed. It's all part of my "expectations". So, plans? If the world goes the way it always has, I now have this nice room to call "Home" for as long as I can stand it all. When I can't take anymore? I'm back on The Rock where I can take off and head out of here... just as I'd planned. Only this time, no turning back. At least I won't die in the shelter. So, I *AGREED TO TAKE THE ROOM!!!!* It's going to be fun, moving, little by little. I'm not saying anything to anybody in the shelter. Just *GET THE HELL OUT!* - With smiles on my face, and the lightest notes in my heart, I thanked Denise, thanked Barbara and left Rockaway this evening, crossing the Jamaica Bay, but knowing that, as of tomorrow, I'll

bring the rent over and officially, I will no longer be... “Homeless”! NO MORE HOMELESS! NO MORE SHELTER! NO MORE BS! NO MORE! Needless to tell, the trip back into The City was tolerable... painful because I didn't want to leave the place I'd called “Home” and can now call “Home” again. But THIS trip was merely to get my things packed and LEAVE! And that made it all the easier to handle.

But then, back at the “institution”... Tonight? I happened to notice that my pillow *stinks*! FOUL, FOUL, *FOUL* odour! And it's from *ME*! I NEED to make a wash but I just don't have the time. And now, something inside my body is going *bad*. I wonder... could it be from 11 months of Homelessness? Stress? Improper diet? All of the above? All I know is that my body smells as if it's *rotting*. So, maybe I won't have to worry about taking my own way out of this... maybe my body is doing it all for me, breaking down and shutting down. Wouldn't that be lovely? - I stepped out to cross the hall for the loo and when I got back, D16 had his little TV on. *BLASTING*! These crack-heads are deaf! And then 17 comes in with his weed and Rich and he get stoned... IN THE ROOM! My clothing is beginning to stink from the cigarette smoke in the room. I'm SO OUT OF THERE! BUT NOW I HAVE A PLACE TO GO TO! A PLACE TO CALL “HOME”! I'M NOT “HOMELESS” ANY MORE! (The fact doesn't make this place, this room, this refuse-of-the-Earth any easier to tolerate, but it won't be much longer now... And then the thought crossed my mind: Hopefully I won't be murdered in my sleep before I get to leave this place! How happy. I should be celebrating. I'm concerned about being murdered in my sleep.

Wednesday 15 July: 338/307

Today's “Metro” (*free daily newspaper*) head-line: Wednesday, July 15, 2009

“Report: Homeless program a failure”

New York.

A rental subsidy program designed to help New Yorkers transition from homelessness into stable housing has been a failure, according to a new report from advocacy group Picture the Homeless. Of 500 Homeless people surveyed, 69 percent said they've been to housing court because of subsidy-related problems, and 41 percent were in rent arrears because the city failed to pay its portion. Officials from the program say it's helped New Yorkers sign 12,000 leases since 2007.

How about *this*? They publish it like *this* is news! BUT the question not answered is: How many of those were *legitimate* and how many were a success? I loathe this city and its propaganda! What

a bunch of delusional liars! 12,000 leases signed, with their help. And here I am, having spent a year listening to BS promises and today? I am paying my own rent to get the HELL out of the shelter system. NO help with rent. NO help with leases. NO furniture vouchers. NO kitchen utensils. NO subsidised rent. NOTHING! And as for the city failures “to pay its portion”? Thank you Mr. Mayor Bloomberg who simply wants all of us Homeless folks to be bused out of The City, or thrown into the jails. (OK, yes, I could round up quite a few who SHOULD be in jails, and quite a few who, all too simply, should be SHOT! But once again... there's NO mention of those of US, who make OUR OWN way out, find a place and TRY to get back on our feet. We... the “Working Homeless” slobs are completely over-looked and THERE is a major issue, a MAJOR problem, not with US, but with society in general. Well... maybe one of these days, AFTER I'm out of the shelter, I'll take-up the issue. But right now, today, this moment, I need to focus on ME and how I'm going to pull-off this move with-out everybody knowing what I'm doing.

Thursday 16 July: 339/308

I got back to the shelter at about 4:30pm this evening after a very hot and humid, oppressive sort of day. But I wanted to get some laundry done. Not much, just sheets, underwear... things I *need* to get cleaned. So, I bagged it all, stripped the bed and headed to the laundry room on the 6th floor. Two Puerto Ricans had commandeered the washers *and* dryers! One of them was actually doing wash, but took BOTH washers! They're really a stupid race of people, and inconsiderate of everybody and everything. No bias. Just the truth from experience. So I sat on the floor in the hall and waited until... The one who had the washers had washed some trousers that were covered in wet, white *paint*! So when I finally got to use the washer, I had to wash *it* before washing my clothes! And to think, today, for the first time in years I actually broke down and bought “Gain” laundry soap and for *THIS*! Well, I got to do my wash and caught it before the white paint ruined one of my shirts! Even with the pre-washing of the machine, there was STILL paint left in it! The whole ordeal took until after 8:00pm! So I come into the room and there, D16 is lounging, watching his TV. D17 looks up and says, so frigging sarcastically: “Oh, you only did wash! We thought we lost you.” “Not yet...” I replied flatly. I'm saying nothing to any of them. Not that I have anything to say to any of them in the first place. And Rich is almost hanging in the window, smoking a cigarette. I just don't get it. He knows I don't like the smoke in the room. He also knows that smoking in the rooms is forbidden. But I swallowed this too and went on with my own business of making the bed and finally, at about 8:45pm, getting something to eat! The

evening went on. I got a shower in. I came back to the room, got ready for some sleep.... SOME... and as I'm trying to sleep, 16, 17 and Rich are yapping and yammering away about pretty much nothing. Crack-heads do that sort of thing... they just ramble, talking TO each-other and never listening, making no sense at all, just lip-flapping, constantly, on-stop. I've learnt to just let it go at that. But *then*... At about 10:30pm, some moron walks in the door, it wants to talk with 17... *Old prison-mates!* They *all* love to talk about "up-state", like it's some mystery resort that only "the gang" knows about. "Up-state" is where I'd spent the better portion and the worst part of my life! The "Hudson Valley". And these trash-rots believe that they're such an "elite" little group. Well, maybe they are... the "elite" of the lowest of most useless scum in all of Creation. Rich gets into the talk. Then 16 gets into it with his "I know all there is to know about everything there is" and they're *ALL* talking *prison!* Meanwhile, I'm trying to sleep. It finally got finished some time after 11:00pm and I finally got to *pass out*. That's the way it's been now... I don't "go to sleep", I lay in the the bed, head pounding, sweating, aggravated and I wait until the general fatigue rips everything out of me and I simply "pass out"!

Friday 17 July: 340/309

Seaside Library... 3:57pm and I'm waiting for 6:30pm. A chance to jot my thoughts on this wonderful day, back in the village I can, once again, call "Home"... the place at the End of The World, where I'll be **LIVING** once again!

Well, it looks like "the system" FAILED *AGAIN!* Instead of having a voucher for the "Work Advantage Program" in hand, I now have two money orders, one for full rent for the month of July and one for the month of August... *RENT!* NO HELP! NO HELP *AGAIN!* *So many promises* and so much information about how much DHS (Department of Homeless Services) can *help* me get back on my feet... And all the while, they've done nothing, *ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!* For these 309 days, I have NOT eaten their food, have NOT changed linens weekly, I HAVE washed the linens they supplied and paid for the washing. I've saved my own income. I've worked myself almost to death (or to the point of horrid and painful sickness at the very least). I've done it *ALL on my own!* I've put up with harassment. I've put up with the threats to my well-being, if not my life. I've put up with the smoking in the room. I've put up with the room-mates who don't bathe and who could knock the wind out of a set of lungs with their stench. I've put up with the screaming and hollering in the halls. I've put up with the urine on the floors. I've put up with running all over to get receipts and to do the paper-work for the so-called "case-workers", paper-

work that THEY are getting paid to compile. I've done *EVERYTHING* that's been asked of me. And today? Here I sit, 800 dollars poorer in my savings account, ready to pay rent, with NO HELP. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES... YOU'VE *FAILED*... *AGAIN!* But I'm certain, completely certain that the DHS AND Mr. Mayor Bloomberg are THRILLED beyond description because THEY got off... just about FREE! No investment of anything on their part. There's been no "services" given by the "Department of Homeless *Services*" at all! - Other-wise, this morning, I left the shelter at the usual time (about 6:15am), got the M15 bus to 14th Street, walked to 1st Avenue for the L train to Broadway Junction where I got an A train to Rockaway Parkway. There, I got the Q41 bus to Howard Beach where Mrs. TG was not in because *she's* been hospitalised. (How nice for them... being able to get medical attention, for what-ever, AND home care as well. Meanwhile, one of their "care" providers is all but dying... or at least painfully ill, and can't afford such a luxury, in time or money.) I worked in the heat and humidity, because they can't have air conditioning... Mr. can't tolerate "the cold". Bleating Hell. But today I *bolted* for the door at noon, 12:00pm on the dot! No giving a chance for any "emergency", and NO FREE TIME to them today. I got back on a Q41 bus to Rockaway Parkway for the A train to Broadway Junction for the J train to Chambers Street and rushed into the banque to get my savings balance, transfer the funds from savings to chequing, bolt for the J train back to Broadway Junction to the A train to the Shuttle to Rock Park. - At Rock Park, a brisk strut to the post office for... Money Orders for the RENT, and my pay stub. Relieved, I strolled over to Waldbaum's for something to eat (PopTarts and a tin of "Half-n-Half" coffee). I took a delightful stroll over to Tribute Park where I ate 6 of the 8 PopTarts and washed them down with the coffee... and I ate quickly, sitting, as I usually do, on a bench at the bay's edge. Feeling "not hungry" but not really well, considering what I'd put into my stomach, I calmly strolled over here, to the library. Oh, this room had better come through! If not? I'll be on the beach at the Fort with my "bullets", ready to go "Home", ready to go to my Mum. That's all I'll say. - Meanwhile... I just want the world to know: Department of Homeless Services, New York City has FAILED YET AGAIN! - Day's end, quick notes from back in the sh**-and-dung hole where everything is nothing but a repeat of every other evening-into-night. The stench of cigarettes and un-bathed vermin is suffocating tonight. And it's gone back into my bed-linens! I really have to marvel at how "low" *I've* come, because I actually lay under these rags, with my head on a pillow that wreaks of some stench that never was "me" but seems to have become "me" recently. These parasites, these cancers that are in this room, and those who have taken over the entire floor wander in, out, up and down the halls, aimlessly, with no purpose other than to annoy, aggravate, and generally destroy even the mos

remote notion of civilisation and humanity. “Disgusting”? No. It's gone too far beyond simply disgusting. Repulsive? Close. Nauseating? Yes. I wonder, almost always, how a “human” can become this, what-ever it is that they are. And I truly wonder, sincerely, HOW the can manage to destroy every rule and regulation set-up in this place, posted on walls, written into documentation, repeated verbally each time they have to confront a “case worker” and all the while... NOTHING is done or said to stop it! I CAN understand how they managed to get into prisons. I can NOT understand who would be so f***ing stupid, ignorant, incompetent as to set them back into society! Do I feel that they deserve prison? No. Absolutely not. What I DO feel is that they should be REMOVED from society... in what-ever way, by what-ever methods and means it would take to do so. They don't deserve this shelter. They don't deserve the services and the food, the bed, the linens. They don't deserve to take their next breath on this Earth. This, what is in this room, wandering these halls, is not “Homeless”. This does is not deserving of a place to call “Home”. This is waste, trash, rotting, miserable refuse. - I wonder tonight, how Geo, Rey, Rich-from-Queens, Tony Muscle, Keith and Kendall are doing these nights. I hope, with all heart and soul that they are “out there” and comfortable. And I MOST sincerely hope that they NEVER have to come back to this place because, not only is this “NOT the place that was described in the holiday brochure” (as Kendall used to say), this is no longer the place they left. - One thing I have to say: I'm rather thankful that they got out when they did, and I'm thankful for the changes here because, back then, I would have left here feeling a bit guilty and sad, concerned for the guys I left behind. Tonight, the only one who is left is Rick, next door. Yes, it's going to be a bit of misery leaving him in this dung, but the intense HATE I have for this place and this room now conquers any sorrow. - I've said on the social media, I said to peoples' face, and here, I write it, and will put it in digital print:

NOT ALL HOMELESS PEOPLE DESERVE HOMES!

Saturday 18 July 2009: ROCKAWAY!!!! 341/310

I have a place I can call “MY HOME”!!!

This morning I went to schul, just as I would on Saturday mornings, but THIS morning, there was SO much to be thankful for and yet, to be sad about. I was about to head out of this synagogue that has provided me with strength, peace, and a sense of worth, and out to a village where I was, once upon what seems today, such a long, LONG time ago, ever so happy... truly happy. It's also the place where, 341 days ago, my “Homelessness” began. Almost an entire year

ago! Do I have animosity against the village, the peninsula? No, not in the least. It was very kind to me from the beginning. The peninsula provided me an escape from “Margot” and her oppressive nastiness and ingratitude. The peninsula provided me with the kindness of the dunes, the “shelter” of the tree. The “people”? For the most part, they too were delightful, kind, a delight... for the most part. All told, the peninsula was a joy. And today, I was returning to it, to re-establish myself there, as a human-being! And these thoughts mingled with the happiness I had as this congregation chanted, as I rocked and swayed in prayer, and today, inside, in silence, I rejoiced. - After services... I headed out... for what would be close to the very last trip of this kind... the trip I'd been taking too many mornings, to get to work, and too many evenings to get “back” to a place I have come to literally HATE with a PASSION. The L train to Broadway Junction for the A train to Broad Channel island... for a shuttle train to... ROCKAWAY PARK!!! HOME! -

Today, this afternoon, Denise and I met at the house and she brought me up the carpeted stairs to the “old world” carpeted hall and to the room... the room that I'd come to call “my” room. Denise put the key into the lock on the door-knob and opened the clean, white door. There was a “fresh” scent in there. No staleness, no sweat, no cigarette and weed odours, no rotting flesh and flatulence. It was delightful, freshly painted a clean and soothing, comforting white, in much contrast with the “off-white” ancient paint of the room I'd just left this morning. The floor was old hard-wood plank, it was freshly-painted a deep green. Immediately inside the little room, to my left, was a “double-sized” bed, not some barely “single occupancy” old metal-framed bit. On the bed, a brand-new, still wrapped in shipping plastic, cloth-covered mattress, not the no-longer-sterile plastic-covered mattress I'd sat, reclined and laid on for the past 340 days. But, even MORE important, the wall at the head of the bed was simply white, with-out anything scrawled on it. No letters, no numbers, just plain, clean white. No “A108”, no “D18”, nothing, just plain, refreshing, delightful wall! Against the wall to my right, a clean, black chest of drawers, to my left, at the foot of the bed, a counter-top with a small sink and faucet with hot and cold running water. Below the counter, to the left, a small fridge and above the sink, on the wall, a glass-doored wooden cabinet for dishes, and perhaps a pot and pan. Directly ahead, a single window. Indeed, as Barbara had described, it faced the wall of the building next-door, some 6 feet perhaps away. But it allowed the room to be lit with the light of day, and it was clear, not covered with some adhesive-backed vinyl. It was small, but so wonderfully bright, comfortable, quite and to be occupied by only ONE person. And the door to this room had a lock, that required a key. It was a place to call “Home”, and my heart beat quickly and strong with anticipation and happiness. We stood at the little chest of drawers, I completed a general “application” that didn't ask for much information, wasn't what I

thought “intrusive” at all. Denise was kind. She smiled. She was welcoming. She offered to fore-go the rent for the month of July, in consideration of the fact that it was already just over half through. But I insisted that she accept the full month's rent and that I would fore-go the rest. To me, unbeknownst to her, this room was more precious than I could have ever explained. I never told her that I was coming out of a Homeless Shelter. She never really asked. But she certainly would never know just how much that little room, with a view of a brick wall painted white, just metres away, actually meant to me. I handed her the “application” with the two money orders, each for 400 dollars. She handed me receipts for each payment and... AND... **THE KEYS! KEYS!** A key to the front door of the house... and a key to “MY DOOR”! She welcomed me to the house and left me alone, **ALONE IN MY ROOM!** “MY” room! - For a while, I just stood there, still and looking. The room was no more than 7ft wide by 10ft long. It offered a double-sized bed with a **REAL** mattress, still covered in the original plastic wrap! There was a corner with a small sink and some counter-top space, cup-board on the wall above. And there was a small chest of drawers and a ceiling fan. But most important of all of these things... this little room offered me a place to call “MINE” and it came with a **KEY!** As of that very moment, **I was no longer “Homeless”. I HAD A HOME AND I WAS STANDING IN IT!** And I luxuriated in it. I stood there, in silence... in the “Heaven” that I'd suffered worked for, suffered miserably for, lived through nightmares and Hell for. I stood... there... in silence... and an exuberant **JOY!** And I stood there for the longest moments, surrounded by clean, quiet and... **ALONE... HAPPILY ALONE!** - I SO wanted to simply kick off my shoes, lay down on that bed, and stay... at least the night. But tonight, I still had a curfew, still had to “sign” for my bed, my locker, my space amongst the 849 other “residents” of the Shelter. So, very reluctantly, my heart heavied, but only just a bit. I put out the light in “my” little room, stepped out into the clean, quite, carpeted hall-way, closed “my” door and with “my” **KEY, I LOCKED MY DOOR** behind me! - The trip back to the Shelter that evening was bitter-sweet. I travelled over Jamaica Bay, in seats on the train that faced the rear of the train, looking back toward “Home”! And I thought of the **JOY** of being able to go to the locker tonight, sorting through things, planning on how to pack so that as I left the Shelter, it wouldn't ever be “obvious” to any-one there. I resolved to tell no-one about this. I worried that, should anybody know that I was actually leaving, on my own, of my own volition and determination, **SOMEbody** would do **SOMEthing** to thwart it all. A jealous resident could, as I slept, severely injure or kill me; a nasty “CaseWorker” or somebody in administration could suddenly arrange for a mid-night transfer to another room or... another shelter. In a worst-case scenario, I could leave one morning to return to an empty locker. There wasn't much in there, but what little there was, particularly clothing, was mine and I certainly didn't want to part with any of it. The plan at this point was to remove my belongings, a little at a time, over the course of a few days, slowly, privately. I resolved to keep absolutely silent about all of this. And I could feel my entire body begin to relax, my breathing to slow calmly. - The wait at Broad Channel island

was brief tonight. Or, perhaps, it just wasn't long enough. Standing there, breathing in the sea air, in the calm and almost silence was nothing less than rejuvenatory. I was coming back to "life"... at long last, I was coming back to "life". - When the A train pulled into the station, I got on and, for a while, stood at the door and looked out on the Jamaica Bay, admiring the sky, the water, the openness. At Rock Blvd., I took a seat and for the remainder of the ride into The City, A train and L train, I sat, closed my eyes, and kept myself in "my" room. The train rolled along, rolled on, across and under Long Island/Brooklyn, heading toward that "Emerald City" that, in my child-hood held so much mystery and wonder, that these days, holds little more than some fading memories and much disgust. At 14th Street, I transferred to the M15 bus up-town, back to HELL! - But tonight, when I returned to the Shelter, I knew I was only there for the briefest while and, should conditions in the dorm or anywhere in the Shelter become intolerable, I now had the option of leaving, no matter what the weather, no matter what the hour, I could simply grab what I could and walk away from it all. And I had a place to go to where it's already CLEAN and QUIET and SAFE! - The plan was to simply pack what could be packed in my back-pack and perhaps an extra bag that would go unnoticed by my fellow residents, each day. Each day, for the next 3 days, at the very most, I'd leave, either to go to work or to simply go out for the day. On work-days, I'd either drop by the house en route to work or after, leave what I had packed. That evening, I'd return to the Shelter to pack some more... and I'd move in slowly, until at last, the locker was empty and there was nothing left behind. On that final day, I'd simply leave, just like any other day, no "Good-bye.", just quietly leave. I owed nothing to any-one there, and no-one there owed anything to me. Beds emptied and filled all the time. People came and went, settled and were removed, transferred in... and transferred out. None of us meant anything in particular to this place, the "staff" and, these days, to one-another. And for every man who left, there were many just waiting for that bed, that locker, that little bit of space, under a roof, surrounded by filthy, old, foul-smelling walls. I would be replaced in precious little time. Quite actually, on that night, there would be no signature beside my name and bed number on the "sign-in" sheet. At about 10:00pm, there would be a "BED CHECK" and the bonobo-bastard conducting it would barge into the room to find at least one empty bed. It, the turd, would note: "D18" and leave. Perhaps, at 11:00 or 11:30pm, there would be repeat performance of "BED-CHECK" and again, the note of vacancy for "D18". This would be duly reported to "Operations" and, at some point in time, over the course of that night, there would be the all-too familiar... click of the light-switch, the rustle of plastic bags, the slamming of lock against steel locker door, the BANG of the steel locker door... much noise, much calamity and then... perhaps... silence again... and a new, different, strange occupant in bed number... D18. I would be replaced... that very night. Would anybody in the room care in the least? No... not even in the very least. And, as I thought about this, I would be one less file stacked on a desk full of files. One "blue file" would be tossed into a bin and brought DOWN into the bowels of "the old Bellevue Hospital", not to be

missed by any of those who had the “responsibility” to ensure that all of the necessary “peppuz” (papers) were there, with their punched holes, ridiculous notes, and receipts. I would be gone... in silence. I knew I'd miss some of the guys. But the ones who meant the most to me were already gone. They'd left. It was now my turn. Again, today, the emotions were, just like always... Bitter-Sweet Bitter.)

Sunday 19 July 2009. *Bitter-sweet Bitterness*

342 DAYS OF HOMELESSNESS / 311 DAYS IN A PUBLIC SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

11 Months and 1 Week / 10 Months

I remember looking in the locker this morning and, having the day off from work, went about packing things into my rather beaten piece of luggage, with it's one “off-kilter” wheel. I'd planned on going to “the house” today, spending the day in Rockaway, and making tomorrow the last trip of moving. However, in the emptiness of the room, in the relative quiet of the Shelter this morning, I calmly packed and realised as I folded everything neatly: I could put EVERYTHING into ONE piece of luggage and *THIS* would be the *LAST* of it! So, with care and careful arranging, I *DID* manage to get *EVERYTHING* into that rolling bit of luggage that was just about ready to crumble (not un-like its owner)! When everything was packed and done, I made the bed as I'd always done, as if it were just another day like all the other days before it, I took one last, long and hard look at the bed, the locker, the room. The memories, the laughter, the joking... Rey, the “original” George, Rich-from-Queens, Kendall, Tony Muscle, Charles, CW... 5W101, Keith, DuRag... the first night, and the many nights after... Friends, comrades, my “Family”... Angel, Mike... I was leaving... the last of us all. The only one left here now was Rick, next door. Only Rick now. The room was empty, and quiet, as it had been on other Sunday afternoons. But it's not the same room. Not any more. Some part of me wanted to cry, to mourn the leaving. Some part of me wanted to shout, out loud, because of what that room had become. But in my heart, I wanted to know that all the others were safe now. They deserved safe. And I wondered if I'd ever happen to bump into them, any-where in this city, any-where in this world. We were “Homeless”. We were ambitious. We cared for this room, this hall, as if it were our own. And now, today, when I walk out of this door, we'll all be gone now, and I knew then that this place will never be that way, ever again. And it was time, time to walk away. No sense looking “back” because “back” there didn't exist now, hadn't existed for a while, and will only live on in my memory, and these notes. Funny how “Homelessness” changes us, brings some of us together, rips some of us apart, makes

some of us wiser, and others, only bitter. For me, in a very dear place, I realised at that moment that I no longer had much, if anything, in common with anybody who'd not been Homeless. Nobody in the world would understand what it is, what it means and what it does do a person when they find themselves at a junction in the road of life when ALL of the people they know and have known, many who called themselves a "friend" are no longer there, at a time when "friends" are so truly and sincerely needed. Nobody in the world can understand or even imagine the depth, the darkness, despair and fear of standing at the doors of a public shelter for... the "Homeless" who are now equally "friendless". Nobody in the world can fathom the fear of coming into such an un-known, because the only way to know this is to live it. And only the "Homeless" have and still do, and will "live" this. I was leaving the only people who can understand... I no longer have anything in common, and I no longer wish to have anything in common with those who haven't lived this. These people, the good, wicked, clean, rotting... these are the people with whom I will share, forever, this bond. But truly, it was time to move on, move along, move out and move away. And silently, calmly, I walked out of the dorm, into the empty hall and toward the "lounge" to the lift that would take me out of here. As Fate would have it, I'd no sooner begun to walk toward my exit when Rick came out of his dorm. He stopped, and standing there, looked me straight in the eye and said with only the slightest bit of a grin and in an almost whispered voice "You're not coming back." He'd been in the system for so many years at this point that he knew. And I admired that so much. Strangely, I too had developed that sense of the coming and going of others. And at this moment, I was very much aware of that "instinct". All I said in reply was "What makes you say that?" My thoughts were to simply say that I was bringing more things to be put into storage. But he "knew". I respected him entirely too much to lie to him, so when he said "I can see things like that." the only thing I could respond with was "And why can't I just be bringing my sh** to storage?" He smiled at me, kindly and simply said "You're not coming back and I don't blame you." and he shuffled his way down the hall and I continued my way to the lift, pushed the call button and when it arrived, empty, I simply rolled my piece of old luggage in, pressed the button for the first floor and as the door closed, so too, did my mind... and my heart. When the door opened on the first floor, I walked past the "Operations" offices, past the guards, out the door of the Shelter and into the open air, to the streets of NYC... alone, more alone than I could remember having been in a long, long while. Almost slowly, I walked over to 2nd Avenue, as I'd done so often, got onto an M15 bus to 14th street where I got myself onto the subway and... left "The City" and the Shelter and Rick... behind as the train took me under the streets of Manhattan, across the East River into Brooklyn, under

Long Island and... away... ROCKaway. No, I wasn't coming back. Today, when this luggage was un-packed, there was no reason, no need to leave my little room... MY little room. Tonight there would be no curfew, no fighting for a place in the queue to "sign" a list for a metal bed beside a metal locker, in a room that had now become strange and defiled to me. Tonight, this night, I wouldn't be hiding myself in tall grasses, laying on a sand dune, or under a tree on the ground. Tonight I would put my head down, and in darkness, drift off to sleep, when and how I was ready... alone. Tonight there'd be no unconscious thoughts or concerns about being transferred, being rudely awakened, being robbed, being assaulted. Tonight, in the quiet of "my" little room, on "my" bed, I could, after more than a year, once again, SLEEP IN PEACE! Today, officially, I ceased to be "Homeless". The nightmares were now in the past. The torment of being treated more like some useless dreg, some infernal burden on society, the obligation of being civil to others who deserved no civility only to ensure my own safety... all of this was finished! Tomorrow, when I woke, I'd be just another member of the general society, showered and dressed and on my way to a job! And, in all of this? I managed to get to this point COMPLETELY ALONE! I did it ALL... ALONE!

Postscript:

*These last days were quite wonderful. Stressful but wonderful. I was so genuinely happy. I was leaving the Shelter; I was returning to the little "town" that had given me refuge, peace, a new life and absolute joy. I was getting a "key" to a door that opened to a place where I could be alone, to sleep, to listen to music that I chose, to rest, to prepare a HOT meal! I could leave my bed and my belongings and, with relative assurance, not be concerned about having anything or everything gone when I returned. That silly little "key" for a silly little room was equal to the most prized medal or acknowledgement of some Worldly accomplishment. In the Shelter, when someone would claim "rights and privileges" to a room, a bed, an area of floor-space, the general response was, "You have no key to anything around here, not even to your locker. You don't have your name on anything that says any part of any of this is 'yours'. When you come into the building, you have no key. When you come into this room, you have no key. You can't lock yourself in, and you can't lock anybody out. And even the key to the locker, which isn't yours either, doesn't mean anything because when they - the administration - want to see what's in there, or throw you out, they can come at any time and cut that lock and your sh** is gone." I got... a KEY! And I got it entirely on my own! No help from anybody! The KEY, the room, the escape from Homelessness... ALL OF IT... accomplished... ALONE! SOLO! BY ME! I owe NOBODY ANY form of gratitude. I "owe" NOTHING to ANYBODY... except to my-self because I survived... ALONE, by my own wits, will, strength, fortitude and tenacity.)*



II. REVISITED

“To err is to wander and wandering is the way we discover the world
and lost in thought it is the also the way we discover ourselves.

Kathryn Schulz, *Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error*

Sometimes we may learn more from a man's errors, than from his virtues.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

687 Days

1 Year, 10 Months, 2 Weeks, 3 Days

Later

("Many opportunities exist for full-time and long-term positions. We offer a comprehensive benefits package and competitive salaries." So read the adverts for employment opportunities.)

Nine dollars per hour. "*Competitive*" with whom, and where? Nine dollars per hour, before a multitude of involuntary tax deductions, payments toward "comprehensive benefits", is what is commonly referred to as "gross" salary.

"Gross" as defined by *Merriam-Webster: *overall total exclusive of deductions, offensive to good taste or morals, conspicuously bad or objectionable.*

Keeping this in mind, my 9\$/hr. salary was, indeed, "gross", as it was in fact, the "overall total exclusive of deductions". It was also, according to the definition, "gross" in that, AFTER deductions, more often than not, it amounted to little more than 5.35\$/hr. Now, one need bear in mind that I was on the rosters of so many agencies through-out the city that I'd lost count and track of them all. On a rotating basis, I'd telephone them, notifying them of my availability, and continue working with the cases and clients that I already had at the time. My thoughts? To hold tightly to the work I had and, in "spare time" continue searching for more work. On any average "good" work-week, I was fortunate to have 29 hours of paid work, but I'd fought and fought hard to get the work that I had, to be with the clients I worked with, to build a trust and rapport with them and their families. After all, I was in their homes, most often alone with the client... their loved-one, and trust was a difficult but rewarding achievement. Additionally, there were promises of "bonus" and "pay rises". The latter amounted to, at best, some 25 cents per work-hour, and I received one of those... which was promptly countered with an increase in "taxes" and "other charges", bringing me back to... about 5.35\$/hr. But I endured, as I'd done for the previous 10 months, struggling along, fighting to maintain my autonomy, doing what was, in honesty and sincerity, my "best with what I had to work with". In retrospect and revisit, I calculated:



5.35\$/hr. = 155.15\$/29hr. work-week (my average) = 620.60\$/month

620.60\$ Total Monthly Income

less: 400.00\$ Monthly Rent

less: 104.00\$ Monthly Transport Expense

Total Remaining Monthly Income: 116.60\$

116.60\$ Monthly Remaining

divided by 4 weeks/month left me with...

29.15\$ Per week to purchase food, toiletries and various sundries.

When I'd left the shelter, 1 year, 10 months, 2 weeks, 3 days ago, I had, to my name, a total "net" worth of 2400.00\$. I'd immediately paid 800.00\$ of that toward what I saw as my only means of survival into the next "day"! That 800.00\$ covered the rent for the 1.5months at the on-set. I was down to 1600.00\$ which covered future rent for another 4 months. Each month there-after was another 400.00\$ expense, and while I paid that amount monthly, and worked for my 620.60\$ (and often much less as assignments were cancelled, re-scheduled and other-wise manipulated), I had the added expenses of clothing, of which I had precious little when I left the shelter, cooking utensils, of which I'd had none, and food, because once I'd begun working, the aforementioned "food stamps" were discontinued. To be quite honest, I do not know, even to this very moment in which this paragraph is being composed, how I managed, short of a few and rare "private duty" jobs, to maintain my "home" over the remaining year and 8 months. I do know that it was quite difficult, but obviously not impossible. I'd come from a Homeless shelter, on my own, with-out assistance! Much in life is and was "difficult", but I'd proved , mostly to myself that precious, precious little was "impossible". Here too was yet another example, proof of that.

I must add that, just as people changed in the shelter with the coming and going of "residents", so too did the "roster of residents" in my once-quiet, once-respectable home-not-far-from-the-sea. My neighbour on the wall to the left most perfectly mimicked, and nightly reminded me of the likes of the toilet-seat bangers in the shelter, with her nightly tapping, banging and even scratching on our common-shared wall. And behind "wall number 2" to my right, the radio-playing and yelling shelter residents who would gather nightly in the halls. The plumbing in the house was such that, waste flushed down drains in the residence to my right backed-up into my little sink, and what failed to flush-through, remained to settle in the pipes. There was a steady

and constant stench of rotting matter wafting up through the sink drain that filled the little space of my “home”, not unlike the stench of rotting flesh of the “non-bathers” in the shelter. My verbal and written reports to the “superintendent” on the premises went ignored, and so too, the same reports to the landlord/owner of the property. I was, in no manner, prepared nor truly able to simply up-root and move along, income considered. So in one heavy and morbid heave of desperate breath, I faced the most dismal fact: I had to leave, and the only place I had to go to was... back to the shelter where I could only hope that Fate would be kind to me and that I would face a situation at least closely resembling the “better” days of my past experience. I could only “hope”.

And so, once again, exhausted and truly despondent, yet educated and aware of the potential of a yet-unknown future, I admitted, to myself, that it was time to retreat. I'd gone through the shelter alone, I'd come out of the shelter alone, and now, once again, my future was up to me... alone. I didn't expect nor did I hope for help, assistance, support in any manner from any-one else. (As I say, I was “educated and aware” now, and having “hoped” in the past was, well, to no avail.)

I have to note that when I left my little room in the town I'd come to love, I DID manage to keep my rent current. But I knew, all too well, that (a) that was not going to be the case for much longer, (b) “better” job prospects weren't in the immediate future, so to avoid troubles and disturbances, it was time to “fall back” onto and into what little “service” I had available. And so, one day, again, I walked through my still clean, white door, leaving the keys behind, and ...

Here now... **“Revisited”**.

Footnote: When I left this time, un-like the previous time, I DID, in fact, manage to pay, in full, all rent due and owed. I left, how-ever, knowing that maintaining future dues would, at this juncture, ultimately prove too close to “impossible” and, rather than bring into my own tribulations, my landlord, I admitted my own defeat, and “vacated”. In the final week in which I packed my few belongings and possessions, for the first time in my life-time, I became familiar too with something I hadn't seen even in the shelter: bedbugs. My little room had been infested with them over the course of time, as “neighbours” coming into the house brought them with. Indeed, it *was* time to leave!

* <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gross>

15. June 2011

6 June 2011: Foreword

Today I am bed number “A118” as I put pen to page, once again. I all but *swore* I’d *never* be back here. But look at this: Primarily because I’m now a proven “sh***-for-brains idiot”, putting somebody else’s comfort before mine, (you’d think I’d have learned by now), giving the free extra hours, tolerating the physical and verbal (and mental) abuse of “clients” to whom I’d gone to “help” in every and any way I possibly could, here I am AGAIN, in a room that smells the same as I can still remember, on a same steel-framed bed with plastic mattress. Oddly enough, I’m STILL the same “HA” (Housing Authority?) number I was originally assigned, after all this time away. And, admittedly, I am that number in more ways than one, in so many more aspects than “records”, mentality and soul. BUT... I *do* warn: do be careful World. I’m so much more than ANGRY and BITTER, with myself mostly and with external influences than words alone can express. I’m VERY much in the frame of mind where I DO believe, with heart and soul, that it’s better to *crush* those who get in my way, and NOT care whether they like me or not. - I want NO MORE “FRIENDS”! I need NO MORE “FRIENDS”! So the rest can eat their own waste and die. This time baby, the World is on its own! I don’t “fight back”, I simply retreat and dismiss. Rather than make chaos, I choose today as I’ve always chosen: I haven’t suffered a loss of people, people now suffer the loss of me; it’s my nature to be-friend, support, help in any way I humanly can, even, often, to my own detriment. I have always striven to be a “best-possible friend” to others... and when I find that others choose to “take” to no end, I’ve no more to “give”, and I simply remove myself, and my help and support. The “best possible friend” that others have had, enjoyed and taken for granted is now... gone, and will never return. No, it’s not my “loss”, it’s my “gain” because I will no longer “give”. It’s now more than about time that I “give”... to ME. I got me out of here the last time, in spite of continuing to give to others. This time, I will get me out of here because I will *not* give to others... I will give to *me*... until I am secure.

Monday 6 June 2011: Another Journal Begins...

It’s now 8:06 am and I am at the Union Turnpike station of the subway, sitting with the morning commuters, waiting for our transfer train into The City to arrive. I have to stop at storage before

going to the shelter.

- This morning I woke, before the 6:00am alarm that I'd set, in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Gb. I woke with a "bad" stomach and knotted bowels, a churning gut, feeling more like vomiting than much of anything else. We returned from a most beautiful, peaceful, calm, bucolic, and rather dream-like "holiday in the woods in their house by the lake" only what seems now to be a yesterday ago. It was, I must say, a wonderful reprieve from a few weeks of stress. And it was a most needed escape from the general mayhem that has become "life and living". But it was only an epilogue of what *had* been and a prelude to what is to come. I woke, this morning, to sunshine... and I woke under a shroud of anxiety accessorised with dread. I had my morning tap-water coffee and my cigarette, wanting *so* much to sleep even a bit *more*. But this morning, once again in my life-time, it's a matter of "*MUST* leave" and not choose to leave. So I got up in what's to be the last "comfy", clean and "private" bed, in a tidy, clean and sun-it room, and put together my meagre possessions and, in yet another familiar state of mental and emotional shut-down, made my way to the front door. M&E were already awake and met me in the dining-room. There really wasn't much to be said. Few words, few lines were really spoken, brief and succinct: (M) "I'm sorry things couldn't be different."

(E) "We've gone out of our way..." (NOT exactly the appropriate nor proper kind of thing to be said in a situation like this, particularly from a "Social Worker". But then, after the previous "stay" in the Homeless shelter, it was nothing different from what I'd expect... "Social Worker", "Case Worker"... same thing.)

(M) "When you got all those good jobs did you have that beard?"

Why yes, I thought to myself... yes I did. Of course I did. I've had it since the day it began growing. And what, I wondered, did that have anything to do with the present situation, or the state of affairs at the moment, or even the state of affairs in Rumania? Rumania seemed as appropriate to the moment as did anything else. But all I could actually get out of my mouth at the moment was,

"When I said, last night, 'Ultimately, there's only one person on whom you can depend...'

(E) "Yourself. That's very true." she replied even before I could say another word.

I thanked them for their kindness, hospitality and other such, and I did so with all sincerity. Indeed, they'd been quite the high-light of my recent times. What began as a "client" assigned by the agency had become more like the "family" of lore. They were, quite indeed and in all honesty, kinder than anybody I could think of in recent years. But it was time to leave. I wanted to get to the shelter before the onslaught, the packed rooms, the "over-worked" and "over-

stressed"... "case workers" and "intake workers". I needed to get this done, now. And I knew that there'd be no change in the situation. That little "spare" room where I'd woken this morning would remain... "spare". - And all this while, in my mind, I keep going back to Ren, Cathy and TJ. Going back some 40 years now, these were so-called and self-proclaimed "friends" who came to me when Life and Luck had let *them* down. I'd opened my doors to them, took them into my "home", *gave* them my home. Ren stayed for many months, ate everything in the house, never had or looked for work, but amazingly always had the funds to find party time every week-end. He left me with his luggage one day and never returned. Cathy and I had attended high-school together. When her family was transferred to the South, she rang me one day saying she wanted to come back to The Bronx. Of course, I opened my home to her. She came with some luggage and a car and a cheque-book connected to a closed banque account back in the South. She asked me to cash a cheque for her and I did so, giving her the equivalent of my month's rent. The cheque bounced and Cathy vanished. As for TJ, he too came to stay, and stay and stay. He brought his cockroaches and cat, a taste for "Pastis" and international telephone calls lasting through the nights. He drove away over the horizon leaving me with his cockroaches and a telephone bill of 1100 dollars.) What goes around comes around? The only "pay-back" I've meted is that they no longer have me to turn to. Didn't there-after, don't now, and never will. I neither forgive, nor (obviously) do I ever forget. - Then there was, in my teens and 20's, my little "social circle" of, I'll call them "chums". For the most part, it seemed I was the only one in the group who worked and had an income. Being the "giving" person, I would always make certain that the one with the least would be able to share in the good times of getting together for drinks and generally socialising. When I had money, we all had "good times". But when I was with-out money, there was no one there to include me when the rest would be out on the town. "When you have, the whole world eats. When you don't have, the world starves." (Oma, my Grand-mother, had said this to me back then, so many years ago. It was an admonition. It was duly noted and understood. Sadly, it didn't change anything... obviously, because here I am, years later, alone, on a subway train, on my way back to a "Homeless" shelter. - And too, I think: Spaces and places... here, Penelope in particular, who had an empty, 4-storey house, but not an inch to spare. And I'm off to the shelter. What the frigg happened? What the frigg is happening? What the frigg is to happen? - *It's time to STOP this!* - I need to get me out of here this morning. - I wonder if/when/where I'll be sleeping tonight. - I'm not feeling well. Tired and ill. And the bottom line: **NOBODY CARES**

I should have taken the time to trim my beard and finger nails before leaving. It's to be quite the while until I get the opportunity to do so next. ("When you got all those good jobs did you have that beard?"... Indeed!)

BELLEVUE!

I'm not sure what time it is at the moment. Last time I checked the time, it was about 2:00pm and now, I'm in the "waiting rut" with time, I know, to spare. So time to get to this morning's little foray. - I was out the door of M&E's before 8:00am and so, with the time available, I headed off to storage.



Thank goodness I have that! I know that I won't have space in the shelter, and I don't WANT to bring too much there with me anyway. So I dropped some things that I won't need immediately, and picked up some things that I will. While there, I took my time and arranged and organised things better so if I needed to come back for anything, I could do so, easily. That done and time passed, I got on the bus and headed back out to Rockaway and to the Peninsula library. There, I thought I could get an hour on-line to get some computer work done (and re-commence my old routine?) with this day. And I did... First thing on the list: Look into transport to Burlington, Vermont. What the Hell? Why not? I've always pondered the possibility of moving up there. I've always wanted to go back to "The North Country" anyway. I've missed the crisp, bitter cold Winters. And HEY! It would certainly get me closer to "HOME"... Montreal. And after all I've been through these past few years, culminating in THIS, today, I'm ever so ready to go back. Maybe I could find a nice, quiet little place, either in Montreal or even farther North, take my tired old carcass away, and there... just check-the-Hell-OUT of all of this. It's something to look forward to. And Burlington has an airport. I could FLY NORTH! (Right now, it's either that or simply head out to the beach here, in Rockaway, a bottle of 100proof good vodka, mixed with my Atropa and the pills I've carried with me all this time and... TO HELL WITH ALL! Well, it's always good to have a plan... and a "Plan B" fall-back. I gottem! - I also got to finish my iTunes down-loads to the iPod too! I HAVE MUSIC! (For travel... where-ever I head out to travel to.) I got a letter printed for the Diamonds as well. Mrs. had asked me about "private duty" for her husband. They're friends of M&E and Mrs. needs the help... apparently I have wonderful references from M&E. That's very sweet of them... considering. My "proposal" to Mrs. D. is 175\$/day for a 24-hour day. She's thinking in terms of being out at their house, by the same lake where M&E have theirs. It would be for "home care" and "health care"

and “Nursing”. I find the hourly break-down to be reasonable. We shall see. I'm not placing any bets or hope on it. In fact, I'll post it to her and then forget it ever happened. That's probably the sanest approach. - Oh, I'd posted a “House Cleaning Services” sign at M&E's building lobby. This morning I noticed it was taken, completely down. Honestly, I can't help but think that E. did that. But, today, right now, I can't care anymore. Ties are severed I'm supposing. And I've got too much of ME to think about now... not “THEM”... not ANYBODY other than ME. - It was lovely, all told, to be there today. No, I didn't want to *have* to leave, especially to go back to where I knew I'd be heading, but today, some-how, none of it seemed to even touch me. There was no “depression”, no “anxiety”... as a matter of fact, there was NOTHING AT ALL! I was quite with-in each moment, no longer, as it was happening. There was nothing before and nothing to follow... it was just that very moment... I wasn't happy. I wasn't sad. I was... NOTHING. - And so, diddle-time done, I headed out the door of the library and onto the Q22 but to B116th Street and around the corner to the post office where... a letter from storage informing me that my monthly rental fee would be INCREASING NEXT MONTH! WELL! How frigging bleating charming! I'm returning to Homelessness and THEY want MORE MONEY! My head went “BANG!”, my blood rushed and boiled, and as quickly as it began to happen... it passed. Gone. A momentary rush of some kind of emotion and then? Not even a “breeze of emotion”. Not even “numb”. Just zip, nothing at all. And in that “mood”(?) I strolled over to Waldbaum's for a yoghurt and a tin of coffee followed by another stroll over to Tribute Park... for “lunch”... again... alone... on the bench by the water. My existence was in re-runs and nothing was un-familiar. It was almost as if it were simply another day, and that there had been no time between this time and the last time I'd done this. - While I was in the park, I rang Penelope. I was going to leave a message of “Greetings” and to tell her that I'd “moved back into The City”. She said she'd not be home today because she *had* to go visit her “friend, Delores” today... but... she WAS at home! Imagine that, of course. She gave me some line about a last-minute realisation that she didn't need to go. Oh, she's really such a very poor liar. And she's certainly NOT a “friend”. She's just the same as the rest and I wouldn't DARE tell her about me going back to the shelter... I KNOW, pretty well, what condescending BS I'd have to hear and quite frankly... I don't want to hear it. But I put on the “nice me” and was pleasant and polite as ever. - So... it was a most delightful and charming, rather “last day” in Rockaway and it got to the point where I understood that, if I didn't get to that shelter during day-light hours, I'd be facing the “evening guests” coming to “register” and “check-in” for the night. So, alone and silent, I walked to the train station for... the shuttle to Broad Channel Island to connect with the A train that would connect me with the L train which would take me to 1st

Avenue where I'd get the M15 bus up to... and here I am... I'm back in The Shelter... I've been cleaning out my "contacts" from my phone, to pass the time and "clean my life" of the unnecessary bilge. - I have to say that all through the trip getting here, there was no "trauma". Perhaps I'm in SERIOUS DENIAL? But although I separated, dissociated, the "trauma" wasn't present this trip. (I'm in SERIOUS DENIAL)! - Ah well... well... well... WELL!!! At the CastleBellevue: NO MORE DARK RAMP! Entry in the front! We all get to enter the "Chateau" via the "front door" these days. How "elegant"! No more slipping into the darkness of the plywood alley way, into an enclosed, walled and razor-wire fenced court yard, and through the "back-door"! - Coming into the building this time was *nothing* even similar to the first time I'd come here. But aside from a bit of disorientation, it was a "zip"! Knowing "the routine" to a point, I'd absolutely and completely closed each and every emotion I had left, off. Oddly, my mind somehow *snapped* back into the same dull drone I'd had for most, if not all of the time I'd been here before. And as I came in, through the metal detector and hand-scanners I noticed: *Ortiz* is still here! But he's now a Sergeant! A promotion! Bravo Mr. Ortiz! Sincerely... Bravo! I can't even imagine anybody who deserves such honours more than you do. The one thing that rather shocked me was the fact that, some-how, I'd been "turned round", as they say. I knew where I had to go to each step of the way, but funny, I couldn't remember how to get there! I asked directions of strangers, "security" and people in general. Once again, I was the "newbie". Yes indeed, I was starting all over again. But as I wandered about, going from place to place, I happened to notice that Ms. Renice is here too. I was beginning to wonder who else was still on staff and would I be dropped right back into my old slot, with the same "case workers". Would I begin from the beginning again? Or, would they switch me, dump me and my "blue folder" onto the desk of a total stranger who'd address me as though I'm a complete idiot? - Well, I did receive my little brown bag with milk, and sandwich and little snack. And I did get to go down those old granite stairs to the little kiosk/office in what used to be the "grand lobby entrance" to the "Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital". THERE was quite the remarkable moment. The fellow behind the gated window took my particulars and gave me the expected index card with the time/date stamp and other incomprehensible information scrawled on it. But when I looked at it I saw my "HA" number... "I'm still the same number that I WAS!" I said, in an effort to make light of the death that I felt crawling up inside me, clawing toward my heart. "You always will be." the "check-in clerk" said, nicely, indeed. "Once you're in the system, you'll have the number forever." I smiled at him, thanked him for his time and as I walked away and toward the next room (where, on my first entry into this Hell-hole, I was told by Mr. *Shockeye* that I had "no right to come to the

shelter”) I thought to myself... “Forever. And when I die, they'll simply retire my number. How nice.” - 6:27pm And so and well, as I say, I've been here since about 2:00pm I'm still waiting for something... what-ever it is that we wait for... 4 and a half hours later... still waiting. How “comforting” to know... Nothing's changed here, thus far. I've had my “intake interview” with a Mr. Olcott... oh yes, appropriately nasty, condescending, miserable, just a general bit of sh**. But appropriately so, considering the accommodations, and him, being... well surprise... another bigot and me being... well... wearing my kippa. And I now have a “new” and “up-dated” photograph on what-ever damned file they keep where-ever they damned keep them. “Cheeeeeez” Click. Go bugger yourselves. OH! I'm sorry... and have a nice day. Bastards. No matter what, they do their best to make the horrors of Homelessness even worse, in any and every way they possibly can. Degrade us to as low as we can possibly go, just short of reaching for the pen in your hand and plunging it into our other-wise useless heart. I've no doubt that that would THRILL them to no end! - 7:23pm Waiting for a “bed assignment” up here in the “lounge” on... the 7th Floor! Oh my! (I can't be serious about this any longer. I just can't. Some bits have changed and yet, too much has remained the same. The “residents” faces have changed... the BS has not. - HEY!!! IT'S THE END OF THE DAY AND I'M EXHAUSTED AND IN A BED... ASSIGNED...

A118... IN THE ROOM NEXT TO WHAT USED TO BE *A108. (A108 has been re-numbered and is now A120! *SERIOUSLY?* EITHER THEY RE-ARRANGED THE NUMBERS OR THEY'VE STUFFED 12 *MORE* BEDS INTO THIS “WARD”! IF THAT'S THE CASE... *DAMN!* THIS HOMELESS SITUATION IN THIS CITY TRULY *IS* GETTING WORSE... *MUCH* WORSE!) But... BUT... I'M IN ANGEL'S OLD ROOM! WHEN HE WAS IN A109!!! I'M IN THE CORNER ROOM WITH THE OLD FIRE-PLACE IN THE CORNER! I'M IN WHAT WAS “The Old Man”'s BED! Back then, he was A110 and here I am.. A118! (And something hit me, directly in the heart, physically: I'm in Angel's old room next door to my old room where, then, on my “introduction to the shelter”, my bed number was A108, and I'm now in bed number 118... and my last bed here was D18. And something is making me think, making me wonder, and honestly... with the wondering so intensely, it's all making me quite ill. WHAT IN THE NAMES OF BOTH HEAVEN AND HELL IS GOING ON HERE? Or am I making too much of a silly coincidence? Time... Time will tell all. I'll just have to wait and see. - “And the plot thickens”. Dear Kendall, so many times I heard you say this, back when the 5th floor was, well, “WE” were... I hope life's blessed you with kindness beyond imagination. Your familiar old line lives on... in the “hallowed halls of Bellevue Sh**-hole”... and in my heart too.

Tuesday 7 June



1:44pm SIBL (Science Industry and Business Library on Madison Ave. and 34th Street) In the air conditioning, a pampered luxury in this city these days and one most certainly not afforded to “residents” of the Homeless shelters. The “domiciled” don't think of the Homeless on these hot and humid days as suffering. What they don't think of is that we're out on the pavement, or in the open spaces, sweltering. Freezing in cold Winter, yes. But nobody thinks of the converse. But here we are. And right now, here I am (with others) here, because over time, we learn where to go to escape. Just another part of, I believe, why the domiciled dislike (and dare I say: Hate) us. We are survivors who have learnt the intricate secret of “living savage”, “rough” as they call it, almost feral. Oh well. So it is. There's something to be

said in support of us: we can survive where others might well perish. Such is the way of “Nature”, I might suppose. - Meanwhile, this morning, I woke (Woke? I don't recall having slept at all last night!) before the alarm because my “roomie” *slammed* the damned door to the room first thing! Why? I've no idea. But then, it's no surprise and, thanks to previous experience, to be expected... at least once in a while (if not regularly). Well, here we go! The truth will be set free and the “calibre” will be made obvious. It'll be interesting to see what develops. I don't think about it too much though. This isn't my “permanent” placement. This is only the very beginning. There's probably much change coming. I remember, I learnt, I know, too well. - It was a fitful night too. Uncomfortable. No pillow, filthy linens. I suppose I could go on about it, but there's no sense. Again... this too will change.... perhaps for the better, perhaps for the worse. But it will change, in due course. - So at 5:30am I was already awake. But I had my coffee and vitamin C, brushed my teeth and didn't bother to shower. Just didn't want to be bothered. How about THAT? ME! NOT wanting to “bother” to shower. Imagine. (Truthfully, I was just too bloody tired!) Seems I'm slipping quite readily, adapting quite quickly to the “life of the Homeless”. Well! Why not? It's not

as if I'm in unfamiliar circumstances. Then out to have a quick smoke, and down to the first floor "Triage" ("Intake" as it's known here) to return the lock for my "over-night" locker. Of course, I had to wait (waiting is what we, here, come to excel at, there being so much of it) because the "lady" (?) who takes the locks wasn't there yet. Locks are returned to the same place where we "check in" to this lovely place, at the same kiosk/office. I wonder what, exactly, they'd do if we simply walked out with the lock. I mean, it's not as if they could bill our credit card. I've heard that they keep a record of "missing" locks and that, if we fail to return one, they use it as grounds for "sanctioning" (which means: to be barred and banned from every shelter in the NYC system for a period "not to exceed 30 days"). I wouldn't doubt they'd do something of the sort. The "system" is funded by the roster, but there are so many Homeless in this city that each and every bed has MANY people "out there" to fill the spot where one gets dropped. So it's almost an endless resource of revenue. (And that's just about what we are: revenue... commodities, and nothing but.) - THIS morning was made interesting by the waiting though. THIS morning, the "grand foyer" here, on one side of the room, was almost FULL of *prisoners*, hand-cuffed to the chairs which were connected to one-another (not bolted to the floors, mind you, but still, it would take a rather carefully executed plan for EVERY prisoner to get up and leave... together, simultaneously). And they were all eating breakfast ("BRRREDFOX!" as I recall the cry of the pre-sun-rise hall-bonobo not so very long ago). Yes, splendid. *Prisoners*, hand-cuffed to the chairs. Such a delight to know that they're here to be "processed" and brought into the "system". No doubt, once the cuffs are off, they'll be floating and toddling about the halls, free as little birds, and into rooms of multiple beds, to mingle with and possibly annihilate their fellow room-mates. Maybe it's part of Bloomberg's (the Mayor) plan to decrease and/or eliminate "Homelessness" in The City: kill us off. "On my!" he'll be noted to have said "How terrible that one of our Homeless citizens has been recklessly murdered!" (As he thinks "What the HELL is wrong? Only ONE? MORE! KILL MORE!") Some of these "prisoners" were quite young and will, I've no doubt, be shipped off to "Wards Island" before the sun sets. There, at least, DHS can keep them under a bit of control, and City Hall can reasonably keep them off the island of "Oz" and away from the "Emerald City" of Manhattan. There's only one way on and off that island, and at night, the foot-bridge is closed. How lovely. How charming. It's become a "penal colony"... for the Homeless. - After a bit of a while, finally, a DHS "Guard" came round, took the locks and, for me, it was back up to the 2nd floor to WAIT for the "Palladia" moron to interview. "Palladia" is, allegedly, an "employment agency" for the Homeless. This do-bat today was to perform preliminary interviews with us to determine whether or not we were "suitable" for something other than a

“shelter”. REALLY? But we're under “mandate” to attend and register. Well, at least somebody's making an effort toward trying to make somebody's life “better”. (All the while I can't help but think: DHS has some funds that they need to make disappear, so they hire-on this “Palladia” to conduct completely useless “interviews” with us. “Palladia” gets paid and DHS gets kick-backs. It's about moving money... not moving the Homeless along and up-ward. Ye thinkst me stupid. Eh?) So my turn comes and I'm called into a little office to chat with a Mr. “Something-soto”. A total arse, to be quite honest. His “interviews” took him all of 3 minutes with the 2 fellows before me and for me as well. He's just here, as I say, to see if they can't come up with options other than the shelter. He didn't for me. Gee! I'm so surprised (frigg). Then he got one *kid* in there for the LONGEST while. Goodness! (I feign.) MEANWHILE... there a “Parolee” was waiting his turn. He yelled in anger and frustration because of the waiting and the fact that he too had noticed that the “kid” was taking much longer than the rest of us had been afforded. “Soto” came out and chastised him, calmly, and so blatantly condescendingly, and promised he'd be out in 20 minutes. BS! It's all just BS! - After our little “interview” I was instructed to go down to the 1st floor again! To the “Intake” waiting room, AGAIN! For yet a few MORE HOURS. But the Case Worker I spoke with this time was quite nice... and I'm assigned... TO CASTLE HELL-HOLE/BELLEVUE again! I had to go up to the 7th floor after this little step in the process, but I stopped out, back in the court yard, for a smoke and there, as I stood having my smoke, I looked to the door to the building and I see... Ms. FIORD! Well O m'GOD! She's SO wonderful! “How are you? What happened to you? We went crazy looking for you!” she said immediately! She recognised and remembered me! I'm not surprised. She was one of the rare and precious few on the staff who seemed to treat and address all of us with such respect. She'd taken me on housing searches, and gave me SO much information that I wouldn't have even thought of asking for. SHE was, and obviously still IS, a compassionate human being with a kind heart and a desire to actually “help” us. Well... I started to tell her the saga of before I'd left, what had transpired since and all, but her time ran late. She DID manage to tell me that “Simpson” is now gone since just after I'd left. Well, imagine that. (I wonder, had I stayed, what would have come of me, and what would I have gotten as a “case worker” after, and quite honestly, I'm rather glad I didn't stay around long enough to find out.) Anyway, it was truly wonderful to see Ms. Fiord, it did my heart and spirit a world of good. When all of my “friends” had turned a blind eye, deaf ear and empty heart to me, this lovely person took the time then, and even now, to be kind. - Well then... she left and I was on my way back up to the 7th floor for “bed assignment” which turns out to be on the 7th floor (F39... my 8's of before are broken, and I wonder what this means... “Numerologically”

speaking, if there's anything to Numerology, although, there are 8 people in the room, so perhaps the 8's continue?) in a dorm of EIGHT BEDS that looks like it was only suitable for 6 bed... maximum. The locker is filthy, FILTHY! I remember "wanting" to clean the locker for D18... this one MUST be cleaned before being used. And once again, I'm thankful that I have that little storage locker to keep what little I have relatively clean, safe and secure. - One thing I must comment on is that the whole place seems rather calm(ish) these days. Maybe it's just because the weather's good and the scumbags aren't coming in yet but I've no doubt that tonight will tell all. AND, it's almost funny to note, now that they see that I've been in here before and know people, the "Newbies" are paying attention and respect to me. Screw them. I'll help were I can but no further. It's the new me:

I CAN'T BE BOTHERED WITH ANYBODY ELSE'S TROUBLES!

I'm all but falling asleep here and I'm so damned hungry. I have to find some food, sit and eat. Haven't had a "BM" this morning (no time for a "loo break" with all this "excitement") and I have a "CaseWorker" (cough choke) appointment at 4:00pm. So, since it's going for 2:00pm now, it's time to try for food! - "Schmulik", (how strange and some-how nice to be in touch with HIM after all these years) has been "texting" through the morning. I sent him photos of last night's bed. The last time I was in here, I wanted NO-ONE to know or see this squalour. This time? I don't care. It's more a statement about "friends" that I'm in here... a statement about "family"... a statement about the world that any of us are in here. It would be nice to see him this evening but I'm not showered and don't know if I'll have the time and if I'm to meet people, I want to be "clean" at the very least. But, we'll see. (And I stink like the 2nd floor... IT STILL has THAT ODOUR! I don't know exactly what it is. "Stale" mixed with something. Not "vile"... just "industrial stale" I suppose. I permeates the clothes and, no doubt, the skin. Oh well.) - Well, with all the "mandatory" running for this morning accomplished, indeed, it was time to cut out and try to get something to eat. So... - Being in no particular rush now, and having a moment, along with feeling almost "comfortable in the place" I decided to put my "seasoned" status to use... and make a "tour" of the "old turf". I headed to the 5th floor, to room "5W101" and "D18". I remembered how Rich and Kendall in particular, had come to visit from other parts of the building. And Charles would drop by from, if memory served, another floor entirely. And, quite honestly, although it really wasn't greatly appreciated when we did, there aren't any "rules" prohibiting visits round the place. The only floor I recall having been anything close to "off limits" was the 8th. And that was because that floor was held in "reserve" for extreme need. I remember it being opened only once when I'd been here before, and that was to place the "Wards Island" bunch when they'd lost electric

power out there. Other-wise, we just didn't go up there. And I meant no harm. If somebody stopped me I'd simply tell them the truth... I want to see my old room. So, down the stairs I went, just as I'd done so often before. But when I came off the stairs at the 5th floor, it was, as I say, "bitter-sweet". At the door, the place was, immediately, so familiar, *too* familiar, in fact. I actually felt "gripped" by nostalgia and anxiety. But the "offices" had changed a bit. There were some that were still there, and others seemed to be missing, closed. Obviously, the place hadn't stagnated over the time I'd been gone. But then, as I headed toward the "lounge" area at the end of the hall where I'd wasted MANY hours "waiting" to be summoned, by Ms. Emaly or Simpson, I heard behind me, a MOST welcome voice. "Well, well, well..." it said. I turned, with a smile on my face to see the one Security Guard for whom I had then, have now and will always have the greatest respect, and to whom I will be thankful for the rest of my life! (And, more to my deepest regrets, I'd never gotten her name. But I've respected her for not showing I.D. She's a sweet, kind, warm and wonderful woman and true human being with a respectful and respectable heart and soul. Better to remain anonymous, lest one of these sh**s in here take advantage of her kindness. I never asked for her name, but it never was important. I'll remember her face, always.) "I'm sorry to say this but it really *is* good to see you again." I said, from my heart, to be sure. She sweetly replied "Same here, under the circumstances. Are you back?" "Only for a short while, a *very* short while." I said. "I'm sorry." she said, "But if you say it's for a short while, I know you mean it. You'll be back out of here in no time. How have you been?" We got to talking a bit about "then" and now. Many of the guys whom I remembered were gone. Some were transferred to other shelters and some found housing. Rick, from next door to D18 got a place to live and was gone. Charles was gone but she wasn't sure where he'd gone to. "There's been a lot of changes since you left." she told me. And when I asked "Better or worse?", she said "Jut changes." It was the way of the shelter... and the system... Nothing was really for "better or worse", everything was just "changes". I asked her if I could just walk down the hall to see the old room and she said I was free to walk where-ever I wanted. (She trusted me, and that meant everything in the world to me... especially coming from her. I always trusted and respected her as well.) Before we parted, I asked her about the Security staff. I told her I'd seen Ortiz and was wondering if anybody else was still on. Come to find out, Vivian, the wonderful Greek woman was still part of the staff here! As for most of the others, they too had "changed". Some left the job, some were transferred around the city to other shelters. "You'll see." she told me. "Oh, no doubt." I said. She went down the hall on her rounds and I headed to the "West Wing" where, to my disappointment, most of the dorm doors were closed, including 5W101. I didn't open any of them, in case somebody was in, trying to catch a bit

of shut-eye. I knew, too well, what it was like to be laying in bed and having total strangers pull the door open, look in, gawk and leave. I wouldn't do that to anybody, for any reason. Besides, if I wanted to see the place that badly, there was much time... later. I could come back if I wanted to. I stopped to look in the wash-room, the shower room. It was obvious that Rick wasn't there. It was obvious that none of the first crew was there. In those rooms, just as in the halls, the place "felt dark". There was no "life" in the halls. As if our smiles and laughter and singing and such had been suffocated out of it all. It was so "changed" that I didn't even feel nostalgia any more. This wasn't the place where I'd been. And that was both a sadness and a relief. On my way past, I grabbed a glance into the large dorm where Rick, Keith, DuRag, "Ripley" and the nasty Russian had been. Even in there, "life" was gone. There was no more D18... 15, 16 nor 17 for that matter. Even our "spirits" had "left the building"... so it was time for me to do like-wise and so, I walked down the stairs and out the get to the market for something to eat. - With the little time I had, I managed to get to the market, get my usual yoghurt, which is, these days, important because, well, I'm hoping it will keep my stomach settled and help with other "lower digestive tract situations. I strolled over to 3rd Avenue and hit D'Ag market for my little rolls, too much cheese and yoghurt. From there, a leisurely stroll back to the Riverside Park where I used to go (and freeze) to eat... (too much at a time, but there was nothing I could take with me, so I stuffed me). It took me almost to the very last minute and I got back into the shelter just about on time. And I had just enough time to get back to my further appointment at... that Horror Hall. - When I returned and got to the room where the "what-ever-this-was-about" meeting was to be held, Abdul (I think that's his name, my little "chum" all of a sudden) was already there. We were both early. So, we both went into the assigned room which had TV, air conditioning and water cooler, to sit and wait and wait and wait. As we sat waiting, some broad comes in with a cardboard box full of papers and such, parks her fat arse in a chair at a desk in the front of the room and proceeds to ignore all of us as she made herself look busy and important, sifting through her little box of treasures. Eventually, some guy comes in, parks *his* arse in the chair in front of her desk and begins talking. SHE'S the bleating "Case Worker"! When she's done with the dimp-head there, she announces that there's a "Sign-up" list *OUTSIDE* the door! We're supposed to sign *it*! Abdul and I had been there for about *TWO HOURS* already! We both made a mad dash for the list and true to form round the old shelter, the order in which we'd arrived was screwed because of folks jumping in to sign the list! OK. I let it go. I had other things to accomplish anyway like getting linens for tonight AND A BLEATING LOCK! I signed the list when I could as did Abdul and we continued to wait. As it turned out, this woman-thing was merely compiling more

information to complete their little “Intake” questionnaires. She offered nothing in the way of information, nothing in the way of support. It was the part that I recalled having missed several times on my first “stay”. I'd never been told about it so I never got it done... until Ms. Pax had finally gotten me and told me about it. Well, at least this time this BS was complete. BUT, Ms. Thang here said that I'd have to come back later this evening for more paper-work. She'd call for me when I needed to come back. (She knew where to find me... she had my bed number... F-something-or-another...) - SO... at long last I got to go back down to the first floor to “Operations” to enquire about linens for the bed tonight and a lock for the locker. The woman there was delightfully kind and respectful (how strange) and told me that I could get both, linens and a lock after 6:00pm on the 5th floor. Oh thank you! Good to know. (I don't expect it to be so, but I was appreciative of her kind demeanour.) SO! I went back up-stairs to the 7th floor, found Abdul and told him that we could get the linens on the 5th floor this evening. He didn't know where to go to so I decided to take him to the “Linens Office” to show him. Well, when we got there, the door was open and there was somebody IN. I figured I'd enquire as to whether the office would be open this evening, explained why I wanted to know (because one is almost obligated to do that sort of thing if one wishes to get ANY kind of reply... everybody around here MUST now “WHY” we open our mouths to speak, IF we dare to do so). As it turned out, this really nice “guard” in the “office” gave each of us what he had: 2 sheets, towel and the “kit” in the plastic bag and told us that tomorrow is linen exchange day. I thanked him for everything and Abdul and I went to the room, made the beds and I went down for a smoke. Abdul disappeared while I was down. I didn't think much of it. - Smoke done, I went to the room for the continued wait... and wait... and wait... - It got to be 8:00pm. No call from Ms. Mysterything so, I went down for another smoke. When I came back, Ms. Moron (I can't refer to her by name because she never gave me one, and I really can't decide which derogatory reference is more appropriate for her, so I use what-ever comes to mind at the moment) was on her “dinner” break! HEY! I had to sign for my bed at 8:30pm! and, since it was just about that time I went and signed. - There, at the desk with the “sign-in” list tonight, ANOTHER familiar face (and voice): Mr. Wonder (as I call him for this purpose, on the off-chance anybody from DHS will read it and, because he's actually one of the few kind people around here, fire him... for “un-necessary kindness and respect of the residents)! Well! I signed the sheet and made jokes about being back and went and checked for the lock for my locker tonight (if at all possible). There was yet, *another* kind woman dealing with that issue. The “Security Guard Lady-Friend” said that things around here had “changed”... apparently so! This business of “kind” people was throwing me off! - For the wrap-up clincher of all times... round

about 8:45pm the “kind” woman came TO ME, at the room, to give me the lock for the locker! I was on my way to “normalcy” with linens for the bed and a LOCK so I didn’t have to lug stuff all over! But no “companion”. He’d disappeared completely! - Well then... I took advantage of the time and went out... for yet another smoke and this evening turned “fun” in its own respect. There were 2 fellows, rather youngish, “First-timers”, as they were, completely lost, not only in the shelter, but in the neighbourhood as well. As I was having a smoke, one of them came up to me to ask where they could go to get something to eat and some cigarettes. My first reaction was to ask them why they’d come to me, of all people and, to my bit of amazement the one fellow told me that somebody had suggested that they come to me because I knew my way around... the shelter and the area. I don’t know WHO said it, but apparently SOMEBODY here recognised me! Well, I thought, if he recognises me and doesn’t come to speak, maybe it’s best that we don’t because it must be somebody who’s not too thrilled about my return. I’ll just have to keep my eyes open. Anyway, as it went, I took these two fellows over to 2nd Avenue, told them where they could go for smokes, where the markets are and the little bodegas where they could get sandwiches with their Food Stamps. They were quite thrilled, thankful and a bit amazed at the fact that I was so familiar with the area AND that I was in the shelter! I went with them as they shopped and when it got too close to “sign-in” time, I told them to never skip that and, if it was at all possible, to be there on time or even early. As we walked back to the shelter, they thanked me several times and, as we went back into the building, them being all flustered by the “routine” and me, just strolling through, we parted ways and melted into the mess that is... the Homeless shelter. - At about 9:15pm I stopped at the “Social Workers’ office to ask Ms. Sh**mouth, who didn’t bother to let me know that she was back, or available, and didn’t send for me as she’d said she would, if she was going to be seeing any more “clients” this evening. She asked “Why?!” I told her I had to shower and needed sleep at some point before tomorrow and was just wondering. (I no longer have any patience for these things and no respect for them either... “things” being these miserable sh**s who are supposed to be here to help us and yet snap at us nastily, as if we’re intruding. She simply said, with her “African” accent (SURPRISE! MORE AFRICANS!) “*Sir*, you don’t have to do anything with me. You do what you feel you must.” I told her I was just concerned and wanted to be sure that I did the correct things. She repeated “*Sir*”... several times AS I spoke. When I’d done having MY say, quickly, I apologised for being *considerate* and *promised* NEVER to repeat the error... and left her behind. - Bad thing? I never *did* get to shower. Somehow... EVERY IDIOT IN THE PLACE DECIDED TO SHOWER AFTER 9:00pm! AND... F40(my little companion) never returned or signed or made bed-check. I’m supposing he either

jumped the Hell out of here or he simply didn't know the "rules"... and lost his bed here. No matter. That's the way we learn... sometimes. - And well... the turds in the room decided to throw an evening chatty-session at about 10:00pm with a radio on. That lasted until almost midnight! I had no pillow so I used the TD tote-bag I had with me, with the towel I'd gotten with today's linens thrown over it. I laid on the bed, sweating because of the heat and humidity, and tried to ignore all. - Oh... It's back in the shelter alright!

I remember reading some-where, a charming little philosophy:

Life is a set of circles. We re-trace each one until we get it right. Then we move to the next. If, at any time, in any circle, we fail to complete all that we're supposed to, we're doomed to repeat it until we get it perfect. I'm repeating one. I need to get this right. - WORK a 7-day week and... GET THE HELL OUT OF NYC!

Wednesday 8 June

11.52am back at the Peninsula Library... Oh... Where to begin? OK. Up this morning before the alarm. Coffee. Vitamin C. Brush teeth *during* "toilet time"! Off to the shower! YAY! CLEAN! Dressed. Out the door. M15 bus to 42nd Street. Flushing Nr.7 train to Woodside, Queens. Q53 bus down Woodhaven Blvd. to storage. I've packed a bag with by "sleep" scrubs, extra jeans, another polo shirt, beach stuff which I'll use to make a pillow so I'll have two pillows to sleep on... "stuff". Then off to Rockaway! Waldbaums market for 2 rolls, yoghurt, turkey, and a tin of coffee. Breakfast at Tribute Park. - Rang the agency and my current supervisor there to confirm that I'm available for work and what do I learn today? Because I haven't had an assignment in so long, (because I'd done that "private duty" for M&E at their "Summer home" a the lake") the agency had me down for having left and they sent me a "Termination Letter", which went out yesterday! But she'll try to thwart it and get me to work! OH! Just what I need... NOW! Imagine, had I not phoned, I would have been... FIRED! UNEMPLOYED! DAMNIT! - From the park it was on to the Q22 bus and off to the "PenLib" (library). - I typed-up a letter to M&E, proposing further "private duty" that I feel is only fair, considering the work I do, the work I've done and work I will continue doing for them: Hourly rate of 15\$ (which is 10\$ less that they'd pay for a "low-end" Nurse who wouldn't do even half of what I do for them, and for ALL of my clients, and 5\$ more than I'd been charging). Daily rate of 175\$ for full 24-hour days. I doubt they'll approve, but at this juncture of my life, I truly have to say: Screw it all if they don't like it. I don't care any longer.

And it's not so much that I "don't" as much as it is that I simply "can't" care any longer. My efforts are certainly worth even more than the 15\$ rate, indeed. - I have to say, right now, all of that "Vermont" suggestion on Twitter is still tempting me to throw it all in and just GO! - Weather forecast tells me that it's supposed to be miserably hot today so my plans are: leave here, get the little bag I've packed in storage, bring it to the shelter, go to *SIBL* for a while, maybe see Schmulik after. Then back to shelter to see some "Case Worker" moron tonight before passing out for the night. Maybe I'll get work tomorrow. Not that I really want... but I certainly need. (5.35\$/hour! Such BS!) - 4:10pm now and I've just finished transcribing the month of November 2008 from my written Journal to the on-line "blog" version. It's good to have another month completed but the notes... they were of a very good day back *then* in 5W-101. It's sad to leave the notes behind and sadder still to leave that memory. Today's shelter is nothing like those good days... and it never will be again. - I managed to get from the PenLib back to storage. I grabbed the bag with scrubs, jeans, pillows, and stuff got shoved into the wheeled luggage and hauled to the shelter. There, it all got stuffed into the locker and then I headed down to the 5th floor for linens, which got shoved into the locker as well. - Mr. Hamilton was conducting an "Intake" in the room I sat in last night for for-ever. I asked him if it would be OK to do my "Intake" tonight and he said that the case "worker" will be on tonight. (HE was a delight to speak with. SHE had better be on! My meal ticket expires tonight! Bitch! And I'm certainly NOT going to RUSH back there either. I've got until 8:30pm to get to "sign-in" and she's got until mid-night to WORK! Just so long as she doesn't screw around with my "bed-check" I don't much care. I USED to care, but I don't care now.) - Meanwhile, it's delightful in here. It's MISERY out today! Well into the 30's (degrees Celsius)! DEATH weather. The "Boiz" at the Hell-hole had better be in good behaviour mode tonight. I'm in *no* mood for their little frolics. - Meanwhile, oh my! I just got an extension-time on this PC and I didn't even see the message! HEY! I'm good with that. - I want to take a visit to Schmulik this evening. I can't believe it's yet another Jewish holiday and here I am, "working". OO! Screw'em. Truly. Nobody's "helping" me in any way so bugger off. It's only "their opinion" and that truly means nothing... nothing at all to anybody but them. Certainly not to me. - But I *am* tired though. I have to say. Every time I've gotten on transport, I've dozed. I think I slept last night but there's really no telling. New room. New room-mates, the friggin shelter. I may have slept, but I may have been too aware to have slept. I don't know. In the shelter, "sleeping" can prove lethal so "sleep" is never really restful because there's a constant awareness of every sound, change in the air pressure if somebody comes into the room. We're like bugs... cockroaches in that respect. (I could certainly use a drink right now. A martini would be nice but I'd settle for a

small bottle of vodka.) - I wonder what the response to my letter will be from M&E. I wonder if/when Mrs. Diamond will ring. I truly don't much care about them at this juncture. I'm back in the shelter and back in that "Shelter" mode:

.I've done everything I possibly could to be supportive of Penelope. Result? Screwed.

.I've done everything possible to be available to M&E, even to losing my job. Result? Screwed.

.I've done everything possible to help so many and where does it get me? In the shelter.

Well? NOT ANY LONGER. SCREW'EM ALL! THE DEATH OF Mr. I. GIVEASCHIT.

That said, 9 minutes left on the PC and for the day. I NEED TO CHARGE MY PHONES! One for phone service and the other as my alarm clock. And I *need* to catch a nap. And I'll need to make the bed this evening. And I'd LIKE VERY MUCH to shower before bed tonight! (Even though there are no spray heads on the 7th floor showers). – OH OH OH! That little fellow from Monday, one of the two I'd taken "on tour", managed not only to stay in M051 (this shelter) but he's on the 7th floor! As he tells it, he's been many places and he's rather educated. His cohort got shipped to Bedford-Atlantic! Oo. "Castle Greyskull"! NOT the best place to ship somebody so "fresh and new". Hey! Not the best place to put ANY human being. That place is noted on the internet and there have been news stories done on it because it's so hostile, and the "residents" there tend to be violent. - OK. So now I have to get moving along here. I'll call Schmulik to see about an early "rendez vous", perhaps this evening and then?... Then back to the realities of the heat... HEAT... HELL-HEAT and Hotel Happy. And... hoping for WORK! this week.

Thursday 9 June

1:15pm at SeaSide Library... Rockaway Park: Let me start with last night (Wednesday 8 June): After spending a splendid few hours with Schmulik at the studio where he's working these days, we strolled along the streets and avenues and talked and since I had the time, I took the train with him for a while, more to be in his company, but to continue talking as well. He's under the impression I'm in here for no more than a week. I'm not bothering to correct that. It would do me no good. First of all, it's really not worth the effort nor the listening to the reactions and even more important, there's nothing he can, nor anything he would do to change anything about my situation. Besides, it's really so wonderful to see him again, I don't want to have it spoiled by having to listen to more lies from somebody I might take seriously to heart. Once upon a time, I was quite "in love" with him... and in the years that we've been apart, I've learnt too much about being disappointed by people who've meant anything to me. I do NOT want that to happen

again... not where he's concerned. He was on his way home after work, I had to get back to the shelter so we parted at 14th Street/8th Avenue on the train. He took the A train and got the L train. It was rather sad to part company, but knowing we can get together again is a great comfort to me. - I got into the Hell-Hole by about 8:30pm this evening and the cow ("case worker), "Ms. Brown" (brown cow... how now?) wasn't back from grazing yet so I signed her "appointment" list and went about my business until 9:00pm. She returned from her graze and took what-ever case she chose & I waited... & waited...& waited... Finally, I went into what they refer to as the "B" room. They don't tell which is which room but this one had air conditioning! It's been in the 30°(C)'s outside and inside too for that matter, so even not being called was just fine for me. I got to talk with some of the guys *and* cool down. - Time passed... & passed... & passed. Somebody came in and told me that they were about to close the room, I had to leave. So I parked my butt outside Ms. Cow's "office" until I could go sign-in for my bed. Then came 10:00pm "bed-check"! I *had* to be back in the room so I ran to there, got accounted for and went back to the hall. The "B" room wasn't closed so I went back to chat with the guys but made certain to appear back into the hall to the cow's door so she'd know I was there. WELL! At almost 11:00pm she acknowledged me! "Why are you standing there?" she asked, quite nastily. I told her I was waiting for her. "You can't stand there. Go to the room or to your bed." she had the friggin audacity to snap at me. MY BED? YOU NEED TO SEE ME! NOW! AND "go to your bed!"? What in the name of HELL is wrong with you and *WHAT* in the name of *Hell* do you think you are? To speak to ME like that? Never mind: You are talking with and ADULT, you belligerent bit of waste! I was fed-up with her, her attitude, and her general existence so I went back to the room where I waited... until after midnight... which is when I toddled down the hall to her office to find, of course, that the cow had left. She bumped me off *AGAIN!* - I gave up. I went back to the sweltering heat of the room... dropped to sleep. - The guys in the room are, all things considered, relatively OK. But now we've got a crack-head amongst us. How fun! He's OK. Going into some "program", says he. But it's just the idea. Not comforting to know that there's something in the room that could pull some kind of screwery at any moment. - But, I did fall asleep... - OH. Some broad comes in for the 10:00pm "bed-check" and announces "There are women doing bed-check. You need to be wearing a shirt." 35°C in the bleating place and *WE* need to be wearing shirts to bed! Right. Suck it from my bung hole thank you. There might be "women" doing "bed check", but we can ALL rest very assured that there are no "ladies" doing "bed check". Not in this place, at this hour. You take a "job like this with that kind of attitude and your "lady-ness" is gone. - 1:32pm Thursday. 4 days now in this place, and counting. *This* morning I woke before the 5:45am alarm. I did NOT want to get up. SO DAMNED

TIRED! And rather weak! I gulped coffee from the bottle, took my vitamin C, and was off to the loo for a “dump” (and a quick sneak smoke). Back to the room to wait for a shower. At about 6:00am, I got into the shower. NO COLD WATER AGAIN! IT WAS MURDER! The temperature in the room was already 32°C (roughly in the 90's Fahrenheit)! And HOT SHOWER! But hey, I got cleaned. Then down for another smoke and up to the 7th floor. Why? I don't know. Something told me to go *there* for a new “Meal Ticket”, and I needed a new one... TODAY. And so I went. And so I was right. My gut, I *must* rely on it more often, to trust it. There was a Ms. Melendez there in the office and she was an absolute doll! Very attentive. Very prompt. Gave me a new Meal Ticket through the 11th. No hassles, no stories, no condescending tones and attitudes, just plain business, with human smiles and professionalism. WOW! Just amazingly wonderful! A pure joy, especially at the start of a day. - THEN I FIND, MY “Case Worker”'s office is across the hall from the main “Intake” office on the 7th floor! *AND* she works the 4:00pm-midnight shift! WHY THE BLEATING FRIGG DID THEY SEND ME TO ANOTHER ROOM AND ANOTHER CASE WORKER WHEN I NEEDED TO COMPLETE ALL THE PREVIOUS BS? Well, they did and I wasted 2 days. But NOT tonight AGAIN. I'll be back there as close to 4:00pm as I can be and tonight they'll get “ME” in their office! - Next step, out the door. I stopped at the 28th Street park to get my thoughts together and to ring my supervisor at the agency to ask about the possible case assignment. Another WELL! She could offer me a 9:00am-5:00pm Saturday and Sunday, back in Howard beach, which could lead into a possible 7 days... if it works out well on the week-end. Hey! I'll take it! I wouldn't be doing anything but journaling all day anyway. Let's just hope there's air conditioning at the residence. But that kind of money, delayed or not, will be very handy for either my ticket out of this world (HOPE!) or just out of this state (to VT). I'll take it! - Full of good from the news of work, I was off to the train for a new MetroCard and to Brooklyn. I wanted new scrub pants for work. I'd seen a place, “Ideal Uniform” on Flatbush Avenue so I headed out there and did I have the most remarkable time. Debbie who helped me, is just magnificent. She actually took care to make sure the scrubs fit me. We talked for at least an hour about Nurses and the invasion of the foreign “bitches” who won't work, but are quick to head for Labour Unions and scream for their pay. (She should see the shelter system!) But WOW! Did I leave there in the greatest mood! Just wonderful! It was a PLEASURE! - From there, I took the B41 bus to Kings Hwy for a Q35 bus and... here I am. - Back at bed Nr.F39 and... RAIN! Lightning. Thunder. Rain. The heat-wave of these days is broken! At last! At least I hope it is. Please let it be so! - AS I'M WAITING FOR THE SHOWER THIS EVENING, SOME MORON COMES OVER TO ME, CALMLY, OUT OF THE NO-WHERE AND, AS IF WE'D BEEN IN SOME SORT OF

CHAT ALREADY, SAYS TO ME “JUST SO WE DON’T HAVE ANY MIS-UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN US I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT YOU HAVE TO STAY AS FAR AWAY FROM ME AS POSSIBLE.” I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE *HELL* HE’S TALKING ABOUT, BUT I JUST STARED HIM STRAIGHT IN THE EYE AS HE MUTTERED. HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT NOT WANTING ANY “TROUBLE WITH “ME BUT “I WAS TOLD TO STAY AS FAR AWAY FROM YOU AS POSSIBLE”. I WONDER WHO TOLD HIM (IF ANYBODY TOLD HIM ANYTHING OF THE KIND AT ALL IN REALITY) SUCH A THING. STILL, IT’S INTERESTING TO NOTE. I JUST HOPE THIS DOESN’T TURN INTO ONE OF THOSE ‘SHELTER’ STORIES. I’VE GOT PLANS... AND THIS CITY ISN’T IN THEM! Anyway, this day is done. I’m exhausted. It’s time to try for some sleep. (Again, I’m “trying” for sleep.)

Friday 10 June

SSLIB (SeaSide Library) 11:09am And so now, today, Friday: This Journal is all falling terribly behind and will fall even farther when work begins, I believe. I hope I’ll have time to get some things jotted to here via the phone as I work with the new client. - Last night was interesting: The resident “crack-head” was awakened by every little sound in the room. Interestingly enough, he gets pissed at the very same things that piss me off: banging locks, banging lockers, chit-chat in the middle of the night, rattling bags AFTER the lights go out, putting the lights on in the middle of the night. He was vociferous about it as well. But I certainly can’t fault him for it. I agree. Even though I just lay in bed and try to rationalize/ignore it, it’s annoying and disrespectful and the others in the room should know better. But I suppose “expectations” are set entirely too high... considering where we are and with whom. - So this morning, I woke, head on my pillows, rather rested. Had my coffee. Showered (with nothing but HOT water again). Dressed. Left promptly for a “usual” day away. The M15 bus to the L train out and away to Storage in Queens for “knock around” scrubs and the blood-pressure cuff that I’ll need for work. Then I decided to try and find tomorrow’s assignment so that I can just get up and go and not be concerned about where it is (and too, arriving on time). Well, I did find it... Nice house. Easy to get to. I’m hopeful about this assignment. So very much depends on it. I don’t like the idea of working through 7 days. But the money will come in handy! And THAT is what “Life” is ALL about now. I don’t like being “mercenary”, but the reality is just that: I didn’t come back to this shelter-life because that’s my ambition, and I WILL get out of this! I WILL! - That done, house found, I came here, to the library to try to catch-up with events in my written notes and to try for more “typing” to the

digital “blog”. As I say, things are already falling behind and becoming so mixed-up. It's proving a bit difficult to keep a record of the general mayhem, not to mention the constant fatigue. But, I can only do what I'm able. I don't want to lose any of this record. In some ways, I'm fascinated by it all... In other ways, it keeps me on the brink of a very high and very sharp but weak precipice, toes curled just barely enough to keep me attached, and always, always surrounded by the fact that, at any moment, all I need do is... lean to any side and... fall out of it all. It's a constant “reassurance”. Others might think me mad, and some might find me insane. But nobody else knows how I feel about it all... nobody knows my past nor my future, and I keep my *present* to myself... except here, on these pages. I don't care what “others” may think. “Others” are doing nothing for me. “Others” don't matter at all. Although there are the moments when I tend to wonder what the response, the reaction would be IF anybody ever did learn... especially the “clients” in whose homes I spend hours, “helping” *them*. - Meanwhile... I need to get to KeyFood market here for coffee. I brought my zip-lock bag to pour the instant coffee out of the glass jar it comes in, so that I can bring it back into the shelter. - I've noticed that the guy from VT twitted (on Twitter) a link for the Burlington shelter. It's Christian! I'm doomed. “Christian” and anything claimed to be “helpful” is NEVER anything “good”. I've learnt THAT much from “Life”. But what the Hey? Hey? I think I just *might* give it a try. I've ever-so little to lose at this juncture. Right now I'm really quite at liberty to go and *try* anything. I'm not looking beyond the 24th of this month as it is. NOTHING BEYOND THE 24TH. - For now, I must to leave here, this little library. I've printed an “Assignment” sheet for the folks at the shelter. Idiots that they are. It appears “legitimate” and really, all they want is “paper”, something to stuff into a blue folder. The more paper that's collected, the more appears to have been done... by them of course, and by me as well. It's about the same as “currency”... paper, paper, and more paper. And all told and considered, both are equal in “real value”. But I do what I must to make my existence as simple and comfortable for ME as possible. No more. No less. Now... out of here and back on the trains! There's another “journey” to be made with what's left of this day. - 4:29pm at SIBL, and 13 minutes left on the computer here. I feel like it's closer... much closer to about 8:00pm. TIRED! SO *VERY* TIRED! And I am *not* really looking forward to tonight at the Hell-hole. It's Friday, and although those idiots in the room don't work during the week, I'm sure they'll all celebrate as if they've accomplished a full week's worth of toil. If *they* don't, I'm willing to wager highly that the rest of them will... in the halls... all night. And I have to be at *work* tomorrow, in the *morning*. There's also the little “meeting” that F41 wants to hold tonight. I'm sure *that* will keep ALL awake for a LONG while. I've no idea what he wants to have a “meeting” about. But... if all else fails, I

bear in mind and heart: there's Xanax and all sorts of other medications, and a nice little bottle of vodka waiting for "a day at the beach". CHECK-OUT! Next stop: Antarctica! - I want to compose a nice little "Thank You" to those who have been right here with me through the previous and this shelter episode. But my head won't do it lately. I'm really too tired. And there seems to be something in my left eye all the time. It itches and sometimes I can't see correctly. Then there's the itch when in the eye, not in the ear; when in the ear, not in the eye. I just don't know. But I don't' much care either. Annoying and only just some-what suspicious. - I found a desk here, where I can charge the iPod and phone so I'll be moseying over there. Just terribly thirsty at the moment. But all passes... thirst, hunger, fatigue, energy, happiness... somehow, at some point.

Saturday 11 June

I'm at work... at the new client's home, in a moment of "down time" as he rests a bit. He and his wife are wonderful people. He's rather a delight, although there is much to do for him, but he's just marvellous. And the wife has told me that "This is *your* house for the time that you're here. You'll be here all day, alone with my husband. So look around, find the things that you need and use them. I'll be next door so you can get me for any emergency, but I won't be here with you so you'll have to find what you need. Look around. If there's something that you can't find, tell me. Other-wise, you treat this like your own house." They're a wonderful Italian couple. The house is SO wonderfully immaculate. It would be a complete joy to be assigned here every day... even 7 days a week. Here's to the possibilities and potential. I won't "hope"... "Hope" only leads to crashing disappointments. - Meanwhile, I'm jotting these notes on my iPod as I sit here... dozing... I'm SO SO VERY TIRED that I actually DOZE off! THAT is horrible. Nobody knows the reason I'm always so fatigued and I'm not going to say anything to them. First of all, it's not pertinent to the job. Where I go when I'm not on the clock is nobody's business. Secondly, nobody's going to do anything to help change the situation. And, above all, I've done for me before... in my own silence... I'll do for me again. - Oh... this morning, I was on the Nr.6 train at 7:00am to get here "on time". Well! Oddly enough, the trains ran so unusually smooth that I was TOO EARLY! So I rode the A train out to Gaston, a little ride over the bay and along the Atlantic coast, then got off there, switched to the return train and got here by just before 9:00am... starting time! (Mrs. E. has mentioned something about an earlier starting hour. Apparently, once again, the agency screwed things us. The previous person was here at about 8:00am, but the agency told me the shift begins at 9:00am. Honestly, there's truly NOBODY to be trusted any more... and sometimes these days,

I'm even starting to doubt ME!) - A note here, mostly to me: I believe the old guy back at the shelter, F36, has a bad case of cellulitis, and possibly quite a case of "MRSA" as well. There's not much I tend to be concerned about in that shelter, but communicable diseases? Not only do I not want them myself... I most certainly don't want to bring anything to any of my clients. Stupidity... when we "residents" come into the damned shelter, we're supposed to under-go physical and psychological "evaluations"... I seriously doubt anything is done for any "suspicious findings". They're probably simply noted on some bit of paper, stuffed into a folder and filed. The end. But for communicable diseases, there rally should be some kind of action taken. (I can't help but remember being told that I HAD to apply for "Medicaid" health insurance when I was "Homeless" and in the shelter the previous time. I was unemployed too... but was deemed "ineligible". The more I experience, the more I learn, the closer I come to losing ALL respect for ANY of this nonsense. Meanwhile, I provide health care... to others... and I have none for me. Welcome to... America!) - I NEED A BREAK... A SMOKE BREAK! I keep dozing...

Sunday 12 June: F39 to E4



I worked my full 9:00am-5:00pm shift today and I am truly, truly exhausted! Never enough sleep at night and MUST get up, no matter what, every morning now. But a quick note on today's event: The wife, daughter and son-in-law on this new assignment told me that they want me back, on the case, long-term. I'm OK with that. I NEED THE MONEY! AND... it really is a compliment. I hope this sticks. One client, every day, all day, all week... a steady income that I can count on and plan on. THAT would be SUCH a relief... and a much-needed one at this point. It would be that much less stress which might just make rest that much easier. Only time will tell. - I can't keep my eyes open any longer. That's that. There's nothing much to be said about the travel today, nor about this room. And that "meeting" that F41 (Steve) wanted?

It never happened because, well, there's a program known as "RWA" (Ready Willing Able), that he'd some-how hooked into. They recruit from the shelters and give guys work, mostly cleaning the streets. But it pays and it gives everybody a new start in the job market. He's been talking about it a lot of late and... today they gave him a spot, and a place to go to, out of the shelter. Well damn it! He was, although rather tightly-wound and a bit on the "manic" side, a voice of "reason". The room is already going a bit toward Hell with-out him. But, I'll miss him... the others? They seem to be taking it in stride... they're behaving like school kids when the teacher has to go to the office for a bit. They're one step short of spit-balls and general mayhem. Such is the way here though. Now it's time to wonder what's to come to take HIS place.

WELL, things certainly took a TURN TONIGHT:

10:00pm bed-check done. I was trying to drift to sleep thanks to the guy in F38 unplugging Ramone's radio at last. (It was almost funny when he just got up, went over to the damned radio that had been playing for HOURS, and with-out so much as a grunt, simply un-plugged it. Ramone was asleep, of course. Oh... the things that happen in this place!) AND THEN... It must have been about 11:00pm when... I feel dull "thuds" on the bed from somebody knocking, though I have to say, firmly but not with knuckles, on the bed-frame. "Security. Mr. Alex needs to talk with you." My immediate thought was that it was because somebody else had signed for F39 (my bed) tonight. So I got me up, in my "sleep scrubs", slipped on my flip-flops and headed on over to Mr. Alex's office where, for a brief moment, I waited. He and Ms. Bea were in their office when I got called in for the news... No... nobody had signed for my bed and no, my signature was fine BUT.... yes, it was WORSE: *TRANSFER ... TO A DIFFERENT SHELTER... IN THE BRONX! ON 183rd STREET AND DAVIDSON AVENUE! IMMEDIATELY! !! I MUST* have shown my panic and anxiety when I calmly tried to tell them that THAT commute would put me in my grave. We talked about the length of my present commute (of almost 2 hours on a "normal" day), and that the commute from The Bronx will be about FOUR hours... EACH way. To my absolute AMAZEMENT, they BOTH LISTENED! They didn't just HEAR, and they didn't just IGNORE me... THEY LISTENED! BY MY GOD!!! THEY LISTENED! (Inside, just THAT much respect for my dwindling human dignity... I can't even describe how I felt!) Well, they listened and Mr. Alex told me that they needed to discuss it a bit. He said that maybe the shelter on 126th Street would be better. I said that it would be, but that it would still add a lot of time to the commute and I described for him, and Ms. Bea, the buses and trains I take now. He sent me back to bed and told me to get some sleep tonight and that he'd arrange for a transfer to be done tomorrow. So, I did, I went back to my bed. It wasn't moments later when, quite suddenly, in the dark, Mr. Alex comes

into the room with some papers in hand. He calls, with consideration of the others in the room... "F39. Mr. Kessler." I sat up, ready to be shipped out just then and he walked over to meet me half way... handed me a new "meal ticket" and with a smile said "You're staying." I broke down... I BROKE TO PIECES! I didn't know what he'd done, but I was SO thankful and I didn't know HOW to thank him and Ms. Bea... I just didn't know what to say, what to do... I was treated as a "Human being" and I was, truly, honestly and sincerely in SHOCK!!! Mr. Alex just smiled... my emotions must have been THAT obvious. "You're transferred to the 6th floor. Get your things. Here's your new bed number." I took the papers, kept thanking him even as he left the room, and got my things together to re-locate. It was late, yes. It was a bit inconvenient yes. But it was NOT going out into the night, riding the rails and buses to get to some other place, in the middle of the night where I'd have to be "processed" which would most likely take all... ALL through the rest of the night and then possibly be assigned some new bed only moments before we'd all be tossed out the door for the day. Well... before heading to the "new" place, I stopped at the office to, again, thank BOTH Mr. Alex and Ms. Bea. He said that they'd decided to keep me here "due to travel hardships". And Ms. Bea added "We're not in the business of getting people fired." DEAREST GOD IF THERE IS ONE! THESE TWO ARE NOTHING SHORT OF AWESOME... as the expression goes these days. - Well... thankfully I don't have all that much to carry about and I took the stair down to the 6th floor. - A bit of a note here though: when I was "in" previously, the 6th floor was quite "off limits" to what is referred to as the "GenPop"... General Population. There were signs prohibiting us from even visiting on the floor. It was "reserved" for those who'd been "diagnosed" with drug addictions and the likes. More or less, the "Psych Ward" of the shelter. It wasn't "lock-down", the residents were quite free to roam about the rest of the shelter. But there were the "signs", I suppose more to warn the rest of us. Well, I was told that there'd been "changes"... here too was another "change". And tonight, I was assigned to my new and "permanent" bed... on the 6th floor... Nr.E4 (a component of my "number 8", I suppose). - Well then, of course it was the middle of the night, and when I arrived, the residents of the dorm were in darkness. Bed check had been done and indeed, they were either about to sleep or sleeping. I felt horrid, coming in at that hour. I already knew, too well, what a disturbance I could cause. The door was open, so I crept in, looking in the darkness for an empty bed. Thankfully, there was only one in a room of 4. Hey! That wasn't so bad. I knew what a 4-bed dorm was like. I'd spent most of my time here, previously, in the same environment. Still, there was no way of knowing "what" I'd be "dorming" with. I didn't put the light on, having resolved myself to "settling in" with-out disturbing anyone. But as I began to put my bag of "possessions" onto the bed, the

youngest fellow in the room got up silently, walked past me and put on the light. I said, sincerely, that I didn't put the light on myself because I didn't want to disturb anybody. "You're a newcomer," he said, very quietly, and returned to his bed. Truly, it was almost "comforting", quite the "welcome" in a place where "newcomers" to a room could mean anything from a good addition to, as I'd learnt from bed Nr.D16 in the past, complete and utter horror. In the light, I glanced about and noticed the roster: There was the young Black fellow who'd given me light to navigate, and he, more or less, gave me the names of the other 2 who were also Black. There was 1 "older" and 1, I'd say "middle-aged" fellow. The "middle-aged" fellow gets up at 5:30am every morning because he works. I apologised to him for the disturbance tonight. He said he didn't mind, he's accustomed to it. "Aren't we all?" I said, as a way of sympathy and to establish the fact that I'm not truly a "newcomer"... I'd been through this before... too many times. All said though, my new "roomies" seemed to be rather nice, and I was MORE than relieved... until I began looking at my little corner and the rest of the room. - The room was, compared to 5W-101, absolutely FILTHY, particularly under my bed! There was "reefer" (weed, marijuana) on the floor, and ashes from either the "weed" or cigarettes (or both, or something other, there was no telling for certain). And the "roach" ends of joints as well. The inside of the locker was as filthy as the floor. All around the room was really disgusting. But, I thought to myself, if the guys in here are OK, THAT'S what matters. The floor and locker can be cleaned... the locker first, eventually. I was thankful, grateful, for the fact that I didn't have to travel, to The Bronx or to 126th Street at this hour, and that I didn't have to leave this building. I didn't bother to un-pack anything, I left everything in the plastic trash bag. I put the fresh linens on the questionable bed, got into my "sleep scrubs" and laid down... and tonight, some-how, I actually fell right off to sleep. This was the room I would,



most likely be in until the day I left. (Nothing is permanent in the shelter... ever... not even a “permanent” bed assignment.

Monday 13 June

Day 8: New morning, new room, new dorm-mates, same shelter, regular routine, all told. And I had an agenda that pretty much called for “cleaners” especially if this is to be my “permanent” room here. But I got a bit of a chat in with 2 of the guys, pretty much my effort to make “good” with them. Apparently the one who was in my bed before me was a pain. Smoked his weed at will (I STILL don't know how some get away with all of their crap while others get snatched-up and tossed so quickly), was a non-bather and from what I can gather, held the rest of the room “captive in fear” because they never knew what to expect out of him from one minute to the next. They're happy he's gone and, for all it's worth, they're happy that *I* came in when I did. I asked them if they'd object to me cleaning the floor, especially around the bed. One guy asked if that wasn't supposed to be done by the “Wildcats” (that cleaning staff comprised of Shelter-folk) and I told him honestly that I'd never seen anybody clean the floors in a dorm in all the time I'd been her before. Well, no, nobody objected to a clean floor (especially since *they* weren't the ones doing the cleaning). Charming! - So I was off and running. I needed smokes today and since I wasn't working, I figured I'd take a trip, see old places and save a buck. To the Nr.6 train to Grand Central, then to the Shuttle to Times Square for the Nr.1 train up-town to The Bronx and 231st Street and Broadway. I needed a new MetroCard today but FRIGG! I don't have the cash in the account so today, I used the over-draft and I got one (at 104\$ for the “30-day” card) at the 231st Street station. The smokes will pull the over-draft even further, but at least up in Yonkers they're cheaper, so the over-draft won't be as high as it would be if I bought them in The City. (I'm making excuses here, I know. But car-fare is a necessity... and, to a point, so too are my smokes!) - On to the Bx10 bus and up to the Yonkers border at about 245th Street. From there, it's really quite a walk to get to the RiteAid pharmacy for my smokes, but it's not as if I'm in any particular rush today. With cigarettes in pocket, I walked back toward the city line (Yonkers/The Bronx) and on the way, I stopped at the Associated market in Yonkers to grab something to eat. How strange to be in a super-market in Yonkers. To some people in The City, this is “up-state” since it's not in “The City”. To me, it's merely “here” and “up-state” is a far cry from... “here”. Still, there's a sense of “suburbia” and it really is rather a bit of fun. - Food in bag, I walked the next 4 blocks to get to “the border” and into The Bronx for the Bx9 bus to vanCortlandt Park where I

stopped to sit on a stone wall over-looking the “wetlands” and have my food, again, in a park. Other people would think of it as “romantic”, a “picnic”. Me? It's just about a necessity, and after a while, it wears thin. But at least I can eat in peace. Cold meals all the time, but eating in peace... and no “security” guards coming along to check the room and locker and forbid the presence of food, as they do and would do in the shelter. - Since I got an early start on the day and truly had nothing of much importance to do with the rest of it, I decided to try for a trip out to the post office and so, being on the Nr.1 train line, and my 30-day car-fare, I got to 242nd Street, up the stairs and onto the train... to 59th Street to transfer to a “Rockaway-bound” A train! And here-now, the FUN! - I got off at Rock. Blvd. and decided to take a Q53 bus along Woodhaven Blvd., to get a dose of “the old neighbourhood” and, as I'm sitting there, I look ahead and across from me and there's HELENE! from Rockaway! From the house I lived in in Rockaway! She'd left before I did, under some miserable conditions and situations that were, I have to say, unfair. But here she was and WOW did we talk as we rode along! SO good to see her again! When we got off the bus in Rockaway, Matt, her “boy-friend” was there! So we ALL got to talking... old times, current times, new plans... the whole bit. But I managed to avoid telling them where I am these days. When they asked, I told them I'm staying “with friends”. (Well, the Homeless, no matter how miserable some might be, really ARE the only people I could call “friends” *these* days.) We parted ways at B116 Street. They popped into the bar for lunch and I toddled over to the post office. What a great thrill: back on “home turf” with good neighbours. A really good afternoon. - After the post office, I grabbed at B35 bus and headed into Brooklyn for the “loop” (as I call it) return to the cesspool. (I could have gone back the way I came but this way took a little longer which meant staying away from that place and The City a bit longer.) By now, it was too late to go to SIBL to type so I stopped at the studio to briefly chat with Schmulik. It's still a bit on the tense side, seeing him, but it's good for the heart to know where he is and to be able to see him and talk with him again, after all these years. We chatted for a while and I walked him to his subway. He got on... I came back to my new room at the “Chateau Sh**heap” - Got up to the room when I returned, and did the best I could to clean what I could with the little bit of cleaners that I had available and then went down for a smoke. Whilst out, I rang E. (Gb) to see if she'd gotten my letter about my new rates for “Private Duty”. Oh... she did alright. But she's pissed! She said the “daily rate” is out of their reach, financially. Well! Too bad then. She never mentioned the “hourly”, but pretty much cut the opportunity to work with them because of the “daily”. You know? Screw that! I'm finished with all of my “Charity” crap! Working for considerably less than others would charge, giving, giving, time, effort, energy and probably my health and this tells me

that my efforts aren't worth 15\$/hr. Well then, good luck finding somebody else who'll charge less... and give less. AND... I asked about the 2 WONDERFUL pillows and the hand-crocheted afghan that I'd started to make in Rockaway and brought to the lake house and, in the relative frenzy of packing to come back to the city, mindlessly left behind. Oh... there's no way they'll be planning on going back to the house too soon. It appears now that I've lost a new sleeping bag, 2 GREAT pillows that I'd bought at the Macy's there, on sale, and the afghan! All left in Connecticut... and me, with no way to get there to retrieve any of it. MORE of my "life"... gone. - I went up-stairs, went to the sign-in ("pay the rent" as we called it, back in the "5th floor" days) and wrap this day up.

Tuesday 14 June

Once again, here I am, in the "Lounge" on the 5th Floor... doing what we, in the shelter, do best... waiting: I was out of bed at 6:30am this morning. No time for a "loo break" this morning. Directly to the shower so that I stood some chance at getting to the laundry here at 8:00am. I don't know HOW, but some-where along the line, it appears that I've lost under-wear! Don't know how. But on the 7th floor, there are 3 washers, 2 dryers, and only 1 dryer "working", and that one took a LONG time to dry the clothes! - But, when I returned to the 6th floor, I managed to find a mop and bucket. MUST clean the room! There's "reefer" under the bed! And I'd really rather that it wasn't seen there because surely somebody will attribute it to me, and, well, I don't need the aggravation of having to defend myself... especially here. - I took a "break" from my morning running about and went down for 2 smokes, which I chain-smoked and then ran back up here to the 5th floor, arriving at approximately 11:00am. It was almost funny when a very nice "guard" took the time to explain the the "protocol" of the procedures necessary to getting in to meet with my "case worker", as if I'd never done this before. It's almost amusing to think that, with the change in the staff, I'm not recognised any more and I'm being treated like a "newbie"... a "newcomer" and I've decided to simply go along with it all and not tell them that I've been through all of this (too many times before). - There was a truly "nice" "case worker" who was kind enough to give me more information and directions today (unlike the previous ones who simply ignored me in days done by). She told me to sign the "Emergency" list since I don't have a "case worker" on this shift and indeed, I DO need some assistance this morning, then, as is the way of the place... wait. - As I sat, "waiting" Ms. Allan, the most wonderful lady (and indeed she is, every bit, a "lady", true and sure) who worked at the "linen office" passed by and recognised me. She stopped to talk a bit and to tell me: Charles has been gone a long time, Rick got a room, and the

one in D18 (my “old bed”) pees in a bottle and leaves it ON the locker! Ms. Emaly is out due to knee surgery. She and Ms. Fiord have moved to “end” offices where they have more privacy. The 6th floor is now “General Population”. No more “MICA” or those who require medical attention. Even the 2nd floor, once reserved for the “Over-nighters” and those waiting placement in this or other shelters is now “GenPop” AND “Over-nighters” together. The 3rd floor is still the cafeteria, 4th and 5th are “GenPop” and the 7th and 8th floors (the 8th floor is, apparently, open these days, because the Homeless numbers in The City are so high) are what is classified as “PASS” which is something along the lines of “Personal Alternatives to the Shelter System”, a kind of “assessment” status to hold people while DHS looks into alternative housing for people who might have other options (and to get the out of the Shelter System if at all possible). What a pleasure to talk with her, really. And as it is, we both agreed that it was good, but what a shame to meet again, here, in these conditions. She wished me all the best, and I do believe she means that with all of her heart. She's always been the kindest, most supportive and encouraging person I can recall. - All in all, it seems “case workers” and some “security” really are more helpful these days. A lot has changed... a LOT! And to this point, for the better. - But truthfully, right now, I'm so tired that I've got the shakes. - Since I found the “slop sink” on the 6th floor, I REALLY want to clean. - It's a beautiful day out-side. This would have been perfect for Tilden, a day on the beach, in the ocean or even just wandering about. - As I'm sitting here, I just remembered yesterday's little activity to pass the time: I cleaned my “Contacts” out of the phone: Penelope, M&E, Calvarusso, etc. Break ties. The end. No more. E's general attitude toward my “rates” increase has thrown me. (I'm falling asleep, my writing's going all illegible.) It would have been sufficient to say something along the line of “We can't afford that.” or “Can we work something a little better out?” But to simply drop and block it all... well... maybe I'm being just too sensitive, but to me it said “You and your services aren't worth the 5 bucks.” The best thing for me to do now is... move along, and that's what I'm going to do. - Must note here: It's rather interesting, what I'm seeing as I sit here... The “emergency case worker” strolls about the halls, never even looks at the “sign-in” sheet! Apparently there are those who know him and gravitate to him, but as for the rest of us who might NOT know, he does an excellent job of dodging. (The only reason I know that he's the “emergency case worker” is because I took care to note all sorts of signs and such and happened to notice his name on the “emergency” list... and listen to when people address him. It's as I used to tell the guys before, when they asked how I knew so much about the “system”: “Stop yelling at everybody, shut up and listen. Eventually you'll get your questions answered with-out having to ask.” It's worked very well for me all along... even right up to now. - There's a “Deaf Guy”

(Robbie?) walking about. I gave him a cigarette earlier. Why not? He was looking for one and I had. He was SO appreciative... of the cigarette and my now rather limited sign language. Poor guy. Life and survival are hard enough for those of us who CAN hear. - Hungry and TIRED! Dozing off here. - Finally! I got seen by some Mystery "case worker" who listened to my little story of needing a proper "meal ticket" and she tells me to return *tomorrow* at 8:00am! Seriously, they toss us around and about worse than old tin cans. The good people are certainly the rare-find minority. But at least the place hasn't changed all that much. I don't think I could cope with TOO much kindness around here. - WELL! And further on with the morning... Since my appointment this morning got to a complete dead end, I went back to the room and *TRIED* to clean in there but as I got to the "slop room" to get mop and bucket, some truly disrespectful, *NASTY* "guard bitch" saw me coming out of the "slop room" and started to admonish me! "What are you doing with that?" (I had the strongest urge to answer with something as stupid as the question, like "Going for a ride", but I didn't bother.) I simply said: "Going to mop the floor in the dorm since the people who get paid to do it don't." She went into a tirade about me not having permission to *take* the mop and bucket. I pointed out that it wasn't under any lock and key, but she insisted that I was "trespassing" on property where I had no business being. I told her that, when I was on the 5th floor, many of us kept out rooms clean and had use of the mop and bucket AND that our efforts were appreciated. In a voice that really resembled a spoiled little 5-year old who's toy was taken by the day-care bully, this one snapped "I'm going to report you to Operations." and she all but "dismissed" me! Oh my! Dearie me! Off she waddled... presumably to "report" me and I simply took advantage of the time and went and FINALLY MOPPED THE FLOOR IN THE DORM! - In other news, I'm happy to report that I'll re-commence my full-day Howard Beach patient. I NEED MONEY! DAMNIT! - As I jot along here trying to keep up and catch up with current events, I'm noticing that I'm losing track of days and dates! Losing my mind! If I don't keep track of the days of the week in this book, or if I skip a day, it throws me off. Is it sleep deprivation? Or what else could it be? My mind seems to fall asleep, even though my eyes are wide open and I'm moving right along here. Cause for concern? Or a simple well-deserved break-down? What-ever it is, there doesn't seem to be anything I can do about it... yet. Get back to work, get the money together, the the HELL OUT! - En route to Rock at approx. 1:40pm (88th Boyd on the A train... back on the rails.) - 3:57pm and at the Peninsula library... Rockaway. When I think about it, I've been quite fortunate: Having the storage locker at the ready; having the extra underwear to replace what I stupidly lost; being wise to the shelter and being prepared for the stupidity; having the over-draft on the chequing to get car-fare for 30

days. But oh my god! Am I *so* tired... tired of it all in general. And today, not knowing day or date makes it all so much worse. - I managed another lunch in Tribute Park: cottage cheese with peaches, tinned coffee, PopTarts. I bought “ciabatta” rolls today. 4 of them. I still have them. - I'm a bit down due to Steven leaving the room. Nothing can be done to change it and I'm just being stupid about it. Getting used to somebody in the room and enjoying their company, only to have them simply leave... there's no continuity, no stability, and the room too closely resembles the world. It's un-nerving. Now, I don't see much conversation in the room coming along. It's going to be a different time of it. - And I still can't get over the bunk response to my having asked for a bit of an increase in pay for my services... particularly when I consider that they know of my current situation, and having been told once upon a time that I'm an “under-achiever”. I was SO MUCH MORE than helpful and now I get the brush-off. It won't happen again. I'll see to that. - 4:10pm I should be out of here by 5:00pm latest. I can still get to SIBL until 8:00pm. Ah, but I don't know where to sign for my bed tonight! I have to keep that in mind so to give me enough time for the “hunt”. The mysteries and games never cease. - The librarian here strolled by, smiled, waved. Odd how some people actually like me. - This library closes at 6:00pm. I doubt I'll get the hour on the computer today. - *The Wave* still lists rooms available at 150\$/week. I NEED MONEY DAMN IT! - As it turns out, I didn't get even a moment on a computer today at the PenLib, so I left at about 4:30pm and headed back to The City, in to SIBL. Got the hour there. And as I worked, came the rains. Nothing too serious but rain none-the-less. Well. We can't have perfect. Certainly not. - M16 bus to 28th Street and back into the Hole. - The dorm is still a mess. But I'm not going to go out of my way about it. - Sign-in this evening is on this floor and of ALL the people at the table? *Santiago*! Stoned as always. But even *he* recognized me! I gave a smile when I got to the table (I remember, all too well, his BS that he pulled on me back when I was merely “D18”). He looked up with a smile and said: “Como estas Señor ?” and made with a “knuckle-bump” and I got on to my biz of sign, showering and into bed. - WELL! Steve (E3) came in this evening, *reeking* of beer! Whoa! And quite feisty after work. Shame though, he's another locker-banger. But not for very long. “BC” (E1) had a *very* young, Caucasian “visitor” this evening. I don't know what these *kids* are doing in M050 but it's annoying... to a point. Still, E3 is, I've learnt, 51 years old, and yet, behaving like a 15 year old, as do most of the adults(?) in this place. “Creation” is a disastrous place. People make it ugly. - I got settled in. All goes quiet and calm. Lights out. I'm drifting into sleep. Comes the bellowed howl at the door: “E4!” “*They*” want to see me on the 5th floor. At 11-bleating-o'clock at night! “*They*”. But the guard who came in is one of the sweet ones so it made the situation *tolerable*. Scrubs and flip-flops on and down the

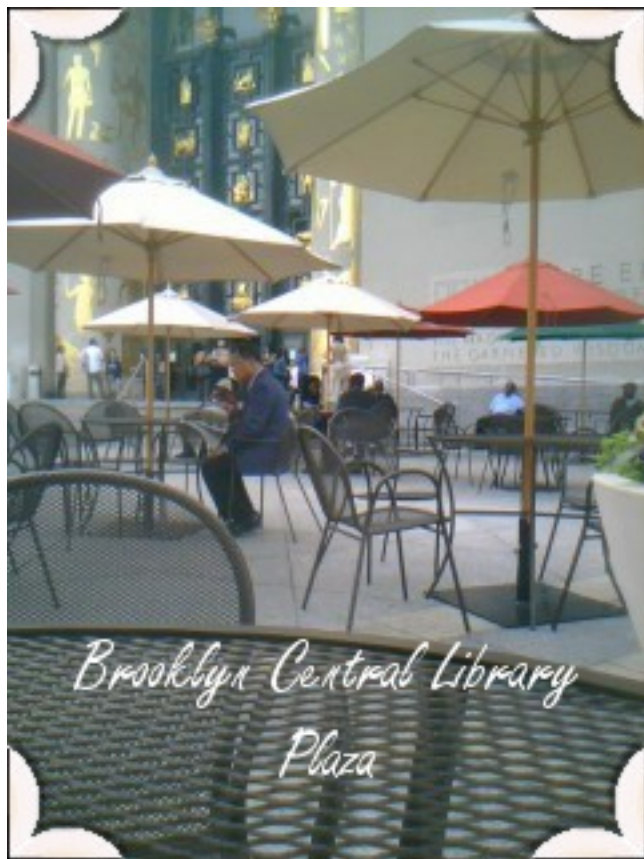
stairs. No idea who “they” are, or what “they” want. But ahHAH! Mr. (a.k.a. King) Jimson sat there, at a desk, the eternal misery. I addressed him only as kindly as was absolutely necessary to my advantage and handed him my “papers. He shoved me off, telling me that I needed to see “Leton”. LETON! She come out of an office and immediately recognized me! It’s almost unbelievable how many remember me! And, they *smile*! We chatted about my return, some more changes in the place and the system. She told me about some “housing prospects” that she knows about and asked me to come back and see her tomorrow... “when you get in”. But for right no, I needed a new meal ticket, tonight and confirm that I signed for the bed. I got the meal ticket and went back to bed. She'd noticed that I didn't have a current meal ticket and sent for me! How kind. How thoughtful. How considerate and compassionate. What next?

Wednesday 15 June

10th day and the usual beginning: up, loo, shower. Then to the 5th floor for my 8:00am meeting with the “new case worker”. The usual wait in “the lounge” for her arrival and the posting of the sign-in sheet. And the usual mass hysteria when the list got taped to the wall. It never ceases to amaze: Blacks and Hispanics have no sense of gentlemanly decorum, civil democracy, or respect. They’re so very much like seagulls, scavengers, defiant in their sense of entitlement. They shove into buses and lifts, subways and even offices. And when the list was posted this morning, they shoved through, asking for a pen, oblivious to anything between them and that bit of paper on the wall. But I managed to be second on the list... and waited. - Almost immediately after the guy who'd signed before me, I was called. Ms. Henika, Russian, pleasant enough, matter of fact and to the point. SO refreshing, I have to say. She took particulars. Repeated the same questions I’ve already answered perhaps thrice already. She noted that I’m to work 7 days. Says I must see her Wednesdays *or* Sundays, mornings, and, as usual, it’s my responsibility to be the first on her list if I expect to be in and out of the office promptly. There is NO consideration for working people in the shelter. I will see her Wednesday for “Psycho-Social” evaluation. Let the fun begin. - I left promptly to PenLib. Immediate computer appointment this morning. Research on CNA study/license in NY and VT. Much quicker in VT! A huge consideration. - Out the door and over to Waldbaums. Turkey, fruit, yoghurt and coffee. Tilden for lunch... in the sun. I’m SO pale it’s disgusting! So I ate, on the bench in the soccer field, shirtless, leisurely. Then off for a stroll to enjoy the day, the weather, the peace, the calm, the serenity... and no contact with anybody there. It was WONDERFUL! No one at the Fort today. But as I left, Geoff was at T7. I didn’t visit. Rather,

as I left, I did stop to tell 3 Rangers of Penelope's "sales pitch" for RAA (the artists' alliance): free, unlimited parking and use of "private beach", is how she's promoting membership. Firstly, there is no "free" parking unless one is attending some class, a function or somebody at/with the Alliance. Second, the beach is rather "private" in that it's Federal property and "use"? THAT is at the discretion of the Fed and NOT the "Alliance". As for telling this to the Park Rangers.. I feel it's a return of her "kindnesses". I've made myself available to her over the years, supported her and such. She's simply taken it all for granted. She knows of the mayhem caused by the recent influx of strangers to The Fort and beach. Yet she invites more! *I* need a place of refuge, that Fort, that beach. Today, *my* needs take precedence. Any ramifications in response to my chat with the Rangers? I've got no regrets. - By about 4:00pm I was at SIBL and another immediate computer. - Saw Ms. Leton, very briefly, on my return to the shelter this evening. The "housing" she'd mentioned is for someone who makes at least 1500\$/month. Well, of course, I'm screwed again. Did I expect different? Of course not. - Upstairs, there was a mop! Waiting out-side the dorm! I grabbed it and did a quick mop under my bed, under Nr.1 (talcum powder all over the damned floor!). The "Wildcat" guy joked with me about having helped myself to the mop. He seemed to appreciate that I wanted to clean the room (albeit, not thoroughly). I told him of the "security" thing yesterday. He responded by saying that there are people who feel they know "all", know the "Truth" and yet, know nothing. He *did* appreciate my efforts. - I went into the dorm to relax a bit. Nr.2 came in, looked at the floor by Nr.1 and asked "Did *you* do that?" (the mop job). I denied. He didn't look happy, muttered something about the powder, left the room. I actually feared for my well-being so I went out for a smoke. - When I returned, Nr.2 and I began to talk. He expected me to complain about Nr.1's reefer-smoking! He resents it, is sympathetic to Steve and me working and putting up with the nonsense. Then Nr.3 came in, angry. His "case worker"? Dimski! And Dimski's giving him trouble, playing "by the book". Well! We all got to talking tonight. Names exchanged. Reference info here: Nr.2(David) has been in the Homeless system for 7yrs, just back from being out for 3yrs. Nr.3(Steve) has been in the shelter system for 3 weeks and is relatively new to it all. Apparently nice guys. But I'm not going to hope for it. I've no doubt things are to become horrible: Nr.1 the youngest of us all, will probably stay or be replaced by something miserable whilst Nr.3 will lose the bed and be replaced by something miserable. The very notion of being in a "Civil" dorm twice is too far-fetched, too "good", too TOO much to ponder. But tonight I slept a bit easier. But for now, we all appreciate what and who we have. And the evening went along, chatting until lights out. Pretty good, all possibilities considered.

Thursday 16 June



11th day and 8:09 Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn on a bench at St. Johns Pl. waiting for the BklynCenLib to open at 9:00am. My bowels feel quite ready to burst. I had a “BM” this morning however. And a full night’s sleep last night! Still, I’m extremely tired. - Blood-clot here now? Yesterday I felt the “crawling” over my left foot, under the skin. Then shortly after, it “crawled” over my ankle. Soon after, up the leg by the knee. Then gone. This morning, as I waited for the M15 bus, I tried to clear my throat and the cough sent god-awful pains from left chest to fingers of left hand! Dizzying pains. I don’t want to drop dead on streets or public transport. And I certainly don’t want to “go” randomly. I did not come into this world in Peace; I certainly have not lived in this world in Peace; I demand that I leave this world, on *my*

terms, at *my* pace, on *my* time... in Peace! - 9:37am A table. A chair. Umbrella. On the “plaza”, in the fresh morning air. Slightly over-cast. Breeze. Comfortable. I didn’t rush into the library at 9:00am. This was too pleasant to pass over. - There’s WiFi out here! - My bowels are a bit calmer. Only a bit. But how wonderful to be at some calm... relatively speaking. - The PenLib (Rockaway) is open 10:00am-8.00pm today. Rain in the forecast, tonight, tomorrow. - I’ve begun the 30-day MetroCard today. I do NOT want to re-new it. I’d like to be *OUT* of NYC by expiration... I’d like to be in VT. - At 56 years old, this is all going to be difficult. But there’s medications and Atropa, in case all else fails (as Life itself has done). - I’m going for a smoke and then a computer. I’ve notes to be typed here. - (4:42pm on the Nr.5 train at Flatbush.) I got an immediate computer at BkCenLib. for 30 minute and then to the train to The Junction, At Rockaway, I went to Waldbaums and had lunch at Tribute Park. Q53 bus to PenLib where now, they too know me by name! And they chat. It’s odd: nice folk and here I am, alone in a shelter. I need to learn how to put being liked toward better things. Anyway, got some blogging, some research and off to Tilden for a bit of “quiet alone” time. Nobody there today. I was there and gone. Un-noticed, un-

detected. - Rang the supervisor at work about work on Monday. She's looking for hours for *another* HHA! To Hell widatsh**. I NEED THE MONEY! NO MORE "NICE ME"! BATTLE ZONE! - Oh well! See here! This Nr.2 train has changed destination and is now a Nr.5 and I'm good to go. 4:48pm at Winthrop (and I'm remembering the Summer concerts I'd gone to here... the old "R&B" and such... fond memories of when I could be "human"). - But somehow, all day, all I want to do is sleep... just sleep... only sleep. - 5:53pm at SIBL. Catching up here. Pretty good. And in no particular rush to get back... no need either. 8:00pm. 9:00pm... all good enough. But Saturday will be interesting. I have no intention of going to services... here or other-where. Not that I have an agenda. Just don't feel like it any longer. Oh well... I can't say why, but Saturday will be Saturday and we'll see how it all turns out... when it's Saturday. - And as the day comes to a close... I managed to get in at almost 8:00pm to a quiet, MOPPED dorm. David was resting, ball game on the radio. I rested. BC came in in a good mood. Then Steve, in the usual blast. Dimski was looking for him and he wanted nothing to do with it all. But Dimski did something NO "case worker" does: He came to the dorm! Steve was in the shower. So when I went for my shower, I suggested he go, "make nice". Seems Dimski's genuinely concerned (for what-ever reason he might have... Me? I trust NONE of them). And so he (Steve) did go to try to make with the "nice" and came back not too thrilled but calmer. - Tonight I learnt that Steve spent a great deal of time on the trains. Mostly the E. The "Orange Jackets" (Outreach) brought him into the shelter 3 weeks ago with painful "peripheral oedema". Steve used the terminology. He described the pain and discomfort to me. How human-kind suffers, needlessly. How human-kind inflicts pain on human-kind. Them that's got live in oblivion to those that's not. It's shameful... selfish... deplorable... "Life"... existence... disgusting. Yes, I'm a bit selfish: I've been accepted in this dorm and I'm getting to know my dorm-mates. I don't want change now. I don't need any more turmoil. So I hope we stay together a while. - BC told Steve about Santiago. HE hasn't changed a bit. Just as he did for Geo. he does for others. Good? Bad? It makes no big difference. It is the "law of the shelter". Supports the lazy sense of "entitlement" in those who truly can prove themselves "useless". - And so, I showered, and to bed.

Friday 17 June: *HERZLIG GEBURTSTAG MAMALE! SHALOM.(Happy Birthday Mamale! Peace!)*

8.45 BklynCen (Opens at 10!) - My "supervisor" at work is making excuses and delaying my return to work! I AM GROWING IMPATIENT AND ABOUT READY TO RETALIATE! I want

OUT... of shelter, NYS, NYC, and perhaps life itself and to do any of it, I need income which means I need to get back to work! I've no time nor patience for frigging "game-playing" here.- I've a bit of laundry and need shave/trim of beard, moustache, hair. The days are becoming difficult. - 9:07am Brooklyn Central Library plaza here. This morning, 5:00am... BANG! RUMBLE! ROLL! BANG! CRACKLE! BOOM! THUNDER! THUNDER! THUNDER! In early morning darkness, Bellevue Psych/Shelter, a storm rolled and rumbled! In an almost morbid sort of macabre manner it was appropriate, relaxing. And Steve was getting ready to leave... Daily, he (Steve) travels out to "The Island" (Long Island). DAILY! Homeless, in the shelter, legs still swollen but improved, he goes to work. SCREW TO HELL these people who think WE, the Homeless are lazy and deserving nothing! David, an older gentleman, stuck in here for 7yrs. Others who deserve help, support, a break. NOTHING! Meanwhile, those who WILL NOT learn/speak English, who speak with heavy alien accents live on the dole here... for long periods of time. It angers me. I got NOTHING, NOTHIN, NOTHING to start with. I KNOW how important ONE BREAK could be. Yet? I continue to get... NOTHING. I KNOW... – Overcast this morning. Warm. A bit of a breeze. Wet from last night's rain. And I've entered this as I sit on the plaza, on the phone (which seems to be dying). It's OK here, on Grand Army Plaza. I'm rather fortunate... in small ways. - I felt I should have done something for Steve this morning. He left in a down-pour, thunder. But the more I wanted to do for him, the more I asked myself: what will I do? We are the *Fortunates*... We know what to do with and about nothing. And I am learning to save "Self"... It's painful when you want to help and can't. But - Now to check to see if I got paid for last weekend. Hmmm - 9:33am When I begin to tumble into oblivion, there is no rope to grasp, no hand to hold. The MCU balance is ZERO this morning! I don't dare check TD. I fear, FEAR the MCU account is closed. TD will follow... You know what? It's a good time to die. I'd like to finish getting this on-line. A week or so more and I'll be caught up. Then... NO MORE NO MORE NO MORE! - And as for the "wrap" on this day? El lost the bed! It didn't take very long for a replacement to come in. So far, he seems clean, quiet, considerate. - Steve(3) got to see Dimski and all seems settled there as well. David, Steve and I talked for a while tonight. Things are settling rather well. May this last! I need the "settle" for next week.

Saturday 18 June

12:44pm PenLib I left the shelter at 8:00am to get here at this hour! I could say, but I won't bother... And, meanwhile, down at the job... Ms. Supervisor is being quite the little arse. She's

waiting for Wednesday to put me back on the case! I *NEED* THE BLEATING MONEY DAMNIT B***H! I GOT *TOSSED* FROM CASES. WHY ISN'T THE SAME APPLICABLE TO OTHERS? MISSY SUPERVISOR TELLS ME THAT THE AGANCY WANTS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE OTHER ONE ON THIS CASE HAS ENOUGH HOURS TO KEEP HER OK. OH! AND ME? I'M WHAT? DISPOSABLE TRASH? REALLY! NICE TO KNOW... I'LL KEEP THIS IN MIND... ALWAYS. - Anyway... I got to shower twice again last night. I'm glad for that. OK? OK. - This morning, I just didn't really want to get out of bed! But I HAD to. So, up, coffee, little dump, shower, sort through the locker. I've packed for the beach today. (Fat bleating chance?). - The L train to here ran miserably. It took me into and out of Brooklyn! It's running only PART of the line (to Bedford Avenue) and with-out notice, we got into Brooklyn and when the doors closed and the train pulled out of the station, it was gong BACK into The City! I had to take it BACK to 14th Street to catch the Nr.4 train up to Grand Central for the Flushing train to transfer to the Q53 bus. *HOURS! WASTED!* I stopped by at storage. I dropped one of the "kits" we get here with personal toiletries and the likes, (I'll never know if/when I'll need one) and picked up the lotions for the beach... the A TRAIN OUT TO ROCKAWAY... SLOW! BAD SERVICE! THE BRIDGE OPENED ON SOUTH CHANNEL! This day is going terrible. And now, 9 minutes left on this computer where I'm typing this directly on-line and I'm off... to Waldbaums and Tilden... I hope. No telling what the rest of the day will be. - I'm wearing my kippa. I don't care anymore. I just can't. - The guy at storage was saying he needs to get out of NY. People here are just too nasty. Seems somebody bunged the loo in there again. People are just miserable. Me? I agree. VT is looking better all the while. - Well, time to trot and toddle. Let's see what we accomplish with what's left of the day. - 5:35pm MMLib (Mid-Manhattan Library) Well I did get to Waldbaums for lunch stuff. Took the B35 bus to Tilden. Sat at a table by B169th Street and ate. CLOUDS! Cool breezes but CLOUDS! NO BEACH! So I decided to go into SIBL at 2:00pm. Waited and waited and waited for the Q35 bus to The Junction! Finally took the Q22 bus BACK to B116th Street for the B35. MORE waiting! Then, the Nr.2 train to Franklin Ave. for the Nr.4 train to Grand Central to the downtown Nr.6 train. NO DOWNTOWN 6 SERVICE! No announcements! So here I am at MMLib. It REALLY IS TIME TO GET THE FRIGG OUT OF NYC! REALLY REALLY REALLY!

Sunday 19 June

9:44am and here I sit, at Bryant Park, behind the main, old library, waiting for the MMLib. - It never ceases to amaze how my own body revolts against me. As I waited for the M42 bus to get



here, my bowels churned violently! I'd moved this morning. Moved last evening. But only when I'm NOT on the bowl do my bowels insist upon "cleansing". I *JUST* made it into Grand Central for the 1 dump and only little more. I took my time. Felt relieved. Hands washed. Sat for a bit in the train station to check bus routes and as I exited Grand Central... CHURN!

UNbelievable! This, coupled with having much difficulty urinating lately makes me think: there are greater things gone terribly wrong inside me. Prostate! Colon? What? But no health care insurance. No income. Probably no banque accounts any longer. No way to find out what's wrong... and, quite frankly, not really wanting to know if/what is wrong. Only hoping to die suddenly, and not on the street, in general public. - I saw Ms. Henika this morning. I was

Nr.3 on the list when I got there at 8:00am. I was seen by 8:45 or so and out. She was understanding. Gave me the option of either Monday or Tuesday return. The only 2 days currently available to me. - Last night, very little sleep. Steve's towel is SO FILTHY the stench gagged. He puts it atop his locker, and the stench is wafted into my face by the air coming in the window! And he showers... daily! But that towel *HAS* to go! We can get fresh towels weekly. I wonder... *Then* he began talking in his sleep! "BEER!" He was demanding a beer! I told him of it this morning and we had a bit of a laugh. He confirmed: the store won't sell beer before 8:00am. This morning he wanted breakfast at the shelter and then out for beer. He's OK. But it just shows: Drunk. - The new fellow in E1, Gerry, came in last evening, offered a cigarette to David and I, introduced himself to David but not to me. It strikes me now and again: 4 to the dorm, only 1 isn't Black. Life. The world. - I gave David more PopTarts yesterday. Why not? He asked for cigarette and I gave him 2. THIS STOPS. No more cigarette hand-outs. Once in a while? Yes.

But... the “entitlement” thing gets to be a bit too much! - And a note: FRIDAY, L., the “emergency case worker” posts a sign-up list. The usual mayhem to sign 1st on the list. Then... Moments later, he posts a *NEW LIST!* *All* must sign... *AGAIN!* How the staff around that place manipulate! Bastards. I swear they do it for their amusement. - 10:05am MMLib open. 45mins... off to Tilden... If nothing else, I'll take in some sun at least. - 7:19pm I got a Q23 bus to Yellowstone to a Nr7 train to get to MMLib where I got MUCH done on the computer AND 30 minutes extra! - Then the Nr.7 train to a Q53 bus (with some senior citizen guy who was out for a ride... to the B35 bus and just needed to talk. Poor fellow, alone and lonely... gee, sometimes I know exactly how he was feeling.) - Got to Rockaway and went to Waldbaums for 2 rolls for lunch. No filler. Just rolls today. Then, to the beach by 2:30pm and I stayed until 5:30pm! THEN... onto a Q22 bus to B116th Street to the Shuttle train to Broad Channel to an A train to Liberty Avenue for a Q21 bus to Union Turnpike to visit with M and E for a while. And there-after... to the Q23 bus to the Nr.7 train where... I'm en route at the moment and “tapping” this onto my iPod as I continue to roll along. No particular rush. I've got 2 more hours before I “need” to be back at the shelter. I've learnt not to stress. - I could get the E train here, at Queens Blvd. to a Nr.7 train but I don't want to waste... the world... the evening. - 7:55pm I boarded the Nr.7 train at 103/Roosevelt, Corona. Air traffic form LaGuardia airport... A prop! A propeller plane! Queens. The hub of NYC air transport. JFK. LGA. Major airports of the world and to see a propeller plane, in this day and age! Imagine that! - (No G trains tonight. Signal trouble. This city is miserable. The system is over 100 years old... one would think that by now, they'd have it figured out. But NO!) - Burlington, Vermont will be a nice change. I need out of here. I might miss some of it but... - Mama didn't die here. Probably didn't want to die in Buffalo. Oma wanted to die in Germany. Irma died in Florida, away from Gottfried. Anita died in the Hotel Newburgh. I shall die in VT... on “lac Champlain”. Close to my Québec... close enough. I just want some Peace before I go. Just some Peace. - 8:04pm and I'm on the train at “46th/Bliss”. Funny? “Bliss”. A street called “Bliss”. No. Not really. - Oh. I got a call from the Mrs. Diamond about my letter of private duty rates. She wants to talk drives to the lake house they have. Hah! Now! She'll have to wait... I have to wait see if I actually get Mr. E. 7 days per week. Alas. - Must check: French jobs in Burlington? Now THAT would be WONDERFUL! - The sun is low. Another day passed. Another day behind me. One less day to go.

Monday 20 June

8.50 BkCenLib Last night I got into the shelter at about 8:45pm! Yet another way to stretch time up to the line. *Any* time *not* in the shelter is good. Santiago wished me Happy Fathers' Day, the conniving bastard. Oh, the things I know about him and yet, I smile, politely. I signed for my bed, showered and soon after, lights out. - BUT... At 1:30am this morning... GOD-AWFUL SQUEAKING IN THE HALL! REPEATED! YELLING! A cart of some kind, squeaking along, back and forth. As David said this morning, "They can't stand peace & quiet. They HAVE to make noise. It makes them happy when they make others miserable." Now THAT'S funny... because I'm NOT the only one who's convinced that they do most of their BS intentionally. - 9:00am and the word from the agency... my "supervisor": Start Wednesday! And 9:00am to 4:00pm! HEY! I worked 2 extra hours on the wk-end! And nobody noticed? The world! But 42 hours' pay is still better than 9 hours! OK. (Now to check the banque accounts.) - This morning: Small BM before shower. Small BM after shower. No BM en route. But I'd swear there's more wrong inside me than I can imagine. This morning I feel like I'm being eaten up inside. The pain... constant pain, is becoming "normal" at this point. - Here, now, today, it's time to check the Burlington Tourism. Maps, transport, employment, etc. The notion of getting out of NYC keeps me going. - Down to 3 packs of cigarettes though. NOT GOOD. Between my own smoking, which, obviously with all my time on public transport isn't all that much, and the "give-aways"... they're going too, TOO fast! Time to pull back on the "charity" BS! - Oh, and no Penelope yesterday on my little adventures. No matter. I'm not good enough for any of them to keep in touch with now... "Fair weather" FRIGG YOU! - And now... On with the day. - 4:32pm, the Q53 bus heading across Broad Channel island, out in the Jamaica Bay and the sea salt soaks into my roasted flesh. I WENT IN FOR A SWIM! Beached from noon to about 2:30pm. For some reason though, I felt hesitant to go into the ocean today. But the water was wonderful and the sun came through delightfully... this afternoon. There won't be much beach to come unless I work 8:00am to 3:00pm and go to the beach from 4:00pm to 5:00pm. Maybe I just might anyway. Now, unfortunately, comes the problem of laundry. I'll manage. - I got an hour at PenLib. computer today too! Blog and Burlington info. "PJ", the fellow I correspond with via "Twitter", the one who's planted the notion of leaving here and going to Vermont, e-mailed: French will help me get work! ANOTHER PLUS! - I'm so familiar with so much travel in NYC now. Thoughtless travel through the boroughs. And now... to somewhere new. YES! I'M GOING! Summer is the perfect season to leave. - Another call from Mrs. Diamond. IF I KNEW I could depend on her and M&E I'd quit the agency and work for both of them. But I know better. Besides... * IN TODAY'S MAIL, I GOT AN

“EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE” FROM THE AGENCY! I’M BETTING I’M NOT BACK IN PAYROLL! FRIGG THIS! I’LL WAIT TIL FRIDAY TO CHECK. NO SENSE MUCKING NOW. THEY’LL OWE ME 5 DAYS’ PAY BY THEN. GOOD “EQUITY”. - Now on to MMLib. A bit more computer time & less shelter time. What I can’t do to occupy a day. - Oh my well well! As I’m going through the bag check at the MMLib I here “Well! Hello!” I turn round... GREGORY from 5W-101! Imagine that! Gregory! The one who referred to me as a “Jew faggot”. Still as darling and “slow in the head” as ever but looking rather dapper and better groomed. Seems he’s STILL in the damned shelter system after all this time! They moved him to a shelter in The Bronx a while ago. He asked after Rick and wanted to know how things are in 30th St. when I told him I’m back in there. Then he proceeded to tell all about his personal business... in the library lift! Well. Gregory is Gregory and always will be... no doubt. Still, it was rather good seeing him (though I wish I’d stop seeing all these people STILL in the damned system!). - This evening, I got a LOT of research on VT done in my 45 minutes on-line! Now I can’t wait to get to PenLib to print it out! (JUST what I need: MORE PAPER TO CARRY! But this is worth it...) - On to the Hotel Sh**-hole where... BC(1) had been gone for the 2nd day. Steve(3) missed sign-in AND bed-check!!!! SO.... middle of the night: BOTH beds got filled! AGAIN! SHIT! Now... E1 is an older-looking Hispanic. E3 is a light-skinned Black with do-rag. Neither of them is too considerate. The lights were left on for the longest and both took their sweet-arsed time getting settled. E3 kept walking in and out. E1 had a little “entourage” saying “You’re gonna be aight papi.” Well, David and I *knew* it was coming. Steve, meanwhile, showed just moments after bed-check, none too pleased about losing the bed. Well... that’s what comes from too much liquor. I wish I could be more caring but I can’t. You screw around and you get dumped. I wonder where they sent him... Yes, I do wonder... but not like I once would. As I say: you screw around, you lose.

Tuesday 21 June

12.34pm I’m on a Q35 bus from The Junction in Brooklyn and this day is passing quickly! - This morning: Ms. Henika is a compassionate woman. How amazing and interesting to talk with her. The “Psycho-Social interview” with her was, well, brief and uneventful. But getting to talk with this woman was a welcome reprieve. And to learn she too is Jewish! A miracle! - I come to think that my set-backs are thrown in to help me better appreciate good moments such as this morning. - However: I must always remember... I AM A MAN DESTROYED BY TRUST - What a damned shock!!! To see... *BRINDOU* this morning! Still as nasty as he was, confrontational,

arrogant, vulgar. A veritable parasite, picking fights & threatening. Idiot. Moron. Why he continues to exist is another mystery. Why he's still in The Shelter... I'll never understand. May it be his Eternal Hell. - At last at BkCenLib and a truly up-lifting and encouraging e-mail from "PJ.Burlington". I'm now SO looking forward to the relocation. (I just need to figure the logistics of getting storage up there for the little bit I have left of my life here. But all will settle in due course and with determination. And I have both.) How fascinating to meet nice people on "Twitter"... both accounts that I have there... - PenLib opens at 1:00pm today. SIBL is open until 8:00pm. Right now I'm quite hungry... AND OH SO BLEATINGLY DAMNED FATIGUED! this morning, I had to wake before my body was ready. Strange, but I could actually FEEL that. - Because of my most recent visit to the beach, my back is sun-burned a touch. No plans for the beach today. There will be time. - 12:49pm and crossing the Jamaica Bay via the Marine Park Bridge into Rockaway and the weather's turned to over-cast. HOT. Humid. Lunch in Tribute Park I think. Then to PenLib to transcribe... AND PRINT THE VERMONT STATS I'VE GOTTEN! - It's good: I have a visible & attainable goal... ESCAPE NY! - I NEED SLEEP! - 2:04pm Lunch. Tribute Park. The bay is alive with horseshoe crabs, laying (and getting laid...as it were). It was quite amazing to see. And the water is so clear! How shameful that it's still not really trustworthy for swimming. - Well, after lunch I got the Q53 bus over to PenLib. where I also got MUCH VERMONT-RELATED PRINTING DONE! I'M ON MY WAY!!!!

Wednesday 22 June

8.15am at Howard Beach, sitting on the guard-rail, Cross Bay Blvd./Conduit over-pass, "tapping" notes onto an iPod. Too early for work at my scheduled 9:00am, too late for 8:00am if I wanted to be early to work this morning. I left the shelter at 7:00am. Noteworthy for future travel time. - Yesterday, I got my hour plus an additional 15 minutes at SIBL. The "BlackNotes" segment of this Journal are coming to the end of December '09. January & February '10 after that, then done. If I work until 3:00pm, I'll have it finished soon. Then? Then. Perhaps a "clean-up", add the illustrations. When it's COMPLETE... there will be nothing left to be said, nothing left to tell, no more excuses to "keep on". - And right now, there's Burlington, in Vermont. A possible "destination" for the "next chapter"... of a life I truly have no interest in continuing at this juncture. But right now, at this moment, I do continue, perhaps out of nothing more than some "morbid curiosity", or simply because I've made a commitment to somebody else... to provide help in a time of need. I have a "client", and an ethical responsibility to that person. So, here I am.

- It was a rather good night, last. Santiago remembered I smoke “Chesterfields”. Close. Non-menthol. We talked in the loo. Good recollections. He's a complete turd, I am fortunate to know the “truth” about him... I'm “aware”. We did our little “chat”, and all the while, I feigned interest. The more he says, the more I learn, the better prepared I am for his future BS. Then, I took me to the shower. - In the dorm, Nr.3 doesn't speak to me. Speaks to David though. Racism? Who cares? Not me. Neither of them are beneficial to my better well-fare. Insignificant. - I had to wake for a pee during the night, something I don't usually do. Watch... I'll develop prostate troubles now. “F.Me.” Right? - Tried to meet with Schmulik yesterday. He was out of work too early so I just let it go. Sent an e-mail telling my plans for Burlington. We'll see where that goes. He DID offer to stay in The City a bit after he'd done working. But this time I wanted to log the blog, so I stayed at the library and made no offer to stay any later, nor to finish my work and earlier. Selfish of me... in little ways. - Now, 8:29am and the skies are a bit over-cast. There's quite the hole in the umbrella. I'll need a new one... again... VERY soon. Alas. - On to work... for crap money... in more respects than one. -

2:24pm ONE BANQUE ACCOUNT SAVED! THANK THE “WHAT-EVERS”! AND... THIS CURRENT BANQUE HAS BRANCHES IN VT! WAHOO & WOOT! - Hours for work: 8:00am to 3:00pm (9:00am-4:00pm today), every other wk-end off. Working 12 consecutive days for 2 days off. Of course, Wednesdays will be the bitch, with the damned shelter & “case worker” meets. But I'll cover next week with a “transport trouble” excuse if necessary. After that? When it comes, we'll handle it. - Mrs. E. was very happy to see me back this morning. Mr.? Not so much. He kept telling me I need to go. He even offered to “show me the door”. But this afternoon, he's better. Just rather sleepy. He doesn't understand why I'm there. But that's all part of this “job”, putting up in silence, with the mood swings and mental issues. No problem, as long as I get the support from the family (and the bleating agency). I got their floors and bed and dishes done. He wouldn't eat lunch so I did. Not my usual “calorie-pounder” (heavy on the calories, light on the “nutrition”) but food none-the-less. - Rang Mrs. Diamond and left message on the answering machine. With that and the banque business today, I'm “good”. - The umbrella actually fell apart! It's now, officially worthless. I'll dump it when I leave work. No saving it at all! A Homeless man with-out and umbrella. How typical. - I want to try for SIBL this evening. It might be tight, leaving here at 4:00pm. But I won't rush back to the shelter and I want to keep the momentum logging the “BlackNotes”. - At the moment, I'm ready to doze. I wish I could be this tired at night. - It's HOT HOT HUMID HUMID! in here. Summer. Hmpf.- 7:38pm (sitting back at bed Nr.E4) ONE PARAGRAPH LEFT IN BLACKNOTES FOR DECEMBRE'09! and I ran out of time on the SIBL

COMPUTER! SO CLOSE! But tomorrow I'm out of work by 3:00pm with SIBL open until 8:00pm. I'll get the year done SOON. Goal? Finish and "clean" before packing this all up and in and heading North to... Burlington. Hey! I can hope. - I've nothing to eat here this evening and I'm actually quite hungry. But Gristede's market ruined my FoodStamps card when the baboon at the cash swiped it and scratched the magnetic strip. Getting a new one meant a lot of paper-work AND travel! I don't want them to do that again. And D'Ag's too expensive. Maybe tomorrow I'll run... RUN! to Waldbaums or KeyFood (I need coffee anyway) after work. Gotta eat. Gotta leave NY. - Mrs. E. offered ice cream today. Told me to help myself to what-ever's in the house. She should know: 2 slices turkey, tomato and cheese (my intake all day). Mr. E. was quite weak today and Mrs. said he'd been ill the past few days. Poor guy. Funny: he wanted me to go to leave the house, all morning. All afternoon he was so sweet and thankful for everything. (A note to myself though: I should have seen the nastiness of Mrs. TG. Revisiting Dec.'09 today showed me just how nasty she truly was! Bitch. AND how "STOOPID" I was with them AND the M.E. folks: I did the extra work, "private duty" at a mere 10\$ per hour. SCREW ME! Well... NOT repeating THAT mistake.) - This evening, I made it back into the Hell-hole just in time: DELUGE! It POURED down with rain! And right after I'd washed a T-shirt & under-drawers. Whew! - David was here when I got in. The guy in E1 is talking, offering him coffee and Sweet'n'Low. Time will tell how that goes with alliances and respect for the rest of us in the room. Can't be too trusting. He's STILL waiting for this dump to clip the lock on his locker. Do I ever remember my first days on the 5th floor in this place... waiting for access to the locker. Well, let this little bonobo learn, as I did, the hard way. - Oh! Spiffy! This evening, there's a moron in the hall belting loudly: "Cuando cuando cuando" and banging the garbage can out there. Arses abound. - I've just had a loo-smoke break here and yet, I want another already. I Shouldn't. - O JOLLY! NOW we've got coke (cocaine) in the damned room! It's going to be a rough next few weeks... and it's the OLD GUY! and David). Well, no reefer. But yesterday they replaced the smoke detector in the dorms so smoking in here is out of the question, Id suppose. Thankfully. - I HATE being in here so early. It's not good for morale... mine, mostly. - David's put his radio on. I'm thinking "EARLY to work" tomorrow. May the night tonight be SILENT ("Operations" said they'll clip E1's lock tonight: between 11-11:30pm. BLEATING BS! More noise in the middle of the night.) - Well? It's hot and humid in here right now. I should nap and get some "sleep" whilst I may. - 8:03pm PS: I simply and merely left the broken umbrella on the Cohancy Street guard rail this morning. It felt so odd... leaving it behind. But it truly is useless... and now I have no rain protection. How "Homeless" of me. - 9:31pm I've signed or the bed and showered. And the guy in E3 says he's got

a RADIO! The “rules” of this dump include “no electrical appliances. Now we have TWO radios in the room! Am I looking at jumping again? Bolting out the door for “peace of mind”? Ill-prepared? Just to keep the crap job I’ve got? IF I have to jump again, THIS time they go DOWN... (like that’s even possible... “down”. They’re at their lowest already... in all respects.) - I need to figure how to get the storage stuff to VT. - And tonight I go to bed hungry. Free food all over the place here but I can’t get at it. It’s distributed too early... while I’m at work. Tomorrow will be an early morning. Alarm set at 5:15am. On the bus by about 6:30am. I’ll have buttered toast, maybe syrup too, at Mr. E’s. Somehow it’ll work out. - For tonight? Tolerance... I eat myself up in anger. Tolerance. – TWELVE (12) PAGES LEFT IN BLACKNOTES! 6 days... or close to it.

Thursday 23 June

10:03am and at Howard Beach. - I FINALLY got some sleep last night when David and El stopped the racket. E3 was trying for sleep too. But 1&2 were “coked”. El has some kind of “Mickey Mouse” statue/doll-thing that makes talk and general noise. He had it going with David’s radio, yammering and what-not! 11:00pm! Useless, rotting trash, the both of them! This is not boding well. Then El plugs into the outlet behind MY bed to charge his phone. No prob. But just moves MY things about to make it easy for HIM! (They clipped the lock for him, by the way. His trash is still all over the place. Another trashSpic (call ‘em as they are). - So this morning, I woke with the 5:35am alarm, toddled across the hall for a little dump, no smoke. Shower. Dress. OUT! 6:16am and I was on the M15 bus to the M14 bus to 8thAv. By 6:43am, I was on the Rockaway-bound A train where I half-dozed during the trip. - At the client’s today, Lou (son-in-law) tells me: My mother-in-law is thrilled you’re staying. (We’ll see as time goes by. I’ve heard that crap before Bucko-boy.) - 7:33am and I clock-in. - Mrs. asked me about *her* FoodStamps benefits! AGAIN, people who trust me! What the Hell? People trust me... I need to turn all this “trust” into a benefit. (Not to mention: Yes, she does rather need the extra Food Stamps help, but, I look at her and her husband, their home, their comforts and joys and I look at me... I’m busting my everything to keep working, getting a pittance for FOOD help and, well, it appears that the “scales” aren’t simply “un-balanced”... they’re busted beyond repair!) What I NEED to do is stop “Giving My Life Away”! – Well, I must note that some of the folks on Twitter are truly being emotionally supportive. AND... AND... AND... I’m looking forward to VT! - This morning I’m “eating”: bread, butter, syrup; an Ensure; coffee with ice cream. Little by little, nourishment.

Won't make up for yesterday's nothing but better than more nothing. - Now, I'd luv a nap. - "Wrap-up" at days end here now: I CLOCKED-IN THIS MORNING AT 7:33am. THE CLIENT GETS 8 HOURS OF SERVICE! I SHOULD HAVE BEEN OUT OF THERE BY 2:30pm BUT. SCREWED! Mrs. NEVER RETURNED TO THE HOUSE UNTIL 3:00pm! AND Mr. CANNOT BE LEFT ALONE! AND EXTRA HALF HOUR? FREE? HELL NO! I RANG THE AGENCY TO REPORT THIS AND THE SUPERVISOR SAID THAT SHE'S PUTTING THE EXTRA TIME IN SO THAT I GET PAID. BUT SCREW THIS BS! NO MORE! NO MORE "GIVE-AWAYS" WITH MY TIME. I'M AT THE END OF THAT! PERIOD! It set my entire evening off! - I DID get an immediate hour on a computer at PenLib. But then BOLTED for a Q53 bus to make a quick run-through at Waldbaum's market for PopTarts, apple turnovers(3), a bottle of Starbucks coffee. I NEEDED to eat! Gulped the turnovers and coffee and suddenly felt better. I REALLY NEEDED some kind of nourishment! So... Shoving the 3 turnovers into my face whilst on the walk to the Q35 bus, finishing the last of my "meal" on the bus, gulping coffee, I rang Schmulik. I'd sent him an e-mail telling of my intention to go to VT. He replied, he's going to kick my "ass... literally". I HAD to see him about that. Imagine... "literally". I have to chuckle. - Well, NYC being what it is, the bus was late, then slow. The train at The Junction was a "just miss". THEN the bloody Nr.2 train went along slowly. My time was destroyed! I got to the studio at about 6:30pm. Too bleating late to stop and visit and get to SIBL! I'm on the last 11 pages of the "BlackNotes" and now it's going to be like this! - Well. As it turned out, the time spent with Schmulik was fascinating: He's upset. I tend to think he doesn't want me to leave NYC, might enjoy knowing I'm here, somehow. He lectured: There are thousands of other things you could do. And "you'd be perfectly successful at about 85% of them. He doesn't understand that I'm exhausted from the hectics of this NYC. He kept telling me that I'll only fall into the same troubles no matter where I go. Told me I need to act on my resentments. Suggested I do what-ever I need to do to "lance" the boil that is my siblings. "You won't get compensation but you need satisfaction". Personally, I tend to believe his efforts are more to keep me here... for him, a friend in town who has some "history". Sadly? Nope. I want out. I can't keep doing for "others", no matter whom. He also said something interesting: "You've always been too considerate of others. You have a job where you take care of others who take advantage of you and when they do, you get hurt." OK. He sees it. He tries to talk me out of and away from it. I guess he "cares"... as much as he can, time, life and the world considered. I'm thinking he's a bit as I am: We "care", but the years have worn us down. Anyway, it would have been nice to have more time with him but at 8:24pm we were still standing at 16th Street and 8th Avenue. I had to get going. We parted at the A/L train station, rendez-vous

tomorrow pending. - At Bellevue, DavidE2 was asleep, radio on. 1 and 3 not in. I kept moving, signed-in immediately (at 8:45pm), made coffee for tomorrow (tap water, instant coffee in a plastic bottle), showered, enjoyed. "Enjoyed"? Well, as much as could be said. It was calm, quiet. I "enjoyed" as much as possible. - When 1 and 3 came in later, the pleasant shock was only moments of chaos. 3 even spoke: asked if he could plug into the outlet (at the head of my bed... fortunately/unfortunately). Then asked why I get up so early... "You work?". He's looking for "Building Maintenance" work, has tools. (Wrenches,drills... *This* causes me some concern. "Tools" can be used as "weapons". But he "seems" OK... I SAY "SEEMS"! There's NEVER any assurance in this place.) - And, after the momentary insanity that is this charming resort... a night of restless sleep. My back itches something terrible!

Friday 24 June

10.57 am at today's client and WOW! I'M TIRED! - 8:01pm and back in my little corner... E2 And... the count-down to break-down begins. It's Friday. No doubt the trash will take to the halls tonight. Screw me. - Bonne Fête Chere Viv. I miss you. It's been years since we've last spoken. I hope you're safe and sound, warm and comfy, content... where-ever you are. - And the radio in the TV room just down the hall BLARES! Told ya. Mayhem commences. - The day? Well, obviously, I woke. Tiny BM. No smoke. Brush teeth. Shower. Dress for work. Got a later bus to 14th Street, then the M14 bus to 8th Avenue to W.A.I.T. for the bleating A train to The Rock. But... I clocked in just before 8:00am! When I arrived to work, silent house, breakfast things set out on the counter. Mr. E. was asleep. I waited until 8:30am and he woke with "*What are YOU doing here?*" rather nastily. But I diffused. Got him into the shower. Made his "french toast". He ate it ALL! Then on to "light tidying". No major house-work from now on. I USED to go all-out for others. I've learnt: in the end, it's not appreciated. Besides, it's not my job to clean somebody's house. This one is clean, I'll "maintain" that but not "clean". - The substitute "Charge Nurse" on this case came by to check Mr. E. We chatted. She seems very nice. The "Charge Nurse" on this case will be back next week. LAH-dee-dah. The same one I worked with at TG's! As if... She did nothing to help me out of THAT mess! But now I know what to expect of her... Jackall nothing... or more trouble. - Mr. E. ate ALL his lunch, save 1 slice of turkey. I had a toast (one slice, but better than nothing), butter, syrup for breakfast. An Ensure (he didn't want it, it was opened, I wasn't going to waste it). - Mrs. came by twice. Timing was perfect: Mr. was clean, I was busy. - As is obvious, I tried a little journalling here but kept drowsing. - THE BANQUE ACCOUNT IS OK! I GOT PAID!

117\$. I'm curious to see what the Hell was taken out of my pay. But THE ACCOUNT IS OK! Now to pay-down the over-draft. HELL! – At 3:03pm I clocked-out and was off to the A train (and another W.A.I.T.!) to Broadway Junction for the L train to Union Square and a Nr.6 train up to SIBL. An “arse-head” resident from the 7th floor was there, watching his DVD player! Dozing. He didn't see me come in. Thankfully! - 90 minutes on the computer!!! I got quite a bit logged. - Rang Schmulik at 5:30-something pm. He'd be at work another 3 hours. I didn't go to see him. Got the M16 bus back to the shelter. - Just at 2nd Avenue I hear “How y'doin' man?” RAMONE from the 7th floor! I told him to sit, and gave him my place. He's the only one left up there. Even Roger (the crack-head) got pulled. “Mental troubles” (as if I hadn't noticed before). The rest are major combative, fights all the time. One trash-rot brought in FLEAS! The room's infested! - 8:41pm continuing from inside... We dropped into RiteAid on 2nd Avenue. I NEED ANTI-ITCH powder! The staff at the store (a “Pharmacy”) didn't know what I was talking about. I looked. They had NONE! Ramone left. I went to DuaneReade. Powder, ONE pack of cigarettes and to eat... a “power bar”. Oh well... - In at the Hell-hole. BREEZED IN! Are the “old times” back? They “trust” me? (Hell) - As I got into the room I was greeted with “Shabbat shalom” (sabbath greeting) from Nr.El! So! He's from Haifa! (Says this evening, that his name is “Nabil” Something... He's “Israeli-Arab. “Chara” (sh**)! Isratrash! Imagine! Not very pleasant. Not very respectful. But greeting me... in Hebrew. No, I'm not impressed, at all. - I've managed to eat PopTarts, make coffee for tomorrow, wash a polo shirt, trim my beard. (I'd filed my nails at work.) Now, in light blue scrubs, waiting for sign-in. Angst about tonight's BS noise. BACK ITCHING in spite of powder. Arms itch too! Possibly the wash detergent for the linens? HOPEFULLY NOT SCABIES! - Well. This covers this day. Maybe more later... or tomorrow. - No days off for another 6 days. VT! KADIMA! (FORWARD!) - Oh... a note: On the M16 bus, we stopped beside a car... TWO VT stickers. HmmmYay? - Addendum: With all else? Horrible leg/foot cramps. Spiffy. – Sign-in... HOPEHOPEHOPE for SLEEPSLEEPSLEEP!

Saturday 25 June



11:52pm and David's got the bleating radio on! I just came back from a hot shower and a quick smoke (tear the filter off, 4 deep draws)... my back is covered with little welts and itchy as all hell! I think the itch is due to the laundry soap. Now I'll have to BUY laundry soap and re-wash EVERYTHING! More money going out! But, it wasn't easy in the beginning the last time round, it shouldn't be any different this time. - Why am I not wasted with fatigue? I will be at 5:30am... can I hold out, hold up until then? And it's going to be Saturday... Mrs. E. will be at home all day. No

snoozing with Mr. - This is "Pride Week-end" too. No parade on Sunday. Alas. Not. - HELL-ALL! My back itches so badly. It almost burns. This is just more misery. And I can't head out at this hour. The "new rule" forbids it. We

used to be able to sign-in and leave (and hopefully not get caught missing at the various bed-checks) but the "new rule" says: sign-in-stay-in. Oh well. - But all of us are in here. No "surprise" Over-nighters to be expected to CRASH in the middle of the night. - Sneezing now. Ducky. I'm gonna "Twitter" a bit. Might as well. Can't sleep. And it's my "civil and intelligent chat" for the day. - Cool breeze tonight. Oh, and I powdered the mattress with "Gold Bond". It obviously doesn't work. - WFAN radio station with baseball... which will go on into the middle of the bleatingfrigging night. But David took a sleeping pill from Nabil earlier. Bleating turd-heads. - MEANWHILE... to the lovely and charming day's events (right then) here at 6:55pm: from the corner of bed Nr. E4... Another day... This morning I didn't bother looking at the time much and didn't try to or not try to make noise at 5:30am as I woke. But David2 had the balls to ask me for the time at 5:45am (a feeble attempt at subtly telling me that I'd disturbed his sleep... piss-off!). The goddamn radio didn't go off til almost bloody 3:00am this morning! I need to short out *his* outlet. He's got one rather high up on the wall over the head of his bed. If I could only get a bit of salt-water into that.... ZAP! No more radio. - Well. The route to Howard Beach THIS morning:

Nr.6 train to 14th Street to transfer to a Nr.4 train to Fulton Street to transfer to an A train to the North Conduit and from there, the walk to the house (a slow stroll this morning) to arrive for work at 7:45am (and clock-in at 7:53am or there-about). Mr. E. was up in a chair already, had eaten. Mrs. was home most of the day. But it wasn't bad. Lou (son-in-law) came by. We talked banquing and Jews and the likes. He tells me that Mrs .E. is "thrilled" to have me on the case. (For now... thinkst I.) - Mrs. offered me hard-boiled egg, 2 slices toast. I accepted. Food. OK! Then she was out. - Lou came by later... with pizza! "New Park", Howard Beach's claim to fame. 1 slice. Very good. - I dusted the house, made Mr.'s bed with Mrs. there to show her how and THAT I "*work*". She washed floors. Said she did it every week-end. OK then. (A subtle hint that that's what's expected of me? I shouldn't doubt.) - Mr. got TWO changes today AND I *HAD* to take him outside because here too, the family denies the severity of his inabilities. Like most, they compensate for their own inferiority by appearing to care with "Oh, lovely day, you should go out, enjoy the fresh air." Really now. He was a bit "distorted" and his legs were weak. But we made a small excursion next door for a bit do he could visit with his daughter and grand-kids. - It was a hot day. No rain. 86% humidity. - I left just after 3:00pm on a reverse of this morning's trip (no L train service from 8th through 1st Avenues... the entire span across Manhattan). AND, I arrived at SIBL by 4:20pm and a computer assignment for 4:25pm AND I got an hour and 20 minutes in time. AND NOW... 8 pages of "BlackNotes" left to transcribe! Tomorrow'll probably be a waste, no library (I NEED FOOD, COFFEE!). But 8 pages today! Yahooooo! - Tomorrow's "Pride" parade. NY State approved "Gay marriage" this morning just past midnight. (Big friggin deal.) It should be quite celebratory. I wonder if Steve S. will attend. I'll be in Howard Beach... up to my elbows in pissy diapers. My "life": pissy diapers. - Well. The dorm's empty. I'm in bed-scrubs. Back ITCHING! It's something in this top! Maybe fungus from the dampness the past few days? I don't know. Tomorrow I'll buy Benadryl: in case of allergy and to help with sleep. I don't have many days of "toleration" left. And right now (7:20pm) I close my eyes. - 8:50pm I actually SLEPT from 5:31pm to 8:35pm! And I've signed-in already. - Rudely awakened by Spics at the soda machine (that machine needs to go... will work on that) and David flipping the light on, mumbling "Sign!" at me. He's apparently miffed... at me(?) (go to Hell David.). I wish I could figure a way to put them all to sleep in here... just for the night. Especially since it's going for "sleep time" and I know they'll all come to motion ever so very soon. This floor (6th) is an "older" crowd, I've noticed. But there's an OVER-abundance of Spics... LOUD, CACKLING Spics. Yet another reason Burlington looks ever so delightful: low "Hispanic" population. Once the "BlackNotes" are done, JOB-SEARCH commences. 4 full-time cheques should do it for the move.

Storage is the only catch at present. And maybe phone service. - I do believe the move will be a drastic cut from NY. I'm in need, dire need of getting out and away. Burlington is a "younger" town. But it has a Québec and Canada influence. THAT will be quite welcome. French... not Spanish. In spite of what Schmulik insists: "You will go there and it will be great for some months. But unless you change who you are, you'll soon be doing the same thing there (letting yourself be taken advantage of and being disappointed) and you'll be angry again." Well, perhaps there won't be those who'll be so prone to taking advantage. Hmmm? Perhaps there'll be a "better quality", "better calibre", better educated, higher civilised people there. Perhaps. I can hope. I can look. I can go. He also asked: "So instead of leaving on the beach, you'll be leaving in a lake?" I replied "I'll have the option of fulfilling a dream... living in the St. Lawrence... in French." At least I won't be living in "SpicSpanish". - On another subject, I think the itch I've got might be due to locker-dampness. Something in the scrubs. I powdered before putting them on. The itch is there. Though tonight, not so bad. I'll shower with shampoo before retiring. It helped last night. - I'm really quite hungry. But I need sleep more than food right now. Sleep. Imagine. - Well "sleep" wasn't to happen... just yet. I CAN'T BELIEVE: Nabil's (E1) been replaced. One of his cronies came by, AFTER the bed was re-assigned, to say that Nabil's in hospital. Something about "one-side pain". What-ever. I don't much care about Mr. Nabil and cohorts. Too much "something" going on there. The new guy? IndoPakistani or something. HE boasts of a "Wasted liver". Says he ruined it by drinking. My 1st thought was: How can I help? My 2nd thought: Great! Hepatitis C! Both thoughts hit simultaneously. I let it all go. Then he said "I'm very tired." David had his headphones on. Silence in the room! Brown (E3) was messing with plastic bags but... silence. I'd showered, only slight itching. I WENT TO SLEEP. SLEEP!



Sunday 26 June

12.43pm at Howard Beach... at the home of Mr. E: I wanted to sleep this morning. But Burlington calls. So too, the need for money. Up. BM at the loo and a smoke. The regular routine and out... to HELL HELL HELL! – Nr.6 train, 11mins wait. Nr.4 train at 14th Street, 11mins wait. I tried the L train, 14mins wait. Back to the Nr.4 train. No Nr.5 train service! FRIGG THIS! Wait for the A train to Rockaway... LOCAL ALL THE BLEATING WAY!!! I got to work at 8:11am! I'd expected some kind of lecture on tardiness (Mrs. E. has said, several times, "If you no can get here by 8:00am I'm sorry, I have to change agencies." with her Italian accent. But, I'll be docked 30 minutes no matter what at 8:11am. I was ready to toss it, the whole case and the job. But Mr. was still in bed so it really wasn't an issue this morning. Yesterday he'd had a tough day. Bad legs, but Mrs. insisted he get out. So he did the stairs. The families of my patients are, as a rule, un-reasonable.) Anyway, Mr. got up, showered, breakfast. I cleaned. Mrs. cleaned. Settled. Fine. - I've eaten. "Stuff". Mrs. made extra rice and vegetables for me. I still need to get to market today... AND STORAGE FOR Vitamin C! Thankfully I have vitamin C. - Otherwise, I still haven't rung Mrs. Diamond. I'm not making me available for the "driving/homecare" crap any longer. I received an e-mail from Mr. Gb. yesterday: curt. I'm tempted to reply with "Sorry my time and efforts aren't worth 5 extra bucks." but I'm considering. The aggravation to me isn't worth it. Better to simply walk away from it all. Burlington. - I'm so tired at the moment. Want to get to storage, MMLib (8 pages left to transcribe!), market for coffee. Storage is most important today. Then MMLib. - 1:28pm A guy's repairing the front stoop on the house here today. I don't want to take Mr. E. past the rubble. I'll check/change Mr. in a bit. Then? - "Heritage of Pride" forecasts MAJOR attendance of festivities this year for the annual "Gay Pride" celebration. And here I am.. Screwed again this year. And to think I'd thought about going with Steve... from the 7th floor. 'OMG Imma SO STOOPID!' (as Mrs. E. often says). - 8:22pm and back at E4. Well, the day went OK. I ate. The rice, from Mrs. E. was very good! Mr. E. ate almost all of lunch. Mrs. seemed happy with my work again today. And even though I clocked-out at 3:005pm I got SCREWED out of my 45 minutes at MMLib by MTA/NYC public transit. When I left the house, I'd headed to Cross Bay Blvd. for the Q35 bus to storage. THE BUS WAS PACKED!!! So I walked back and over to the A train. AND WAITED! - When I finally got to storage: got a 32-day supply of Vitamin C, and some non-dairy creamer. Now I can't find the other mirror and I need a haircut! HOWever, I was happy to grab a swig if vodka. WHAT a RELIEF! It just took the edge off. There's a bit left from the bottle I'd gotten whilst "at the lake". I managed to pack that and bring it with when we left. Then, with my little things from storage, I headed over to RiteAid for cigarettes and "Gain" dish soap, for

laundry. Got COFFEE (and PopTarts) at the market on Liberty Avenue. They've got great prices! I'm happy. Then, the day lost, back to the A train to Fulton Street in Manhattan. At Fulton, I decided to take the bus on Water Street. Whilst standing there, in the "Financial District", the memories of when I worked, successfully and happily in the "Wall Street" business, for some reason, the legalisation of Gay marriage in this city grabbed me. Choked me a bit. So I sat for a bit to Twitter my feelings and thoughts on the matter. I was feeling bold and melancholy at the same time. 47 years after "Stonewall", the turning point in the "Gay movement". And my Mum not here. I wonder what she'd say. No doubt she'd be happy... even though I'm too old (and worn out) to benefit from any of this, it's more than likely that she'd be elated. Still, it's quite an historic accomplishment. -Well... Back at the Hell-hole... the guy now in Nr.1: Jesus! How funny! His name is Jesus. In this room we now have Jesus and Judah! - I washed a t-shirt, socks, towel. The towel has stains from something in the basin. But all is clean. Just a few things remain. - David came in. I gave him PopTarts... just to stay in good. Hell. I don't need BS. Then got on "NYCme" Twitter. FUN STUFF! Homeless AND non. Twitter has become my "touch" with the world and the latest news. - 8:40pm and David listening to some music. He had WBAI on for a while. Old radio shows. SO WONDERFUL to listen to, but they're playing Michael Jackson now. - And I'm not a part of a great moment in Gay history. Crap! But "typical". I tend to miss the "great moments in history" things. - A thought that I had on the A train this evening: the iPod that Schmulik had given me (because he no longer uses it) compensates for the wedding ring & Gund bear that I'd given him and he admittedly destroyed. And how odd: I resent his common BS, telling me how *my* life is *wrong* with-out advice on how he believes it could be better. Common bunk. Common. I'm in no mood. - And Burlington is still my driving force. Burlington. No more NYC. - A note: MOUSE IN THE DORM this evening! It almost ducked into my locker. Oh well. Bellevue continues to sink... - 8:55pm and GAMES? Almost 9:00pm and no sign of sign-in! No word. No "security" on the entire floor. - Jesus just tells: sign-in on 5th floor. Friggin bastards! - 9:32pm I go. I sign. I'm leaving to come back to the room and... STEVE! E3! (now D33!) He's in *here*! It honestly was good to see him here... not Wards or Bed-Atlantic! I offered to help him if I can. He grabbed me, cheek-to-cheek. "Y'know I love y'man." Big grin. Here I go again? Why me? Well. What the Hell? Just don't let THIS guy go shooting somebody! (like CW did and then vanished... into prison.) What-ever. He's sweet. Works. He's a Cabinet-maker. Drinks a bit much. But... me too... if I could. He spent 7 yrs "on the rails". "Lived", as it were, on the E train! He got brought in by "Outreach". He's tough. Kind though. Got a sweet side. Yup. Here I go again? - Meanwhile, I'm showered. David's now got WFUV on the radio (The Fordham University

station). 30's-40's music. The TV down the hall is on some old movie. The music's the same on both. Out in The City, Lady Gaga's ruling the night. In here? The world should only know. - Well, I'm showered. My back still itches a bit. But that itch in the left eye is gone. Something's going "right" (I'm in for BIG CRAP NOW!) - Just waiting for bed-check. - Tomorrow I start taking pictures from "Monogram". I need to have some kind of "digital" record of the sketches in the book. I'll post them to "Photobucket" on-line. As for the on-line "blog", I've got 8 pages to type. Then proof/correct. I believe I'll get a "Flash" drive to store ALL the documentation from ALL the blogs. My life... in my pocket.

10:00pm... my mind wanders and I wonder, in that "Numerology" thing:

D18 (my previous bed here) - F39 (my first "assigned" bed here): F=6th letter of the alphabet plus 3=9 plus 9=18 - E4: E=5th letter of the alphabet plus 4=9 x2=18 - Storage locker number: nn18

18=CHAI In Hebrew, the number 18 spells the word "Chai"... "Life"

Monday 27 June

6:49pm at E4 and my t-shirt and itchy scrub top are now washed. I'm wearing my light blue jeans (which need washing), grey polo shirt. CLOTHES! Hmmm... - A tough beginning to the day. Got to work in plenty of time, clocked-in at about 7:40am to a quiet house but Mr. was in a *very* bad mood! Combative! Would NOT cooperate with me at all until I simply removed the bed linens (which NEEDED washing!) and he simply got up! To think I'd argued with him. From then on, a wonderful day! (Mrs. almost *demand*s that Mr. get up and out of bed *every* morning by *not* later than 8:30am *AND* that he shower *each* morning. She's ever so good at "demanding" but then, it's not *HER* who's doing *ANY* of the work so...) - I rang my supervisor at the agency to ask for Wednesday morning off and to report on Wednesday afternoon here for work. She said "You never call out. I'll get you coverage. Take the whole day off. Relax." You KNOW I appreciate the time. BUT I NEED THE MONEY MORE! Then Mrs. E. asked if I could just come later for a few hours instead of having somebody new! She actually wants *ME* on this case. (But so did that conniving sack of turds there... Mrs. TG... to my face... back-stabbing, ungrateful bitch that she proved herself to be.) So, I'm letting it ride. I don't accept compliments any longer because I've learnt: they're lies. - As for taking the time off on Wednesday, Ms. Henika is so pleasant, prompt and proper that I actually WANT to be "compliant" for her sake. Not to mention: I'm in a fairly decent room with fairly decent room-mates, so I don't want to do anything to lose that. AND... at

this juncture, I can't really afford to lose anything at the shelter and have to start the crap all over again. So, I'll do what I must to keep what little I've got going well for the time. - Meanwhile, I'm eating during the day. Not enough. But more than nothing. "Just enough". - Today, I got many photos off the phone and on "Photobucket". Now I'm prepping to get the "Monogram" sketches shot to put into the blogs. - Went to SIBL after work. An hour and some. I'm so tired I almost couldn't type. But another 2 (or 3) pages closer to *Complete*! There's tomorrow after work and a MAJOR RUN on Wednesday for 3 libraries (and SOME beach please?). I *NEED* to get this done. - And so... back into the Hell-hole now. It's nice right now: quiet... before the mayhem. And it's cooler in here than out-side so I'm rather enjoying... whilst I may. - Have decided: I'm not communicating with the MEGb's any further. I'm insulted beyond description about the 15\$ rate and Mr.'s curt e-mails. I'll communicate when I figure out how to retrieve MY belongings from CT (before leaving to VT... which is what I'm still planning). Screw'em! - My back is itching! I'd washed this shirt in shelter laundry soap. I'm probably allergic. Thank goodness I got the other stuff to re-wash everything!

Tuesday 28 June

8:49am and back at work. - It wasn't half bad last night in spite of David and the radio (CBS.FM, the "Oldies" station) for a while. And I fell asleep before "Brown" put the lights out! - This morning I woke to the alarm, "rested", as much as possible. Last evening's wash was dry (but tonight I MUST wash the light blue scrubs pants! URINE! It happens... I'm old & the plumbing's leaking I suppose, and if I don't wash them, I'll "smell like a Homeless person"). Anyway, quick smoke and no BM (not good, and I'm paying attention to that and noticing that it's happening again, as it did when I was in here before). - Quick commute this morning. Clocked-in at 7:48am! - The "*I HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!!!*" anxiety hit this morning. It makes my head and heart *POUND* terribly. But: Keep I keep the idea in mind, I have to try to keep it with-out the panic. It's good to remember, but NOT allow it to cause panic. - I've got about 60-plus sketches from "Monogram" photographed. Not "quality" with the phone. But something for the WebJournal. - Not rushing Mr. E. to get up yet. Coffee first. - Should be an interesting day... school lets out. Summer! Frigg! - VT at end of July is the current "Goal". - 7:38pm back at bed E4. ACCOMPLISHED! (As in the adjective, me, here.) It was a relatively easy day in Howard Beach. Mr. was in an "OK" mood. The Charge Nurse on the case came by and with her came the news: Mr. TG is dead. She had much to say about Mrs. TG: The two-faced bitch *COMPLAINED* about

ME! SCREW HER! Well, I learn more. I learn again. But as she, the Nurse says: It hurts those who really *DO* appreciate me because now, 2 years later, my trust is gone and all the rest will suffer.

TRUTH:* Some give til it hurts. I've given til it destroyed. (F* *ME!* I'm back in the shelter... pulling pre-tax, 10\$ per hour for putting up with this BS.) No more and never again. She's absolutely right about the ones who *DO* appreciate because even right here and now, the "me" who used to love doing for others is all but "dead" too. And I'm *NOT* going to do anything to resuscitate that "me". To *HELL* with the rest from here on. They get *ONLY* what I'm hired to do and not one bit more. *

OK. Tomorrow's another day. - OH! Do I *HAVE* to note *THIS!* *I can *SENSE* a "Security Guard"! Got on the A train coming back here this evening and as I was just glancing, blankly, at the floor, I happened to notice a pair of boots across from me and "felt", not "thought" but "felt" ... "Security Guard" and YUP! I look up and there, across from me stood a guy in a "Security" uniform. Same company that's used here! Young Black guy. Uniform and all. And I didn't look... I *FELT*... I *KNEW!* I truly, *TRULY MUST* trust my gut/intuition more... and more. - And this evening, I got my hour on a computer at SIBL. Not sure how many more pages to go but maybe 6? *GETTING THERE! GETTING TO THE END!* And so many photos to add. *WOW!* - Stopped at Gristede's on 28th Street this evening on the way back. PopTarts are 4.29\$ there! Got 3 pastry-things at 1.29\$. Not bad. Not good. I'm still hungry. - Back at the dung-heap, I *FINALLY* washed the locker. Got the stickers off at last. They were so bleating filthy they'd stained my wet towel. A "Wildcat" let me use their broom and mop when I asked if I could. *THE FLOOR'S CLEAN TOO!* When I'd done, I went across to the wash-room and in the face basin, washed scrubs bottoms, towel, socks. *CLEAN.* (Now *I* need a shave and haircut!) - Now, thought, I'm *SOAKING FROM SWEAT!* It's 27°C in here but *HUMID! HELL!* Even my own body heat is *HOT!* I can't take much more of this. - August. VT. That's it. That's all. Done. July to figure logistics. And Monday's pay is "Holiday Pay". - 9:14pm I'm signed, shaved and showered. Ah, the shower. I'm in, 2 Spics come in, stand with-in finger-length of each-other and *YELL!* Reminded me *SO* much of the 5th floor: "What the f*** is their problem? Stand right in front of each-other and *YELLING!* F***in' deaf muthufukkuz." said David, one evening. (Hey! We only call 'em as they are. Truth.) Then some guy comes in slamming the garbage can around in the shower room and then used it to put his clothes over whilst he showered. But *SLAMMED* the damned thing. I mean, *WHAT* the *HELL?* - But sign-in was on 6 tonight. OK for that. And now? Spics at the soda machine. One is trying to punch the coin return (trash). RadioBoy's (David) got WFAN on the radio, for more sports. And there's some kinda noise coming from the TV room. Shelter-trash. - On my social media

connections, the guy in the Homeless shelter in Boston is having “guard troubles”. First, they confiscate his own pillow. Tonight they’re giving him more bunk. Even in Boston. Kick the Homeless. I pray they rot, painfully and very long-term. - August. My birth month. Deadline. VT. Out of here. Out of NY. (OH! No more NY taxes. How nice is THAT?) Back to the NORTH. AUGUST. No more Spanish. No more “entitled” “minorities”. Just OUT. - Thought: light blue scrub top, navy bottom, same colours as “Security”. So funny, that. - Tomorrow... Ms. Henika. Joy. (SHOOT ME!) - Jesus and I talked a bit today. So far, he seems to be a quiet man. - Now, Brown will come in and piss around a while. Then, bed-check. I’m hoping to sleep through it all. Packed day tomorrow. - WHY does “DHS” do “Psych/Soc.” evaluations and then keep the druggies and freaks in with the General Population? More “just plain trash”.

Wednesday 29 June

7:17am at the 5th Floor “lounge”. Waiting for Ms. Henika. There are 4 others here already. Me, I’m showered, in jeans and grey polo shirt and packed and ready to head out to Tilden when this is done. just in case. My bowels feel as if they’ve been “stuffed”. No BM yesterday. Small this morning. - Precious little sleep last night: Brown(E3) lost the bed. He came in after 11:00pm sounding surprised. “I’m transferred. A lot of people came in late, lost their bed.” BS! THEN he cuts on the light, rattle, crumble, thud, bang... Leaves. COMES BACK! Rattle, crumble, thud, bang. I was JUST about to get up and simply put his locker out of the room and into the hall! And, these days? I most certainly would have done, had he come back... but he didn’t. - The room settles. And then... SQUEAK! SQUEAK! SQUEAK! Knockknockknock. “Hello?” The new E3. “Hello?”? What the HELL? You say “Hello” when you come into a room? Great! Either it’s “new” or it’s “retarded”. Squeaking sneakers AND “Hello”? THIS is NOT the HILTON. He comes in, tosses his jacket on the locker so that it hangs over the top AND directly ABOVE MY FACE! I lost it! I sat up as calmly as possible and gave him the “Respect” lecture. I pounded my locker (forgot how LOUD that can be... oops, but point well-made indeed), and left the room for the loo to have a smoke to let my “lecture” sink in some-where and some-how... and, honestly, to get away from this turd before I actually smashed him in the face. These days... it’s quite possible to do. When I came back in, E3 says he’s just going to make the bed, in the dark. IT TOOK THE BETTER PART OF AN HOUR OR LONGER! I just figured: SCREW IT ALL! He finished... *comforter* and all! and left... I fell asleep... for MAYBE 3 hours. - I was back up at 5:15am! DAMN! Brush my teeth. Schmooze with David and Jesus (what a “Biblical” roster when you factor me in those names). E3’s locker is

empty, bed made and apparently he didn't come back last night. (Could it have been something I'd said? I hope so). - Meanwhile, back to here in the "lounge" and now to wait, wait, wait (7:31am Henika just arrived) for the mass chaos and battle for the sign-up sheet "First Place" on the list. TO HELL WITH THIS PLACE! FROM HERE ON, "We gonna use what we got to get what we want! So...OH...! (**Think About It* Sung by Lyn Collins, Written by James Brown 1972) - WELL! 9:11am and on the M15 bus down-town to Fulton Street. - After the routine mayhem and chaos, I was Nr.2 on "the list". By 8:33am I was back at the bed. By about 8:45am I'd exchanged linens AND got a *blanket*! - Ms. Henika was curt but pleasant and "seems" to want to work *with* me re: paper-work, appointments and tells me that the agency can be sued by The City if they refuse to give me work because I'm in The Shelter. She says she understands that I don't want it to be known BUT she's VERY willing to go legal IF they try anything against me. (Do I *trust* her? Nope and HELLnope.) But right now, I'm off to the "libraries-run" to "make" paper-work for her (and me). She tells me: Everything's become stricter, more involved, more confusing since I was here last. I can see that. One slip and... finished. Residents are OUT of the shelter, transferred or otherwise. - Well? David was *still* in bed at 8:35am whilst I was buzzing around. There's always one in a room, it seems. But with-out a job... Hey! At least TRY for SOMETHING? Nah. Why bother? And then there's his age: 60. I suppose between his obvious mental malfunction and his age, it just might be difficult. Still... TRY! - Meanwhile, my day begins. HOT-HOT but lower humidity. And the challenge to accomplish ALL! AND I AM SO HUNGRY! - 9:32pm E4: What a damned wasted day! Yes, I was out of Henika's office by 8:33am. Yes, fresh linens on the bed. But that's where the relative nothing got accomplished. - I got to the Brooklyn Central library early enough. Quick on the computer. I got the agency and banking forms on the Flash drive so all I have to do is update them and print for submission to the "case worker". But AGAIN, I couldn't remember the on-line log-ins for either banque! So, it was off to The Rock... post office... pay-stub an the VT INFO I'd asked for on-line! YEAH! Waldbaums: Focaccia, muenster (great sandwiches), tinned coffee, fruit, Greek yoghurt and big box of PopTarts, bottle of "water-stuff". NEXT... off to the PenLib... the bleating computers were down! An HOUR WASTED! trying to get one to function! WASTED! I headed to Tilden... 2:30pm and DAMN! Cloudy! I sat, very alone, at a picnic table over by the basket-ball hoops and had lunch. I've got 2 cigarettes left. I took my time over lunch. FOOD! CALORIES! NEEDED! RELAXATION! PEACE! PEACE! - After a wonderful lunch, in quiet, I was out the gate and to the Q22 bus to B116th Street to catch a Q53 bus to RiteAid on Liberty Avenue for cigarettes and a lighter (mine was empty). Money spent. I'm about to regret it when the phone and storage come due. I don't think I'll be getting paid this Friday. Of course not:

Holiday week-end, I've got off, broke. My "life". - Next, to storage to find the other mirror. I NEED a hair-cut. Tore the place apart! No mirror. But I brought a chambray shirt and some socks (the ones from George). A pair of socks returns to The Shelter. Also brought the dryer sheets (some already stuffed into the locker as I write). - Another little thing "accomplished", I was off to the A train to the L train to the Nr.6 train and up to SIBL. 6:25pm already. Got the one banque statement done. All's ready for PRINT and to be handed over on my next "case worker" report. AND MORE "BLACKNOTES" TRANSCRIBED! 3-4 pages left! (But, had PenLib been functioning, it would've been better. And I can't work it on the week-end... libraries are closed!) - Got back to Dung-hell at about 8:00pm. NEW E3 AGAIN! Maybe I scared last night's? I'll have to remember that I can do that: scare these idiots and trash-bags. - I signed for my bed, then showered. It's HOT in here again (and might be getting hotter...with the new Rican... damnit.) - So, the new E3 comes in. Old guy. Yes... Ever polite with the mouth but... BANG! the locker. He puts some kind of things ON the locker. THEN gets on his phone (at 9:54pm). LOUD. I've set MY alarm, full volume/vibrate, two alarms: One set for 5:10am and the other for 5:13am. They can be rude? I'm on "Selfish" setting now. WE shall see... - 9:57pm I'm just remembering, with all the locker-banking going on, that I DO have some Xanax (BANGBANGBANG This guy's gonna get HELL... The morning's are MINE! I don't want to use them though.) OK. Right after "bed-check" I'm down for the night... IT HAD BETTER GET QUIET AND STAY QUIET TONIGHT! AFTER LAST NIGHT? SOMEbody's gonna regret my presence in this room tonight (and tomorrow morning at 5:10am). - 10:22pm and.... BED-CHECK! David's radio blaring but no David RadioBoy. OH SCREW US! - OH! OH! FRIGGIN E3 knew he had this bed all day BUT...waited until 9:00PM to move? FAIL! - THIS day is SO DONE! Gone. Over.

Thursday 30 June

1:47pm and I have to say that I got to sleep OK last night. This morning: Got up, got out, got running, got to clock-in for work at 7:30am! At 8:00am, "Patrick" arrived to work my shift! The agency sent him *AGAIN*! So, I rang the agency and got told to call back when my supervisor is in. So "Patrick" and I waited until 8:30am when I got through AND WAS THEN TOLD.... MY supervisor is no longer on this account. NOW we have somebody called Madeline!? Madeline claims that my supervisor put me "off" for TWO days. But wait... some OTHER person at the agency, Shawn Bailey says only "1 day" was on notes for this client. Bottom line: *I* had to leave! More income lost! - I spoke with Mrs. E. about it and she's NOT pleased. Neither am I!. - OK! I've

got the FRIGGIN day OFF! 4:32pm (“esp. dialect”? What the HELL? I AM SO BLEATING EXHAUSTED!) So I've left... and got a Q35 bus back to The Junction in Brooklyn, hopefully I can get a Nr.5 train to SIBL. - And the day went further: A train to B59th Street to get a Food Stamp application for Mrs. E. (and now I'm doing friggin SOCIAL WORK for these ingrates). From there, I got a Q22 bus to B116th Street to stop by Waldbaums for: 3 apple turnovers, tinned coffee (meals) which was consumed on the Q35 bus to The Junction to the Nr.2 train to Brooklyn Central library to work the “statements” for the “case worker's” files, look-up employment agencies in VT and border patrol jobs. I noted several openings in Burlington for “Quebecois”-speakers on Craigslist! OK! - Back to the Nr.2 train, back to PenLib to print Henika's paperwork and mine, AND more “BlackNotes” logged on-line (3.5pgs. left!). - The Q22 bus to B116st Street to where I am now... stewing in the rage from this morning. Especially since what I’m “blogging” is a lot of the sh** I took from Mrs. TG, the extra “un-paid” time, the abuse. Yes. VT is the goal. I SO want OUT and AWAY! - Am preparing to take the friggin agency to court. Patrick claims they’re “hiring” so many so they get some kind of “award”. An “Obama” thing: create more jobs, hire more people, get an award, then just don't give all the “employees” ANY time with ANY client and hope that they just go away. “TWITTER” TIME for the TRUTH. A new account, a new truth... on-line. - As i sit here today I have to note how odd, how I still don't feel “severed” from Rockaway. I don't “miss” it. I spend much time in it. - Right now my anxieties: No pay tomorrow. Storage with-drawl will hit the account tomorrow. Phone due on Monday. I NEED MONEY... NOW! But I honestly can't think about it, lest I lose my bowels (and I've been constipated... small BMs, not good). Also, cigarettes. It just gets worse. And now I learn ANOTHER NURSE TOOK CHARGE OF MY Mr. E.! New RNs on the case. New forms. New protocol. Bleating HELL! BUT... 4 more weeks... O.U.T.! D.O.N.E.! F.I.N.I.S.H.E.D.! S.C.R.E.W.I.T.A.L.L.! - 4:52PM at Kings Plaza. Time is moving quickly. This friggin bus is not. I LOATHE NY. - 8:00pm E4 TWO PAGES LEFT IN “BLACKNOTES”!!! An hour, 15mins at SIBL. TWO PAGES LEFT TO TRANSCRIBE!!! And, after that... on the M16 bus back to the Dung-heap I wondered: WHAT will I DO when it's finally DONE? The transcription has become its own journal. It's kept me busy, occupied, travelling, some-what sane. It's been an “Old, Dear Friend” who has talked with me of good and bad times. It's my story, my history. It's my existence and my ‘life’. And now, very soon, it will be open to the entire world. My time, from 1954 through, will be open to every and any one. The “good” I've done, accomplished; the “bad” I've done (relatively); the stunts pulled, the names are there. Open, told, forever telling. My “Legacy”. - So sad the libraries will be closed the week-end. So sad. - I've photographed 99 sketches from “Monogram”. More to come. They'll become part of the Journal.

I'll make a copy of it... all... just to be certain it remains long, LONG after me. The "metro" notes will be included. (I MUST PAY THE PHONE SOMEHOW!) And soon? A whole new chapter will be added... VT. I look forward to that. - For now: The evening is magnificent. Another one that makes the Bakfort SO enticing, to just give up on all the "protocol" and the job and BS there and go back... to my little tree. This evening we have low humidity, kind temperatures, clear sky. That new building, the "Alexandria" (that was a hole in the ground in '09 when I was here but today is a fully functional building of some kind) grabs and reflects the evening sun, THROWING it down 29th street! Amazing! - I got in at about 7:40pm or so. A relative zip through metal detector and the lift. That



"faggy" "security" "guard" is still here. SUH-WISH HUNNEEGURL! Too funny though. - E3 is "un-packing". I walked in to about SIX HUGE BAGS of "stuff" on the floor! Either he's been here that long or he's planning to stay that long. What-ever. None of my business. - 4 PopTarts. Call it "dinner". - I must nap briefly... - 9:08pm Notes: 1.Jesus 2.David 3.Guillermo Cruz... speaks NY English and Spanish, been here 1.5y5 years, he's from 3rd floor and got transferred when he went into hospital, fave expression "Sh**!", as he sorts through an un-packs his accumulated TONNES! - Finally here, at 9:12pm I am... Showered. EXHAUSTED! Psyched: The bi-lingual jobs and Border Patrol job potential. But border jobs are Department of Homeland Security... DHS! (Department of Homeless Services) Holy F***! Anyway, I'm so tired I'll probably sleep through the rattling of plastic bags tonight (but I'd rather not have to... THAT cinched it. I'm DOOMED to a night of... CHAOS... no doubt.)

16. July 2011

Friday 1 July 2011

5:03pm and I'm on the Q53 bus, from Broad Channel to NYC. THE PHONE IS PAID FOR THE MONTH OF JULY! - I think I got paid for something "extra" last week, the pay was a bit more than I'd projected. I'm not asking. What-ever it is, it's gone to pay bills. Now? To be able to pay the storage... I'm only hoping that will be covered. If not, it'll increase my over-draft on the account, but... I deal with one disaster at a time here. (I'm not wearing my glasses. Things are a bit blurry.) - ONE PAGE AND ONE PARAGRAPH LEFT IN "BLACKNOTES"! ALL "MONOGRAM" ILLUSTRATIONS ARE PHOTOGRAPHED! DAMN! SO FAR, SO... (I'm NOT going to say... It's been a lot of work getting this all together. I'll leave it all as it is.) I still want 45 minutes on a computer at Mid-Manhattan Library and that closes at 8:00pm tonight. - Well, today, Mr. E didn't get showered and I'm most certainly not feeling guilty about it. I took an "easy" day for me. He ate. I cleaned the house. I kept him dry. OK. Getting him into and out of the shower is living Hell. When he doesn't want to shower, he drops to the floor and lays there and refuses to get up. And I can't lift him. So, this morning, when he said "NO!" to a shower, "NO!" it was. I'm tired of the fighting and tired of almost breaking my back for these people who don't appreciate anything done for them. Besides, I've got plans for the near future, and a damaged back isn't part of those. - I spoke with my supervisor at the agency today. Bless her. She's being taken off the case for my client and so, I spoke with "Melanie", the new supervisor. JEEZ! She comes across as being rather stupid about a lot, especially where my client is concerned (and my work already done with him). I can tell already that she's going to be trouble. But I also opened a "Twitter" this time, to log her BS some-where public. I'm fed up with taking the BS alone, in silence. I work more than most, and all I hear is whining complaints. Now more. ONE MORE MONTH! AND I AM FINISHED! With all of this BS and stupidity! - And today? I work from 7:30am to 3:05pm. Even Mrs. E. knows that I was on the job at 7:30am yesterday AND today. But that little truth never seems to be recognised... nor acknowledged. They whine about what they believe isn't being done. They never seem to recall the "extra" that's given to them. - Now? 5:13pm. STILL at it. Hungry. Constipated. But... moving right along... toward... death (my ultimate goal... PEACE!) - 6:33pm at

the Mid-Manhattan Library at last and 16 minutes until my computer appointment. I'm almost done with the transcription of "BlackNotes". A bitter-sweet time for me. But there's still much work to be done: the proofing, the images, the back-up copy/copies, merging so much more history together... How? When? To where? At where? AND... to close... FOREVER... NYC8539266. So much more... after TWO YEARS of libraries and typing. TWO YEARS! TWO YEARS. How I wanted to be GONE from here, Creation, in 2010. I never thought I'd finish the on-line versions. But here I am, this evening, SO CLOSE TO CLOSING! Next? The journey... NORTH! On the trains here this evening I thought: Closer to Québec! A bounce across the border. Maybe re-unite with Viv. But no matter what... there, to die, find PEACE in the place that brought me PEACE for the very first time in my existence, in the place where I LIVED. To finally go back... finally. VT is the step that's coming. PEACE. - 7 minutes to my computer appointment. May the keyboard (and the Java scripting that seems to jam these out-dated computers here, on a regular basis) be favourable. - 10:07pm back at bed Nr.E4: Jesus(bed 1) screwed-up. No sign-in. Missed bed-check. Now WE have to suffer the next one to come in. I've no sympathy for any of them. But even "BedCheck", the one who came to "perform the duty" this evening said it: 1st of the month, cheques. The drunks run amok. They get their money (compliments of those of us who work and pay taxes to support those who won't work). This evening, even David here got a buzz on... but IN the room. Now he's in bed, headphones on. - Well, tomorrow I'm heading to the Fort. Sun. Sea. Surf. Sand. And maybe... a "shove-off" as the tide leaves. Who knows? But NO RAA. To Hell with the lot of them. Not a word... again. So much for "friends" and "support". - So far I've wiped Penelope, the MGs, and others from my "contacts" and other aspects of my existence. No more. NO more. - I'm showered. It's time to get horizontal. Travel will be miserable the next 3 days. - This room stinks... stale and Nr.3's old stuff. Booze'll be next. Alas. - G'night.

Saturday 2 July

7:40am and on the road, off to the commute and tapping in the notes from the Q32 bus at Madison Avenue and 34th Street... NYC. "Freakin' Jesus" lost his bed last night. In the middle of the night, a guy who's argued with me in the past got the bed. (And this morning? The son-of-a-bitch bummed my lighter. Life. Goes around.) Last night was NOT restful: David2 smoking in room. The stench, in locker, in bed... If he's caught and he's OUT and I have to deal with new-comer, HELL! He was up and down all friggin night, lights on/off. He wanted the door closed! No ventilation! NOT in THIS room! The smoke can go out into the hall and I'll not lay on the bed

breathing the smoke all night! Meanwhile, Guill3 (bed Nr.E3) is constantly hacking. Well. This morning I'm off to Waldbaum's for "beach-lunch" food and then out to the Fort. See who screws THIS Saturday. - 7:53am Q32 bus at 65th Street and 2nd Avenue. The City's so empty at this hour. It truly is lovely. But I'm looking forward to getting OUT and AWAY! - 7:55am ON THE BRIDGE! ESCAPE! MY GOD! ESCAPE! - Taking this ride puts me in a "rural" sort of mind-set: DX Travel (distance). - 7:57 QUEENS! Made it across the river, off the island and AWAY! - My guts are a bit "knotty". Very tiny BM this morning, again. It's not like I don't eat. But there's always something "wrong" with the guts. I could wonder... if I cared at all. And I don't. - Hello Queens. Screw-off there, MGs. - OK. E-nuff. - 9:10am and JUST getting to Liberty Ave.! For this I woke at 5:30am? Transport in this city is a miserable joke. I'm not under any real pressure for time, but to take this long to get ONLY this far? In THIS city? Inexcusable. - Ah... 4:24pm at the Shuttle train in Rock Park. It really was delightful at the Fort today. Not too crowded. Not too hot. The water, not too cold. Tide, not too low. From 11:00am to 3:00pm I had my respite, peace, sun, sand, sea, fresh air, calm. For 4 hours today, I was "human". I'll be sorry later. No "good time" is ever "free". A price will be paid. I've no doubt. - When I leave this place, I'll miss the ocean. The buoyancy, the waves (though there weren't any today). I'll miss that "open" experience... looking out to "the end of all". Looking straight out over the Atlantic, with nothing between me and the bottom of the planet... Antarctica. But... I won't miss the BS here. - So now I'll make it back in time to wash swim trunks and towel, sign-in for the night, and hopefully relax. Tomorrow: get the mirror. Tomorrow evening, HAIRCUT. - Right now, THIRSTY! - Oh, I got cigarettes when I arrived in Rockaway. Walked the Freeway to Waldbaum's. It's nice to be here... nice KNOWING the place. At the Fort, gave 2 FRENCH visitors Fort information. Hmpf. Me so schmart. And me SO SCHWITZIE! - 4:33pm STUCK AT THE HOLLAND STATION! BLEATING MTA! I WON'T miss THIS part of being here, in this "city"! And this 8-car shuttle is packed. Bleating Hell! - FINALLY... back at "bed-side"... By 7:19pm Swim-trunks washed, beach towel washed, coffee made for tomorrow, paper-work for tomorrow done. - It looks like the banque paid storage. Good for me. Bad for me. It eats 300\$ from my "Escape Funds". SCREWME SCREWME SCREWME AGEN AN AGEN AN AGEN! Oh well. Tomorrow's paper-work is good. Accept the little things... leave the big things to themselves. "This too, shall pass." as my dear Mum used to say. - Getting back here though... A train to F train to 14th Street to the banque ATM to get the receipt for tomorrow's "case worker" meet. M14 bus to 1st Avenue to M15 bus with an immediate transfer. And at the "hotel here-you-are", NO QUEUE to get in! HOW-ever... dumb-ass "security" had to check my meal ticket twice. Duh. She forgot she'd checked the

first time. “Brill”. No prob. Up in the lift with 3 Black queue-jumpers (they, those, them actually do believe that they don't have to follow any civil protocol). At the dorm... David in... bed... gee, how novel. But the door to the room was open. OK. - And now I lie on the bed, feet up on the locker as David mucks with the radio. And I’m “Sunned”. - Waiting to see what “colours” appear on the white towel this washing. I swear the water’s bad in this place. - Still can’t get over the changes in here since “Ms. Renice” became “Director”. Like Dear Joyce said: A woman in authority is bad enough, but a BLACK woman in authority is pure HELL! (Wise words from an even wiser Black woman. I still, often wonder, where she is these days, and I always hope that she's well, content with the world. That would be wonderful, and so well-deserved.) Indeed.

Sunday 3 July

5:03pm at E4 and a re-cap of the day's events: I think I left the Hotel Dung-heap at some time round 9:30 this morning. Saw Ms. Henika... I was 3rd on the list. Whilst waiting to sign however, I HAD to take a DUMP! H.A.D.! And thankfully, I had “terlet paypuh” (*toilet paper*) in ye olde ruck-sack. Wow! The 5th floor stalls. “Rick’s stall”, the one he took particular care of wen he cleaned. It almost felt like... no, I won’t say that. But it was “familiar”. And productive. (RadioBoy returns... It's 5:07pm) - My “paper-work” pleased my “case worker”. “We’re good now.” she told me. She mentioned some “Section 8” housing program and I looked on as she checked the Internet. Nothing much mentioned on-line and not much information given to her. She suggested I keep in touch with her. New “Meal Ticket” dated for the 13th! A Wednesday! But not THIS Wednesday! Hooray! - I came back to the room, it was RAINING out-side! (We’d already had a small thunder-storm.) (As I recap here... I think I must doze just a bit. It's been a day! But first...) then... haircut, repair umbrella, TD tote, washed socks/t-shirt. Oh, and my sneakers leak! Holes in m'shoes now too! Snooze time (whilst I may). - 6:59pm I woke at 6:49pm! I *NAPPED*! Not enough, but... these days, any “nap” is better than none. And it was deserved after this day. - This morning was: Ms. Henika meeting. But... Oh! Steve(former E3) came through the “lounge”, en route to morning (8:00am) beer. He seems to be doing OK. He’s D33 now... across from Keith’s bed... in Rick’s room. (My memories in this dump. I don't suppose they’ll ever go away.) - Then, I was OUT into the rain. The “new” umbrella is missing 2 connectors on the spokes. OK. No prob. I got it for free, what else could I expect? M15 bus to the L train to Broadway Junction for the A train to Lefferts Blvd. and Storage. I took my time looking through almost *everything* for the damned mirror. Took the old grey sweats (I have the new set here and would rather have the

old), sewing kit, little “nose hair” scissor, an “Imari”-scented body powder (forgot the anti-fungal... crap!). Will put the “new” sweats back tomorrow. Can’t keep much here this “visit” to the “hotel”. I think I must have been done BEFORE NOON! And *HUNGRY*! But only 30\$ left on Food Stamps. I went to the RiteAid: 1 pack of cigarettes, 2 “Power Bars” (on sale), bottle of Coke. Then to the Q35 bus to Queens Blvd. for the Q60 bus to 2nd Avenue in Manhattan for the M15 bus to... well... where else? Here. I was back by about 2:30pm. (Left foot soaked. Sneakers have a hole and the toe stitching/seal is broken. FriggFriggFrigg! I will NOT wear the 65\$ Reboks! They were my “Nursing” shoes, they’re still in very good order and 65\$ for every-day, knock-about shoes is INSANE!) - As I un-packed, David2 left. I HAD THE ROOM TO MY-SELF! QUICKLY... I put my yellow swim-trunks on, plastic bag on floor... HAIRCUT! TWO MIRRORS ON LOCKER DOORS! (One for the front view and the other for the back view.) Good job too! Quick shower after. (The hair cuttings flushed down the loo.). Back to fix umbrella and TD tote. - A “chat” with Guillermo3. “GeorgeRussellJr”(E1) bothers him. Well, last night he came in reeking of “turd”. I think it was his own. Totally wrecked on booze/drugs/both. Showered. Pissed and moaned, up and down all night. Said something about this being his 6th bed. If that’s true, there’s something WE here need to keep a watchful eye on. That’s a lot of transfers... and I wonder what the reasons are. I eventually fell asleep... in exhaustion... I kept watching him though, through squinted eyes. I don’t trust him AT ALL! Anyway... G.3’s been here a year and a half. We talked about “changes” over the course of time and still, the fact that there’s really no “help” in spite of all the “promises” for it. (RadioBoy/David/E2 turns off radio and is now schmatzing, that “lick-lick” noise... like he’s got a mouthful of taffy or some rot! Bleatingfrigging PIG!) OK... back to the chat: Everybody with whom G.(E3) came in with is gone. He’s the only one left out of that group. Hey... the only one I know of that’s still here from *my* past is... unfortunately... Brindou, the friggin maniac, so I pretty-much know how G. feels. (G. has a prosthetic arm, WITH a rather realistic “hand”, by the way. No cheap metal hook.) His story is more like what I’ve come to learn and now KNOW: Those who stay in here don’t DO anything to improve their lot. So here they remain. Well, they get no sympathy from me. And so, I continued to stitch my little repairs... I HAD to wash today’s socks so I threw in the t-shirt as well. Now to hope all is dry tomorrow. - All said, busy and productive day... Early too. - On the “Twitter” social media today: Interesting communications with PJ in VT. He’s apparently anti-Government because of low salaries for the working class. Well. That’s what’s terribly wrong with/in these U.S. But... I thought it “might” be “better” in VT. Apparently not. Alas. Still, VT’s closer to QC and THAT is my GOAL. - I realised today: I “talk” on Twitter lately. Certainly not here. I conduct complete conversations, dialogues, on-line and, as I do, it’s as

if I'm actually chatting away with these folks. And this morning I could have gone to the Fort to "talk" with Penelope, or to Glendale-MGs or maybe even Brooklyn and Schmulik... Aside from a "Shabbat shalom" message on Friday from Schmulik, I hear nothing from anybody. So... they're DEAD. They've no use, no concern for me... GONE. ZAP! Finished. I've no cause to "communicate" with any of them, really. And thinking about "them" reminds me of more that's lost and gone... I can get another sleeping bag and pillows. Afghan? It's incomplete. Let them rot in it. *May it curse their homes.* - As I think of it, a note: I'm having trouble peeing of late. Bladder pressure but constricted flow. Hmmm... CA/Prostate? What the Hell? Why not? - An hour until sign-in. I'm hungry. But the prices in Gristede's market here aren't worth the shopping. Hopefully I'll get to eat something at work tomorrow. Then, 6 days til more Food Stamps and I can finally eat something again! (I'm hungry now though. Made liquid non-dairy creamer, the powder in a bottle with water and SHAKE. It's been a substitute for milk and it helps kill an appetite, for sure. But I finished it already. Oh well...) - No libraries again tomorrow AND trains/buses on holiday schedule/Saturday. Getting to work means: *EARLY* DEPARTURE! (Probably no sleep tonight too... SCUMBAGS!) - Back to "Twitter" for a bit. - 8:29pm David2 walks out of the room, comes back, gets BACK into bed, lights a frigging cigarette! DAMN HIM! ANOTHER MORON! I don't need MY clothing smelling like cigarettes AGAIN! - For the past several nights, the soda machine, outside the door, hasn't worked. The total retards in this place get to BANGING ON IT! JOSTLING IT! CUSSING! YELLING! BANGING THE SELECTION BUTTONS! One would THINK these feeble idiots would learn. But... NO. Today, the machine is dark. Somebody's pulled the plug. HOWEVER, the feebles are STILL trying it! Holiest HELL! They're just SO DAMNED OBTUSE! Hopeless. Pathetic! - Sign-in on the 5th floor tonight. Jolly. Instead of toddling down the hall... it's a trip down and back up the stairs. - And tonight, again, I wonder about sleep. But my cell-phone/alarm is on "hi-vibrate". I just wish it was LOUDER! - I've just had 2 days "off" from work. Been getting up early anyway. The usual hour. Yesterday, to get to the beach. Today, to get to the "case worker". NO REST! *NEVER* ANY REST. - But at storage today I found another vial of pills. It's with the AtropaVodka. It was "comforting" to hold them both and remember: I have my options... OUT. (So why don't I just go? Now, it's because I'm curious about leaving to VT. Champlain. Québec. Still, maybe THIS stint in the shelter will toss me... OUT... to sea. It would be nice... but "We shall see." We shall see.)

Monday 4 July

6:32am OH LAST NIGHT! At 10:55 through about mid-night: **CRACK!** That trash-rot David is smoking CRACK, IN THE ROOM! - 10:16am and it's back at work, back in Howard Beach. I MADE IT! 7:50am clock-in. - Last night? George never showed. There was no bed-check. I drifted off to sleep(?) at about 9:30pm, expecting bed-check. Then, since George never appeared, expecting a "new-comer". And I was hungry. No bed-check. No "new-comer". No damned soda machine. Silence. It was wonderful and most welcome. BUT THEN... 10:55pm, David gets up, animated worse than a cartoon character. Body in motion, talking to himself. Sitting on the edge of the bed. Under the blanket. Up. Walking out and in. THEN... the STENCH! He's smoking in the dorm... cigarettes AND **CRACK!** Now I'm inhaling **CRACK** in my sleep! He's up, lights on, in his locker. He's down, lights off, under the blanket. Up. Down. Talking to himself. Animated. Guillermo wakes. Gets to fumbling about in his locker. Bang. Typical. They simply CAN'T let peace be. G3 sells cigarettes, on the 3rd floor. DEElightFUL! - By about half-past mid-night, I managed to drift into half-sleep, still anticipating a "new" El. - This morning? I slept until 6:40am! 6 alarms! Up. Toilet, brush teeth. Shower. Dress. GO! - Bus to L train to the Lefferts A train. - Got to storage. There was a ladder waiting so I could get to my locker there. Sweats into the locker. Creamer out and into my tote. Done. Q11 bus to get to work. - Patrick, that other HHA was on the bus. I panicked thinking the agency double-booked a-friggin-gain. They hadn't. He was off to a different client in the area. - When I got to "my" client's house, Mrs. E. cooked eggs. I had 1 on toast. Then I got Mr. up and out of bed, showered him. Done. - I'm *tired* now. No rest. NO rest. 27 more days. 27. - 4:45pm and to the Q32 bus and I'm in no rush. Nice day. During the day I had the pleasure of Biscotti and a little ice cream. 2 coffees. And Mrs. E. boiled an egg: 2 toasts, butter, for me and for Mr. HE was in a good mood. It was a good day. But now? For a miserable night with the Crack-ass. - At work today, we got to watch the "History Chanel": How the states got their shape... I got to see... VT and the Québec border! My count-down! I HAVE TO LEAVE NY! - 6:34pm and back at E4:: Left work at approximately 3:45pm to grab a Q53 bus to the Q32 bus to the M16 bus and arrived at the shelter at 5:58pm. The bus trip takes a bit longer but it's above ground all the way and I'm in need of day-light... no tunnels. - I finally got my light blue jeans washed. Coffee made. CrackBoy's got the radio BLASTING and he's bleating-frigging sound asleep. May he ROT! - Bed Nr.El is stripped-down. Linens bagged in the hall. We've got another restless night coming. - 27 days more. Give me strength. - But my locker's smelling better (because of the little container of "Imari" powder in there) today. - No food again tonight. I just can't get myself to pay those Gristede's prices! Oh well. - "Twitter", maybe a brief "nap"

(yeahrightfrig), sign-in, shower. TO HELL for these trash-heads. - This evening, when I came in, I took the lift and when the doors closed I saw: "Fuck you fake Homeless" written on the door. OH! I SO AGREE! There are too many of those in here, and most come in here to steal from the rest of us. They pretend to be Homeless, come in under the guise of seeking shelter and, once in, past the "security" at the door, they wander about, like scavengers, looking for empty rooms, open lockers, anything that's been left out on a locker or on a bed. No matter what it is... they take it and waltz out the door... until next time. People, in this world, in general, are vermin. - Whoa! 28.5°C in this pit at the moment! Quite warm indeed! - 9:06pm and... Just did a whole entry for the blog (I'm trying to "tap" my notes into a "Note" on the iPod and then copy/paste it directly to the blog, since I can actually get Internet on the iPod in here) but the "name" field had gone



blank. FUKDISH**! Gone. An entire entry. Technology... it too is a failure. - I told the "new" El (Fernid Moore?) where the light switch is, where to sign for the bed. I will NOT be the Happy Welcome Wagon! He's brought only a back-pack. He's better on the eye than others. He seems to take better care of himself... or, he's "new" to the "Homelessness". Maybe aged in his 40's. Possibly Hispanic but I'm not certain. - CrackO's sitting on the bed, having filled his friggin face. Radio going. In and out of the room already. Pacing. - I changed the plastic bottle in the door that keeps it open with a crushed can. (The bottle has been used as a door-stop to keep it open for ventilation.) I'm wondering how long it'll be before CrackO gets rid of it so he can close the door and get to his smoking CRACK. - E3's just back in. *BangClunk*. Into his locker. -

Wasted life forms, these things. - I'm hungry. As always, nothing is offered. - 9:16pm El's in, making the bed... TYING THE SHEET. OK. He "knows" how things work round here so we can rather safely presume that he's not "new to Homelessness" nor to this shelter. Now I keep an open eye on this one. He's not so "new". He brought his padlock. The little "tell-tale" signs. And

here I am, the “Enigma” to mostly everybody in this place: White, Jew, kippa, quiet, reserved and, according to many, well-versed and familiar with the “system”. They just can't figure it out. I'm not the “type”. Oh well. The less they “know”, the better for me. - An interesting night to come... indeed. - Now to get rid of E2... or not. I'm not sure. (It's “bouncing” again, the crack-head. Not speaking to me... fine. Let it pass the bleating frigg out! Seriously.) - El pulls out a pack of “Cheyenne Menthol” cigarettes. “And the plot thickens.” (KENDALL! WHERE ARE YOU?) He's Indian I think... NOT HISPANIC! AND SHOWERING! Now THAT'S a relief! - 9:26pm THE fireworks have begun. - “WordPress” (where I “blog” this) is screwing up... almost lost this post too... that “name” crap! - I'm hungry, tired, fed-up.

Tuesday 5 July

11:43am and of course, I'm at work. I've managed to get 55 “Monogram” sketches to “PhotoBucket” on-line for “safe-keeping”. I have to send each one, individually, via e-mail. But, at least there's a record of them... should the note-book ever, for some reason, disappear... like EVERY OTHER part of my ENTIRE existence since conception (for which I thank... with prayers of eternal Hell... my “dear and loving family”... They're even “more useless” than the worst trash in this “system” here). Last night's washed jeans were dry this morning when I woke. - Today, “Melanie”, the new “supervisor” on this case, rang this morning to speak with me. “Routine check” and to confirm that I work this week-end. Seriously? Does she truly believe me to be THAT incredibly stupid? “Routine check”? And to “confirm that I work this week-end”? It's not bad enough we have to be subjected to the degradation from the clients... we have to tolerate such insult from... our own supervisors? This is total sh**. - Anyway, Mr. E. is in a rare, good mood. And I'd like a nap. Exhaustion... as usual. One of these days, soon would be nice... total burn-out, burn-down and burn-up. Poof! Me, gone. - Back at “my corner of the shelter”, a quick wrap-up: The rest of the day was “Productive”... I made it to Peninsula Library for funky computer... it gave me a bit of trouble but it printed and I'm now into proofing the blog version of this Journal from print-outs! Caught-up and proofing. I didn't think I'd ever see this point. - Shuttle, A, L, 6... SIB Library. Learned how to up-load files from the old cell-phone! It took me a while to figure (I hope I can remember), and it has to be done 1 file (picture) at a time but... 50 images went to “WordPress”! So I now have a “back-up” of the sketches that are in the margins and in the text part! I feel more secure now, knowing that there will be a record of them because they're integral to the Journal... and they do rather mean the world to me. - 8:00pm

(approximately). E1 comes in. We begin to talk. I try to convince him he's in a good room (I don't want turn-over and he's more respectful than the other 2 slugs). He's from Tunisia! In his 40's. (He thought that I am too... funny haha.) He's been in this place for 4 days and this is his first time in a shelter. I ran the "major list" of what he should expect. We talked... god, psych, philosophy, history. He's interesting. - 10:30pm Bed-check. All accounted. I opted for no shower... ERROR! - At 12:48am (middle of the damned night) the YELLING IN THE HALL! Room 6W-110. *STAFF*! The *STAFF* congregated and were *YELLING*! At 12:42am *BANG*! Another moron used the soda machine in the hall, directly across from the door to this room. The machine took the money and gave him no soda. The bleating machine's broken! It's OBVIOUSLY BROKEN! BANGBANGBANG! The idiot in-breed slams it and punches it. Somebody suggests tipping the machine. I silently agree, provided they "tip" it completely over to its side. By about 1:00am I decide to shower... for my own comfort. Following? E2 up and down, eating. E3 up and down, eating. Useless. That's all they are. I try to doze off despite the continued... Yelling. Rustling plastic. I don't know when/how... I drifted... - This *was* a "Psychiatric Hospital"... it isn't much different from it's originally intended purpose... these days).

Wednesday, 6. July

7:27am back on the job. I clocked-in at 7:31am ...BLEATING *EXHAUSTED*! And I get here to find Mr. E. in bed, no pyjama bottoms on, and the bed *ABSOLUTELY SOAKED IN URINE*! SCREW IT AND ME! - Meanwhile, I've brought the damp jeans I'd washed with me to dry. They're hanging in the loo. I'm at a point now where I no longer give a sh** about what people think, do or say. Actually, it's more like I "*can't*" give a sh** any more. - 7:53am And well so... This morning I woke to the alarm at 5:28am and, after a few gulps of morning coffee, I toddled across the hall to the loo for a VERY SMALL "movement" (of the bowels)! No smoke. I didn't want one. Brushed my teeth and then had to WAIT for a shower! Got it. Dressed. Out. At about 6:30am I got the bus to begin the morning "commute". Good connections this morning. (Somebody must have made a most terrible mistake there! "Good connection"? OH NO!) - But I'm incredibly tired... All told, I probably got a total of 3 hours of restless sleep all night. I NEED MORE! - And now... and now... at 8:04pm and back at bed Nr.E4: The day went well... until the end. VNS came and put my worries about Melanie to rest. Most of the "Home Care" staff in our region have problems with her. And the COC/Charge Nurse? Supportive, kind, and she's from a "Hospice" background. I'm relieved because we have a commonality, and Hospice is a rather specific and special background

to have in common. Ah... but then at 2:40pm Mr. decides he's hungry! OK! Lunch! I have to begin food preparation at THIS hour when, in mere moments, I'm expected to clock-out and leave! And I wanted to get to Peninsula Library and SIBL this evening. SCREWDAT, OK! SCREW ME! I got him lunch and made the GRAVE ERROR of giving him jello... he proceeded to drop it on his clean clothes. WELL HELL AND OTHER DAMNATIONS that can possibly come to mind! So he had to be cleaned and changed! I didn't get the bleating HELL out of there until 3:40pm!!! There was no sense in rushing about any more. THIS is the kind of thing that nobody else knows about (and even the agency doesn't give a turd about. The bitch if we work past end of shift, tell us that we won't get paid because it isn't "authorised". Ah yes, but, if a complaint goes in because the "client" was soiled... KABOOM! And WE'RE run over hot coals and broken glass. Yeah... it's MORE than time to get the HELL out of and away from here! - Yesterday I got stuck in Holland/Rockaway because the South Channel bridge opened. Today... the A train was in no hurry, barely rolling along. So, I took it to the F train to 34th Street and 6th Avenue. NEVER AGAIN! CROWDS! ALL OVER the stations and in the train! So, I walked to SIB Library where the bleating-friggin computer wouldn't let me transfer files from the phone! No computer help person any-where in the place. I went to get help at the Information desk and the Asian bitch there looked at me, away from me and, all so simply took to somebody else and blew me off! She did it to me before when I asked for information... gave a partial answer and went to the next person! Well! I WASTED about 40 minutes doing NOTHING! Finally, I sent a message via the library site to NYPL (New York Public Library) then left one in the "suggestion" box. As I dropped my "suggestion" into the box, the bitch was already defending herself at the "Altman" desk! I quietly walked over and said "Madame, you're discourteous, disrespectful and rude. This is not the first time you've done this to me..." I'd also said I'd inform City Hall... they can consider my message at next "budget cut". And with that, I simply, quietly and respectfully walked out! - By 6:00pm and nothing accomplished... Schmulik had sent me a message on the phone: "When are you moving...?" He'd also left the studio at 3:00pm today so I had no idea where he'd be at this hour and wasn't in the mood for such "When are you..." questions. When? When I good and damned-well ready. Thanks for asking and have a nice day. - I headed back to the Dung-heap. - Ah but... I took the M16 bus down to 23rd Street to the MortonWms. market for PopTarts, knishes, Gatorade... my usual very-cheap turkey and pastrami. (All I'd eaten all day was cake.) I shoved an entire package of turkey in my mouth as I walked across 23rd Street to the CVS pharmacy/store. THERE is ANOTHER STORY: a Black bitch (no "judgement" here... simple fact... I call them as they are) comes to check-out and snaps at me: "Nobody here to serve you

here.” I told her that I need cigarettes. “Wuh kine?” she mumbles at me. So I told her and she gave me my cigarettes, directed me to SelfCheck “I’ll be right there.” she again snaps at me. “The line’s over there.” Points. Then GOES AWAY! What the HELL? I scan my pack of smokes and... wait... some *nasty* guy comes over as if I’d taken him away from his mommie’s apron and grunts at me: “Beer? Cigarette?” He scans a card and says “Customer obviously over 21”. Go to HELL, NY! Seriously. I worked all friggin day... at a job I can’t take much more of, for a bunch of clinical retards, with-out supervision or assistance and then I get yelled at or lied to and I come to THIS? Nahhh... No. Not me! The ONLY rather some-what “good” that came from all of this? I got my smokes... and briskly left the store before my temper ran away from me. - I walked toward 1st Avenue, taking a bit more time to “eat” and I shoved the whole package of pastrami in my mouth. Done. THAT was my “dinner”. - 8:43pm and... THE FLOOR IN THIS ROOM WAS MOPPED! CLEAN! CrackO was (and still is) in the bed... TALKING TO HIMSELF... CRACK-HEAD. ASKED ME FOR A *MATCH*. I said I didn’t have any more because he’d burned-up what I gave him. (He did... on the night when he was SO stoned and animated... he’d taken the book of matches at one point and set the whole thing a-alight... IN THE ROOM!) He had some filthy little reply and I let it out! Topics of MY dissertation to him included: He’s got NO respect, his attitude is to screw ME because I’m nice and so, from now on, the rest of you in this room can go screw yourselves and each-other because from this point on, I’m minding my business! OK. He’s not happy... OK. I don’t give a rat’s hole. - So it’s 8:41 and 30°C in here! I’m SOAKED with sweat. And the sh**head-braindead-TrashSpics are banging on the soda machine across the hall... AGAIN!!! - Time to sign-in, shower and then go KILL SOMETHING in here. Amen.

Thursday 7 July

6:07am on the M15 bus. WE GOT ANOTHER NEW EI last night. But I managed sleep in spite of it. - This morning, yet another small BM and even now, my guts are knotted. - No happy mood. Fed-up with much in general. - 6:13am at 14th Street and 2nd Avenue. I’m taking the bus to 8th Avenue to the A train to see if this route to work is any better or shorter than my “usual”. - Well, I managed to eat last evening. CrackO behaved. And the new EI was fairly quiet. Stinks though. Not terribly. Just generally. But I do too... urine. I’ve reached the age where I “drip” I think. Only “time”. Only “time”. I’m starting to fall to pieces here... insides first. Only time now. - 6:17am M14 bus and across town we go! - This morning I think of getting on the road/rails, heading North... mere time... through VT and to the border... QUÉBEC! Soon. Soon. Soon. - I am displeased with

humanity this morning. Fair-weather people. I'm SOLO. TO HELL WITH THEM ALL! - 6:22am at 14th Street and 5th Avenue. I've got Cajun music playing on my iPod... LOUDLY! Morning. TO HELL WITH THIS BUS-LOAD OF QUESTIONABLES! TO HELL WITH THEM ALL. - 9:29am I left 30 minutes earlier than other times, only to arrive on the job at 7:31am (MTA! Jungle-bunnies at their prime. THERE! Said it! They can't get one damned thing correct on the entire system... and after all these years they've had to improve it!) - When I arrived at the house, I found Mr. E. sitting at table. Dry bed. Damp drawers. Not good. He ate well though. And right now? I'm looking at enjoying a bit of TV, newspaper and this morning. I'm going to check my e-mail, perhaps see what Schmulik has to say, if there's anything from PJ.VT, the library. - 7:22pm Mid-Manhattan Library Catching-up again here, (on ANOTHER POORLY FUNCTIONING KEYBOARD WHERE THE KEYS STICK!) - I left Mr. E's at about 3:45pm and went to the Howard Beach Library for 2, 30-minute sessions on their computer AND NOW... *ALL THE SKETCH IMAGES ARE LOADED TO THE WORDPRESS! I DID IT! I DID IT!* - And whilst in the library, the RAINS came! It absolutely POURED! I missed getting *SOAKED!* HOWEVER... true to NYC and the MTA, the A train was delayed at North Conduit. Then, at Grant Avenue, the train was held, so I went BACK to Liberty for a Q21 bus where I accidentally sat in a seat where some beach idiot sat before me and ... wet arse! And on a Q21 bus! Took it to Queens Mall for the M train to the F train and here I am. I wanted to go to the SIB Library for the hour but... All's fine... *THE IMAGES ARE ON WORDPRESS!* - Now to clean this mess up a bit. I've got the "blog" Journal printed, so I can read through it where-ever and note corrections and such. I know there are a lot of errors in the typing because, well... it was all done in 45-minute sessions spread out over 3 boroughs and even more libraries on more computers. This should prove interesting to see just how "accurately" I managed to type... quickly. - OK. I'm back in the room and not sure what time it is but... I walk in to MILK CARTONS! ABOUT 10 OF THEM! E3. Across the top of the locker! The locker that separates his bed from mine. They're open. Some are empty, others, I'm not sure of. Freaking SLOB! "Typical" of his "gente"... "pueblo". Stench and garbage. And the next thing we'll have is mice, and water-bugs, roaches and who-knows-what in here! Seriously! - Well, I'm just going to chalk it all up to MORE support for bugging out of here ASAP. Meanwhile, I need a shower, to get changed and lie down while I can. I'm so pissed off right now I could... I won't... but I certainly could.

Friday 8 July

6:08 on the M15 bus. - I'm just going to get this out of my system quickly this morning because I'm still about to bust wide... At about 2:40am, this morning, CrackO David Hall (E2) comes in from who-the-frigg-knows-where AND PUTS THE RADIO ON! And not low-volume... just ON! So I got up, having *napped* well, turned on the lights, took out my 20 pages of "proofing" for this journal (2 pages remaining now), used my little light as well, and *almost finished* the proof-reading. By then, it was well past 3:00am already, so, with the radio still blaring away, I put my head on the pillow and tried to get in a bit more rest. Of course, I didn't fall back into a complete sleep because I was too afraid I'd sleep through the alarm and... be late for work! - Well then, when I "woke" with the alarm at about 5:30am, I got up, followed my normal morning routine, but, most certainly, I was NOT quiet. And I surely didn't care... and don't. Damn it. - And... Wonderful... I had no BM before leaving this morning... but now, how wonderful... en route, 6:19am, my guts twist and turn. - Well, it's payday today. Food Stamps get posted tomorrow. Me, I just want to bring the banque account back to the "black"... NOW. - In general: I am in FULL BATTLE MODE! - 8:06pm and back at E4 - I suppose it's safe to assume E1 *IS* another CrackO. It's a non-bather, schmacker, lip-sucker and laughs to itself... AND STINKS! Happy David? A little *friend* for you. Now you have a filthy little side-kick to share your mental illness with. Personally, I wonder why this "system" puts this kind of trash-rot in with people who have a goal of getting themselves back together. It's all counter-productive and, quite frankly, screwed-up beyond belief. - Well, I got paid today... and according to MY calculations (and re-calculations) the agency *SHORTED ME ON MY PAY! They too, are just so pathetically predictable. When I get to work early, they don't put it in. When I get to work late, they dock by the half hour after 7 minutes. If I leave early, they dock on the same basis. BUT... when I WORK late, they ignore it. They're a bunch of thieves. But this is good to know. Now, I cut back on MY services even more. It's one thing to be unappreciated and lied about. It's another when I DO the work and DON'T get paid for it. Tough sh** there, Mrs. E. You no like? You've been threatening to go to another agency anyway. Your day is coming when you'll probably have no choice. But, as the Charge Nurse before this one told me: You're running out of agencies who'll take your case. Good luck... not. - So, short on the expected pay, today I kept 77\$ to last me for the week and put just over 254\$ into the banque and I'm STILL SHORT 85-plus. This pay should have covered the entire over-draft and left a bit. *This* is going to be difficult. But it all gives me even *more* incentive to *GET OUT!* (As I'm "tapping" this note here, E1 is blatantly intentionally rattling paper bags and clunking empty cans... Great! We've got empty milk containers on E3, more trash at E1 and this morning I had a *mouse* in my

locker. This place has REALLY gone to sh**) - So... I'm pissed about the pay. But got 75 per-cent of the over-draft paid. - Next item? Mr. E. got *really* showered today! I got him in there and gave him all but a "full-body car wash"! Scrubbed from head to toe! But after it, he refused to eat the breakfast I cooked... So *I* ate it. HE sure as Hell won't go hungry. Me? I'm busting my everything there and getting screwed from Hell to breakfast so... the food was good, I cooked it well... I was NOT having it thrown into the garbage! And when my day was done today, I clocked-out just past 3:00pm. Mrs. had gone shopping this morning over at the WalMart's, and to get her groceries back home, she took one of their trollies, so, since the market is on my way to the bus, I brought it back (not as a kindness to HER but to the store and other customers.. to be sure). Then I grabbed a Q41 bus down to the Howard Beach post office to get a money order to deposit to the banque, Then... had to WAIT until *well* past 4:00pm for the Q21 bus to RockPark! Screw and to Hell with the MTA. And there were storms pending this evening. Even as I stood waiting for a bus, I was under dark skies. - FINALLY, at the RockPark post office, ONE bleating pay advice! I should have two! Well... since it was raining (and MY SNEAKERS LEAK!), I scurried over to the SeaSide Library for 30 minutes on one of their computers where I got my Dept. of Labour complaint forms printed AND 37 more pages of this journal printed to proof! Happy me. Barbara O.(from the house where *I used to* "live") was there. I dodged her. She saw me and yet she said nothing. I'm just as glad. She'd started avoiding me for some reason shortly before I moved out of the house. Oh well. Too bad for her, not me. - Done! And I was out of the library, on the streets and shuffling off to the Shuttle to the A train to the L train to the Nr.6 train to the banque where... Deposit made! Day's runs done! - A delightful and well-deserved casual stroll back to "here" where, upon arrival, all were present, the room was silent and the STENCH was enough to knock the wind out of one's lungs! I washed 2pairs of socks then ate 4 PopTarts and now I'm just waiting to sign=in for the night... It's going to be *VERY* difficult with Little CrackO in here. Stench. Stupidity. Noise. (And my proofing is the record of my 1st night in here... back "then". Imagine!) - Ah.... there's a BREEZE! It's SO SO SO HOT AND HUMID IN HERE! - Well, off to sign'n'shower. Yup... a difficult time ahead. CrackO Jr. can't quite grasp the bottle-keeping-the-door-open thing I've got going on there. There's more sh** between those ears than imaginable. - 8:27pm and from the corner we hear: *SCHMATZ!* Not schmack. *SCHMATZ!* That stupid, miserable, mental case, junkie sounds like an old dog lapping grease... and he's not eating anything... he's just doing it! Must be a side-effect of the crack he's been smoking.

Saturday 9 July

11:47am and of course... I'm... at work where I've just come out of a NOD! And I *do* mean a full *NOD* into a momentary deep sleep! But... I actually slept last night! Almost incredible! David was well-behaved. E3 actually *offered* to put out the light! (I wonder though: I've noticed that he keeps a bit of a "bundle" in his shorts. Valuables? He's strange. And he still has his trash on top of his locker. And somebody in the room isn't bathing. - But... most important for the night... sleep was had. - This morning I woke at 4:50am. E3 was already up. I took my time getting my morning started, showered and such and out. M15 bus to the M14 bus to the A train to Lefferts for a Q11 bus and clock-in at 7:51am. - *On the A train this morning, at RockBlvd., a young, rather attractive Black fellow greeted me with "Shabbat Shalom"! The Hebrew I'm hearing from the most unexpected source! - OK and well meanwhile now... My sneakers are drying by the fan in the parlour. I wore plastic bags over my socks (left foot) because the sneaker was SOAKED! - Mrs. E. was in a little snit this morning when I arrived. I didn't bother to ask why because, well, I don't give a ... AND, I WAS SO DAMNED TIRED but Mr. was awake and ready to go *immediately*! And with Mrs. here, it makes it all the more difficult for me to get ANYTHING accomplished! BUT... Even though I dusted and lightly mopped I've reached the point: *NO*body will do for these people what I do. BUT at my salary? I'm *NOT* going crazy or out of my way for any of them. - 3 more weeks. I don't know *HOW* but I *AM* GETTING AWAY... TO THE NORTH! - 5:09pm on a Q53 bus to... Hell. - I'm just coming from storage where I emptied the binder of CT and NY documents, records and the likes that I don't NEED. But I'm keeping the VT information. It's "part of the start". - The day went OK. Not bad. I kept busy, filed my nails, charged my phone and iPod, dried my sneakers. Maybe tomorrow I'll trim-down to "Summer beard". I don't know. It might draw my face too much, since I seem to be steadily losing weight here. But... We'll see (said Mama). - DEAR GAHD IT'S BLOODY HOT AND HUMID! - 9:05pm E4: I've been in since 5:19pm. I've proofed a few more pages. E1(CrackO1) came in. *It* doesn't bathe. It "pit-paints" with deodorant! Reeks of deodorant and the funk the deodorant should eliminate but can't any longer. Me? I have to laugh, silently. CrackO2(David) is directly across from CrackO1, so the stench wafts over toward David! Serves him too right. Justice. Meanwhile, I cleaned the bottom "lip" of my locker, and then coated it with that "One Drop" odour killer. It "sort of" works. But the stench of E1 is *nuclear*. Alas. - I've washed my t-shirt. It's almost dry already. Had I known things would dry so quickly tonight, I'd've done my work scrubs too. But there's tomorrow. Maybe I'll get to storage for a little "Gain" softener... fresh scent... on clothes, in room. - Right now, I'm just waiting for bed-check. E2 has the radio on. Baseball. WFAN. EVERY BLEATING NIGHT! How

much baseball actually happens? - Back from “paying the rent” (as we called it on the 5th floor). When I signed, E3 was in the room and he asked if I work tomorrow and when’s my day off. I think my 5:00am alarm bugs him/them. If so... YAY ME! HAPPY DANCE. - Apparently Schmulik was “*engaged*” this evening... Probably one of his filthy little questionable sojourns to one of Manhattan's less reputable establishments... as he's wont to do from time to time. When I “texted” him earlier today, the response was rather “telling” and although I'm sure he found it amusing, I did not. Oh well... Too bad for him. I enjoyed my bus ride back. In fact, 2 women got on the Q32 bus in Manhattan, One (the older... approx. early 60's) spoke French with a PERFECT American accent. DISgusTING! The younger asked “Are tomorrow the pharmacy open?” The language was good to hear. VT! Here come I! - HOTHOTHOT again tonight! Damn! It'll never stop! - E3's at the bangbang on the locker again. But the milk cartons are gone! - Oh, Earlier, CrackO1 comes in, removes t-shirt, gives it some shakes, laughs to itself. Hasn't really spoken to anyone. Come to think of it... neither have I. Hmpf. Too bad. - Enough. A little “Twitter” and tonight's attempt at SOME sleep. I'm showered and ready to toss the day.

Sunday 10 July

9:17am and where in Hell else would I be but... WORK! And OH SH**! The *stench* in the room last night was *ACRID*! The “One Drop” “odour killer” worked pretty well at getting rid of (or covering over) SOME of it. But I keep getting that tickle in the throat, waking to coughing fits. As I proof the earlier journal I see it's to be expected. With the mice in the building and room, it's to be expected all the more. But, CrackO2 put the radio volume down and off at just before mid-night, imagine that.- This morning I was on the 6:13am M15 bus. Then, after a LOCAL A-TRAIN ALL THE WAY out here, I got to work at 7:45am! Mr. was already showered and eating breakfast when I arrive. Mrs. was steadily whining about the work she'd already done. Well... She didn't *HAVE* to bathe him, *nor* make breakfast. Not my problem any more. But THEN... the “walking” thing. She *INSISTS* that *I* take him out for a walk! So...Mr. and I went round the block... with 4 stops for rest. He's weak, in body and head, and I'm bleating tired, hungry, and want a coffee. These people expect that I should give my *LIFE*. F***DATSH**. OK? They lie to my face, then lie behind my back and they expect “Love”? BS baby! Just plain BS! - 9:52am and now Mrs. is mopping the floors. She can't do that when I'm *not* here? Or is this just *MORE* that I'm *expected* to do, even though she told me that she does it every week-end and now won't give me the opportunity to even TRY? Oh well. Not going to be concerned. Not worth it. NONE of this is “worth it” any

more. NONE of it! - Somebody on Twitter posted: "god took my parents, I don't want to survive." Familiar? I don't believe in the "god" crap, but the not wanting to survive... well. - I'm trying not to nod... Mrs. is here until noon! It's SO difficult to stay awake though... sitting here. - 6:29pm and the funniest thing just happened: AT ABOUT 6:23pm, as I was waiting for the bus... I GOT "GOOGLE-MAPPED" AT 34th Street and 7th Avenue... In scrubs. How flattering. I was standing there, in the small crowd that was waiting for the bus too and the "Google" car with the roof-top camera went by. I didn't pay any attention to it until somebody said that it was the "mapping" car and mentioned that we'd all be on Google now ! I'll have to remember and keep an eye out for this one. HAH! - And now I'm on the M34 bus across town and on the way back to unadulterated Hell. Fabric softener, dryer sheets, 3 packs of cigarettes, Dial soap, no money. La-dee-frigging-dah. I should NOT have shopped Rockaway. But the cigarettes were 1 dollar off. And for the fabric softener? I Want (need?) to wash these scrubs *tonight*. Good thing I've softener... STENCHO in El. Maybe the scent of the softener will waft round the room and help cover that rotting trash over there in the opposite corner. - Right now though. I just need a shower and sleep tonight.

Monday 11 July

7:57am at Mr. and Mrs. Wacko-world of Howard Beach. (I can't even be civil about this any more.) BUT I'M IN CLEAN SCRUBS! YAY! The locker is full of *Gain* dryer sheets and smelling *fresh*. - Santiago came by the room last evening... Yes, I gave him 2 Camel cigarettes... the "old days" return. I wonder: (a) What do these others make of me and my "connections" to the staff around here and (b) Do they think I might be a "plant" to follow them? Do they ponder that I might actually be on the staff, posing as a Client to watch and report? Is this what keeps me segregated to a point? Well, I'm presently communicating with no-one in the room and happy about that. I've really nothing to communicate about and much of my own business to attend to. And as for Santiago? I *KNOW* him and his BS so... It's to my advantage to keep on the "good side", and if cigarettes is what it takes then, fine. - It was a delightful Sunday night last night: "WBAI Old Radio Shows" night. I wonder: David's such an arse most of the time yet enjoys something as cerebral as "BAI Golden Age of Radio". SCHIZO that one! (And probably quite actually in the strictest clinical sense that there is!) - Stencho El came in late last night. GADDAM the boy *stinks!* *The whole room fills with pits-funk!* And the schmatzing! GOTS T'GO! But my laundry and dryer sheets saved me. My little area is like my own little room. To Hell for the rest of 'em. - By about 9:30pm I was down for the night. Bed-check and... out - 8:10am and recounting... This morning I

was at the bus-stop at 6:08am. How nice to put on clean scrubs. (Now to do something about beard/moustache... I'll get to those... in time). Connections were great. - There's a guy on "Twitter", going through a tough time. I commented yesterday about "God", "Nature", inner strength, etc. I was certain I'd be thrashed. But this morning "Everybody follow... He's been to Hell and back and stays positive." This guy's sorrows hurt me so deeply I wanted to howl, sob, vomit. My legs went weak. I'm capable of too much empathy. But how well I do feel. It's really rather frightening. - Mr. E. is now awake. I *NEED* to take a dump at the loo. No time. Here we go. I HATE this job, these people, this place! - 3:26pm and at LAST, I'm on a Q21 bus to The Rock. HOT! DEAR GRACE, IT'S HOT! HUMID! MISERABLE! And today, at the last minute? B-friggin-S! Mr. E. decides he's *NOT* going to let me change him. An actual battle ensued. Now Mrs. is stuck with him. But the Charge Nurse trusts me. So does Mrs. Even the neighbour across the avenue who says that the daughter and son-in-law speak highly of me. (NOT, mind anybody, that I truly believe any of these lying sacks of total...) OK. Good. I NEED THIS SPOT FOR AT LEAST THIS MONTH! - Now? Post office and then to "create" documentation for the "paper-jerks" at the Dung-Heap on Wednesday AND to get to correcting this journal. - I'm wondering about "DrHall2011" on the "Twitter". His depression is too close to my heart. This morning I had to fight-back a genuine sob. I know, too well, that pain. - Broad Channel 3:37pm. I should be simply going "home" here... to Rockaway. I'm simply going to Rockaway. Dear Denise Ortega! I will be praying, for the rest of my life, that you get your too-well deserved HELL right here, on this earth... and for eternity. Thank you. - This morning, some NewAge freak, TV, says it's healthier to "forgive", "let go". NO! It would be healthier to BEAT'N'THRASH those who are responsible for our pains and anxieties. Or... get away from it all... away... away. - 13:41pm at TheRock. and on the run. - 5:44pm and back on the Q22 bus with.. No pay advice! I asked "Mei" about the route of the Fort mail. The post office shut us down out in the Fort Tilden office and are now re-routing all of our mail to Rock Park. Well, "Mei" being what the name implies, is obviously functionally illiterate when it comes to the language of the country she's come to leech off of. She didn't understand my simply-put question. Then DISMISSED me: She just told me "Goodbye." and walked away from the window! WHAT a total BITCH! Typical. - And now, at 6:00pm I'm on a Q35 bus to The Junction in Brooklyn for the train back into The City and, time-wise, I'm cutting it close this evening. - Well. I'll help relieve Ms. "Mei" of her employment miseries and think of this (and the increased box rent) as more "incentive" to get to VT. - Skipping back a bit... This evening, in the parking lot behind the laundromat in Rock Park I hear: "Stop that texting!" SEAN (from Baxters Hotel, the first place I went to look for a place to live when I first got to Rockaway)!

Looking *good*. He's fed-up with the way B116 Street is going. "Your old place..." (RPH) "is a half-way." (One of those "re-habs houses for so-called "recovering" drug addicts.) These days, they have a place for the "Drugs" on B116 and for the "Mental" on B114. RockPark's finished. - He leaves, CHUNG (the wonderful young lady from the local RiteAid)! And the guy in the wheelchair from RPH! I meet my "neighbours" now that I'm no longer here. O JUST KILL ME! It hurts a bit but I try to believe that better is to come. I keep reminding me of that. - I got to the Peninsula Library and an immediate computer. First 2 "chapters" of the "blogged" Journal are corrected. 17 more pages printed. All of 8539266 is in "Word.doc" on a "Flash" drive. And now I'm trying for 45 minutes at Mid-Manhattan Library for more correcting. - 6:11pm on the bus and at the Fort on the way to The Junction. I *should* be on the beach... with iced vodka and sandwiches. I SHOULD be "gone", "departed", "dead". It's such a hazy evening and VERY HOT/HUMID! It's going to be REAL HELL at 30th Street (the shelter) tonight. - 6:18pm Brooklyn. - 8:30pm at E4: I had to pass on Mid-Manhattan Library for this evening. I was on the Dyre train at 7:11pm which is a tad too late. So I caught the M16 bus at 34th Street. - When I got to the building this evening, entry went fine. I chatted with a "security" guard a bit and got onto a relatively empty lift. Only CrackO2 was in when I arrived at 7:19pm. Radio on. *Not* baseball! There was a brown paper towel wadded, set on my locker. I brushed it to the floor and went about my business in silence. A cigarette butt in front of my locker. I kicked it out. CrackO2 gets up. Radio off. Leaves. I change. I know what the frigg went on at my bed in my absence. But I'll be damned if I'll let it get to me. I'm bunking with the total dregs of our species here but I'll be damned if IT will bring ME DOWN that far to its level. - It's miserably hot and humid in here! Too dark to read. TWO mice skittering about the floor. One's "juvie". They're actually cute. Had I not finished 4 PopTarts I'd've given them a bit. Would serve the others right. Feed the mice and keep them in the room! HAH! - Well.. 8:37pm Sign-in. Shower. (Sleep? Doubtful.) - Tomorrow I HAVE to print "documents" for Ms. Henika! Peninsula Library/SIB Library. It's supposed to be HOTTER than today! - I've had a tickle in my throat for over a week now. "Fishermen's" cough drops aren't even helping. Now what!? ScrewMeFerSher.

Tuesday 12 July

7:55am Howard Beach and the floors are dusted. OK? - But fist off: Last night was *tough*. I kept moving along when I got in and just kept moving, doing... something. Signed. Showered. The sh** began. Glen Williams (El CrackO1) with the klik-klak-of-the-tongue stupidity, David Hall

(E2 CrackO2) with the radio-bull at mid-night, Guillermo(E3) with the bang-bang-locker bunk. The *symphony* carried on into the night. And I was drenched in sweat most of it. 30°C in the cell. Spictrash in the halls. Stafftrash in the halls. And the full moon isn't yet here. (I've been seeing the moon the past 2 nights and *SO* wishing I could be in the Bakfort again. THIS is why the Homeless REFUSE to come into City shelters! Right here! This Journal. THIS is why! In case anybody ever gets to read this.) - This morning I made *NO* effort to be quiet. I can't match the noise of the others but I do what I can to wake them at 5:00am. SCREW'em! - I was OUT of the building by 6:00am. - "DrHall2011Twitter" is going through some tough spot. He's actually my diversion from my own BS. And proofing this journal is teaching me TOMES on pulling back so as not to harm me. - THEN* a voice-mail: Mrs. MG. to tell that their daughter will be taking them up to Connecticut (how lovely) and will be glad to bring my "possessions" (I don't currently "possess" them Dear) back... to Rockaway. As much as I'd like to just forget them, *THEY'RE MINE AND I WANT THEM!* So now I *MUST* remember where and what. I'll send a printable e-mail of inventory and location so there won't be too much confusion. (Although, there'll be *Drama*. I've no doubt. OK.) - 8:10am HOT. HUMID. And in this trap, only a fan, no air conditioning. I'm tired. No "hard" work today simply because I'm too damned tired. No matter what, I'm NOT going to stress myself for anything... ANYTHING at all! - Must ponder tomorrow's pending tardiness. To tell or not to tell? That is the quandary. I HAVE to meet with Ms. Henika and, quite actually, I'd rather meet with her than be here (except for the lost income). But I remember, all too well, the last BS situation when I needed a half-day off... the morons at the agency screwed me out of TWO FULL DAYS! AND I'm NOT giving them the chance to pull THAT BS again! - But, for right now... I must move. I find that I'm dozing. And I'm NOT looking forward to Mr. this morning but will NOT bust *me* over this. - My guts... DAMN! Churn, gurggle, cramp. - 1:42pm A thought: I'd like to think that DHS caseworkers are so nasty because they're burnt-out from dealing with foul-mouthed degenerates who have no ambition, no talents and feeble brains over a period of time. But I must say that, having given the notion much careful consideration I believe, with my "all" that they are, in fact, discontented malcontents, impotent beyond imagination, incapable of any independent thought process, whose main purpose is to ensure the continued failure of those who are stupid enough to seek any sort of positive aid or assistance from them. They're consumed with and by such bitterness and hatred of and for any and all humanity that they actually derive great joy and pleasure in manipulating all persons, aware and unaware of their purpose, to the point of exhaustion, frustration and pain. (Case-workers and, in great part, Social-workers as well.)

Wednesday 13 July

6:53am AND... I'm in The "Lounge" on the 5th floor of the Hotel Hell-hole. Temperature must be in the 30s. Windows closed. No fan. No ventilation. Turd-head slamming a metal garbage can lid. 8 of us "waiting". The "animalSpics" yapping away. And I'm already in a sweat. - This morning, *SOMETHING* had taken to sleeping in my t-shirt, in the locker, over-night! It bolted this morning when I reached into the locker and I moved the shirt. As I was getting ready to leave the room, a "water-bug" (American cockroach), on the door-frame! Some 7.5-8cm in length! I'm HOPING what was in my shirt was a mouse and NOT THAT! - Last night I emptied the locker when I got in. Smelled like something died in there! All those dryer sheets, the odour-killer and still... Of course, Glen Williams (1) doesn't make things better. WHOA! THE STENCH! NASTY FUNK! and tongue-clicking. FRIGG! I keep thinking of how I'm short EVERY DAMNED BLEATING WEEK on time and pay because of this turd-hole-dung-heap. But... I WILL get out of here, out of NY, and NOT MORE THAN 1 week past *MY* dead-line of 31 July. I will *NOT* spend the coming birthday in here! *NOT NOT NOT!* - 7:05am The perspiration just clings. The air is completely still. - Oh! *Last evening: Entry into the building was quick. I waited for the lift and I watched as it stayed on each floor from 4 up to... I took the stairs. At the 4th floor, the *masses* were descending. "Fire drill", so they said. So I had to go back down 4 flights! On the 1st floor, *NOBODY* knew WHAT the Hell was going on! All we got told was "Nobody can use the elevator." Some turd-head says "It's broke. I dunno." About 5 minutes later? We (6 or 7 of us) got into the lift and rode up. NOTHING! No trouble at all. It's so bleating typical of this bleating-frigging mess. *NOBODY KNOWS ANYTHING* about ANYTHING! But... It is... what it is... brain-dead. It WAS a psychiatric hospital, dedicated to the severe cases... it still is... and the severe cases are now... the paid staff. - MEANWHILE... *I should be in Howard Beach or at least S. Ozone right now.* I'm in this cesspool... not happy. BUT... I'm "compliant"... and charming. FriggTheWorld. - And now... at 10:51am at Howard Beach... we re-cap our delightful morning. Well... I clocked-in at 9:52am and then rang Mrs. (who was, as usual, next door with her grand-brats) and then Madame Supervisor. See? I KNEW: This meeting in the morning at the sh**ter would get me here at 10:00! I didn't NEED a full day off. OH! OH! OH! AND YESTERDAY, I TOLD Mrs. THAT I WAS GOING TO BE LATE AND SHE SAID THAT IT WAS FINE... COME WHEN I CAN GET HERE... NO PROBLEM! (Right... lying piece of... she whined to the agency already this morning. Anyway... At 10:58am, Mrs. comes over. Calm. Understanding. BUT... I LOOSE TWO BLOODY HOURS! AND THAT'S NOT THE WORST! Ms. Henika? OH WOW! THAT ONE! The sign-in list didn't get posted until 8:11am. I was the second on the list. She takes the 1st at 8:16am and sits with it until 8:24am. LATE!

Me? She doesn't understand the papers I submitted, then the copier doesn't work, *SHE TELLS ME I COULD HAVE COME ON SUNDAY!* But my meal ticket? Expired *TODAY!* "That doesn't matter." says she. WHAT IN THE FIRGGIN NAME OF HELL? If the meal ticket expires *I can't get into the BUILDING!* NO F...NG CLUE, THIS ONE! - OK... Well... I'm here. The day passes. And I'm out TWO GODDAMNED HOURS' PAY... TO BE DEDUCTED FROM/SHOWN ON NEXT PAPERWORK... DOCUMENTED... THERE, HERE and TWITTER! where I'm spilling ALL of this BS! Hey! YOU screw ME? I screw YOU back! - 8:45pm at last and it's 30 bleating degrees in here! - The day: Worked to 5:00pm so there should be NO "lost time" and the day was the usual "fair" day there. - This evening, I managed an hour at SIB Library... Registered with Westaff and Spherion, Burlington VT employment agencies. - Got into the dorm at about 8:15pm to a note on the bed. Ms. Henika wants to see me on... *SUNDAY* regarding *housing*. *SUNDAY!* Well, at least it's my Sunday off. - So I washed t-shirt, socks. Ate 4 PopTarts. AND Now... Da(rse)vid (E2 - Da:arse:vid) is blasting his bleating radio... some kind of "blues" programme. HELL-HELL! Albert Green BS flash-backs. - NOW I'm SWEATING! and Hoping for SLEEP tonight, F***.

Thursday 14 July

1:44pm and another day of "serving others" (at work). After a nice cooling shower last night, it turned-out OK. David's radio was almost a blessing; OK music to drown the tongue-clicks of Glen. Glen may have *bathed* because the funk wasn't too heavy. I didn't sweat after the shower. So... that too was alright then. The only interruption was bed-check. WHY the HELL they feel they *MUST* throw on the light and SCREAM "*BED-CHECK!*" when it's OBVIOUS that we're asleep is a mystery to me... Well, they're inconsiderate, inhuman, disrespectful and generally useless other-wise. Morons and/or monkeys. But that's unfair... to monkeys. - This morning, I do believe that my alarm woke D(arse)vid who kicked the wall and slapped his legs when it buzzed. Maybe the water-bug/cockroach from yesterday got to him. Would serve him right... eating dinner at 9:45pm every night. He's got food all over the damned place. Let the bugs be comfy in *his* bed. - This morning: rush out the door to COOL BREEZES AND LOW HUMIDITY! AT LONG LAST! Would've been PERFECT for the beach (but that's not to be). The transit connections were good and I got to work by just past 7:30am. But I NEEDED to use the loo and Mrs. E. was in! So that had to be deferred because with her in the house, there's no taking a "break"... not even for the loo, lest she whine and complain about that as well. She made breakfast for Mr. and left. I headed for the loo. HooRAY! Then off to the dentist: Mr. had an appointment

this morning so that involved me taking him for a walk across the street and back. I suppose I should be thankful that it was only across the street, and, in a way, I am. After the dental appointment, he and I sat out in front of the house for a while before lunch. - OH! Rang Melanie about yesterday. Good thing! Says she: "I'd take care of it when it came up." Screw you dear! Take care of it NOW! Now I'm seeing why my hours and pay are seldom correct of late. They "take care of it when it [comes] up", by which time they've no idea that anything needs taking care of. I'm working here, extra time because of "situations" at the homes of the clients and they have NO idea what's going on... and, quite frankly, it's blatantly obvious that they don't want to know. And all the while, WE are working... and I'll bet they're billing the clients for every minute. I need this income... more than most, I should think. - Meanwhile: "BELINDAUSA" (on the social media) HAS a copy of "RAIN"! I've been trying to find that song for YEARS now, to replace the copy I had for so long (and it went with the "I'm so sorry" conniving and irresponsibility of my "family" when they dumped 50 years of my existence, after deceiving me, and feigning "help"). SHE WILL TRY TO SEND Mp3 VIA E-MAIL! I HOPE! I've found some EVER- SO-VERY GREAT people on social media (in spite of what Schmulik says). Very blessed, I am. - And now, at 2:00pm, Mr. needs a "change". - I'm planning some e-mail and Journal work at Peninsula Library after this, then JobSearch at SIB Library this evening. Tomorrow: Post office for money order for the banque to pay-off the balance due, get "papers" for Sunday's song'n'dance with Ms. Henika and a new MetroCard. (Monthly car-fare card probably... The money's not coming in well enough, I may have to stall the move... I HOPE NOT!!!) - 5:23pm at Holland, Rockaway. Waiting for the shuttle to the A train after the library. - I just have to note that my bowels are finally emptying... in "shifts". HAD to go before leaving Peninsula Library. Could have still been there even now, if I'd had the time. But, I'm "moving" at last! - At the library... 30 minutes of computer time wasted trying to find Dorothy Morrison's song: "Rain". Cyndi M., I pray you contract incurable leprosy! You piece-of-rotting-waste! Amen. To think that, not so many years ago, you LIED to me, taking me away from the house so your husband and our brother could, behind my unsuspecting back, wipe me out! May Karma deal with you now... suitably for the 50 years of my life that you "discarded". - Now to get to SIB Library and more job-hunting. - Tomorrow will be VERY BUSY! - Oh. And I'm noticing that I stink: piss'n'powder. Screw me! - 8:58pm DAMN! El is SO BLOODY "RIPE" TONIGHT! The stench of not bathing, not cleansing, and what-ever it is that crack does to the body. And steady with the schmatzing-lips-licking! Same bastard who, just last night, *slammed* his locker and said "Excuse me fellas." Moron. Filthy moron. (And Guillermo3 just asked it if *it* wanted apple-sauce and *it* said "No, thank you." It says "thank you". Funky

bastard. - D(arse)vid just *slammed* into the foot of my bed as he went past to leave the room. TURN A BLEATING LIGHT ON BUTT-HEAD! Of course, he's never hit the bed before so this must have been intentional. OK. Oh well. No sense thinking about it, nor "discussing" it. Next. - So I applied to Adecco in Vermont this evening. This makes 3 employment agencies I'm registered with up there. I'm laying my ground-work and preparations. - I'm sick about tomorrow's pay. 200\$ isn't going to cover ANYTHING! But if I gross 300\$, taxes bring it down! I'm tired of working for SH**! And working *with* and *IN* it as well! And if I lost that Thursday when the agency essentially knocked me off, sending that substitute when I should have been working, I'll have to take the matter to the Department of Labour and anybody who'll get me MY money! I'll have to stretch my "stay" to 15 Aug. But I'll do it kicking, screaming and killing. - Washed a t-shirt and unders this evening. *Gain* fabric softener on the t-shirt for the rinse. It smells good and freshens the air in this room as it lays on the top of the locker. - THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING IN THIS ROOM! That cough I have now, only happens in here. Funkbottom across the way? No doubt. - Meanwhile, it's a WARM 28°C in here and delightfully cool out tonight. I've showered. I'm sweating. And the pig who coughs, chokes, nose-blows and such is at the basins again. It's become a nightly routine where he goes into the wash room to do all of that. WHAT in HELL is it that makes them believe they MUST make LOUD noises? Oh get me the bleating HELL as far away from here as possible... SOON AND QUICKLY AND ETERNALLY! - How I LOATHE NY!

Friday 15 July

9:10pm from the corner of the room E4: THE BANQUE ACCOUNT IS "BACK IN THE BLACK" AGAIN! AT LONG LAST! OK! HAPPY DANCE! ONE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TAKEN CARE OF! (How I wish I could... dance. This old body wouldn't survive and truthfully, I haven't felt like dancing in longer than I can recall.) - Well... Last night I went comatose. Maybe it was the sugar in the the frosting on the PopTarts. I wonder if I could kill my-self with sugar. - "LouieDrHall" on the social media got a REAL "psych session" this morning. Poor guy. 22 years old and so depressed: family deaths and such. I need to stop the empathy though... or get paid. But... It's "the way I am". It hurts me to see somebody so young going through such misery and Hell. There's SO much of that in this world though, of late. Of course, I look at me... but then, the more I see of "me" the more I come to appreciate the facts: I'm not out in the elements, and I'm not completely with-out clothes, I'm not eating well but I'm certainly not starving... and I'm

working because of the kindness of others. I'm not "that" poorly. - How-ever... I *was* a bit "out of sorts" because of the sugar, a bit "buzzing" when I got to work... and HAD to get to the loo! So... of course, Mr. was having breakfast, Mrs. didn't have to be next door so "I" got deferred... yet again. BUT... Mrs. asked me to go to the "druggist" (as she calls the CVS) AND I accomplished getting *my* money order at the Howard Beach post office and my cigarettes at RiteAid! *Errands accomplished!* (And all whilst I was "on the clock". I'm considering this "time and money due".) The rest of the day? I did Mr.'s medications, checking, administering, and phoning the "druggist" for renewals. Something that I am not responsible to do. Hello? "Charge Nurse"? I just did *YOUR* job for you! - I had to call Melanie at the agency to enquire as to whether or not "service" to this client would be terminated on the 17th, as per a letter they received from the agency. The *bitch* said, in a most condescending tone of voice: "I have no such notice, kindly call the nurse". OK *Melanie*. And SCREW you too... "kindly", of course. - Then the day turned busy, but *good* busy. Next thing I knew, 3:00pm. *BOLT!* Out the door and to the Q53 bus to Peninsula Library to print "statements" for Sunday/Ms. Henika. (My original files got messed-up somehow in the computer and I had to do them again! Images disappeared and the alignments were wrong. But I got them fixed and done and printed!) And BelindaTwtr sent "Rain" as an Mp3! I got it on the Flash drive but CAN'T get it on the iPod to listen to! SOOO CLOSE! Oh well... I have it... again... after all these years. THANK YOU BELINDA! THANK YOU! Since he'd given the iPod to me, I sent an e-mail to Schmulik to ask how I go about putting this music onto it. We'll see if I get any reply... or... forgive me... "help". Now... we wait. - Next affair: KEY FOOD market! Coffee! PopTarts. Rolls! (I emptied the coffee out of the jar and into zip-bag in the parking lot of the market, right away) and off on the train (where I *shoved* a package of pre-packaged roast beef cold cuts down my throat... I WAS SO BLEATING HUNGRY!!!) to the banque on Park Avenue in The City. - DEPOSIT MADE IN THE ATM/MACHINE IN THE LOBBY BUT... I ALMOST LOST MY DEBIT CARD! In my rush to get things done, I'd left it at the machine when I walked away. I didn't notice until I'd left the banque and was on my way back to the shelter. So I almost RAN back to the banque and when I got in, asked a "security guard" if anybody had turned the card in. WELL! Somebody HAD and one of the tellers knew it was mine! Imagine that! Well... We got talking "banquing" and, come to learn... He's from Chase! The last banque I'd worked for (not to my happiness how-ever) when I left "Wall Street"! How funny. But it was a delight. - I tried calling Customer Service to report the kindness, but the hold was REALLY REALLY too long. BUT THEY'RE HIRING! MAYBE IN VT? I SHALL INVESTIGATE. - Quick-easy in tonight. Smacko!CrackO! must've bathed! Goodgahd! Though he's steady into the snacking. PLEASE!

SOMEBODY SHOOT IT! And he's exceptionally LOUD tonight. - Oh well... I'm showered. Tomorrow? Up at 5:00am... OUT TO THE FORT!

Saturday, 16 July

7:15am on an up-town M15 bus to 59th Street for a Q32 bus to... THE OCEAN! - Last night I slept quite well but my guts are trying to kill me this morning. Figures: a day off from that job, en route to the beach and sick. - 8:21pm back at the bed... E4: (CrackO2's got the radio on... of course. But this evening's entertainment is "Old jazz". Not *too* bad.) This morning, I was ON the beach at 10:28am! I'd stopped at the post office on the way to... NOTHING! "Postal Inspectors" time. *I need pay-stubs!* If the post office wants to make *MY* life difficult, OK. We play. THEY closed my post office down and THEY decided to shove my mail over to Rock Park. WE already knew that Rock Park was incompetent. And that attitude from "Mei" (see, I don't forget names). GOT TO GO! - Then I stopped at Waldbaum's: Focaccia, turkey, yoghurt, V8 juice (for here), Gatorade, Hostess cupcakes (8 to the package and already... I just ate the last 2). When I got to the Fort, I stopped at a picnic table and had my yoghurt for breakfast (and hopefully to settle my guts and it mustadun the trick because I've felt a bit better since). A rather excited stroll (I WANTED TO GET TO THE BEACH) to CrossWalk 4/5 to find the beach relatively empty! Gorgeous! Cool breeze. Low humidity today. And I got a couple swims in and a 5-hour beach day? Today I happened to notice that the beach is "going quite Gay". An older male couple, laying beside each-other gave each-other a little kiss. "ROMANTIQUE!" and CUTE! (Typical... I get the Fort becoming Gay just as I'm ready to LEAVE. My life's story. Just like Restoring Downing Park in Newburgh, investing all those hours and days and... POUF! Gone.) - Oh so hesitantly, I left the beach this afternoon at about 3:30 or so. - Got the Q22 to bus the shuttle/A train to storage. As I went down the aisles looking for that step-ladder I need, I saw some young guy sitting in an over-head unit, *sitting on a chair*, head-phones on, "backing-up files" as he told me. He uses the little storage bin as an office space! OK. Well. I got the 2010 "1040" for Ms. Henika tomorrow. (It won't be good enough. You wait. Nothing I do is EVER "good enough".) And I was out and on the streets and on the run again. - A-train to 34th Street for the M16 bus across town and back to the Dung-heap. - And today, I washed my t-shirt, swim-trunks, socks, and kippa. - Now for sign-in and tomorrow? ANOTHER BLEATINGFRIGGIN EARLY DAY: Bleating Ms. Henika at 8:00am. But I'm outta here anyway for the remainder of the day: beach or... I *can't* stay in here all day. ("Those" days of staying in and "resting" are NOT "these" days.) - I've just noticed that I've gotten quite "coloured"

from the time on the beach. Not painful... yet. But it's a good feeling... after a wonderful day of sun-shine! - A NOTE: My left fore-arm breaks-out and itches... when I'm here or when I'm on my way here. I wonder... bugs in here? Or just "a reaction"... nerves? Anxieties? DREAD? - PS. Last night the radio went off AFTER bed-check but at the end of the game. (It's on at the moment. D(arse)vid is out some-where in the building.) - SIGN-IN! 8:41pm! SHOWER! - OH! MTA BUS ANNOUNCEMENT M16 bus arrival time: "19 hundred hours"! AT LAST! SOMEBODY in this backassward city is going on the 24hour clock!

Sunday 17 July

9:37am and on another M15 bus... up-town again... to 59th Street: and a "Pardon me but" ... SHOVE YOU MetroPCS and Huawei cheap pieces of TRASH-ROT! Seriously... I'm trying to tap this entry on a phone that I'd paid handsomely for and between the "no service" and the malfunctions of the phone itself... It's bleating annoying! - OK. My *guts* are *knotted* (yes, again). I woke at 5:30am, had my casual coffee, 2 tiny bm's (and are they ever acrid!). Showered. And I was at the 5th floor by 7:30am. I was proofing the print-outs in my own quiet when I hear: "*Pardon me brother but I was sitting there.*" (STEVE!!!) I calmly looked up and said "*YOU* were sitting *HERE*?" "Yeah." he replied, seriously. So, I offered to let him sit on my *lap*. IT SCARED THE CRAP OUT OF THE OTHERS SITTING THERE. He's as tall as I am but MUCH "bulkier"! And, well... a "White" guy talking like that to a "Black" guy? Oh my! But we both got a *good* laugh out of it. - It's 10:41 and I'm waiting for the Q32 bus at 64th street at 3rd Avenue. So, it seems Steve's kinda messing with his job, being late and days off and... of course, beer for breakfast. But y'know... it was expected. He was just that much "too good" at the start. Still, beer and all, I so sincerely hope good things and better days come to him. He's a good human being, and those are quite rare of late. - As for the "meeting" this morning... I was 4th on the "CaseWorker" list and was out by about 9:00am! I tend to think Ms. Henika really does have my best interest in mind. But... do I trust her? Nah. I don't "trust" anybody any more. NObody. I completed the "Housing" application that she had. She gave me a meal ticket through the 31st! Bless her. It gives me more time to WORK with-out all the anxieties of having to think about time off or being late. So now we'll see who usurps her authority, screws *her* round about (and me too). I've no doubt at all that there's somebody who's watching both of us and if MY life is made any easier, they'll step right up and in to shove crap right into the middle of my face. ONE somebody, at least... - When I'd done with the "meeting", I RAN back up to the room to get beach stuff, make peanut butter/frosting

sandwiches (not too “healthy” but it's got calories to keep me going). E3 asked about my day off today. He got a little chatty. D(arse)vid? He's got Gospel music on the radio this morning. Imagine THAT trash-rot “gettin' a little Jesus”... but, as would be expected, still in bed! Useless. - Last night... *OH OH OH LAST NIGHT!!!* D(arse)vid gets up at about 11:00pm, flips on the light, rummages through his locker. Light out. THEN the arse in E1 gets to thumpbanging HIS BS! I quietly sat up in bed and, in a “polite” voice I asked: “Excuse me. Will you be doing that until like 3:00 in the morning?” “No suh.” he replied. “Thank you.” I said, equally kind... I hear a soft “*Bitch.*” coming from him. But that ended it. In my corner, to myself, I smiled. I slept, through the night, fully prepared to BATTLE! None came. - 10:54 and we're at Queens Blvd. and 42nd Street. I'm SO hungry but SO afraid to eat, and not too sure why I'm bothering to go to the Fort at this hour. Before changing buses in The City, I got some adhesive at HomeDepot on 59th Street this morning. I'll try to “fix” the holes in these sneakers. - I'm exhausted. This phone's screwing about. Ciao. - 7:41pm at 14th Street at the end of the day. - Out at the Fort today, there was a bus full of people in the parking lot. And TRAFFIC all about! Something's not “right” out there. Too many people all about. This does NOT bode well for “our little hide-away. But, Wow! A really good, GOOD day! In spite of getting to the beach at 2:00pm and having to go to CrossWalk 6 (Battery Kessler is 7, at the very end of the Fort) to find a comfortably empty area. - I Got the Q32 bus bus at 59th Street and then in Queens, took the Q53 bus (which was PACKED AND MOBBED AND “REFUGEE-TYPES” FROM END TO END!) to B116th Street. - Briskly headed to Waldbaum's for beverages and rice cakes (hopefully to stop the “trots”). I'm “browsing” the “Gatorade” when I hear “What are you doing here?” SULLY! WOW! SULLY! The only person from the Fort I ALWAYS enjoyed talking with, and comparing notes on what we know of the Fort's history and present (he worked on the Fort for several years from the time it was de-comissioned). We TALKED... the Fort, NPS (National Parks Service), the history, the present, the works! Suddenly, I was in no rush. It was SULLY! And the conversation was, as always, MAGNIFICENT! But... when we parted I was off to the Q35 bus and to... the Fort. - When I arrived, I took the little table by the old post office (where I used to get my mail... back in the “better days”). Whilst there, I put some glue on the sneakers, finished my peanut-butter/frosting sandwiches and coffee and was off on the stroll to the Shore Road and a beach PACKED with “people” (I'll be kind, because they're not “people”... they're “non-native, invasives”) up to CrossWalk 5! CrossWalk 6 wasn't *too* bad. But how strange to swim out there. I've never done so before. There's such a notable difference in the quality of the water and the current from one part of the beach to another. I doubt others would notice it, but after a while of living there, and

swimming and paying attention to the ocean, one can't help but notice the difference. But, I managed to get one "real" swim in. Not bad at all. And I see where the section they call "Bay 1" is... The Fort! - And today brought cool breezes too. DElightful. I actually *slept* on the beach from about 3:28pm to 4:40pm! - No "wash" before leaving today. I left, salted. (I usually cover me with shampoo, head-to-toe before my last "dip", and rinse in the ocean. It takes some of the sweat and salt and sand off and feels a bit more comfortable on the trip away.) - As I left, I made a trip by the "FreshPond". No beach plumbs for harvesting yet. Out of the Bakfort via the Ranger Road. NO "RAA"! YAY! - Out of the gate and onto a Q22 bus to Gaston where... the bleating MTA's changing the signs! "B67 Arverne By The Bleating Sea"! (I tried to take a picture of the remaining old signage but this piece of all-but-useless-trash phone screwed about.) It was always "B67 Street Gaston"! Yes. Time to let go... leave. There's nothing left to hold on to. - Well... I was at Irving Place. Back in The City at 7:56pm and the day was another wonderful memory. - 9:24pm at E4:: MOVE! JUST MOVE! DON'T STOP! MOVE! The rice-cakes and Gatorade stopped me. But they went directly through me! - E1 and E2 were in bed at 8:21pm already... probably all day. They probably never got OUT of bed! - I "sorted" wash, signed-in (there are 2 floors signing on the 6th floor tonight. Why? What the Hell?), washed the t-shirt, trunks, socks, then me. - D(arse)vid's got a 9:00pm baseball game on the radio, but relatively low (or I'm getting used to this crap). Glennie's (E1) reclining, tongue-clicking. But with the BOTH of them, they'll start at 10:30pm no doubt. - My ONE, SOLE, SINGULAR, SOLITARY HOPE... *STRENGTH*... *VT*! With-out it, I'm done. - A Note: Today, I heard French on 59th Street this morning, French on the beach, French at the Gaston station and French on the bus this evening. A message? Preparation? - OK... I've just finished 2 PopTarts. I want a quick smoke. No sense resting til "BED CHECK"! And tonight we have the "hise nigger" with the superior attitude pulling the "BED CHECK!" and "hall duty". Ah... Sunday is done and gone. Tomorrow... it's back to WORK!

Monday 18 July

8:43am and back at the Hell of Howard Beach... on the "job". - Last night, bed-check was a simple knock on the door, followed by a "not-too-bad" night. I slept. Did *NOT* want to get out of bed this morning! - By 6:00am I was on the stairs and on my way out the door. At the bus stop, I *needed* a loo! Held *tight*... When I finally got onto the A train, I "doze-snoozed" all the way to RockBlvd! Some-how, it helps "calm the urge". But I'm SO bleating tired! - The Q53 bus was empty but the "Public Address" speaker was buzzing all the way. - At the Mr. E.'s house: He was awake! (I used

the loo almost immediately... HE can WAIT! I can NOT! And I see the frosting sandwiches are coming through. Mrs. came back into the house *as* I was finishing with my toilet.) Mrs. prepped breakfast. Mr. had a dump in his drawers... AT TABLE! I'm in *no* mood for his "sh**" (in every meaning of the word) but I got it all cleaned up and done. AND... Their grand-kids are here!!! They're not feeling well this morning. One vomited this morning, I'm told. - Eventually and finally, Mrs. left, went next door where she spends the day anyway, to do laundry, which she does just about every day. I shall NOT "baby-sit" HER grand-brats AND her husband! HELL NO! - I'm nodding here. - BUT the banque is fine and I'm OK. The sneakers that I glued yesterday? We'll see when the rains come but they appear to be fair. - 3:46pm on a Q21 bus away! OK then. I had a little "incident" this morning, with the bowels. I washed it. Butt (as it were)... it's the idea. I don't know when or where it actually happened. Butt, all is clean now. - The *family* was ill today. They had a BBQ yesterday and they think something might not have been cooked properly, But I HAD the kids in the house this morning! HEY! NOT MY JOB! But they seem to believe that it's fine to dump the kids into my responsibilities! Oh yeah... and then Mrs. has the frgging audacity to bad-mouth ME? The unadulterated BS we put up with... and the agency? NO SUPPORT AT ALL! - THEN... I'm over-hear... OVER-HEAR... THEY DON'T TELL ME... that Mr. IS GOING INTO HOSPITAL *TONIGHT*. THE DAUGHTER HOPING HE'LL BE BACK *THURSDAY*! HERE WE GO... SCREW-ME TIME! GODDAMNIT! I CAN'T AFFORD THIS BS! So, I rang the agency, and wanted to speak with my "former" and "sensible" supervisor, since I can't trust the one I have now, but she's "not in"! F-ME! So I'm looking at making a whole 2.25\$ tomorrow (since they'll only pay my car-fare if I come out here, and NOT the time it takes to get here)... AND probably a trip into Howard Beach for... the trip! I CANNOT STAY IN THAT SHELTER! Even until 8:00am which is when we're SUPPOSED to leave for the day (unless, of course, we're "David" or his ilk). The beach? No. I'm getting a little too much beach these days and I don't want to burn and have to deal with the consequences of that... not now anyway. Maybe job-hunts. I NEED to apply to the banque anyway. They're hiring and they're located in Vermont. Maybe this is an omen: GO NOW! We'll see. - En route (3:57pm at Rockaway B96th Street) to post office and Peninsula Library now. - I just had a turkey/mozzarella sandwich (on the bus of course). Mrs. had made it and giving it to me said "Take". I've no fridge to keep it in! My "life". - Well? Well. - 7:18pm at South Channel on the way to the "end" of this day and I HAVE TO PEE! I'M THIRSTY! AND... The dumbarse agency sent me the WRONG pay statement! I specifically requested a specific date and they can't even get THAT right! I've no patience for this stupidity any longer. I truly don't! AND... I spent TWO HOURS on-line at Peninsula Library for almost nothing, "iTunes"

music and their “Apple iPod” are, to be polite about it: F'ed-up! Let's add to this little list at end of day: I have to wash my work scrubs, a storm is coming, the air is actually WET, AND I have to go back to that Dung-heap, AND NO WORK TOMORROW... AND I have to WAIT for a bleating A train! It ALL comes crashing at once. Time for a break-down. I want a DRINK... MARTINI! VODKA! SOMETHING!

Tuesday 19 July

9:45pm E4: 29°C! No breeze again tonight. And D(arse)vid's been smoking his sh**garettes in the room again. But tonight there's TWO “Febreeze” air fresheners in the locker (with “tones” of eucalyptus... mmmm...). Hopefully to dissuade the little mouse (confirmed this morning when it bolted again and then scurried about the loo, out into the hall and into the “ELECT ROOM” (6W-91) across the hall). This as I woke on time, and left here at 6:30am! - Wearing my scrubs, I made it to Howard Beach by about 8:00am. From in front of the house, I rang Mrs. E. who was next-door with the grand-kids as usual. Mr. went to LIJ Hospital at 9:00pm last night. I rang the agency to confirm ans was told, simply and curtly and not at all politely “Leave.” When I got to talk with Mrs. again to tell her that I was to leave, she told me: “Go home. Make your coffee. Take the jello, pineapple, what-ever you want.” Imagine? “Go home.” She was referring to *HER* “home”, but talks to me as if it were *MY* home as well. So, I went, made coffee, ate pastries, did the dishes, made the house nice and clean. - Then I rang the agency and got to speak with my “real” supervisor and checked for more work. She knows this case is good and encouraged me to hold it and “dismiss” Marlene's miserable nastiness. OK. - I left. - Took a Q35 bus to Waldbaum's back “home” in Rockaway, and then, I very casual stroll to my customary Tribute Park lunch: 2 Greek yoghurts with a *half* tin peaches. I *DROPPED* the can and *LOST* half! Stupid me. But I ate well. - Lunch done, I took the Shuttle train to Peninsula Library. “Apple iTunes” TRULY IS SCREWED-UP! The “address” on the iPod doesn't “verify” any more! Screw it! Screw them! Enough! I'm on a Twitter rage! I'm PISSED! 2 “Live Chats” with “Apple” and some moron there, “Tim”, tells me to fill-in some “on-line” form. OK. I did that. For the address... A PO Box is no good. They want a “physical address”. So... back to the “live chat” were some OTHER idiot, “Jamie”, says it takes 48 hours to process! As for the address? I can't recall which address I “registered” with in the first bleating place so I tried B116th Street, B169th Street, Rockaway Beach Blvd... None of those matched what-ever they have on file that corresponds to the banque. HELL anyway! (But, in all of this, I did find that my recent deposit cleared and all is well, so... I

guess all of this BS isn't for nothing.) - Then I get a call from RockBeach post office about my complaint against the RockPark office. The caller was a nice woman who listened and apologised. But I know the post office... SHE was nice... THIS won't go anywhere from here. That's how "they" are. - And... so... onward to RiteAid for much-needed cigarettes and air fresheners. THAT was really GREAT! I walked with Chung to the Q35 bus and we rode into Brooklyn together. I went to Target: XXL "ZipLock", gallon "ZipLock" bags to put things up in storage and get that unit together and protect what's in there. - Then... Miserable trains back into The City! - SIB Library for 45 minutes of working on the iPod and still NO "iTunes"! I just gave up... for now and headed back to the Dung-heap and.. RadioBoy. - When I got back in, I washed the beach towel and my pillow case. Grabbed a cool shower. - 10:01pm O FRIGGINJOLLY! NEW BLEATING EI TONIGHT!!! But he's "White", wearing a black polo shirt and khakis. He strikes me as "Kinda CaleeFornya" in his manner, but I'm NOT "fond", to put it kindly. Seems he's got no luggage, no linens, no clue. But I don't "feel" it's going to be "good". Well... *IT HAD BETTER BATHE AND NOT BANG INTO THE NIGHT!* Or smoke in the dorm. Frigg.) - 10:11pm Radio on. E3 stirring. Air at bed smells nice (Friggdem). And I must try for a nap before our new EI begins with the bangbang tonight.

Wednesday 20 July

6:26am and I'm at 34th Street and 1st Avenue and my bowels want to burst! It's HOT this morning, and the bleating stylus for this phone is probably on the damned floor, back in the room... THIS is a bad start. . very bad start. - I'm off and on the run to storage. I'd much prefer death. - 6:35am and now it feels as if something is pressing on my bladder. - (I'm using my pen to "tap" this on the phone to enter my notes here.) - Well then... At 9:00pm last night, I got a call from Mrs. EG: my things are in Rockaway... wot their daughter. BUT... I'd bought a bottle of "Kessler's" rye whiskey whilst I was in Connecticut, just because there, it was quite inexpensive and well... the name. BUT, it seems Ms. daughter "didn't see it". I left a whole bottle, unopened in the house. But... it's Ms. Daughter... "Orthodox", probably won't touch alcohol, even if it's unopened and in a glass bottle. Figures... They're pieces of work, that kind. Well now, I need to figure how to get it all from Bayswater, Rockaway to South Ozone to storage... in this heat. But for now, this moment in time, here, PLEASE just let the bowels hold til I get to storage! - 12:37pm on a Q35 bus from The Junction, in Brooklyn. These are the days to push even *sane* men right directly over the edge! I keep inhaling saliva, choking and sneezing. It's because my brain is

shutting-down. I can't even control involuntary actions in my body. I've reached *the edge* and am teetering. Admittedly. Even to the point of pondering going for "help". Only "pondering", mind. I know, ALL too well, what "help" would be, and I don't have the mind-set for the additional annoyance and aggravation. - The stylus for this crap-phone may or may not be on the floor in the dorm at the shelter. I'm using the spare that I just happened to have found in storage... Got it this morning when I went to storage to put some papers back, get pay stubs, get the Ikea tote (for the things that Ms. Daughter now has). I left there at about 8:25am this morning and headed to Brooklyn Central Library directly via Rockaway. There was a 5-minute wait for 30 minutes on a computer. "iTunes" is still screwed beyond belief! To Hell with them. Screw "Apple". Friggital! - One quick potty at "Target" store (I'm getting REALLY good at knowing where the public loos are in this area. SO "Homeless" of me.) A quick stop at RiteAid pharmacy at The Junction and at 12:45pm I'm ONLY at Floyd Bennett Field and still in Brooklyn! AND... I'm in scrubs (but they're cooler than other clothes, I'm sure). - It bothers me that Ms. Daughter now has my things. I just don't "like" and I certainly don't "trust" her at all! I don't "like" nor do I "trust" those "Orthodox" ilk. - I sent a curt e-mail to Schmulik about his frigging "Apple/Mac". He's SO into that brand and is SO insistent upon the WORLD buying ONLY their products. One would think he gets commissions or something. From my own experience: NEVER! - Meanwhile... I'm just *SO tired* of being *SO tired ALL of the time!* - Working my bleating-frigging BALLS off for about 79\$ to my name. I'm fed-up. Really. - Marine Park Bridge! HAZY! Disgusting sort of day. But there's Jamaica Bay... and that alone is a comfort and a consolation to me. - Now to Peninsula Library and MORE FRIGG-UPS for the day, I've no doubt. - 8:40pm and back at the E4 corner of the room at the nut-house (shelter): I got an almost immediate computer at Peninsula Library. Spent the solid hour proofing the "blog". Then, it was a hurry-rush to the Q53 bus to a B35 bus to an immediate Nr.5 train and the SIB Library. I "coded" a "table" (HTML coding for the internet) for images ob the "blog Journal" and proofed to pg45! 44 more pages to go and then comes the remainder. - Left SIB Library about 7:00pm and walked over to the banque to see about an address change on the account (to satisfy this "Apple" BS). WELL! I BLEATING FORGOT TO COPY PAY STUBS FOR Ms. Henika so tomorrow I've that much MORE to do! And nobody on the floor at the banque so THAT TOO, *TOMORROW!* HONESTLY! THIS WORLD! - Rang Ms. Daughter about my "*stuff*" as she called it. SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHERE HOWARD BEACH IS! She's grown up not 3 neighbourhoods away and she doesn't know where it is? AND... it's almost impossible to get from where she lives to any-where else in the city with-out going by, near or through it! And WOW! can she be simple. She wants to meet at an *address*. I suggested

Waldbaum's on CrossBay Blvd. BUT NOW, she wants me to call *NEXT MONDAY 8:00pm!* It's no wonder she got sucked into the "Orthodox cult". Well, it *has* been said that it's an easier life: they never have to make any decisions nor learn anything other than what they're told. I can see that... all too clearly. I'll suggest Liberty Av. Frigg! It's the least she can do for all I did for her parents. Friggit. She's making this appear to be such an act of charity on her part and one that's putting here SO out of her way. If I didn't truly want what she has, I'd just leave it all in her lap. - I rang the "Charge Nurse" on Mr. E.'s case and she told me nothing. She knows nothing and there's no answer at Mrs.' number. - Well OK THEN! M34 bus and I strolled down to Dung-heap where getting into the building this evening went along quite fine. - The "new" E1 has packed-up and left tonight. Here we go again! E3's glad he's gone. Me? Hey. He's "White" (how rare in this place) ... but truthfully, there was something I didn't like. But... NO REST AGAIN TONIGHT! We'll have to be rudely awakened in the middle of the night with a NEW "E1" again! Oh. E1 brought about 4 HUGE pieces of luggage, after the fact! Must have been THE WHOLE HOUSE! (My *storage* is a blessing.) - I'm pissed. 1.5 weeks til AUGUST! I BLEATING-FRIGGING NEED *MONEY* AND I'M BEGINNING TO *CONNIVE* ABOUT HOW TO GET IT... NOW!!! I DON'T WANT 3 FRIGGING MONTHS IN HERE! - 8:53pm and the HallSpics get to shouting... accompanied now by E3! It MUST be some kind of genetic defect amongst ALL of them. - Sign-in. Shower. - I've eaten 1 Cadbury chocolate candy bar, 1 Coke, 4 rice cakes, 4PopTarts all day. NOT GOOD. I'll be "paying for this" soon enough... no doubt. - I'm exhausted, at wits' end and the end of this bit of rope.

Thursday 21 July

10:34am on an M34 bus to SIB Library: And THIS morning's saga runs along the way of: I began at 30th Street and 1st Avenue for an M15 bus to 42nd Street and 1st Avenue to transfer to an M42 bus to Grand Central Terminal to transfer to a Nr.7 train to 61st Street in Woodside Queens where I got a Q53 bus to Liberty Avenue to go to storage to return the extra phone stylus so I'll know where it is in case I ever need it again. CLOSE CALL "incident"! (I thought it was "gas"... it was NOT! My digestive tract is a total horror now!). Emergency stop at the I-HOP at the corner on the way out of storage to BEG to use their LOO! - WELL... we move (and do we ever) along to a Q53 bus to Metropolitan Avenue where I trot into the "Staples" store to copy pay statements (for which I pay... out of my pocket... out of the little cash I have to my name, for the convenience of the friggin "shelter"). - That chore accomplished, out the door of the store and on to the Q53 bus to Queens Blvd. to transfer to an M train to Roosevelt Avenue to transfer to an F

train to 63rd Street and Lexington Avenue in Manhattan where I got an M15 bus to 30th Street and 2nd Avenue and a walk to 30th Street and this dung-heap of trash-rot and a WALK up to 5th Floor. OK THEN NOW! - Funny? But when I got to the 5th floor, Ms. Pax saw AND SHE RECOGNISED ME! WONDERFULLY WARM GREETING! She went and got Ms. Henika from her office, as a kindness to me! (Quite honestly? I almost cried, so appreciative of such kindness. How incredibly wonderful!) I handed Ms. Henika the envelope with copies and explained that these were the papers that she needed when last we met. She seemed QUITE, well, almost “shocked” that I'd take such care to bring them to her. Well, m'dearest “madame”, if YOU make MY life easier, I will do all that I can to make YOUR life easier. Now I wonder if she and Ms. Pax will talk and what Ms. Henika will learn... about me, from Ms. Pax, whom, I must say, was very kind to me before I left the previous time. We shall see... I suppose. We shall see, indeed, if at all. - THAT DONE... AND ON TO THE REST OF THE DAY... Walked down to the street, out of the shelter and... from the shelter I walked to 34th Street and 1st Avenue to get the M34 bus across town to the SIB Library at 35th and Madison Avenue where I passed an hour charging my cell-phone and noting images on all of the printed and proofed pages of the “blog” Journal and planned the following “leg” of the day out at the Peninsula Library in Rockaway. - Well... the “Plan”: Q53 bus to TheRock, Peninsula Library. (I'm so damned HUNGRY right now... and thirsty). Q22 bus/Q53 bus to Waldbaum's for a quick yoghurt lunch and water. Q35 bus to The Junction. Nr.5 train to 14th St./ Union Square. Nr.6 train to 33rd St./Park Av. Walk to SIB Library until 8:00pm and then M16 bus/34th St. back to where this all began. - “Actuality” of the rest of the day... It's now 12:20pm at 53rd Street and Madison Avenue and I'm *tired*. Gee. I wonder why. I'm in scrubs but I'm in air conditioning and IT'S SO HOT, HUMID, DAMP! - 12:55pm and I got an IMMEDIATE CONECTION TO THE Q53 bus! (A little side-note of no particular interest I suppose but, 38-19 69thSt./Roosevelt: “Lucho's” is a Gay *Sports Bar*? Imagine THAT!) - I'm SO SO SO BLEATING HUNGRY! I can FEEL that my blood-sugar's *low*. But... we're movin' here people! We're MOVIN' and no time for stoppin'. - WELL OK THEN NOW! 4:08pm on a Q35 bus to The Junction in Brooklyn. I got my hour on a computer at Peninsula Library. Images are going onto the “digital Journal”! -I also received a NASTY e-mail from Schmulik. He suggested I phone “Apple”. He stressed a “*polite*” call and included the statement: “*I don't need aggravation either.*” OK. You won't get any from me. CUT. FINE. The iPod will cover my monetary investment and hospitality of yore. Call us “even”. - ONWARD to a Q22 bus bus to Waldbaum's. 2 Greek yoghurts, tin of peaches, tin of coffee. Gary, at the agency has a “4-hour per day times 5 days per week” assignment for me in (well of course) Howard Beach. I rang Mrs. E. to learn that Mr. got a

3rd transfusion this morning. All's well with him. He'll probably back on the week-end. But I've screwed me before by holding-out. I'll call Gary, see if I can take his case temporarily... for the hours. (AND THE INCOME!) I'm about to be screwed again, no matter what. I can see it coming. - Now back to SIB Library to continue with this journal. - WELL-HELL! It's been a day! - 9:12pm and at long last... E4: The thermometer reads 31.5°C in here! My body says 40° easy! I've just come from a cold shower and must say that if I hadn't showered in COLD water, I'd soon be rushed out of here in collapse. My body will NOT take much more if this *heat*. I'm feeling it right into the marrow: pain, spasms, cramps. I pray only for death. - Meanwhile, the trip from Peninsula Library went... the Nr.5 train at The Junction became a Nr.2 as we pulled out of the station which means a bit of a different route. I got off at Franklin Avenue, WELL before I'd planned. (Our next El's just come in. Clean bed, clean floor... but another Locker-banger. Oh well frigg. And all chummy with D(arse)vid. Jolly, that.) The Nr.4 train was there at Franklin, but wouldn't make the connection! Conductor saw the 4 of us waiting, and one guy holding one door. Nasty bastard, closed the train doors on us and the train pulled away. So a Nr.5 train came along in moments so I got on that one to Union Square... to a FULLY-PACKED Nr.6 train! I had NO time to waste so I shoved my way onto it. (Whilst waiting for the Nr.6 train, a youngish Black man got to speaking with me... presumably because I'm wearing scrubs. He's a CNA looking for work! HE'S getting paid 8\$/hour! JEEZUS-HELL! And not working enough hours! So much for CNA! It's ALL just WRONG! Some CNAs are getting as much as 18\$/hour! This whole situation is complete SH**!). Meanwhile... at the library, I got an immediate computer at SIB Library (in AIR CONDITIONING!). Many IMAGES are now on the "digital" "*Monogram*" pages! A bit more work needed and lots more proofing lies ahead. The proofed text has to be placed and the formatting needs tweaking. But... PROGRESS! - I stayed a while longer than I worked (IN THE AIR CONDITIONING) then left at about 7:30pm. - Quite the lengthy wait for M34 bus cross-town, but nice people to wait with. - When I got to 2nd Avenue, I walked to 30th Street and zipped in at the "security forces" check-in at this charming establishment we call "the shelter" here. WALKED THE 6 FLIGHTS UP though... *SLOWLY*! - Once up and at the room, I washed unders and was sweat-drenched! - Signed-in when the time came and then showered. - 9:29pm The air in the room is moving a little. El's a "Lights On" for everything and all the while little turd. AND A BLEATING-FRIGGING LOCKER-BANGER LIKE ALL HELL! FRIGG! SLAMMING! FOR NO FRIGGING REASON! Shame... must be a terribly small penis. (The louder the noise the smaller... It's compensatory.) Time... I've a feeling I'll be "jumping" too soon again. I'd like better weather to enjoy my death though, but it's getting to the point where that's not an issue. And that's what it's

looking like lately... just time to “check out” of here. - A note: E1, Black, LOUD. E1 locker-banger. E2 radio noise into the night. E3 Puerto Rican. Not too loud. A bit considerate and respectful. But not silent and not too clean. Just a note. - I think I’m peeling from too much sun at the beach: back and scalp are flaking and itchy. - Call this a “night”... call this a “day”... call this all a “farce” and call the whole freaking thing a “wrap”... for now.

Friday 22 July

6:21am from the M42 bus cross-town yet again. - D(arse)vid was up and down until almost 1:00am this morning. Lights on. Lights off. Lights on. E1 was in and out of the room through the night. Locker-banging. And me? Up at 4:30am this morning. - 7:26am and I’m at Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn already. The heat and fatigue are beginning to take hold. And with 90 minutes before Brooklyn Central Library opens! I’m about *bitter-hateful* just now. About 3.5-4 hours of sleep last night... *Sleep? NOT!* Between the sweating and the chatting and the smoking and the locker-banging and the lights on and the lights off... *Sleep? Oh no! Not me.* - But I had a some-what good “dump” in the Grand Central loo this morning before getting on the train out here. Just enough to make this morning a “Non-Emergency”. So, OK for me on that! - Grabbed the Nr.7 train at Bryant Park to Times Square for a Nr.2 train. Fatigue? I was thinking “Flatbush to the B41 bus to the library”. The Nr.2 train comes *directly* here! Fatigue? Mental melt-down is more like it. - I need a place to lie down and *SLEEP!* (And an iced coffee would be grand. I’ve got a “tenner” in my bag that I’m holding on to for dear life... I don’t even have a “dear life” but I’ve got a dear 10\$. As I sit here, in front of the Brooklyn Central Library, I look across the street and I wonder what the “Union Temple” over there would say if I asked to nap in there. - Plan was: go directly to the Fort this morning. BUT it’s just SO HOT! I considered HomeDepot for a canvas tarp, as cover on the beach. But 11-16\$ spent on something to be used so infrequently? I should think not. So “auto-pilot” brought me here. It’s come to that point: I don’t even have to “think” about destinations or transport... I just move forward and get to someplace. - If I close my eyes right now I’ll drift right off... and the time is moving SO slowly! - I *do* have the “beach stuff” with me. The sheet I lay on needs to be washed. But I just might toss it into storage at some point during the day. - (Oops. Dozed a moment there.) - Breaking a sweat here, just sitting! The air is still. And now I have “company”. A Black woman. No chatting. Too hot. Too tired. - Oh, E1 asked about using the outlet (electrical) last night and D(arse)vid told him “There’s 2 right there.” and pointed to MY bed of course. When I got in last evening D(arse)vid had his phone plugged into it... phone on the

floor. Frigg'im! I ignored it completely and he made quite the rushed little move to retrieve it. Good! He's got that damned outlet above his own bed. It might be high on the wall, but let him figure out how to use THAT one and stay the bleating frigg away from MY bed! - Let's see who... I forget what I was about to enter there... something. Forgot what it was. I keep dozing! Social media time! - 11:26am and Brooklyn Central Library *RUSHING*! I've got to be in Howard Beach on a case by 2:00pm now! - I managed to get the "iTunes" fixed and down-loaded more music! - 350\$-plus deposited into the account today! I have to get to the post office and transfer some of it to the over-draft account at the other banque! And I see my address there is corrected! It was all because of the "950" on the "new" PO Box address! The post office is SUCH a SCREW-UP! - I haven't eaten ALL DAY and now I'm SO hungry! - BUT, I've put ALL the images into the September Journal notes! - OK! I got to get outta here! - 6:12pm on a Q53 bus back to the Dung-heap. - WHAT a day! "iTunes" galore! *Hours* in Peninsula Library. THE *HEAT*! 37 bloody degrees! SWEAT! I actually HAD to *remove* the scrub top. - The patient? FRIGGED-up. Old couple. Neither is mobile. Neither is very pleasant. Their house is a dark place... closed. Dreary. She'd arranged with the Charge Nurse that somebody would be there at 1:00pm. Gary told me 2:00pm. Well. In spite of *WALKING* from the Howard Beach post office (where I got my necessary money order) and arriving *SOAKED* in *sweat*, I was "*released*". No regrets. And 2 hours' pay. Good riddance to those two there. - Mr. E. might come home tonight! WORK! MONEY! YEAH! - This afternoon, as I came out of the Fort, I was listening to Moby. "*So this is good-bye...*" as the bus crossed the Marine Park Bridge. Goodnight Jamaica Bay. I WILL miss you... a LOT! - 9:05pm at E4: and 34.5°C in here! - E1: Jorge Lopez. Engineer. Cuban. Standing in the doorway when I went to do my nightly wash. "You work?" he asks. "Yup." says me. "Respect to you." he says. Imagine? AND he gave D(arse)vid a bit of a go at 6:30am this morning (by the way) when that trash-rot crack-head put his radio on. He (Jorge) even went and got "security" involved. RadioBoy was told to get earphones. (The damned radio's on now and he's walking in and out of the room. Spiteful nigger... Just calling them as they are... with-out malice.) Jorge even noted it's disrespectful to Guillermo(3) "The old man with one arm", as he called him. So now we wait'n'see. As I thought in the cool shower "You don't need *friends* in here but you surely don't need *enemies*". - Did I mention today's "meal"? A Portuguese roll, 2 packages of cheap cold-cuts turkey (77cents each) which I got at Waldbaum's and made sandwiches with, on top of the shopping carts in front of the store and eaten as I waited for the Q21 bus. I was so dehydrated I had all to do to swallow! "Lemon pie" for "dessert. Not bad. Tinned Starbucks coffee. A bit of "Gatorade" and that was on the bus en route to the "patient". - I've just had PopTarts. - It's so

HOT in here. I was OK right after the shower but even the motion of my fingers journalling is making me sweat! This is just WRONG all round. - Tonight, Guillermo (E3) was chatty. He tells that he's asthmatic and feeling the heat. He suggested we can sleep in the "Cooling Room"... sitting on a chair. Well... I've slept in worse I suppose. - I put the PopTarts wrapper on the floor and a mouse just went for it! It gives me ideas... for crumbs by the "crumb" Dear David. Nothing further to say. - EVEN THE AIR/BREEZE IS HOT! Guil says it got to 101°F today. Wrong. Just wrong. - Waiting for bed-check. Hoping for SLEEP! Trying to figure out travel for morning. Libraries open at 10:00am tomorrow. I want to be out by 6:30am. - 9:27pm The smoke detector is blinking little green lights. OK D(arse)vid... go ahead...light up tonight. The damned thing was replaced and seems to be in working order. It would be SO delightful to see your lazy, nasty arse dragged out of here... even if it meant losing an entire night's sleep!

Saturday 23 July

7:05am and here we are at 34th Street and 1st Avenue and MY GUTS WANT TO BURST! WHY? I can sit for 20 minutes on the bowl for nothing. BUT, walk OUT the door and BANG! - This morning began with a COLD shower this morning. Refreshing then and now the sweat begins. - Up at 1:00am this morning with leg cramps. I took a cold shower and went back to bed. It's getting to me. It's getting me. The heat, the fatigue. It's just getting me. - Tempthingie here says 84°F. More like 84°C. - Bowels churn. I'm thirsty. Even the breeze is hitting my guts. - I was thinking of taking the Q32 bus to storage but right now, it just might be cross-town to Penn Station for the loo and the A train. Why are there no public loos in this hell-hole city? WHY? - 8:00am an a quick note whilst I'm sitting on the Q32 bus here: "Gigi's" restaurant at 34th Street between Park and Madison Avenues saved me this morning. I'll get more in on that in a bit. But it's the most important note of the day. - This morning, my beard is trimmed shorter, neater this morning. Long time it hasn't been trimmed short. I've been letting myself go of late. No time... no incentive to look cleaner. Hey! I shower. That's important. The rest? It can wait. - Now I'll have to get the Q53 bus, storage, Peninsula Library. And, I'm in scrubs again. - 7:14pm from the bed at E4: It's 34° at JFK Airport, reports the weather, and it's 34° in this trap! And, for the first time all day, I'm *drenched* with sweat. - This morning, I woke at 5:00am, after a semi-fitful night. I got *some* sleep but not much. *HEAT* mostly. Jorge (the "new" E1) never came in. Now I wonder... *Please*, no more changes. He spoke. He's clean. (There's a large moth flying about as I get these thoughts down.) He appears harmless. He hates D(arse)vid's radio (how can y' not luv that?).

Please, *no more changes*. - OK. So, this morning I trimmed the beard closer. I won't trim it down this time because it shows how terribly drawn my face is. I look utterly *disgusting*. Terribly "drawn", old" eyes... (Although everybody, including Jorge LopezEl, takes me for being in my 40's. I dunno.) I think the beard feels "cleaner". Don't know. Can't really care anymore. - But this morning, in short order after waking, I was out for a very casual stroll to 34th Street, still rather uncertain what to do with the day. It's interesting to be walking the streets of this city, with no particular destination, pondering what to do with an entire day. There are places all over where a "Homeless" person can go, but one needs to be careful, let one finds one's self being arrest for something. And if asked for "residence", should one tell that one is in "the shelter", one's arse could well be in a sling. But I was in scrubs. They're cooler, easier to wash, and they give the impression that I'm off to work. - On my way to the bus stop this morning? BOWELS! I decided to ignore the pain and discomfort and when I got to Madison Avenue, I decided to get the Q32 bus, take a trip to storage, put my beach stuff in there. I'll have little beach time in the coming weeks and, I have been schlepping "beach stuff" all about, for no reason. It's time to clear up the locker anyway. I don't wear "clothes". No sense having them here. Little by little, most of what's in there will go. - But on that stroll, casual as it was, I got to 34th Street between Madison and 5th Avenues and THE CRAMP! I HAD TO GO! At 7:00am on a Saturday morning. So I slowly strolled east along 34th Street... slowly so as not to jolt or bounce any part of my body, and to concentrate on holding the contents of my bowels IN. Well, I learnt that there's no loo at the Dunkin Donuts. I went into Beth Israel clinic and asked to use their "facilities". I had to go into the "reception" area and ask there and they actually told me "No" because they don't open until 8:00am. I went into the DuaneReade at the corner and they told me to "go to the restaurant". I headed out, not knowing WHAT "restaurant" until I found "Gigi's". I walked in and there were tables! A "restaurant". I humbly asked a fellow there if I could use the loo. HE obliged. *JUST IN TIME!* It's the damned PopTarts! One boom and done! It must be the "s'mores" PopTarts I snarfed down in an attack of sheer hunger last night. This morning, they attack! But... THANK YOU GIGI's! You'll probably never know the kindness you gave a desperate person this morning. THANK YOU! - I had a "lighter" return to the bus stop. And so... On we went. - Great connect to Q53 bus that was almost EMPTY! YAY! I wasn't in any condition for a lot of yapping and noise and people. All I wanted to do, really, was to close my eyes and sleep. But I'd settle at that point to just sit, calmly, and close my eyes... and that's what I did. - At storage: NO LIFTS! ConEd (the NYC electric company) cut-back on the power, so read the notice. (OK. Yes. We're not Equatorial but this DAMNED HEAT is taking its toll.) Thankfully the little bag/tote that I was carrying was

nothing. I walked up. On the floor I borrowed a step ladder for the quickest moment and was done. Walked back down the stair and before leaving, made another "Potty stop", just to make certain I wouldn't have ANOTHER attack like earlier and I was back out and back on the streets. - At the Compare Market round the corner from storage, I stopped to get 2 melon Gatorades, 2 tins tropical fruit for "meal" at some point today. I wanted something light to eat in this heat. And over to Woodhaven/Cross Bay Blvd. to get a Q53 bus to Rockaway. I arrived at the Peninsula Library just past 10:00am. Good timing! - I did a little searching and down-loading of music from "iTunes" for a while, since that's the only way I know of to get any music that I like onto this iPod thing. I also got more images onto the digital Journal. In general... I lingered... in the AIR CONDITIONING! - And again, this evening, I left very hesitantly. A quick Q22 bus to B116th Street. A casual stroll to Tribute Park. "Meal" at high tide! Figures. High tide and me NOT at the beach! It's the best time to be IN the water, in the Atlantic! Free and open sea! As the folks type: FML. There's no better way to describe it. - And after my 2 little tins of fruit were eaten, and a bit of a "sit and relax and mourn", I got up and walked, rather gloomily, to the Shuttle station and took the train back into The City. There's still no Nr.5 train service so the A-train was the best choice at this point but... S.L.O.W.! I actually *SLEPT* deep and sound, on the train! I switched for the F train at Jay Street and a D train at 14th Street and that too ran S.L.O.W. BUT... when I got to 34th Street, I got out and strolled, yet again, over to and made it in at the SIB Library by about 3:30pm! - Down-loaded a few more songs on "iTunes". Yes, when Schmulik gave me the iPod, he left a bit of music on it for me, but there's SO much MORE that I want to listen to! Most goes back to the wonderful era of "Mr. G's Roundhill Lodge", 1973 and 1974, but there's MUCH MUCH more that I miss SO terribly that I had on a MULTITUDE of CDs that I'd collected over the course of my life-time. (And once again, I have to include in my notes here: Cyndi, Tony and Joe, even now and for the rest of my breathing years I will pray that you get nothing less than you deserve for all the pain you've caused me, you HATEFUL, MISERABLY HATEFUL bits of rotting, festering, maggot-infested waste! Music, books, never mind the clothes, art, furniture! GONE! Band of thieves, the lot of you. Scheming, plotting, conniving thieves! I don't even want to SEE, I don't really care to KNOW... I just hope and pray that you get what you deserve.) OK... after all the iPod business, I even got yet another hour on-line at the library... THE BORDER SKETCHES FROM "MONOGRAM" ARE DONE! Now to correct text, insert a few images. Bingo! I can die... the story will remain... for as long as the internet lives, and the servers at "WordPress". Hey, maybe someday, somebody will stumble on them and learn... the TRUTH! - THEN... a phone call: Mr. E. is HOME! (So why the frig have I not been contacted by the agency?) I'M BACK

TO WORK! (I DID complete the Department Of Labour complaint today too.) - Well... all my day-wandering done, and my little “errands” and “chores” complete, at about 6:00pm, I headed for an M16 bus back to this turd-box. And when I got to the room... D(arse)vid was in (of course), radio on (of course). I got “comfy”, hand-washed the beach-sheet. It’s on the locker to dry overnight now. Washed water/coffee bottles. Made my instant coffee for tomorrow. And now, I am on the bed, wearing scrub bottoms only and DRENCHED WITH SWEAT! - A note: I brought the freshly-washed sheet in, put it on the locker, D(arse)vid commences farting! Crackhead son of a bitch! Stench! That’s about the sum total of that useless bit of... well... uselessness. - Thankfully though, right now, the air in the room is moving! Not an actual “breeze” but I can HOPE. - Nodding here at 8:08pm PS: My locker was a little *roach nest*! It’s clean now but certainly not “clean enough”. There are places in it that I can’t get to, and what it needs is a hosing! But for now, it’s a LOT better than it was. Hopefully now it’s inhospitable to the roaches... past and future. My freshly-washed scrubs bottoms have gunk on them from laying on the locker. I come in early to be reminded why I shouldn’t. This place IS HELL (and just as hot too).

Sunday 24 July

8:15am waiting for a Q32bus at Madison Avenue and 42nd Street on a Sunday morning in NYC, bound, eventually, to Queens and storage. - This morning, after the alarm sounded, I fell back to sleep until almost 6:00am. When I woke, it was a matter of “Bust’n’Bolt”, for no particular reason though, other than the fact that I just CANNOT be in that room for any length of time! “Bust” out of the bed and “Bolt” for the door out of here! - My bed and pillow were SOAKED with sweat when I woke! It’s all beginning to smell sour from sweat. I’ve MUCH to wash now. But the sheet I’d washed last night was delightfully dry. *It* goes to storage this morning. - I’d sorted the locker last night and surprisingly, there’s not much in there. I’m prepping to relocate... middle of the night, either because of the shelter (a transfer for some kind), or because I’ll simply snap and walk out, or (*PLEASE!*) walk out the door to VT. SOON-SOON TO VT! PLEASE! OH PLEASE! - Anyway... this morning, I did what I had to do (gulp my morning coffee, head to the loo and shower and dress) and quite and rather quickly, headed out of the building for an up-town M15 bus from the shelter to 42nd Street where I caught the M42 to Grand Central to use the loo... just in case. There wasn’t an “emergency”, but I felt I should “go” before heading off into the day. - The considerations for the day, at this moment, include: Mid-Manhattan Library open 10:00am to 6:00pm, Brooklyn Central Library 1:00-5:00pm. I’m “plotting”. But right now... Storage first.

Then?... My existence: Then? - Oh, and there's a possibility of rain today. I'll *HAVE* to change shoes. BOTH of the Adidas have holes in the soles and I don't have enough bags to cover my feet. *DAFUK* (Hebrew: "*Fucked up*") indeed. - In the meantime, a little about LAST NIGHT: Well! Jorge left last night! DAMNIT! Here we go again. What's with El? The *cursed* bed in the room. I wonder: It seems each room has ONE bed that keeps turning over. Who died a merciless death in that spot over the history of Bellevue? What soul lingers there in Hell? I have to wonder. (In days of yore, on the 5th floor, in room now 5W-101, it was bed Nr.D16... how well I can still recall the constant horrors that landed in that bed... right up to the end.) And now? I dread what's to come in the middle of *tonight*. - I almost *lost it* last night: D(arse)vid with the lights and radio. I finally came right out and asked, in the most civil tone I could muster through my mad anger: "Do I disturb you when I wake at 4:30 in the morning?" "No." he said directly. "Do I disturb you when I get ready for work?" "No." "Do you hear me leave at 5.30-6.00?" and "No.". "OK then. Just wondering." The light stayed on, radio too. The old man's brain-dead (which should come as no surprise, considering his "crack" habits). Then, the light goes off, and he lights a cigarette! IN the room! HOW in HELL'S name, does he get away with pulling this sh**? Aside from the fact that he's a crack-head and obviously mentally WRONG, there MUST be something that can be done to rectify his violations. But, no. We're expected to suffer through it. The "staff" doesn't give a flying rat's arse. THEY have NO connection with or to ANY of this. THEY come and go and that's that. - Before the confrontation, I'd just posted on social media, that the old man (my father) tried, for 16 years, to kill me. Some dumb-arse replied: 'Many of us were verbally or physically abused leading to depression, instability and homelessness.' What a bunch of "Freudian" bunk! Blame somebody else for your own "depression, instability and Homelessness". REALLY! *FACT*: My "problem"? *TRUST*! I "TRUST" *too many, too much*. And I get SO PAINFULLY SCREWED! (Note: NOT ANY LONGER. NOT EVER AGAIN.) THAT, THE TRUST, is what led ME to "Homelessness". It had NOTHING (or VERY precious little) to do with the old man's ignorance and stupidity.- 8:29am *on* the Q32 bus! I DO swear, if some woman hadn't gotten off this bus, I'd've missed it. I'm so out of almost everything all around me now that I'm not paying attention. The bus pulled up to the stop and my brain wasn't even partially functioning! Nothing! But then the woman got off the bus and I suddenly SNAPPED back, realised that that was the bus I was waiting for and quickly got on. Only 2 of us on here. Sweet! - I'm in scrubs again and hoping for "the telephone call"... please call me and send me to Mr. E. this morning! I NEED the *income*... NOW! NOW! NOW! - Oh.. look at this: 8:35am The bus had to take a detour for some reason and it brought us up Park Avenue to 59th Street and, glancing out the window, I noticed here, this

morning, that 500 Park Avenue, which is where, SO many years ago I worked for a Brazilian banque (Banerj), the 1st floor that used to be our “lobby” is now TD Banque! Imagine? My past is disappearing... like my soul. - As I think about my past disappearing, I think too: I just can’t get past “Mrs. Daughter”: She grew up in Glendale/Forest Hills. Lives in Bayswater and asks *ME* “Where’s Howard Beach?” No wonder she went “Black-hat” Orthodoxy. Mindless twit! And to think that I have to ring her tomorrow to get a part of my “past” that’s now in her possession. I’ll arrange to meet at Peninsula Library, get my things, have done with it. Sever and walk away. Peninsula Library should be easy enough for her to find... being ON the peninsula and NOT TOO far from her front door. It’ll make it a bit more difficult for me, of course. It would have been a kind gesture, since she’s driving a vehicle, to meet me at storage, but... I’m not “Orthodox” and therefore, most certainly NOT worth the effort. I understand. TWIT!) - 8:44am and the bus pulls off the 59th Street Bridge and onto... QUEENS BLVD! OPEN SPACE AND NOT THE CITY! Coming here is like suddenly breathing after a long period of breath-holding. It’s so open, and there’s so much sky to be seen! How wonderful! - 9:20am and Woodhaven Blvd. and more open sky and space around me! But I’m concerned: The sky is looking a bit over-cast and my bowels are calm. DOOM is to come eventually, no doubt, if my bowels are calm. But here we are, on a South-bound Q53 bus, rolling down a wide-open boulevard, and on the way to storage, which is, in its own right, a “re-uniting” with “me”... even for the briefest moments... moments I cherish and appreciate SO much. - CATCH-UP TIME HERE: I stopped by storage for a quick moment of exchange and such and, to my absolute joyful amazement... *AZIZ! was at storage.

(A while back, over the Summer, when I was living in Rockaway, and running back and forth to storage now and again, and I don’t know how this got dropped or was never mentioned, I got to storage one morning and only quickly needed the step-ladder to get to my “locker”. The only one available at the moment was being used by a Black fellow a couple of lockers way from mine, so I politely asked if I could use it, for a few brief moments and he was so kind. We chatted a bit as I grabbed what I needed and as we chatted he mentioned “the shelter”. HE WAS IN THE SHELTER... THE SAME SHELTER I’D LEFT! Well! To be noted in the book of “Can You Believe It?”, not only was he in THE SHELTER... he was in D18!!! MY OLD BED! Oh! It was truly a most amazing moment. “Homelessness” seems to create a “bond” that never disappears and we instantly became “Friends”... especially since we both experienced the same bed assignment! We laughed, exchanged stories, even down to the “Floor Plan” that he and I BOTH snatched from the frame on the wall! It was like two kids from school meeting again after one had been moved away. It was almost as if we’d known each-other for the longest while! And he told me that he

HATED the room, HATED the bed! The guys in there at that time were miserable, filthy, lousy, nasty and the room constantly stunk of urine! I told him of how we, the “old crew”, mopped the floors, scrubbed the toilets, showers and sinks. And he told me that it was NOTHING even remotely similar any more. Ah... it was a bit of a heart-ache to my naive heart. (Little did I know that I'd be back in that shelter, about a year later, to see it all for myself.)

And here, again, today... Aziz, one of the little delights, to see good people again. Life... it has its moments of wonder.) But today brings heart-wrenching news: They (the shelter) tossed him! They'd put him in a hotel! (Well, they call it “Three Quarter Housing”. It's a hotel room or, in best-case, an actual studio flat, that's shared with another person. It's not completely out of the “Shelter System” but it's not in an actual “shelter”. There's some kind of “security” present on the premises and, as in Aziz's case, he has to turn his key in when-ever he leaves the place.) As he tells it: Some bastard “security guard” had picked a fight with him, telling him he's going to f*** Aziz's Mother, sister and daughter! Well, first of all, “Security” isn't there to pick fights with the residents. Second, “Security” is supposed to be trained how to “defuse” a potentially volatile situation and NOT feed into it! But above and beyond all else, WE, the residents know that that's NOT how it works in the reality of the shelter because MOST of the “Security” staff are ignorant morons who look down on the Homeless with the same disdain as most other folks and, if they get the chance, they use the Homeless as their punching bags or old “kicking cans”, most often verbally, but sometimes physically as well. WE are, in their estimation, lower than turds on the bottoms of their shoes. Well, Aziz apparently responded as many would when told that someone is going to “f*** their Mother, sister and daughter” and, as would be the result, gave the offensive little bastard and good “wham”! AND, as is common and typical, the staff of the shelter sided with the “Security” staff and the one who got punished? The “Homeless” guy. Aziz was put out... on “SANCTION”! No entry into ANY shelter in NY City for some “unknown” length of time! Usually, the maximum is 30 days, but this? “Unknown”. It's SO easy for DHS to toss a Homeless person back out onto the streets, confirming my thoughts: THEY don't give a half-turd about us, because, for every ONE of us they toss, there are hundreds waiting to take our place. THEIR jobs are secured by that fact. WE are expendable at ANY moment... even on a whim. But today I learnt one MORE interesting little fact about Aziz: His “case worker”? Ms. Pax! (And, in the words of Dear Kendal: “The plot thickens”.) She told him to “lay low” because she thinks that “somebody's out to get him”. It's been difficult for Aziz since. But, as he says, he's rebounding. “We” do that... “rebound”. I SO wished that I could have offered him a place... even if it meant just getting him back into the shelter. But, when “sanction” is pulled, that photo they take of us at “Intake”?

THAT'S part of what they use it for: "Sanctioned" people get their photo pasted up at the door! No entry into the shelter... at all! I was at quite a loss, but he tells me that he has someplace to go to for a while and that I shouldn't worry. (I will anyway of course. He's good people. Life should treat him much better than all of this.) - It truly was terrific seeing Aziz. But he kept yawning. He's working. Nights I believe. WORKING! Great guy. ANOTHER "Working Homeless" person! Oh... I told him about this Journal and he excitedly kept telling me that I should publish it. "It's not just YOUR story man, it's ALL OF US! It's OUR story! Please, promise me you'll do something with it when you're done!" So, I did... I promised him. I don't know how, I don't know when, I don't even know that anybody would want to read something like this. But I promised him. Maybe one of these days, if I can. - 11:12am AAAaaannnd I'm on an A train to... TheRock. - I left storage at about 9.45, thought of going to Brooklyn Central Library for 30 minutes on a computer there, followed by Mid-Manhattan Library until 6:00pm. And... I need to WASH MY SHEETS TONIGHT! Then... tomorrow... I can deal with that later. I don't even know if I'll be called to work tomorrow so, I can deal with that later... but hunger set in and so I decided to head out to Rockaway and get some food right away. So, I got on the A train to Waldbaum's for a fresh fruit bowl (5\$ for a simple plastic "case" of bits of fruits that probably didn't sell in the produce section), 2 yoghurts, a bottle of Starbucks coffee, and some Gatorade for re-hydration. - As I'm walking along the aisles, half dead from fatigue, I happened to spy Matt M., a neighbour and good people from my days of Rockaway residence. Another really warm greeting of "old friends"! He tells me that he and Helene (who lived in the same house as I did) got a place at B117 Street on The Blvd. A studio flat for 900\$/month all inclusive. I don't know HOW they did that, but I'm glad to know that they're settled into a new place and that Helene is finally OUT of that horrid little place we both lived in (me on the 2nd floor and she, on the 3rd... and then the 4th... and then out). We all chatted and caught-up with the latest of "the old neighbourhood", like neighbours will do, and they were off and so too, was I. - I strolled over to Tribute Park (alone, as usual) for my "meal". The skies were cloudy and still HOT! Right through the clouds! This wouldn't have been a good day to be out on the beach anyway so I didn't feel as if I were missing anything. - AND THEN... As I was waiting to cross Beach Channel Drive to get to the park, a "toot"! Geoff (of RAA and the Fort). He waved. I waved. Since I haven't visited with anybody from the "Artists' Alliance in quite the while, I wonder how word will go round, having been "seen" in the area... Yes, I'm still here. Screw them. Screw them all, really. That's all I could think. - I continued on my own way, sat in the park, by the bay, and devoured my lunch, in silence and relative peace. - Feeling only a bit better, thanks to having eaten, at last, it was, sadly, time to

leave my little “home village” and head back into The City. So, again, it was a reluctant stroll across the street to catch a Q35 bus. But, once again today, another little joy! The driver was WILLIE! SHE is such a HUGE part of my “life” out here. She was probably the first person, other than Barbara who used to talk with me, as I'd ride the bus up and down the peninsula, learning more and more about my new “home”. It's always such a GREAT day if it includes a talk with WILLIE! But today, unfortunately, I dozed during the run to The Junction. (I'm so “wiped-out these days... just so tired, all of the time that, as soon as I get the chance, I simply tend to fall asleep!) We quick-chatted at the end of the line though. Briefly, because she needed to turn round for the return. -I left the bus, went down the stairs to the Nr.2 subway train to Atlantic Avenue to connect with the D train and off to 42nd Street/Bryant Park and the Mid-Manhattan Library. - When I came up from the subway at Bryant Park, there was a voice message from Marilyn E., Mr. E's daughter-in-law! I rang Mr. E.'s home number and Mrs. E. answered... Can I come to work there tomorrow? Of course! (3 reasons: (1)It gets me out of The Shelter with destination and purpose... (2) Returning to the job endears me to the family, and hopefully will give me job longevity... (3) I'll get to see if the agency screws me over by sending somebody else (as I expect them to do). Settled. But not one mention of “pay”, so I'll be brutally screwed with this one. I'm more than happy to get back on the case, but with-out confirmation from the agency, I doubt the *family* pay me. Still, I won't be in Shelter and WILL be in a HOME! At this point in time, even just being in a house, some-where, for a few hours, able to cook something to eat and having a hot coffee is better than the “normal” day. And, in the long-run, I'll see how it all turns out anyway. Right now... I'm BACK TO WORK! OK! - Away we go and to the Mid-Manhattan Library. WELL! I get there, find a place at a table and... NO PLACE TO PLUG IN THE IPOD! - (DAMNIT! I had SO MUCH journalled GONE! I'm trying to get these notes in, tapping on the iPod and as I do, I'm falling asleep and when I do, the stylus rests on the phone screen and wipes everything out! Let's try to recapture as best I can...) - I managed to reserve a computer with a 45 minute wait until it was free. Took a seat by the window on the 4th floor. NO AIR CONDITIONING! NO FAN! MISERABLY HOT! And the WiFi (to try and down-load more “iTunes” music) was sh**! Just horrid. I sat, sweating. - Computer? Much like too many of them in this place. Bad key-board. Non-functioning mouse. I got to social media and bitched about the computer and general conditions, to NYPL (New York Public Library system) and Mayor Bloomberg”, and I'd no sooner sent my rants when the damned computer cut my session! WORTHLESS! Well, HELLO! With great and intense “suddenly” I *HAD* to use the loo! Ran to the stairs to go down to the 3rd floor for the “rest rooms” and in there, 2 guys in separate stalls.

The place stunk! The one free stall was FILTHY. So I went back to the stairs and hurried up to 5th floor. There, 2 Homeless guys. One was doing his *laundry* in the basin. The floor was covered in urine! (I'm supposing it was urine... and the spilling from the one doing his laundry.) But I HAD, HAD, *HAD* to go! So I super-padded the bowl with as much paper as I could. (Heat cramps are killing me!). When I'd done, I couldn't wait to leave! And it was only about 4:25pm. I didn't want to get back to the shelter too early... and have to put up with what-ever this day would confront me with there. But I didn't want to be in the library either... in the heat, the stench of the place, the "other Homeless" people... Ah-HAH! There was something else that needed to be done today and that would keep me busy and out of the shelter... - Out the door, into the streets and away to Staples on 40th Street at 6th Avenue. I copied pay statements for the next "case worker meeting". When I actually looked at them and saw how much they totalled to, I realised that these would probably come to no good. 2 of them averages 200\$/week. I'll be losing Food Stamps now, no doubt... "FML" as 'tis posted on the social media these days. Well. It's done. The chore and what-ever is to come. - Because of the heat and humidity, and the fact that I wasn't feeling well at all, really, AND, because I have an "Unlimited" car-fare card, I strolled back up to 41st Street and got on the D train... down to 34th Street. On the train, even MORE fun for the day. A lovely and quite charming young Black lady came to me to ask how she could get the "train to Washington". I knew she meant Penn Station. I don't know WHY, but I offered to help her. Come to find out, she's from FRANCE! We got to speak a bit of French and I can't help but wonder if this recent exposure to the language here is preparing me for a move to Vermont. YES! I say YES! So, as it went, I brought her right to Penn Station. She was so thankful, but I told her that I had the time and it was my pleasure (and yes it was... if for nothing other than the French-speaking). Since I was there, across the street (almost), I toddled off to Jack's 99cent Store. OK... 4 cakes of "Irish Spring" soap (because it not only take the "Homeless" odour off the body, it also cleans the air whilst it's in the locker), a plastic case to keep the cell-phone and the iPod relatively safe, and a bottle of aspirin (to keep the blood thin and help me cope with the heat these days). AND... all this running about for the day was... DONE! To and M16 bus and back to the Dung-Heap to face... who-knows-what (and what-ever it is, I never actually look forward to seeing it).- I was back and in and up in the dorm by about 6:00pm after a zip through the "security" and a ride up in the lift! Once in the room, I got straight to the "chores" that had to be done there. - Changed into yellow trunks. Grabbed bottom sheet from the bed and the pillow case. WASH! Put them in locker to dry. T-shirt next. (I put plastic bags on head-rail of the bed so the wet shirt doesn't lay

directly on the metal... hang t-shirt.) That all done, it was time to trim my beard, make coffee for tomorrow and completely ignore David who had the radio on (ignoring me and everybody else, as he does). - 7:37pm at E4: WASH! I got that done! Sheet, pillow case, t-shirt. OK! And beard trimmed. Coffee made. O,OK. Made up for totally wasted time at Mid-Manhattan Library. - And it's *down* to 30°C in here! - David the sh**head is over in his locker with a bleating cigarette! And my just-washed laundry is out on my locker! Wet! I *NEED* to address this... but with whom? I wonder if Jorge got transferred because he bitched at that useless trash-rot. DAMN! - This evening, he's listening to "Olde Tyme" radio which was followed by show tunes, on WBAI. He listens to progressive nostalgia and yet, is SO BLOODY INCONSIDERATE and really



too ignorant for description. - Well, I tried to journal but kept nodding off! The heat, humidity, lack of sleep, concern about income, the move. ALL and more. - OK... signed-in. E1 "Unassigned"! Showered. Lie-down, wait for intrusions to come with the night. - I think the 4 aspirins helped a bit. I'm not cramping and feeling a "touch" better than I did for most of the day. - Addendum in the middle of the night (since I'm awake) I don't know what hour: knock on the door. "Sorry fellas. E1." Tall Black guy. Well dressed. Well spoken. Didn't slambang the locker. Even apologised to me for putting on the light! (TOO GOOD! MAJOR TROUBLE COMING!). David woke, sat up, FINALLY turned the radio off! And in due course, all went quiet. - The end.

Monday 25 July

8:08am and BACK at Howard Beach where, this morning, I arrived at 7:15am. I was up at 4:30am this morning and last night's E1 was gone already. I got me together and toddled out the door to the usual M15 bus to 14th Street to cross-town bus to and OLD A train where I SLEPT almost

ALL the way. - This morning the weather in Howard Beach is DELIGHTFUL! On my way to the house, a woman across the street spoke. She says the E.'s said they hope I stay on the case. Lou (the son) said "I'm so glad to hear your voice." when he called the house shortly after I arrived. (As if they're checking on me?) Mr. E. is still sleeping at the moment and I have no intention of waking him any time too soon. I have a bit of quiet right now and I'm going to enjoy it. - I'm quite tired. CRAMPS this morning! and only just a tiny BM. But I'm sitting in a comfy chair, fan on, in quiet, and my morning coffee is done. I'm OK. - 7:01pm at the Mid-Manhattan Library lekhaysred (EXHAUSTED! SO much so that that's what I'd tapped.) OK? But I don't want to go to the Dung-Heap yet and was hoping for an "iTune" or 2 (but the WiFi here is screwed up again). I have to ring "Mrs. Daughter" at 8:00pm and quite honestly, I'm really rather dreading that. And, quite frankly, considering that I've put in a full day at work, on precious little sleep all night, and have been up and about from since 4:30am this morning, I'm really rather resentful of the fact that she's making this retrieval of my things so incredibly ridiculous. This could have been handled very quickly, easily and should be a done deal by now. And the longer I have to think about it, the farther from "resentful" and the closer to "angry" I become. Oh, never mind, I suppose. Meanwhile, I'm on the 5th floor, quiet but annoying, this "no WiFi"... I wonder if they tracked my nasty tweets yesterday about the miserable condition of the computers and associated to my card. ANYway... 10 hours at Mr. E.'s today at 10 dollars/hr and Marilyn simply handed me 5 20\$ bills and no comments. No "thank you". Nothing. As if she was FORCED into having to tolerate me! Well, it's more than I'd've made *on* the books. AND today I got the call that the case is open again AND I'm back to 7 hours/day, 7 days/week. Happy? ONLY because of the income... and truly, NO other reason. NO other reason. - Right now I NEED FOOD! I had only a toast and ice cream ("Ensure" ice cream though... "Nutritional"... right) all day. - WiFi won't do "iTunes" when I get any connection to it at all! This phone is aggravating me. - IT HAD BETTER BE A QUIET NIGHT TONIGHT!

Tuesday 26 July

6:04am The morning "routine" and out the door to the M15 bus. "Schpritzie" weather this morning. And, as is usually the case and condition: Bustin'bowels. - Last night, no wash: clothes nor me. I came into the building, up the stairs, into the room, changed out of my work scrubs, laid on the bed and waited for "sign-on". Got up, signed-on on the 5th floor and had a schmooze with Steve there. Back to the room, took 2 aspirins and went to bed! To... SLEEP! - 6:13am on an

M14 bus: I didn't hear El come in last night, nor David's damned radio, NOR bed-check! I woke "chilled" this morning. No cover. Chilled. Nice. But I needed 2 trips to the loo before leaving this morning and my guts are PAINFUL. I didn't really "eat" yesterday and only added "Doritos" en route back to the shelter. My body is just SO hateful. - Last evening I tried calling "Mrs. daughter"... no answer, so I left a message. In return, I got a "message": One word: my name, nothing more. Figures. The world. BS. THIS situation with my belongings is getting out of hand... and there's NO excuse for it. - Well... just get me to Howard Beach please... CLEAN! No "incidents" with the guts. - 7:18 Howard Beach again and this morning I made it here by 7:06am! I SLEPT... I mean "*SLEPT*" on the A train all through Brooklyn. I barely recall seeing Nostrand Avenue station. So... it's back to the "Riverdale Days" where, the only rest I ever got, pulling that 24-hours/7 days with Margot was... sleeping on the A train. (I HAVE to sleep... it's the ONLY way to control my guts. If I'm awake, I'm in painful discomfort. BUT, as long as I'm either asleep or even dozing, I'm fairly OK... when I got *here*, it was gas. Still, I can't risk "more".) This morning, Mr. E. will have French toast and I will have scrambled eggs. (*WE* will have breakfast.) - I have to get coverage for Sunday. Mr. E.'s hospital stay threw my "off" week-ends and I MUST see Ms. Henika THIS Sunday. MORE NECESSARY MONEY BEING STOLEN FROM ME... Courtesy of Department of Homeless Services who have NO respect nor consideration for those of us who actually WORK toward getting OUT of the system. But, logic/rationale? It's actually because I have a set date for myself to get finances and get out. It's "me", not the world. I could simply take the time off and leave it at what-ever income I make. BUT, THAT'S NOT what I want to do. I want the income and to get the actual HELL OUT of the "system"! The sooner the better. - Meanwhile, this business with "Mrs. Daughter" just pisses me the frigg off! "Where's Howard Beach?" she asks me! Dumbarse. Really! And I'll carry the brunt of the parcels (as usual). SHE has a car. BUT I don't dare suggest S. Ozone/storage. Me? I'd deliver to the door if I had the car. But then, me? I'm "Schmuck o' the World". And she? Oh! She's "Orthodox" which means SHE does crap-all for the world. Well. That's THEM. I'm just looking forward to closure... the end... buh-bye. Her parents had it VERY VERY well for the time I was in their employ. But I wasn't VERY VERY worth a couple bucks more. Now even their daughter... Enough, let it go. - Mr. E. is awake. I'm rather tired. I'm here. Clocked-in 7:18am. On the clock at 8:00am. (I don't and won't get paid for any time before 8:00am.) This is MY time now. I'm here... period. - 9:25pm and end of day at bed Nr.E4: (The radio's going. No Darsevid to be seen nor found about.) I am relieved to note that it was a quite the day. Mr. E. was in delightful spirits. Talkative. Showered. ATE ALL BREAKFAST AND LUNCH! And I brought him next-door at 2:30pm for his birthday cake. A

GREAT day! - I had a 3-egg omelet with cheese and finished the “old” pound-cake. I ATE! - Left 3:18pm and went to Peninsula Library. No computer until... I’d gotten a couple “iTunes” whilst waiting for a computer and then, just as I get logged-on I hear “Judah...”. Mrs. Daughter had arrived. Timing was incredible, since I’d JUST gotten the computer time. She said she’d look for a book whilst I worked on the computer. Well... the computer wouldn’t allow the phone to be connected to it for down-loading anything, so I logged-off. (9:33pm and the turd-head, Darsevid is over in his locker, smoking.) Well indeed, Mrs. Daughter brought along 3 large items: afghan, sleeping bag, pillows along with some “Toiletries (some are not mine), my Bustello coffee, a bottle of vermouth. What the Hell? OK. Anyway... Mrs. Daughter was a bit hurried... She wouldn’t even offer a lift to storage when I told her that I’d now have to get these large bags from here, in Rockaway, out to S. Ozone Park. As I said as she left: bitch. But I got the Q53 bus quickly, put all into storage and was out by just about 5:30pm! I even had time to stop at the RiteAid for cigarettes and then walk up to catch the A train... - OH! BUT AT THE TRAIN... The damned turnstile/gate thing jammed me! Stuck! I had to ask 2 Transit cops for help. NO GODDAMNED TOKEN BOOTH! Thankfully, the cops just happened to be there! So there’s just another “system” in “The City” that’s screwed all round wrong. (I need to get out and away from here... really.) The 1st cop (female) was too busy with 2 Black kids who were just sitting there. When I called for help she turned, and with a snarl, snapped at me: “You gotta wait. I’m busy with this.” (Just open the damned gate, stupid bitch.) A male cop comes. WELL! The “Emergency” exit requires a KEY! (which he had). A KEY! For an “emergency” exit. Shows just how screwed-up NYC and the MTA truly are. Opening the gate took him all but a matter of mere seconds. Still... had this been an emergency of any kind, there’s no telling what the results would have been. AND... that female cop’s response to me? Totally inappropriate and un-necessary. But, this is NYC today. The WHOLE damned city’s gone inappropriate and un-necessary. Time to get out of here. The “New Yorkers” are GONE! My turn. - On the A train to the L train to the 6 train (with all of my “Connecticut” things in tow of course) to SIB Library where... iTunes! Including “Blue Rodeo”, “Mavericks” and “Nek”! YEAH! MY music is coming back! And I left just before 8:00pm. The guard at SIBL knows me so well: “Where have you been? I don’t see you long time.” he commented as I left. (Gibbons at Mid-Manhattan Library, the folks at Peninsula Library, this morning a bus driver on the Q11 bus... I’m “Known”... in 2 boroughs. Known... still...) - I got into the Dung-Heap. Ortiz at the entrance. “How’s it goin’?” he asks in a kind tone of voice. Known... It’s rather nice, in its own fashion. - Well, when I finally got up to the room I’m greeted by David’s radio. Dark room. I got right to changing, to my laundry, and sign-in. - Tonight, El came

IN *AT* bed-check. The idiot doing bed-check ALMOST wouldn't let him sign! The frigger. But it went OK. I'm rather glad. El's relatively quiet, he's clean. It splits the room again: Filth on one side, People on the other. - OH. And David turned the radio down! Imagine? - 9:38pm I had to take a HOT shower tonight... no cold water again. Took my aspirins. Need to try for sleep. (Now I lay me down to sleep and pray Darsevid lands in hospital... in pain.) - Note on the day though: After all of what's happened, I actually feel good about severing the connection with MGs and especially their daughter. And now... I put my head on the pillow... to end the day. - Odd though: I'm feeling so much better now that I've no ties to the MGs. It's done. I'm "free of them". Leaving makes me feel so much better. Odd... Schmulik said I allow people to take advantage, and then I am offended when they do and then I sever connections. Maybe that's something I need to work on? - Looking forward to "new music".

Wednesday 27 July

7.41 Howard Beach, at work where I clocked-in at 7:58am This morning I woke at 4:30am. No BM. Cool shower. El left about 5:15am. I think he works! How wonderful! (He also folds his mattress as I do... as I learnt on the 7th floor.) Out on time to WAIT for the M15 bus. WAIT! whilst my guts felt as if they needed to BURST! Just missed the M14 bus. More waiting. More gut-churning. WAIT for the FarRock A train... THEN? Sit and sleep all the way. I TRULY REALLY NEED to get OUT of NYC. - Slept well last night. Want more sleep now. - 5:25pm B98 bus WAITING... Wasted hour at Peninsula Library this evening. And my guts are wrenched. - 8:42pm The trip from Playland/Rockaway to the SIB Library took ALMOST 2 HOURS!!! BUT... I got several Québec "iTunes"! FRENCH MUSIC! at SIB Library. I need to get back to proofing the printed "blog". - I NEED TO GET OUT OF NYC! - Good day over-all though. And now, waiting to sign in whilst Darsevid (E2) SMOKES HIS CIGARETTE... IN HIS BED! IN THIS ROOM! AGAIN! - Hot. Sweaty. No laundry. Nothing to eat. I'm SO tired. - Today I got an e-mail from Belinda! (She's the one who sent me "Rain".) - My eyes are closing as I tap this out. PLEASE! Let me sleep tonight!

Thursday 28 July

6:08am at 31st Street and 1st Avenue. "Life", "being"... cursed when the very thing you hate most is your own body. When, EVERY day begins the VERY same way: wrenched, twisted, knotted,

painful gut. Needing to “go” but unable until... it’s not possible (on the street, the bus, the train). EVERY day, no matter what. And you realise: it’s something YOU cannot control but something that controls YOU! Horrific! - I can’t enjoy the sun-rise, perfect temperature, the breeze... not even my music! My body wants to spew its contents... I want to spew... - This morning: as I’m trying to get ready for work, I’m in the “toilet” room (this was a hospital with “communal” toilets, let’s remember), the floor is covered in urine, OLD urine, sticky in some places and slippery in others. These freaks in here insist upon peeing on the floor. Hey! Why not just pee in the bed? Anyway, as I’m brushing me teeth at the basin, an older Black man come out from a stall. He’s bare-foot! He comes walking over to me and out of the no-where he yells at me “GIMME A CIGARETTE!” Stupid son of a bitch doesn’t realise just how close to the edge of Existence I am of late. I looked at him via the mirror in front of me and simply said: “GO T’HELL!” And this morning, I honestly and sincerely meant the very thing! “GIMME ONE!” he yelled again. And again, but this time turning to look him directly in the eye I snapped at him “GO T’HELL!” WELL! Damned if it didn’t work out quite nicely when he turned and walked out of the room. So much for THAT! Apparently I’m not such a “nice and quiet fellow” after all! And yes... I AM rather proud of me. I’m tired of so many things and being abused is on the top of my list. NO MORE! - 7:43am and Howard Beach and what the Hell? and FML (as they say) again! Up at 4:30a, to get here at 7:30am!. Even with a break-down to 1 bus and 1 train. I NEED to get OUT of NYC! HATE! Other-wise? BUT... this morning, I put the ear-buds into my ears and cranked-up the volume to the likes of Nek. Bruno Peletier. Paul Piché. Music! WHAT a delightful way to begin a day... NO ENGLISH! (I’d journal in non-English but it would defeat the purpose.) - HOWever, I must say that I dread checking the balance in my chequing account now. I must STOP the music (purchases)(for a while). - Hey, as a thought completely out off topic: This morning I had some prune juice... let’s hope. Something else I “NEED”... to clean my in-sides to the out-side. - Oh...and the things from CT? My “Zest” bath soap is missing. Whom-so-ever gathered threw in crap that *isn’t* mine and missed the “Zest” *and* a new, un-opened bottle of shampoo. (Unless Mrs. Daughter figured it was hers, some-how.) Me? I’m just cutting the whole thing off. Let them handle their affairs. The “books” of life and kindness are dreadfully off balance (not in my “favour”), but friggit... friggem. - 8:41pm at E4: I’m rather in the dark. The room is dark. Radio on WBAI, Black-bias programme (speaking for themselves, of course). As if Obama’s done such a splendid job. - Speaking of which: The Canadian dollar is STRONGER AGAIN! Yesterday, I looked at “Archambault Musique” in Montréal and the US prices are higher! GO CANADA! - That said: It’s been a miserable day. NO BM! I’ve tried frosting, prune juice, pineapple... Nothing’s worked and

this is day 3! NOT GOOD! To think the day begins with such “urge” and... nothing. I need to *go* on the streets, just let go when the “urge” strikes. Would serve NYC right. - Work? Not terribly easy. Mr. E. had a *bad* day: no concentration, his legs didn’t want to work. (But I made 3 eggs for me for breakfast and had a half tin of tuna for lunch today. Oh well there.) At 3:53pm Mrs. E. asked if Mr. wanted to go next-door to be with her until her kids came home to attend to their kids. YUP! But I didn’t leave too late... earlier than usual in fact. Later than I SHOULD, but earlier than usual. - Before heading back into The City, I stopped at storage for more Vitamin C that I have in that HUGE bottle there. The storage locker needs to be PACKED, in normal fashion. It’s quite the mess in there. Shameful! - Then on to SIB Library, where I “iTuned” more Québec! I NEED, MUST, HAVE TO STOP THE MUSIC! I’m now spending TOO much! But I *am* re-building for “English-free” mornings. I like THAT! - At the SIB Library, an e-mail from PJ. Burlington is looking better all the time. I just need the *money*! Even though he says the shelters are better there, I don’t want to land with my hand out. I sent him a lengthy reply. He’s quite the blessing. - This evening I stayed at the library until almost 8:00pm. - I just realised... I NEED to re-new my driver’s license! I paid the phone. Storage will be next. EVERYTHING IS COSTING ME! AND AT A TIME WHEN I CAN’T AFFORD TO BUY OR SPEND OR... I NEED TO SAVE MY MONEY! (The little bit that I actually get.) - *HOT* in here AGAIN! Guillermo (E3) brought in the makings for bologna sandwiches this evening and offered to make each of us one. It truly is a nice, kind gesture but I DO NEED roach spray. (Money flying all over!) Especially with all the food that’s already been brought into this room (and dumped all over the damned place). - Time for... Sign-in. Quick shower. HOPE FOR SLEEP!



Friday 29 July

7:38am Howard Beach indeed. It's Friday. Rain. Cool temperatures. And last night was another OK night for sleep. HOWEVER... SOMETHING TUGGED AT MY TOWEL AS IT HUNG ON MY LOCKER! Something INSIDE, tugged through the bottom vent of the door, *enough to jiggle the lock*. I was laying on the bed when I saw my towel, damp, laying on the top and over the front door... MOVE! I got up quickly, took *everything* out of the lower and mid shelves (on the left side). Nothing. Then, from the larger right side. Nothing. Now I wonder. It couldn't be a bug. Too strong. Mouse? It didn't bolt when I opened the door or when I took everything out. Curious. Hmm... Time might tell and we shall see. I'm most certainly not going to panic over it. Especially since it's definitely too big even to be a "water-bug". - Today is day 4 of no BM. Now the constipation is just about murdering me! It's becoming so painful. Even now... as I tap on my iPod, I'm on the bowl here. Something *wants* out. But it won't come. (AND there's stirring outside the loo door. GIVE ME ONE BLEATING BREAK! FRIGG! Mr. E.'s up and about and he can't be strolling with-out all sorts of supervision! I need to take a DUMP PLEASE!) - 8:06am 80.BLEATING.DOLLARS.AND.50.FRIGGING.CENTS! to re-new the damned drivers' license! WHEN, WHERE, HOW WILL IT EVER STOP? TRAPPED! I AM SO TRAPPED! Oh, last night, in the shower room, I spoke with the Dread-locks from next door. Nice fellow. Questionable history. But congenial. Quite intelligent and capable of pleasant and enjoyable conversation... I should say. How refreshing, considering what I've put up with in this place over time... especially THIS time. - Meanwhile... This morning, as I waited for the lift, a fellow gets right up behind me... Steve! he tells me that Wednesday evening, he got busted for peeing in the subway! Bastards! Put the bleating loos back in the subway system where they used to be and people won't do such things. So simple. I've NEVER figured out where in HELL this city expects people to pee and dump if they close ALL of the public facilities. And never mind the "stores"... I've already learnt THAT lesson. Never mind us "Homeless" folks... EVERYBODY, ALL OVER THE WORLD NEEDS TO PISS'N'DUMP! Open the toilets and stop arresting people for emptying their bladders when they have to. - Anyway... he's a nice guy that Steve. I some-what enjoy his company. - As for the moment at hand... This morning we're "moving" ever so slightly. My entire body feels this heat and pain and constipation. - Mr. E. is asleep at the moment... THANK YOU! The world is grey (the rain has stopped). Oddly, it's comfortably cool in here this morning. The brat-vermin from down-stairs are shrieking. And I want to NAP! - 10:36am Mr. E.'s shower, breakfast, and dishes are done. Mrs. E. cooked and gave me a bowl of oatmeal. (Now I need to get it out.) - Now I see, as I'm looking this crap up here, renewing my license can still be 64.29\$! What

the HELL? WHY do I bother? Tomorrow I was *supposed* to be “OUT OF HERE”! WHAT the HELL? Just WHAT the HELL? Really! AND... The license can take FOUR bleating WEEKS to arrive! Well... nothing can be easy and my “happy time” can't last for long. - Today, I want to write a letter to TD banque in VT and the agencies. I have to print statements today. I *HAVE* to get car-fare. I'm becoming over-whelmed and fed-right-up. Angry. Pissed. Just... I really don't know. AND it's becoming humid again. Thinking Atropa. (At least I always have that option... just GO and leave it ALL behind... FAR behind... forever. I have that option.) - 5:15pm Houston? At 5:00pm we got *MOVEMENT!* At *Peninsula Library*, where we also up-loaded images to the Journal (*I DIDN'T KNOW I HAVE TO PUT THE PHONE IN “USB MODE”*), Printed statements for Ms. Henika, and VT JOBS. Now, with lighter gut yet churning bowels... off to the SIB Library (I hope) (I'm only at Holland station in Rockaway just now). - PS: Yesterday's pay-stub arrived *TODAY*. Hmm... Maybe somebody in the post office got a well-deserved smack and told to pay attention to their (her?) job? OVER-NIGHT! Imagine THAT! - 9:06pm at E4:: And the bowels move! - And the damned radio blares! And Guillermo's got a bleating SUPER-MARKET ON his frigging locker! 7 cartons of juice and a PARKAY TUB full of *something!* Me? I've a locker full of roaches. Tomorrow? Roach spray comes in whether anybody likes it or not. - I got to SIB Library at 7:00pm! Better? Closed... at 6:00pm! I forgot! Even better yet? My guts had been CHURNING ALL THE WAY! I'd considered “dumping”, right at the station out at Broad Channel. Being arrested would have been worth it. SO! I bombed into the Beth Israel Emergency Medical Clinic (again)... they were so sweet! And I was *SO* relieved... *truly*. Chatted with the receptionist. She asked if I was with “the competition” (NYU). I lied, and said yes. Who cares? I got the loo. (VERY UN-like the other morning when then too, I was in a state of EMERGENCY and they told me I couldn't use the loo because they didn't open until 8:00am.) - Relived, in every sense of the word, I walked across the street to Staples where I copied 3 pay-statements, BUT, FORGOT THE DEPARTMENT of LABOUR FORM AGAIN and noticed I made a mistake on this week's “statement” so I *HAVE* to go to Peninsula tomorrow! OK. No problem. - And then... IT POURED! POURED! as I was coming out of Staples. I grabbed an M16 bus and when we got to the East Side? Rain done. But it did NOTHING to bring the heat down... or the humidity. MISERABLE! - A stop en route to the pits at RiteAid for cigarettes. - And now, here, at my corner, I've washed work scrubs top and t-shirt (and under-drawers), taken a cool shower and my nightly aspirin. I'm truly getting tired. Darsevid's lowered the volume on the damned radio. Sunday will be my day to “mention” the radio to Ms. Henika and see what kind of response THAT gets. (None, I suspect.) - 9:24pm It's time for shut-eye. Alarms at 4:30am tomorrow. I just might knock me out.

Saturday 30 July

7:35am And again.. the sensation of impending bowel evacuation. Bloating. Painful bloating. (7:38am and I'm on the M15 bus.) Often, my legs actually tremble because my knees turn weak from these cramps and the pain. My head throbs. Saliva floods my mouth. I get rushes of heat, horrible heat, with drenching sweats. Cramps. The need to mouth-breathe. (7:42am The M42 bus pulled-away JUST as I arrived. I saw it crossing 1st Avenue but just *couldn't* run.) The panic of contemplating losing control. Clench? Worse. Relax? Worse. Jabbing cramps. Body trembles. Deep, slow breaths. Short, quick, shallow breaths. Sometimes pressing the tip of the tongue against the edge of a tooth relieves it. Sometimes softly repeating "loh...loh...loh...". None of it makes any sense. And the sensation of NEEDING to literally *BLOW* the bowels empty continues. I want to just let it go. Or I want to sit, with dignity, and empty my body. And the eyes throb. Head pounds. I want to sleep... just sleep. FATIGUE! God-awful FATIGUE! Closing my eyes helps. Sleep. Dozing helps. But nothing helps for long. - 7:53am and the M42 bus driver says, as I board: "I didn't want to pass you. But we gotta go to the bath-room in the hotel (Tudor!)." How sweet of her! How ironic. And here I sit, alone on the bus, engine off at 42nd Street and 2nd Avenue. HOW WELL I KNOW HER SITUATION! (Even now...) - 8:02am A quick jaunt across Madison Avenue and right into the Q32 bus! Timing! And yet... my guts feel like circus balloons, twisted and knotted into animals and such. EVERY MORNING, no matter what, begins the same. - Last night Edward Hi(r)(n)es Jr., the new "E1" was the only disturbance of sleep. Momentary and relatively quiet. This morning I snoozed over 3 alarms to wake at 5:30am. A quick shave this morning. A cool shower. I'm in light jeans, chambray, "work" sneakers, kippa. Screw the world and what anybody might think. Strange, clothes, not scrubs. - To: Staples (copy Department of Labour documents), Home Depot (roach spray), storage (why?), Peninsula Library (statement print and job application). Later, SIB Library. The world closes at 6:00pm today. - GUTS, BE STILL. - 8:35am Off the Q32 bus and ON THE Q53 bus! - 9:55am Q21 bus to Peninsula Library. - A few "points" of this morning here: (1.) I had to "fix" the copier at Staples! Then made my copies. The machine didn't registre any charges but... (2.) Home Depot didn't have the OneShot roach spray that I wanted! (3.) This phone is frigging about. (4.) "Twitter", my social media, won't let me post. - SATYRDAT(Saturday)! HELL! - Note however: I've no regrets about severing the MG connections. I did SO MUCH MORE FOR them. It's done. I owe nothing. (Now I just need to get past the whole ordeal and put it where it truly belongs... Forgotten!) - 29°C already. Too hot (and, from the crowd on this local bus... too late) for the beach. My plans are being screwed quite well this morning. - I'm quite hungry. But the guts are still churning. Yup... screwed nicely. I SHOULD

BE EN ROUTE TO VERMONT NOW! - 11:42am on the shuttle with roach spray on hands, roast beef in tummy. - 1:20pm at the Peninsula Library and the statements for Ms. Henika, tomorrow, are printed. This Journal is no further along. And the roach spray on my hands hasn't killed me... yet. - 1:29pm at Aqueduct-North Conduit station and for Saturday 30 July 2011 the notes go as follows here: Well. Indeed. Home Depot didn't have the roach spray so I went to TheRock. Enjoyed an early meal at Tribute Park which consisted of an entire plastic container of roast beef on 1 roll, a tin of coffee, 2 little lemon pies. AND I got the roach stuff at Waldbaum's... for less than they wanted at Home Depot for the same product! So, at Tribute Park I filled the little spray bottle, spilling some on the ground and getting much on my hands. The label says the stuff works for a year! Must be potent... and on my hands! Oh well OK. - I got to Peninsula Library. Did the statement for Ms. Henika. Then did a stop at storage to put up the remaining roach spray that didn't fit into the small spray bottle that I'm bringing into the shelter. - A train to F train to SIB Library where I did more "iTunes" and tried to get in touch with Schmulik. I sent a text message via cell-phone. He replied that he was about to leave work, could I wait? I thought he'd come to SIB Library. Apparently I was mistaken. I said I'd wait for him until 6:.00pm. He replied "That's too late. Maybe next time." Made no sense to me but I simply replied "right". Write-off. He can't be bothered... I simply *WON'T*. Even in a misunderstanding, I offered to wait for HIM... Obviously, the converse isn't to be expected. Nah... I've no time nor use for such nonsense... "too late"... yes, indeed it is. - No time on the computer this evening and out the door I went. - I took the 6 train down to Union Square where I got WiFi in the park! And did social media on the iPod! So, WiFi in Union Square was fun. I can't use Twitter on the phone lately. Some message about being over the "limit". I suspect it's the messages about the MTA and Bloomberg. I just suspect. No problem on the iPod or computer though. Only the phone. Damned Nazis. - So, about 7:30pm I strolled to 1st Avenue for the bus. Another day off... nothing. - At the Dung-Heap, rookies at the entrance. More little idiots. NEW little idiots. One tells me to put my back-pack in a tub. OK. I go through and forget the tub. The idiot reminds me then the one behind the scanner wants to check the pack. OK. But they're BOTH yipping like little dogs so I said "One of me. Two things to do. One at a time." The bonobo goes and OPENS MY PACK! (Bare-handed yet... UNprofessional). "What are you looking for? Tell me and I can make it easier for you." "You have a pointy object." "I have pens." "What kind?" "Ball-point." "Oh. OK." Pass. (Dick-head.) - I had fun tip-toeing past the "guard" at the lift as a bit of a joke. We laughed! "It's sad if somebody has to sneak IN." I said to her. "You're only going up there to your room." she said with a bit of a shrug of the shoulders and a grin. "Yeah..." I said... looking like a lost puppy. - In the room

8:00pm: Darsevid with radio on but he left AND I *SPRAYED*! And E3 has food *ALL* over the top of his locker. But the floor got a GOOD SPRAYING (and part of his locker). So, the floor, lockers and wall got bug-blocked. - The heat in the room is HELLish! I washed my towel because it smelled awful! Signed-in. Darsevid actually turned the radio off! I was *sh**lessly* amazed. And... *it stayed off all night!* - There was no bed-check but Edward Hires Jr. E1 took his time preparing for bed and E3 had to get up and put the light out. Not a problem, really. I'd taken my 2 aspirins and a cool shower. - I speak with no-one these days. I'm up and out before they wake and come in, change, do a wash, sign-in and turn-in. Silence. E3 will ask "How are you?" (Your food's going rotten moron!) "Another day." I answer. E1 will give some brief greeting. I return. But no conversation. E2 (David CrackO Hall) seems to mutter something each time he passes to/from the door. I ignore him and the comment. Silence. I've nothing to say to any of them. It's much different... In-side, I knew it wouldn't be D18... and... it's not. And I don't care. Not any more... not about a LOT of thing... NOT any more.

Sunday 31 July

5:49pm back at Union Square West. *Hello Zuri. I can see your old studio from here. I miss you. I just hope you know that.* - WELL! I woke at almost 6:00am this morning and pretty much took my time getting me about and such. But no BM again. We're back to that. - Down to the 5th floor by 7:00am and only 3 of us waiting. At 8:05am a "CaseWorker" comes in but no Ms. Henika. Come to find out... no Ms. Henika today! But I got a new meal-ticket until Thursday. (If I put a 1 before the date it goes to Sunday... I purposely asked for Thursday for that reason. I've been on this "ship" before and I know how to sail it now.). By 9:00am I was out! - M34 bus to Madison Avenue. NYC is having a "PakiParade Day"! I had to go to 6th Avenue! I strolled... and got the F train to Jay St. and the Lefferts A train. OK. A Q21 bus to 157th Avenue" Waldbaum's" market for 2 containers of ice cream for "the house" (now I'm buying for Mr. E.'s house), my tinned coffee, pkg of Stella d'Oro cookies. I went to see Mr. E. (on my day off). He was lethargic for the most. I left the ice cream and chatted with him and the CHHA (nice guy) a bit. I stopped ext door to visit with Mrs. E. a while. At noon she pulled out tomato, olives, bagels, egg, told me to make lunch and she went next door to see her husband! When she came back, we chatted for quite the while and she was her usual "inviting" self. I think she enjoys the company... We talked about her, Italy, planes, the old European "call the post office" method of making calls from the U.S. to Europe... We chatted. Again today, it was TOO BLOODY HOT for the beach. When I left, I got the train to Rock, the

Q35 bus to the Fort. FOUR people asking if the bus went to the Fort! DAMN! The place is getting to be TOO well-known! And the more people come, the more they destroy it. - I used the loo at the Fort. The guy before me made it unbearable! STENCH! I strolled back to *my* clearing. And rather shortly after, I left. - On B169th Street I hear a horn honk: José! The park ranger (with whom Penelope is SOOOOOOOO enamoured). He gave me a hand-shake and asked where have I been? (I told him the truth: I working 7days now). And, just as quickly, off he went. - Me too... off to a Q35 bus to The junction. It was TOO early to go back to the Turd-Hole, so I browsed in the comfort of the Target store for a while. Then to a Nr.2 train to Boro Hall, R train to here, at Union Square - I can't get to Twitter! And can't get Union Square WiFi! - But there's shade and a breeze and I'm going to relocate to try for WiFi. - 7:17pm Time to leave Union Square, Twitter's a mess and I'm pooped. And this is going on from the iPod! Woot?

17. August 2011

Monday 1 August 2011

6:30am The Q53 from Woodside, Queens is just pulling away from the curb and for some reason, thoughts of my siblings: They turned so evil; so very evil. Miserable and rotten, to their core. I wonder how. So hateful. So terribly hateful. Even to turn against their Mother. She gave everything, everything. Perfect? No. Not really. But as close as possible to it. And too, they turned hateful toward me. I held them, protected them. I took them on. Not mine... hers... theirs. But I knew they needed, I knew what they needed. I gave. I had nothing more, nothing left. They took. I've nothing left. *"Oh God forbid that one should perish." "They live so far away." They never heard my calling... calling... - I didn't want to see this month, this year, this morning. I wonder, this morning, why I'm here. I wonder what keeps me going. There's no hold on me. I owe nothing. I owe no-one. I didn't want to see this date, this sun-rise. I wonder... because here I am... wondering. - Last night... It was an OK night. The radio went off at about 9:30pm. The light pierced my closed eyes when Hires(EI) came in. I went back to sleep. I was exhausted. - This morning, I woke about 4:15am, with-out the alarm. - A 6:00am M101 bus to Grand Central for a Nr.7 train. And I was at Woodhaven Blvd./62nd Road. at 6:46am. - A lovely morning. - This borough of Queens. I'd made it my "home". Strange land. Same crap. Give. Give. Give. My fault. My fault. - My guts *wrench* again this morning. My body wants to collapse. I've no time, no opportunity. To die. I've done more than enough... thanklessly. - 7:00am at Atlantic Avenue: BelindaUSA, from the social media has been such a wonderful correspondent. I have to smile when I see her posts. We've never met yet seeing her posts puts me in a mind-set of sitting on a front porch, rockers, big trees, soft breezes, iced-tea, chatting, catching-up. Thank you Belinda.

**Calling My Children Home: The Dartmouth Aires*

Tuesday 2 August

6:21am at 28th Street and 1st Avenue... Waiting... with guts on the verge. – Yesterday (Monday 1 Aug.) I was reminded that a new month has begun: When I arrived back at the Dung-heap,

Darsevid had his head in his locker, click-clicking away on... yup... *Ye olde crack-pipe* and mumbling a la machine gun fashion, to its self. The joy of a new month: Daily we toil to pay taxes which go to the pockets of the useless non-toilers who, in all their leisure, re-circulate that currency at the hands of the dealers who supply them with the means to get stoned and all the more stupid, useless, disgusting, repulsive and generally abusive... to us who daily toil to support them in their useless leisure. - 6:32 on the M15 bus to 42nd Street and... *PAIN!* My guts! MY GUTS! How much MORE CAN I with-stand? Thankfully, nobody can SEE the PAIN, and nobody hears or hears about it. I keep my mouth shut. It would do no good to tell anyway... no good at all. - Well, I arrived to Howard Beach for work at about 7:00am on a morning when 8:00am would have been fine. The inside door to the house was still locked. Mrs. E. was still asleep, so I perched on the stoop-rail to read the morning paper. The family is on holidays in Mexico thus no children to watch, thus, no reason for her to be awake at this hour. Not even for me. And to think: just this very morning I got the “good news/bad news”: I’ll be working an extra hour every week-day! It’s “good news” because it’s another lousy 6\$, maybe 7\$ per day, “bad” because it pulls an hour away from anything I might want to do. But Mr.’s colon cancer has been confirmed and my heart goes out to him now. - At 9:09am I rang Melanie at the agency: I asked for Thursday off to re-new my driver’s license and she gives me BS! “There are offices open late.” “There’s one on Rockaway Blvd. open until 6:00pm.” WHY? I GIVE YOUR BLOODY CLIENT AT LEAST AN HOUR *EXTRA EVERY BLEATING DAY!* I need ONE FRIGGIN DAY and you CAN’T simply say “OK”! I had to literally *BEG* before she finally approved. Now I see this as pure “abuse”... of ME! I sent a note off to the office, just to document and back up. - The day went along. Jigs (Mr.’s Physical Therapist) came... and put in all of maybe 15 minutes of time in. Mr. has been somnolent all day, and he’s got a poor appetite. But Physical Therapy (PT) will continue. They’ll do ANYTHING to be certain that THEY get paid! - Mrs. wants 2 hours extra instead of the 1: 6:00pm-8:00pm daily, in addition to the 7 hours she’s getting already. No way the agency can provide and truly no way *I* can, nor *would*. And *NOT* at 10\$/hour... BEFORE BEING TAXED UP MY ALREADY PAINFUL ARSE! - So... I ate much junk again today. Ice cream, candy, cookies. And I wonder why my guts are in misery. - Day ends, bolt for the Q53 bus and... TWO PASS! They just didn’t even slow down, never mind, stop. I have to wait! - Here I am and I finally made it to PenLib. I only need appear and someone here puts my name on the computer waiting list. What did I get accomplished today? BUNK. Although I did register for change of address on-line with Department of Motor Vehicles. But it didn’t actually go through until I got to MMLib later! An hour... pissed away. But, am I in a rush to get to the Dung-heap? Oh HELL NO! - As I was

leaving the Peninsula Library (PenLib) for the Shuttle train back into The City, thunder rumbles. RESENTMENT! I wanted to stay, to go “home” in Rockaway, to watch the storm. I can’t. And Rockaway seemed and felt the “small town” comfy I came to love so much but.. I HAD to leave! – MMLib. (I think of it now as: The Dung-heap Annex.) The computer-mouse malfunctioned. The key-board malfunctioned. NYC. The Grand Dung-heap. I’ve no more patience with/for this hole any longer. So I diddled. BUT DID CHANGE THE ADDRESSE WITH DMV! Post Office Box number AND PHYSICAL ADDRESSE... FOR ROCK.PK post office (FML... and that acronym covers sentiments quite perfectly). Hopefully I’ll get the new license quickly. I NEED to move out, move on, move along. - When I left the library this evening, a stop for Cigarettes and beverage at the CVS store on 42nd Street and then off to an M15 bus to 30th Street and... bleating Hell. - This evening, thankfully, I got into the shelter with no problems. I took the lift to the 7th floor (because the damned lift didn't stop on the 6th floor) and walked down to the 6th floor to... CrackO David Hall in the room. I ignore him completely. No sense speaking. No sense to ANY of ANY of it ALL. But, at one point... It calls my name. “How you doing?” with a grin. “I’m good.” I half muttered back and left it at that. “It” went back to the click-crack smoking... IN the dorm, IN the locker. - No laundry tonight. I'm just too damned tired! - Off to Sign-in on the 5th floor. As I’m leaving the table... BANG! Steve! I think it turns people on their arses when he does sh** like that. (I’m EXHAUSTED this morning, and recalling and recounting last night... well, it takes a toll... remembering.) He bumps into me and makes a big deal about it, making it appear that I bumped into *him*! It tends to quiet the crowd a bit. Too funny. Anyway, he’s doing OK. He’s back in a “4-bed” room. Not too bad as rooms go. He’s friendly as all hell. There are those I couldn’t care less about. I’m glad Steve’s ended 7 years of the “existence” he had on the E trains. - On my way back to my Hell-hole, I stopped to chat with E3. Darsevid’s “cracking” bugs him too. As ’twas said: there’s the toilets, shower, court-yard; he doesn’t need to do that in the room. Well, I’m kind of amazed. I didn’t think it phased anybody except me. OK then. Later, he (E3) and I talked about Rockaway and how few places are left in this city with affordable housing. - Meanwhile, the crack-smoking went on til about 11:00pm during which time, Darsevid put on his headphones and quieted the damned radio! - At last! Santiago did bed-check and... end of a LONG day. - MEANWHILE BACK TO TODAY, TUESDAY AND I AM SO TIRED! – Breakfast! Oatmeal, orange juice, 2 “hahdberld” (as Mrs. TG used to pronounce “hard boiled”) eggs, buttered bagel. And I SO MUCH WANT A NAP! - Day over and back at E4 at 8:32pm: I got to SIBL this evening and barely made it to the loo for a full-fledged BM! But I don’t care WHERE... I’m still bloating. But... BM! At LONG last! - Mr. E. ate a great breakfast and nothing else all day... not even ice

cream. I'm concerned. Ice cream has always been something he never turned-down. But he too, had a good day of BMs. So I suppose I could say it was a "delightfully sh**ty day". Indeed. - At 3:40pm I was on a Q53 bus to Woodside to the Q32 bus. I couldn't keep my eyes open for fatigue and bowel-rolling. No sleep. But the closed eyes seem to have helped settle the pain. By 5:30pm I was in the loo at SIBL. What came out had to be at least a half-metre long, no breaks, pale (vanilla ice cream?) but with no effort at all. I was quite shocked... and relieved! - Accomplished at SIBL? Proofing. Bought the song "Iko Iko" by Belle Stars. And TD banque in Burlington VT needs an Assistant. Head Teller! I NEED TO GET MY ARSE TOGETHER IN THIS APPLICATION! OK! - That covers SIBL. - I CAN'T GET MY SOCIAL MEDIA ON THIS PHONE AND HAVE TROUBLE ON THE IPOD BUT IT ALL RUNS AM OK ON THE COMPUTERS. I DO SUSPECT BLOOMBERG/MTA PEGGING MY ACCOUNTS AT THIS JUNCTURE. I NOW EXPECT THIS JOURNAL TO DISAPPEAR. I NEED TO BACK IT UP! - Well and meanwhile, back to the Dung-heap this evening. Swift entrance into the building this evening, but I was the only one coming in at the time. My most fave security force was at the entrance. She really turns my attitude better. She, and Ortiz. They address me kindly. I actually get a jolt of "Humanness" about me... and I'll never be able to thank them enough for that. Then... swiftly up to the floor in the lift. No laundry tonight. Tomorrow's coffee made. Radio on (of frigging course, loud enough to create feed-back in Shea Stadium). And now? Sign-in. Hopefully a nice shower and immediate fall to good half-sleep. - Belinda? If you're reading... Thinking of you and hoping, most sincerely, that your day went well and evening is better. Odd. We've never met but I miss our "tweets". Thank goodness we still have e-mail. - And now... it's... Sign-in time! - AND TONIGHT.... we've got a *new* El. Imagine? The turn-over in that bed! I wonder "who" is still in that corner of the room. "Who" got tortured there in the "glory" days of Bellevue. It's strange. They come, they rest, they GO! And our new "roomie" showed at about 11:00pm... proceeded to towel-clean the locker, put down *his own* striped sheets, rattle bags, bang the locker, kept the light on. THEN APOLOGISED to DARSEVID, who kept the radio on (very low after about 11:15pm)! Screw Cruz and I. Eh? No apologies to US! AND... though he's "White" and rather "Irish-looking" I've a gut that says "prison". Time will tell... time. When El went "for a shower" I mumbled "Oh wait until 4:30 tomorrow morning... We'll ALL be awake for the party." Darsevid mumbled something at me as he left the room and I suggested he could "f*** that too".

Wednesday 3 August

THIS morning (from Howard Beach... again): I woke with the 1st alarm and did what was needed to be done in the morning... with a “touch” of noise added. As I left, E2 (David) woke (poor slob), said nothing, just looked at me. Right. - So, out and on the run to work, I took the Q34 bus to the A train out to Howard Beach and arrived here at 7:10am. With the time on hand, went to Waldbaums market here: roll, roast beef cold-cuts, Greek yoghurt, Starbucks coffee and for Mr. E., vanilla yoghurt, hoping that it'll help him with his own digestive difficulties. I clocked in at 7:37am. Mrs. at home. Mr. still snoozing. Mrs. had given him a sleeping pill at 2:00 this morning. - Me? I could use quite a nap! But it's not too bad... being *THIS tired*. But, it's only the beginning of the day. Only the “beginning”. - 2:08pm and... At 1.56pm, I got a call from Ms. Melanie at the agency: Mr. E.'s hours go up to *NINE* hours per week day and *FIVE* hours on the week-ends! AND she tries to scold me... “I told you when you went back (Monday).” The *request* for more hours didn't go in until *Monday morning* when Guerda (the Charge Nurse) left after her visit! This “Melanie” is serious trouble... and a liar to top it off. - 3:33pm I no sooner tell Mrs. that she has NINE hours per day, she gets an *attitude* and says it “does no good” because she wants *evenings*. The Charge Nurse told her she can't get evenings. In the same speech, she chastises *ME* because Mr.'s eating schedule is off. Why? Because she gave him a sleeping pill at 2:00 this morning and he couldn't (not “didn't”, COULDN'T!) wake up this morning! I couldn't wake him for breakfast until 10:30am and, well, he didn't want lunch at noon. - It's so comforting to be appreciated. FML. (This one too, this “client”, is proving to be little more than a royal pain in my arse... along with all the other pains that are already there. The whole family appreciates NOTHING!) If I didn't need the money, I would be out of here, finished, done. It's ANOTHER “TG”! - THANKFULLY DONE AND OUT OF THERE!... At 5:13pm I got the A train to Broadway Junction to the L train to 14th Street for the Nr.6 train and was at SIBL by about 6:20pm! Quite a bit of bolting from train to train but I made it. - *COMPLETED THE ON-LINE APPLICATION TO TD BANQUE AND, FOR REFERENCES: Moe, Barb T., Mary T. Let's see how *this* goes. The rest? Pretty much honest. What the Hell? That, and a quick e-mail to PJ.VT was all that got accomplished. Then? Out into the RAIN for a n M34 bus to 1st Avenue for the walk from 24th Street to the shelter, and immediate entry and a lift to the “chambre” where... the light was on! I should have made a wash but, since it was raining, I doubted anything would dry enough. So... tomorrow's coffee made, an e-mail to Belinda (Hello! if you're reading. *SMILES*), sign-in and a shower. Since E1&2 were “eyes closed” I decided “lights closed”. Not for long. Darsevid and radio. Light on, radio up. The usual BS from the resident crack-head. Well... to be expected. I got

comfy. Charged my phone and iPod for the next day. And... bed-check. The guy actually forgot himself and put out the light after! (They NEVER put the lights back out, but asking for that is expecting entirely too much.



Thursday 4 August

This morning up with the 4:30am alarm. 5:00am to the loo. An extra 45mins to just “loungue” on the bed. A bit of a sneeze this morning. It was a cool night and I’ve no blanket/sheet/cover. But I don’t mind. - 2 sm.BMs (and yet my bowels are still cranking! Will there ever be a morning with-out this pain?) A warm shower. The water won’t stop running and I don’t care. I dressed and headed to my morning “meet and greet” with Ms.

Henika. As I got to the main corridor, Steve was at the lift... at 7:00am? I wonder about his “job”. (None of my business really.) (7:28 Ms. Henika just came in!) - My guts need to STOP CHURNING! This must be Chron’s Disease. I must look it up., one of these days, I suppose. - And... after this, the DMV, SIBL/PenLib/Storage for coffee and bug spray... maybe Tilden. Another day. Another day begins. - 7:07am at the 5th floor “loungue”. The “wait” begins. – I got the scoop from the new “roomie”: Edward Smith, the latest El. He's been here in the shelter from since November. He was a taxi driver. Says he, he made “One mistake.” but he didn't tell what it was (and I didn't ask). He got into some group or program called “We Care” (must to look that up). He says they helped him with his situation and they actually got him into the shelter system. *How* he’s been here from since Nov. and comes to us? Well, it’s to be seen. Meanwhile, he’s another “self-absorbed” fellow and most likely to get loud at some point. Delightful. - 8:50am on an M34 bus! I was out by 8:35am with next date for the next meeting on my Sunday off. And Ms. Henika was SO wonderful! I got to see Ms. Fiord whilst I was in the office this morning. She tells me that her husband is dying! Why? WHY!?!? Life is rotten to the “Good” people. She's a kind

heart and a good soul. There's no excuse for her suffering, and, as far as I'm concerned, nor for a man whom she would marry and obviously care for and about. Life... what a total sh**-pile. (I also learnt that she's Darsevid's case worker!) – OH! When I told Ms. Henika about the radio and crack-smoking she offered: If I can find a 1 or 2-bed room, she'll arrange for me to be transferred to it! Imagine? I don't know that she can, nor do I know that she will, but even to think of it and offer is, well, unexpectedly kind. - Beautiful day, I must say... thus far. - 9:16am at "License Express"... now serving B131... of B172. (I could use a loo.) To think I get off the bus every morning across the street from right here and never paid any attention to it. - A note this morning: Language gives me miserable headache! From where do the words originate? Why the pronunciation? How did the words begin? The differences and similarities across languages? How do we know "1" as "one", "un", "uno", "eins" and so forth. Same with "two". My mind reels from it. And why so? How strange. - The weather is beautiful this morning. Good "beach" morning. If only... perhaps...Now Serving B139. Moving along. There must be more to it. – SIBL opens at 10:00am. I'll need a full phone charge this evening: phone interview for Food Stamps at 4:00pm. Always something to tear chunks out of a day. - I wonder if the agency is engaged in bumping me off my case. THAT is the MAJOR concern today. I almost expect it... am rather planning on needing an attorney. I've little doubt a court case is on the near horizon. I do NOT trust Melanie! - Time to pay some attention. 9:27am and B142 already. May it ALL go quickly. AND MAY THE NEW LICENSE ARRIVE WITH-IN TWO WEEKS FROM TODAY! - Back at the cesspool at 9:33pm corner number E4. Light on. Radio on. Signed-in and showered. - I can't get over what little I accomplished with this day and how quickly it disappeared. - I was out of DMV by 9:58am! The license will have my "Fort Tilden" address on it! OK! - When I'd finished at DMV I went to the A train and out to storage. There was a HALF jar of coffee in storage! (It's now in the locker). And I've got more bug spray. And that went along quickly. So... RiteAid, cigarettes, 2 "power bars" (HUNGER!) and a Q35 bus to the post office where the 4th JULY PAY STATEMENT WAS, MARKED "PUT IN WRONG BOX". A MONTH? WHERE THE HELL WAS IT SITTING FOR A MONTH? On to Waldbaums. (Our Anthony Smith El has anger management issues m'thinkst. Oo! Mash-up Darsevid and radio? Jolly! An argument ensues.) 2 Greek yoghurts, tin of peaches, nasty Butterball turkey cold cuts, roll, tin of coffee, little boxed lemon pie. I made and ate the sandwich on the Q35 bus to Tilden where I sat at a picnic table in the sun for lunch. It got to be 1.15pm! A pit-stop at the loo. But... done and to the PenLib. - Quick computer appointment. Checked openings at TD Banque in Burlington VT. TWO! I APPLIED! Attached a copy of the letter and printed it. Posted the printed from the drop-box out front of the Rock Park office! Let's

HOPE! - 4:00pm came, went, became 5.00pm. NO DAMNED CALL ABOUT FOOD STAMPS! What the Hell? I'll ring "HRA" tomorrow morning. Screw the world! (9.48pm and the radio volume goes up. Lights still on.) - On to a Q22 bus to B116th Street and then to the Q35 to The Junction (Brooklyn) for a Nr.2 train to Penn Station/34th Street. Jack's 99cent store. I want another "poly case". Not a one in the whole store! So I walked up to SIBL. - E-mail from PJ BVT. Am backing-up the "DeadArtist" blog to a Flash drive. Proofed more of this journal. Pretty much closed the day. - Arrived here about 8.30pm. Fine. Washed t-shirt, socks. - *Note* At Kings Plaza, Brooklyn this evening, thought: Kings Plaza was SO obscure to me, a mere location on the map. Then Margot made life so impossible and I began to travel. Found Kings Plaza. Moved to Rockaway. Began taking the Q35 bus to the B3 bus AT Kings Plaza. The "unknown" has become "quite familiar", and I'm ready to leave. *Note* Listening to "The Lunatics Have Taken Over The Asylum..." on the train I HAD to grin thinking of BLASTING it in the halls HERE! HOW SO BLEATING APPROPRIATE WOULD THAT BE? - 9.57pm RADIO! I'll put out the light after bed-check (and a quick smoke?) - 9:59pm I put the light out and Darsevid rolls over, yells "HEY!" and lays there, staring at me! 10.01pm BED-CHECK! Radio blaring. Darsevid laying there staring at me. I mentioned a "situation" with him and his miserable attitude this morning. Retaliation? OK. Maybe a stop at "Operations" tomorrow morning? Report the bastard and his crack-smoking directly to them? I'll have to find a "single", and put up with this until next Sunday. And now he's hacking stuff up like a choking dog... Oh, this place gets 'em. Just so long as he doesn't approach me on anything. - I'll cut out the light... quick loo smoke. Tomorrow? NAH PRESUH I! (Don't put the pressure on me.) 9 bleating hours. - 10.06pm El's stirring. Jolly. SUN-DOWNER'S SYNDROME! - I should've *gone* LAST YEAR! FML.

Friday 5 August

1.45pm at the delightful Howard Beach job. Last night? D.A.A.M.N.! Radio on til well past midnight. "Khkhha-a-ak!" Sudden out-bursts of "HEY!" All from Darsevid. On into the night. It must have been about 1:30am this morning when the crack-head-retard finally ceased. THREE of us and one of "it". But I say/do nothing. I doubt I'd have support if I do. So I leave it alone. But I fell asleep figuring ways to short-out the outlet on the wall over his bed. - This morning? Back to sleep after the alarm until 5:00am. A bit of BM! Pretty good! Shower, dress, out. No elevator! The treatment we get must be illegal. - Made it to Howard Beach by 7:31am! So I stopped by the Waldbaums and for 14\$: 2 stale rolls (1 for morning coffee), 2 tinned coffees, 2 yoghurts, 2 pre-pack tutjey(turkey), breakfast bars. I brought my own food. T'HELL wi'dis sh**. - Clocked-in at

7:48am. Still early... and still unappreciated. - 2:24pm I had my plan: Mr. E. would wake, shower, eat... on time. Mrs. gave me a tough time on Wednesday because he woke late and it set HER routine off. BUT SHE woke him, pushing the shower, cooking breakfast whilst I showered him. She made an enquiry about "Mike" who covered yesterday: WONDERFUL! So I wait for word that I'm off the case. If it weren't for the money, I'd simply walk off this case... and away from the agency. - During the day, I've tried 3 telephone numbers for Food Stamps. Left a message at one. Nothing on the other 2. I see them being cut... again. FML. FTW. to put it quite plainly. - Rang Melanie at the agency. There's no official "break" in 9-hour shifts. She claims I get paid for all 9 hours. This week's pay? 206\$ for 28hours. I'm getting fed up! - Mrs. E. was not welcoming this morning. I'm tired. It's hot and muggy. AND I CAN'T GET TO THE MONEY ORDER TO MOVE FUNDS TO TD SO NOW I HAVE TO GO TO MCU ATM, THEN TD! AND I HAVE TO TRANSFER CASH! THIS IS FRIGGIN STUPID! NO POST OFFICE UNTIL A WEEK FROM TOMORROW! NO SHABBAT! NO TIME OFF!!! THIS HAD BETTER TURN TO THE BEST! IN TWO WEEKS! E-NOUGH! - 2:36pm FINALLY! Food's done. Air traffic is bugging me. Mr. is dozing. HOT! I'm dropping into depression. And no social media on the phone, no library this evening... There'll be running to MCU and TD in the heat (and threatened rain). (No umbrella.) I am *EXHAUSTED*! - 2:45pm Comment on U.S. economy: Canada went through this, several years ago. I brought cash to Viv to help her with her expenses and I brought the U.S. cash in the amount that was her expenses in Canadian dollars. Then, the exchange gave her considerably more. Today, the \$CAD is stronger than the \$US. The way to recovery is obvious... follow the Canadian lead. But no. The U.S. is too elitist. So, what I experienced in Montreal, today I experience in NY. But as usual, those I'd helped then aren't here to help me now. I AM SO SCREWED! - Meanwhile, I bide my time on this job, prepping for the call saying there'll be somebody to take my place. - 7:26pm at Union Square park. My social media is screwed-up! Still. Can't even access on iPod! - But... after an UN-thankful day of NON-appreciation, I managed to bust out at just past 5.00pm, get an A train to Broadway Junction, a J train to Fulton Street and back to Chambers Street (I wasn't paying attention, missed my stop). Got to MCU to the cash machine there, then a Nr.6 train to 14th Street and TD! YAY! When the teller asked if there was anything else she could do for me, I said "vacation". She gave me a Twix! SO CUTE! (But I noticed: the TD at 14th/5th? All Black staff. Interesting.) - So I decided to pass some time in Union Square. Nice breeze. Lower humidity. I got on social media via Union Square WiFi, got ONE twit and then got KNOCKED OFF the WiFi! I'm convinced: MTA and/or Bloomberg (or I'm still logged-in from too many places where I didn't log-off? But that would kill the libraries as well

so... It's the MetroPCS IP that's being pegged. Yup.) - It hit me today: NO POST OFFICE for every day I work! Monday through Friday AND Saturday, I WORK during post office hours! SCREWED! Library time? Possibly SIBL on Saturday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Maybe PenLib Monday and Thursday. NO LIFE! And NO *appreciation*. - 2 guys feeding a squirrel here... ADULTS! Ever so cute. And the place is filling with more people. I thought: I dreaded going "home" in Beacon, Newburgh, RockPark. I DREAD going to the sHELLter now! Will I EVER look forward to going "home" at the end of a day? - Some little turd kid is *sitting on my backpack*. I've GOT to GO... to the dregs. But... TO HELL WITH THIS PLACE NYC! - 9:18pm It's smellin' "shelter" in here tonight. - I passed through the entry very well this evening. WALKED UP to the floor! Walk in at 8:20pm to Darsevid sitting in the hall out-side the TV room and the bleating radio on in the room! Went immediately to wash unders. Then to sign-in. Followed by cool shower. Here we are. - It is THE PERFECT night to be out on the dunes! There's even a BREEZE COMING THROUGH THE ROOM! But there's a threat of bad storms to come and with the coolness of the breeze it looks likely. Alas. - I have to say, I hope Fran, PJ and Belinda are dropping by here at the on-line "blog" of this from time-to-time. Twitter being blocked, I don't want to lose touch with them. - Well. 9:25pm. Anthony (El) and I are here. He's on the phone. He amazes me: well-spoken and yet SO inconsiderate with the SLAMMING of his locker! Oh well oh well. It's why I generally have no compassion for the general Homeless in general [sic]. - That roach spray isn't working well. Still getting one IN the locker every day. I need to spray again. (I wonder if it'd work on the Big Roach... Darsevid.) - Waiting for bed-check. Not that it makes any difference one way or another. - Final note: My guts churn, gas, all day long! Almost uncontrollable. Nerves... the root of it all. - 9:31pm and KA-SLAM! Mr. Anthony's in his locker.

Saturday 6 August

6:25am 34th Street and 1st Avenue. "But down here in 'reality' everybody knows there ain't no such thing..." (Macy Grey - *The Letter*) - A delightful morning weather-wise. And the body rages the daily battle... churning guts. - The "game" (baseball) ended early (10:00pm) last night. The radio went off. And the night passed with light on, light off, light on, light off... This morning? The 3 of them in bed... asleep when I left. There are those to whom shelter *should* be limited then flatly denied. I work, and from my salary come taxes which cover the "rent" for what I have AND what I use: the shower and the bed and nothing more. - 6:33am M16 bus. A bed and shower. - I was out by 6:00am this morning. In at 8:30pm last night. One set of linens. No food. No laundry soap. No bath products. No toilet paper. It's my own fault, really. I SHOULD MOOCH, LEECH,

LEARN TO BE PARASITIC. - And now? To where *NONE* of what I do is appreciated. Well, when I was dismissed yesterday by Mr. E. I got it off my chest: "You get service for free. Your wife gets 9 hours of baby-sitting for free. Handouts. No charge. So she goes and does what she wants all day... FREE. NO CHARGE TO EITHER OF YOU. I cook and clean and wash your sh**ty/pissy arse. And you *dismiss* me. Imagine that." I need to get out of this, out of here. - "Life is a heart-ache and now I need to be free". (Macy Grey) - 7:36am Q35 bus number 3622 to Howard Beach. LATE! I won't have time to get food which means I won't be able to eat today. I'm losing time which means I'm losing income. No doubt there'll be some snarky comment when I arrive. I probably won't get library time this evening which means no-where to go to avoid the shelter... in the forecast... rain. - This morning's commute: the M16 bus to 34th Street and 8th Avenue where the A train is running LOCAL. So, I took a C train to 42nd Street and a WALK through tunnels to the Nr.7 train that sat in the station for the longest. Finally we leave... somebody plays "Hold the door" as the retards in this city these days will do. Then at 61st Street/Woodside this driver has to be reminded *he's* supposed to drive the bus and the "supervisor" jokes about. - 7:44am and I'm only at Corona Avenue and Broadway! Not even on Queens Blvd. yet! NO way will I make Howard Beach by 8:00am, never mind be AT work by then! - This morning's *Daily News*: "It's becoming unbearable to live here... NYer." I've just spent the past 30 minutes or so pondering suicide. I truly cannot take more. Physically I'm being ripped apart internally. Mentally I'm losing my grip trying to "escape" by trying to sleep every time I get on bus or train. (7:50am and we sit at Woodhaven Blvd. at Queens Blvd.) Emotionally I'm on the verge of murder... self and/or others. One more thing is about all it's going to take. So, this morning, again I do my inventory and mentally reserve time and place for my "departure". Thankfully I have all that I need. THAT is my solace. DEATH ALONE IS MY SOLACE! - AND... AT 7:16pm... A MOST *HORRIBLE* DAY all told. I stopped at Waldbaums for food and arrived to work at 8:25am! But got a beautiful "Good morning!" from Mrs. E. and Mr. E. was already at table and the bed was already stripped. But then, shower-time and Mr. E turned *evil*. *Refused* to get into the tub, *COVERED* in sh**! Became *combative*. And today I re-realised my "PTSD". He raised his arm to me and *THAT* was *THE END*! Yes. I list it. I didn't strike him. But my words were cruel, horrid, vicious! I now regret each syllable but I must remember to simply walk away... Particularly because, when it was time to leave, I was in his good graces again. Still, I don't see this case lasting much longer. I say so because Mrs. is extremely dissatisfied with the time-frame. *Never* satisfied, these people. 8:00am to 5:00pm doesn't *suit* her. She wants something round 5:00pm to 8:00pm. Like most, she doesn't understand that those are not hours that people *want* to work *AND she has family to help*

her in the evening. For 20\$/hr I'd give her 3 evenings in addition to what she's getting now, 5:00pm to 6:00pm. Certainly NOT more than that and CERTAINLY NOT 10\$/hr. How do I see this ending? Another of her "Agency switches" or somebody private. Right now I actually can't work later than 6:00pm, needing to be in the Dung-heap by 8:00pm and not being able to depend on public transport. I have a curfew and though the place where I dwell isn't up to the standards of many others, it's what I have and ALL that I have. Well. What will happen will happen. - My guts are all twisted and I keep having huge bubbles of gas. But each time I allow me to the toilet, a little bit of something comes out. Maddening. - After work today, I managed to get to PenLib. More proofing, cleaned a bit of "Yehudah ben HaGalut", another "blog" of prose essay, checked e-mails. - Grabbed a Shuttle train to the A train to the L train to 3rd Avenue to "JAM" paperie for a poly box. (I'm beginning to get dozey here at 7:35pm.) They had nothing even close to what I'm looking for. Checked CVS, Walgreen's. Nope. Took the us up to RiteAid on 2nd Avenue for cigarettes and then... To the Dung-heap. - (7:37pm RADIO TIME! It's been off all the while. I KNEW it'd come on... at "time to rest". I ignore. LIGHTS ON! Intentional? Or crack blindness? LIGHTS OUT! RADIO ON!) - When I finally got back into the shelter here. I WALKED up to the 6th floor. Washed 2 t-shirts, socks, good unders. (7:40pm HE'S-David Hall-SMOKING IN THE ROOM!) Tomorrow morning's coffee made. - 7:50pm I sprayed the floor against roaches. - I was just thinking: Too bad don't have a bag of nettles for his bed. I'll think of something (7:44pm Radio off. Hmmm...). Just for Schitzengigglez. Meanwhile, I'll look for a single on the floor- OH! MESSAGE FROM SCHMULIK! Text, of course. 'By now you're in VT. Hopefully you'll find happiness. You deserve it.' He has NO friggin idea where the Hell I am. He never asked, I never said and there's been no communication since the last one... weeks ago. Yes... people "care". Right. And again I say: FTW. (7:47pm Radio on again. Baseball.) Screw him (Schmulik)! I can't be any more bothered than he could. Now I've Saturday and Sunday evening free, but I won't contact him anymore. - I NEED a shower. - I *NEED* some *SLEEP*!

Sunday 7 August

5:59am and back on the M16bus and my guts are *stabbing*. I woke at 4:25am before the alarm. Went to sleep last night *SO* tired! The radio was on at a decent volume though, I have to say. - Tiny BM this a.m. But... *PAIN*! - Rain this morning. - Hopefully I'll get to sleep on the A train. - 12:15pm here in Horrendous Howard Beach NY. 29°C. Heat Index 33°C. But I'm ready to simply drop dead. This *needs to stop*! Truly. And it doesn't help when I think: I shouldn't be here. "This is

obviously not where I'm supposed to be." (Macy Grey again.) A year ago I should have just left it all. A week ago I should have taken the jump. And I think: no matter how hard I try, no matter how much I work, I can't get enough together to land on my feet. No matter what. Nine hours a day. This morning? I made it to work at 7:52am. Awake at 4:25am following a restless night and making it to work at almost 8:00am. For what? A pay-cheque that's worth less than over-used toilet paper. AND as I journal this? No bleating phone signal! FML! Indeed! But I can't take: no fan, no cooling in the dorm. 4 adults. No air. And the humidity... Murder. - What I'll do when I leave here today, I'll try for MMLib but... no where, no why. - 2:54pm at MMLib and the usual slow-as-sh**-worthless WiFi AND NO AIR CONDITIONING! - Forgot to mention: This morning's ride, 34th Street to Howard Beach on the A train... LOCAL ALL THE WAY! - The day went by. Mr. E. got no shower. Mrs. E. came to give him lunch. I ate almost everything I'd bought this morning en route: *HAD* to buy a pkg of rolls (6), ONE package of cheap cold cuts, ONE yoghurt, ONE coffee, a tin of peaches and a small jar of honey (that I wanted to have with a roll but couldn't because Mrs. wouldn't leave). Anyway, I was done eating by about 11:00am. - Ram, one of the guys from the shelter, is here! Imagine that! We were talking and he tells me that he got out of the shelter system and into a half-way house where he's found trouble. Now renting a room some-where and having more trouble. Imagine THAT? (I can. He's also rather delusional, telling me that there are U.S. government spies watching him. Yes indeedie.) Anyway, I'm trying to catch up with some of this "cleaning" of this Journal (move comments here, proof there, back-up else-where). And it's so hot in here that I'm soaking wet already! SCREW THIS CITY! I'M OUT!!!! - 7:55pm (19.55 on the 24-hour clock. Quite the hour.) Quite the heat. 29.5°C but I'm drenched in sweat, having been in this room (E4) from since about 6:30pm, straightened the locker (because El was in, alone, light on, READING A BOOK. I commented, jokingly, that "we don't read here". He was not amused. Alas.) And so I washed my towel, by hand as usual (which stunk terribly from dampness) and today's t-shirt which was soaked from such sweat! - I *did* get out from work at 1:00pm. I *did* get to MMLib where, along with the drama of Ram, I accomplished moving "comments" here to a "main page", copied more "DeadArtist" to a Flash-drive, and proofed November on the Flash-drive file. Then, I was off in search if a poly-case for the back-pack. - Jack's on 41st Street, then to the R train to Union Square and walked to 14th Street and 7th Avenue. Stopped in at the "Container Store" (where I lingered in the air conditioning), BedBathBeyond (more lingering by the fans and air conditioning) and the M14 bus to 1st Avenue for the M15 bus to here. In. Done. - *Note: I can sit all day, in the breeze of the fan, at E's... no *major* cramping. BUT... on the way TO/FROM (MTA?) I'm in *PAINFUL HELL!* And

thinking about here... *cramps*. *NERVES* I'm killing m'self with nerves!* - OH OH OH! (SCREW THIS PHIBE.PHONE!) The last message from Schmulik when we didn't meet? I MIS-READ IT! I THOUGHT HE WANTED *ME* TO WAIT FOR *HIM*! *HE* OFFERED TO WAIT FOR *ME*! OH JOLLY SCREW-UP SSCREW ME! REALLY! (And now he believes me to be in VT and I've no intention of correcting. Time to begin letting all this bunk go. - Something's up in here. I CAN'T STOP THE SWEATS! I'm DRENCHED! Hmmm....

Monday 8 August

6:07am 34th Street at 1st Avenue and there are "No Arrival Times" being displayed for the bus service this morning. NYC... WHY BOTHER? - It's something, being in a "hospital zone". I come and go, to/from work, in scrubs, and fit right in. And I'm in the shadows of a rather prestigious hospital at that. - And despite a good BM this morning, good temperature, breeze, lower humidity, DAMN! my gut just wrenched. Really. What the Hell? The pain is so bad that it makes my hands tremble. - Last evening, the toilet room was FLOODED! From the sinks all across ALL the stalls! When I went to sign-in, I humbly asked the "security" guard if I could use the mop to pick up at least some of the water. She was kind and understanding. I thank her for that. And so, I found the mop and went right to work. Odd? Only ONE guy "thanked" me. Only ONE. While I mopped the loo, Darsevid comes in to have a smoke, looks, sees me, leaves and went to the shower-room. I knew THAT was wet too so I mopped in there as well while I had the mop. Darsevid was sitting in the stall, having his smoke and commenting about how I'm a "bitch". Apparently, the cleaning bothers him... terribly. I finished and left him, staring at me through the slightly open stall door. No further comments. (I wouldn't call him a "piece of sh**" ... status too high.) - Restless... Difficult falling asleep last night. Radio volume was low (mostly) but I just couldn't drift off. - This morning, I wanted more sleep but managed to get up in spite of the horrific fatigue. - 6:22am on the M34 bus. So much for trying for the post office THIS morning. - Surprisingly, I'm not "tired" now, this morning... no more than usual. But yes, intestinal distress. I wonder: I drink the tap water in the building; could it be *THAT* that's making for this pain? - The fellow who wears pink silk shirts most every morning just boarded (at Lexington Avenue). Today's is "hot pink". NYC. (How I HATE it.) - And so, last night, this morning and another day of hate and pain... off to a thankless job, to be grossly under-paid, under-appreciated to wait for the call to "clock-out and leave"... Daily, I await the notice that I'm "off the case". It helps my nerves... and guts... NOT! - 8:00am at Howard Beach. I left the dorm at 6:00am and arrived at Penn

Station, 34th Street at 6:35am. Bleating A train at 6:43am. When I got out here, I stopped quickly at Waldbaums. Clocked-in 7:45am. Mr. E. vomited last night. Mrs. was washing floors when I arrived and she was in a good(ish) mood. - MY guts are a little better but if she's to be in... no waiting for me today. - I noticed my bottle of V8 juice in the fridge. (I put it in the fridge yesterday, behind the Bisquick... SUDDENLY she decides: pancakes for breakfast! UN-frigging-believable! She probably noticed the juice and this is her coy way of letting me know that she discovered it. TOUGH SH** Mrs. Bitch. Hey! It's MINE and NOT YOURS! Bitch to the agency if it makes you feel better. I'm "allowed" to eat or drink whilst I'm here... especially since I get no "official break".) - Food Stamps posted! I'm about to be SKEE-ROOD! (ASSume the position...) - 8:06am Mrs. walked out the door. No comment. I guess I don't "exist". - (Grant that I pull only ONE WEEK MORE, accrue enough to GO, get the JOB in Vermont and LEAVE from here!) - The radio is on here with new about the MTA screwing about with trains. THIEVES! INCOMPETENT THIEVES! - 08:11 Note: Walking down Huron Street here this morning, coming to this place, I felt unbelievably and horrifyingly SO TIRED! I actually *desired* to lay down on the pavement and sleep... - 3:03pm Funny; on TV, someone is dying, forgiveness becomes all-important. "I have a brother. He's not in my life anymore. It's been x years." says the idiot on the tele. "But down here in reality, everybody knows there ain't no such thing..." (Macy Grey) If *ANY* of my "family" came *ANY-WHERE* near me... let's just say, there is *NO* "forgiveness". Bury me in hate and grudges. What makes me cry is the stupidity of people who put themselves in a position to be betrayed... again. Sad for them. For me, there's nothing that can be "forgiven" and I've no desire.- 4:07pm and 53 minutes to go! Time... to pack my human dignity back into that compartment where I hide it, protect it from the onslaught of the sick joke of "security" guards and "peace officers" who do their best to make me look and feel like something less than the cockroaches that invade my tin locker every night whilst I half sleep. Time for the intestinal cramps to return with a vengeance. Time to not go "home". Time to, as daily, think about going "*Home*" and wondering why I'm not there already. Time. It keeps running down and out and by. And another night of witnessing the evil that man can be. - Where to go from 5-8:00pm? I can't go back in there before 8:00pm. Can't handle the degradation, the insanity. It's really becoming too heavy a burden. - I must make it through Friday. Why?... .. I just don't know. - 6.21pm MMLib (no air, no fan, no sh**) I MUST JOURNAL THIS! I caught a 6:00pm F train coming into The City. I happened to look at the notes being written by a woman seated to my left. "Progress Notes". First line: "encouraged pt. to decrease social isolation" And at that very moment, on my

iPod... Fun Boy Three "The Lunatics Have Taken Over The Asylum" played! I almost lost my own control! Sometimes "Life" is, well, hysterically hysterical!

Tuesday 9 August

5:25am 34th Street at 1st Avenue. M34 bus - Herzlich Geburtstag Liebe Oma! (Happy Birthday my Grandmum! She'd have been 105 years old today. Lucky her... not here. I SO wish I weren't.) - The piece of trash-rot MTA phone-thing said "M16 at 5:44am". Now, although I'm on a bus I doubt this timing will work well. I'm trying for the post office this morning. Let's see how terribly late this city can make me today. - No BM. No time. But no PopTart before bed last night. But did have nice schmooze with Cruz(E3). We talked about Rockaway and lead in our water. (Do I have/Am I getting poisoned?) He knows parts of Rockaway and has been out there many times. It's nice talking about it with somebody who knows the area. * But, when we got talking about the water in this place, he asked me where I'm getting my water from for my coffee. When I told him it was coming from the taps he said something about how old this building is, that it's highly doubtful that the plumbing has ever been changed and that, when this building was put up, so many years ago, LEAD pipe is what they used for all the plumbing. That being the case, and the age of the plumbing, he's got NO doubt at all that my stomach troubles are from "LEAD POISONING"! Hey! Could be, might be. He suggested that I stop drinking the tap water and start using the bottled water in the cooler in the hall. He says it's there for US, ALL of us. Well then, I'm going to give it a try. I've really nothing to lose. Let's see what comes of it. * - 5:33am at Herald Square and on my way to a Q53 bus to Howard Beach. - 7:34 Q53 B94th Street heading to Howard Beach. And so, on this perfect morning, in the place I called "Home", I've been to the post office (it opens at 6:30am) for one pay advice, and Waldbaums (opens 7:00am) and had the previous Q53 bus PULL AWAY AS I ARRIVED AT THE BUS STOP! And I'm *exhausted* already, *not* in the mood for what's anticipated for the following 10 hours. Imagine? 10 hours out of 24. - Being in Rockaway puts me in a rather blue mood. Last night Cruz3 asked about buses at night, Winters, trains and commented on the Black population out in Rockaway. Talking about it made me homesick. Being there this morning... I miss some of it (as I waited for the bus, "Walter-from-the-pink-house" just a few houses from the one I lived in, was at the corner). But I must be honest with myself: I no longer want to be anywhere in NY State and MOST CERTAINLY NOT IN NY CITY! It's very much time to leave here... for ever for good. I've nothing to "connect" with/to here. Nothing. Nobody. And this isn't "Life". - 7:46am and crossing North Channel. I should make

it to that miserable “Den of Ingratitude” on time! - 3:20pm ans yes, still in Howard Beach. But... at 2:39pm the phone rang, “caller ID” read “Unknown”. Usually I don’t take those but something told me... TD BURLINGTON VERMONT! OMG! To take the time, to *acknowledge* the letter! I’m in awe! PEOPLE! REAL PEOPLE! OH PLEASE? OH PLEASE? May it be THE GOOD omen! (I’ve gone giddy.) – And? RAIN! Delightful rain to cool the day and hopefully wash away the humidity! - 7:42pm Dung-heap. 28.5°C in here! Jeezifrigginkriste! It never cools! This place *must* actually BE Hell! Yes. That’s it. It *IS* Hell. It’s history is pain and suffering. It’s present is pain and suffering. *THIS is Hell*. We’re allowed to leave so we can see where we’d rather be. Then we come back in... remembering where we’d been... and in here, with the banging, yelling, stench, filth, mice, roaches, water-bugs and other parasitic vermin we know there *IS* better, but *WE* are *HERE*. Hell. (I’ll add my bloating, gas, constipation, cramps... BINGO!) - As I left E’s, R.A.I.N. DELUGE! WIND! DRENCHED! Got to the Q53bus at Cross Bay? The rain stopped. I was drying off? *SPLASH!* Bastard in a sporty Nissan *pulls into the gutter*. OK then. - Relatively empty bus to Jamaica Avenue where I transferred for the J train to Broadway Junction at about 6:00pm. Well, screw me! I didn’t get to 1st Avenue until almost 6:50pm! Too late for SIBL (and my guts were CHURNING AND KNOTTING AND CRAMPING). So... I got the M15 bus to here. - Washed the work scrubs, socks, t-shirt. Now to figure HOW to be in bed with a wet t-shirt hanging on the frame. IF I thought I could trust Darsevid, I could put the shirt at the foot of the bed. But... I know better than to try THAT! - Reminding me... I BLEATING-FRIGGIN LEFT THE LOCKER UNLOCKED TODAY GAHDAMN ME! THAT just truly, madly, deeply pisses me off! That I’m THAT GAHDAMN DUMBASS-STUPID! SH**! But I don’t see that anything’s gone missing. Still! SH**! – Thought: Cruz3 was talking about lead in the water here. Cramps. Constipation. Inability to focus. Memory loss. Symptoms of lead poisoning. Possible? I’ve made coffee with water from the cooler this evening. I’ll start bringing water from Howard Beach. No more drinking from the basin and we’ll see what happens. - 8:03pm Radio on reasonably. 2&3 dozing (they do it so well). 3 is in the hall being his congenial self and I’m sweating like mad. 10 hours of no air conditioning. Brief reprieve on public transport. Then in here... HEAT! - I’d wanted to do some proofing at SIBL, send an e-mail, lodge a complaint against B59th Street HRA (Human Resources Administration... my buttocks). Stuff to be done. But I did laundry. (Maybe tomorrow I’ll bring the beard trimmer to work and cut my hair whilst there. Will have to figure the clean-up though. But I don’t want to do it here. - The sweat is dripping into my eyes. Time to fund another past-time. TOO HOT IN HERE!

Wednesday 10 August

6:20am M15 bus... Wrong. Terribly wrong. Weak. Hands, and Big abdominal pain. Lead? What? Just wrong. - 9:59am Howard Beach (as if where any-where else) It's interesting; a thing that very few will discuss is probably THE most important aspect of humanity: *elimination*. Needing "rest rooms". That said... *This* morning was one for immense concern. I woke at 3:15am because I had to pee. That's starting? Up from sleep to pee? Great. Then, I got out of bed at almost 5:30am! No BM. Brush teeth. Shower. I have clean scrubs this morning! But the world was some-what "removed" and my intestines churned and gurgled. But it was the *mind* that wouldn't stop and focus. In my mind, "2 bottles for water" became "2 socks for water", "an egg sandwich" became "fried underwear sandwich". Thoughts. *Scrambled*. - After I was dressed and ready to go, BAM! *HAD* to go. GAS! NOTHING is coming out. And when something does, it's precious little. (10:11am Phone. "631 Name Unavailable". Screw U. Bye.) - Somehow I made it to the bus by 6:16am. But I felt as though I was standing in a world to which I didn't belong. - M15 bus to the L train. GUTS trying to *BURST* and... PSSSSTTTT! The sound of the train slamming to a halt. Stand-still IN THE TUNNEL! 6:30-6:44am. No announcement until the recorded message from the NYPD about searching back-packs! Sitting there, contemplating possibilities: having to let my bowels go... *TRAPPED* in a tunnel under the East River. Finally... off we go. Broadway Junction. I tried the Jamaica Avenue train. *S.L.O.W.!!!* At Woodhaven Blvd: A PACKED Q53 bus and a Q21 bus. I took the Q21 bus. Guts churning and cramping all the way. - A quick stop at Waldbaums: I forgot to get my coffee but got Gatorade(for the bottle, to bring water from Howard Beach to the sHellter), yoghurt, fruit. - 7:56am clock-in. - I get here, to work at Mr. E.'s? Guts seem so much calmer. Not perfect, but better. - And now? Mr. E. and I are in the living-room. Breakfast done. I fried 4 eggs for a sandwich for myself. And now? I'd like a nap. - 1:08pm This bloody ohine(phone) dropped the whole post. Typical. I get and entire post composed and suddenly, it's gone. Trying to keep-up with this Journal on this phone is ridiculous! - At 12:58pm I got a call. AZIZ! Yesterday, I'd gotten a call from TD in Burlington. Today, Aziz. Good things, 2 days in a row. Something's about to come, and I'm not sure I'm going to like it. That's the way it goes, something good happens, followed by something horrific. - I'm trying a pair of pull-ups today, to wear disposable under-wear, just in case. My other-wise existence has come to this. I'm wearing diapers! - CHECK-OUT time! From "life", from existence. - I can't look into my health: 1. I can't afford to take time off work to go to a doctor nor a hospital. 2. I can't miss sign-in/bed-check, should it take that long to find out what the HELL is so wrong with my body. 3. I can't get anybody to tell me the status of my insurance... IF I have any. - Too long. I've been here too long.

- And I can't keep up with this Journal right now... too much pain today, even for this... for thinking.

Thursday 11 August

5:58am at 14th Street and 1st Avenue. Early? - Twice already, this morning, small BM. I'm dehydrated. And yet, my gut is still painful. Will I ever have a pain-free morning? Ever? - Mum used to say "There is no Hell. After this, there's only peace." This morning, I understand that so well. - 1:28pm From Howard Beach. This morning, I woke to the alarm and to the noise in the hall. Noise from some guy *scraping* the floor! CLEANING? Are we due for a "Callahan" Inspection? It certainly can't be for the sake of house-keeping. And what about the fact that we've only one pane of glass in the window in the room? Yes, only one window has glass in it. It's "closed" but there's glass in the upper and none in the lower... none at all. Will the missing pane be replaced (by translucent plexi, no doubt)? The guy in the hall had to close our door, but was most thoughtful, closing it quietly and letting me go about getting ready for work. I wonder: will they adjust the water temperature in the showers where ONLY HOT WATER comes through now, fix the leaks so I won't have to mop? I just wonder. - Well, even with quick stop at the market before coming to the house, I was here by 7:30am! OK. ONE more day! But it would've been better passed at Tilden. Clear skies, clear air, warm sun, cool breeze. Me trapped. - 7:09m at the North Channel and on the way through Howard Beach en route back to The City from Rockaway. High tide on the bay and tonight, it crushes my heart to leave Rockaway. Egrets on the channel island, roosting in trees, fishing on the shore. Painful. Serenity. There, not here. - A very nice day at work. A PERFECT day to have been at Tilden. But... And, oddly enough, my guts were good all day... until now. Until now. Until now. - E-mail from PJ. Health care references. E-mail from TD Burlington. Nope. No job offer there. Oh well. "Over-qualified" no doubt. And the "NY thing". I'm going to have to just "jump". Properly prepared to leave or not. I see it coming. One way or another. - Strange, when I began this entry, a call from... VT! But a message in *SPANISH*! I'll have to check into that. - For now? RockBlvd. 7:16pm. I'm not too concerned about arrival at the Dung-heap. Though I *do* must wash "*the*" shirt for the week-end. - In Rockaway this afternoon I got the banque statement printed for the next "case worker meeting". I'm "accomplished". - I *should* be at "home"... in the other direction, the one I'm leaving. - I have to close my eyes now... my guts hurt.

Friday 12 August

6:06am M15 bus heading down to 14th Street. Last evening, made it in *just in time*, in spite of a bit of chaos at the entrance. Some monkeys simply can not be “trained”. These useless bits of trash-rot just refuse to follow protocol. They don't have the mental capacity to grasp the fact that shutting the actual f*** up and behaving in any kind of orderly fashion will make it all so much easier for them. Truly, if more people could see this they'd know that there ARE “dreadfully inferior” beings amongst us. It's got nothing to do with “bias”. It's a fact, plain and simple. - I walked up to the 6th floor via the stairs again. Once in the room, I quickly unpacked my things from the day and hit the loo! Another *half-metre* cleared-out... effortlessly. (So why am I *still* in all sorts of *pain* this morning? Even after yet another movement? Something inside is terribly wrong. I *do* want to know what it is, but *not* if it's something I can do nothing about.) The intestinal pain is now so great at times that I go so weak that it feels like my entire body collapses-in on itself. My hands and arms go weak! - 6:15am on the M14 bus to 8th Avenue... Fingers, legs, even my feet suddenly give-up. If I'm walking, the need to simply lie down on the sidewalk is almost over-powering. Sitting on the bus/train, I close my eyes. For some reason, looking at anything at all makes my gut wrench. It's not nausea. I don't want to vomit. I feel as if I need to “blow” my bowels clear... yet, most often it's gas and nothing more. My abdomen's not distended. But there's the sensation. - Must continue later. This phone-crap and bus bumping... I'm aggravated. 11:23am I have just done THE “Homeless”: hair-cut in someone else's loo! Yep! In the E's. Quick. Not absolutely perfect, not bad, nice trim. And now I'm itchy. BUT... looking a lot better for it. Yes. I had to get nekkid to the waist for this hair-cut, buzzing away, door open. AND... hand-washed Mr.'s T (no pun but... Mr.'s t-shirt) after he gave it a nice splash of chocolate Ensure. As for the hair-cut, I swept the evidence, down the carsie. Had my yoghurt. Had a smoke. Physical Therapist is coming round noon. (Why do they even bother? Really.) Now... to see what the remainder of this hysteria will mete out. - I WANT A DRINK! - The cramps are lurking. Not “here”. But “there” some-where. I “know” they're there, or here, but I don't actually “have” them. It's a strange sensation. - I need a nap. - And the weather's good. - Well! 9:02pm and back at the old E2 corner of the shelter room. Signed-in and showered. The day went well though Mr. slept mostly and needs a shave but the electric shaver pulls and he interprets it as me inflicting intentional pain on him. So... and Physical Therapy cancelled his appointment. I tried to stay awake. Then... 5.00pm! Out the door and... I found the poly-things, little cases to put “fragile things” in my back-pack, at the 99cent on Cross Bay Blvd. They're white. But they're better than none. I got 2 in spite of the fact that I HATE THAT STORE! Cashiers are slow and *RUDE*! But I

don't go often so... - Then, a Q53 bus to Jamaica Avenue for the J train... Beginning of the end. *S.L.O.W.!S.H.*.*!* to the MCU-banque. On to the Nr.6 train to the Nr.4 train to Grand Central to TD banque to deposit in THAT account and... YES! Done... 7.00pm. (It took THAT long to accomplish THAT little!) Next? A stop at Staples to copy pay statement. Staples was *CLOSED AT 7:00pm!* HELL!! So I grabbed an M15 bus to 30th Street. When I got off the bus, walking along, a young Asian fellow enquired about the flags on the back-pack. Having Germany and Israel on the same back-pack confuses people. I've had that combination of flags for years and it's always confused people. "People" are ignorant... mostly. We chatted until mid-block when I cut across (not wanting to draw attention to going into the Dung-heap)(imagine that). - In with-out incident. Lift to 6th floor. THE LIGHT WAS ON. E1 in. E2 and 3 out. I went across the hall and washed unders. Signed-in. Showered. - 9:14pm It's quiet in here for now. E1 and E4 (me) are in. I'm going out for a smoke and a turn-in.

Saturday13 August

6:45pm on a Q23 bus at Fleet Street and 69th Avenue in Queens and... WHAT A DAY! (And now. back to the bloody cramps after *NONE all day.*) - I've been to storage, the the post office (where my LICENSE was waiting for me in the post office box!), a stop at the Waldbaums market and Rite Aid in Rockaway. A visit to the Peninsula library and out to TILDEN for a WONDERFUL day, walking about the Bakfort, alone and quite happy with and about it I even got to bunker 411 and SANG! The acoustics in there are SUPER and the singing actually helped my general being! (Of course, I have to add that when I stopped at storage on the way out to Rockaway, I got the bottle of vodka that was in there and, walking about the Bakfort, I had the equivalent of about 3 shots, which helped my mood... TREMENDOUSLY!!! - When I left the Fort, I stopped back at storage (to return the vodka and the "beach things and such". Grabbed the bus to get to Staples for copies of documents I'll need for tomorrow's "case worker meeting". I took the time to browse at Michael's arts'n'crafts and to the bus... back to... - 8:06pm... The Dung-heap. Well, once again, E1 and E4 are in, and it's lights on. 28.5°C in here. - OK. Re-cap the day: Out of this Misery Hall by about 6:30am I believe. M15 bus to 57th Street. The Q32 bus was almost 15 minutes late. I suppose, for NYC MTA that's "on time" (or even "early" I say with a puckered smirk). Off to the Q53 bus to Storage where I got the step-ladder straight away, got the items I wanted (including beach things... never used them but I had them in case) and was off! Q53 bus to the Rock Park post office where the only piece of mail was... TAH DAH THANK YOU LORD! THE DRIVER'S

LICENSE! HALELUJAH! Nothing left to tether me to NY! (Except money... I NEED enough to GO!) Waldbaums next for tin of coffee, bottle of water, cereal bars. Light “meal” today. Then walked the “Freeway” to RiteAid. 2 packs cigarettes, 2 “power bars”. The Q53 bus to PenLib. Bought “I Can’t Stand The Rain” (iTune) (Memories of Joyce and les Mouches... GOOD GOOD Memories. Music.) And checked e-mails, and much social media. Since I have the “BlackNotes” again, proofed a few dog-eared pages. ON TO... TILDEN! - It was about noon already. Stopped at a concrete picnic table for coffee and “lunch” (which was the “breakfast bars”) and then strolled T4 parking lot to the Hero Rd. to the Shore Rd. to the Fresh Pond path. I avoid T6 and T7 at all costs now. I’ve no reason, and obviously, no connections any longer. - 7:13pm at E4: The walk along the Hero Rd. was fun today. I carry proof of residency IN Ft. Tilden now! Little do the non-readers of this Journal know, indeed I DID “reside” there-in... ON the Fort... and on the Shore Rd.! But today, it’s quite official. And so I had to grin. - And so I strolled, happily. Along the Shore to the Fresh Pond path. Along the Ranger Rd. to the Center Rd. back to the Marshal Rd. I’d brought the left-over 100 proof vodka and so, saluted the “413”... my escape, reprieve, respite bunker. Today, however, I did *NOT* want to leave! I lingered, figuring how to set-up house there. It was actually sad to leave today. I lingered... the left an inscription on the bunker wall: “JAK AUG ’11 DEADARTIST”. (If anyone reads this and wants to arrest me... fine. OK. No prob. Get bugged.) I took a few photos then, and as I stared, it came to me: 413. 4 plus 1 plus 3 is 8! August! Of no particular import... or is it? Well, I’ll probably never know. I’m “there” now. I hope I’ll be able to return some day. - Strolled back down the Marshal Rd. and over to the air-ship bunker where I got the urge... Went to bunker 411. There, I belted a few songs with the help of the iPod: “Calling My Children”, “Sand And Water”, “Dimming Of The Day”, “Time To Say Goodbye”, “Misérère”, “The Morning After”... I SANG! SANG WITH ALL I HAD! I FRIGGIN’ BLOODY-WELL SANG! It felt WONDERFUL! I finished the vodka (what little was left) and left the bottle and an empty Camel pack in 411. Not to litter. To leave a bit of my visit. And it got to be almost 4:30pm! I just did *NOT* want to leave! Screw ME! - Back on the Marshal, Centre, Ranger, Pond Path... the beach plums are coming into season... will I be here for them this year? I’m more hoping “No” than “Yes” even though it would be nice to taste them again. And along the Shore Rd. at the east end of which... JOSÉ, Mr. Park Ranger making the rounds! As we chatted, he commented “You don’t associate with that...” Meaning he knows I don’t go to swim whilst the riff-raff “hipster-trash” is there. There’s talk of closing the beach off. Talk of NPS selling permits for concessions! *MY* time at Tilden is gone... Sad. They’ll ruin this place, turn it into more space for more trash to come in and destroy it. More and more it appears that I’m leaving just in time. I

don't want to be around to witness the devastation of those who have no respect for this place. - And so I left... to the Q22 bus to an immediate Q53 bus back to storage to return the un-used beach things and pick-up a few toiletries. - NO CRAMPS TODAY UNTIL I WENT BACK TO STORAGE... ON THE WAY BACK TO THE DUNG-HEAP. OK. THAT tells tomes! - 8:00pm I made it back to the shelter by about 7:45pm. Right through the "Building Security" and walked up. Hell! I'd been standing most of the day and my legs were painful. But Anthony(E1) was in, cleaning his locker. We talked. He spoke! We chatted about keeping the place clean. He mops! YAY! CLEAN! - I signed in and showered. End of a day I wish it had gone along forever... But, it was time, to return to... SH**-HELL. Good(?)night. - But today? I had a drink. I got to my bunker 413. I did *NOT* "tarry" at the Dung-heap. It was well.

Sunday 14 August

2:08pm Today: From E4. This morning, I slept til almost 5:30! Leg cramps galore through the night. - Quick coffee, shower, dress, and down to the 5th floor for today's appointment with "The Warden". Though I do enjoy meeting with her. She always asks "Do you have time?" Indeed, today I did. It was pouring with rain! But our meeting went by, she took my documents, gave me my meal ticket until next Sunday (I'll have to RUSH! to get here) and I was out. - I was off to Brighton (Brooklyn). Jackie's. I need a light jacket now. But Jackie's had nothing. Truly. Nothing. Hopped the B68 bus to "99cent Limit". They've re-organised the store. Much less merchandise, particularly from Israel which has always been quite the attraction to the place. AND... they've gone the 1.49\$ route! The "99 cent limit" is gone... just like all the other so-called "99-cent" stores in this lying city. But I got 6 "Dettol" bath soaps and 4 challah rolls (which, aside from 6 PopTarts, is all I've eaten all day. My guts will be spiffy tomorrow.) I headed back... NO TRAINS! I MEAN "NO" TRAINS! They flooded again! The rains, the tracks, the tunnels... NO TRAINS OUT OF BROOKLYN! The ONLY trains out of Brooklyn were leaving from The Junction.! And the only way to get all the way over there is by bus! Well, leave it to NYC and the MTA. Screw-Ups. But in due course... the Q train finally came through so I got it to 34th Street in The City to connect with the D train to MMLib. Got a computer there. And AGAIN... a faulty computer mouse, SLOW computer! And.. STUNK! STINK! STANK! FUNK! Damned non-bathers! But... I've backed-up ALL of "DeadArtist" today. AND... E-MAILS FROM BELINDA AND P.J.! It made me SO happy!!! They've become my "friends"... Friends. - It was 3:00pm when I left. I walked to Jack's "99-cent" store for some cleaning stuff. I wanted to wipe-down my locker. Jack's had *NOTHING* at all. I bought *NOTHING*! So I got an M16 bus to RiteAid where I bought wipes, an air freshener, pack of

cigarettes and came back to the Dung-heap (or, perhaps, "Snake Pit"). Darsevid was in and I got busy... CLEANING... I emptied the locker section-by-section and GOOD thing too! ROACHES in the back of the top shelf AND upper corner of the large area! *ROACHES!* OH HELL! So it got a GOOD wipe-down and some spray. Clean... for now. - Darsevid left as I began to clean. He's got a seriously psychological aversion to "clean". Sick bit of total trash that he is. - Anthony1 came in. We talked. *He* sealed the mouse hole in the wall behind his bed, with duct tape. He finds Darsevid to be nasty and rude. A shame they're on the same wall, same side of the room. But... - My locker is now clean. Smelling fresh. I need a shower. Have taken a top sheet out as a cover-blanket for tonight. 1,2 and 4 in. - 8:24pm and Darsevid just strolled out. The light's been on all evening. We've been lounging (as it were). Old radio programs on (WBAI). I'm looking forward to sign-in, shower and ending this day. Tired, indeed. Just tired. - 8:53pm Just noting: Sign-in on the 5th floor this evening and they're using LAST NIGHT'S SHEET! We were told to simply put a tick-mark next to our name. I initialled. I anticipate mayhem. I'm going for my shower now and then, hopefully, to wrap this day and call it "ended". Tomorrow? More unadulterated Hell and abuse.

Monday 15 August

5:59am M34bus: After a good night's sleep... I got out of the shelter this morning and... across from NYU and... *BLAM!* *Cramped* right up. *Why? Why* when I'm clear of everything, and early enough to take the commute easy? Worry about MTA? Worry about difficulties on the job? Or the sudden absence of needing to be on my guard? A sudden reduction in stress? What? - Killing your neighbour, homeycide. Homeysexuality. Homeygeneous. Homey-genius. Thought-line this morning. Thoughts like this seem to help as a matter of distraction from the pain. And noting them, as with noting this Journal, serves to distract as well... especially as I roll along on public transport. And it keeps others from know what's going on inside me, none of which is anybody else's business. (They wouldn't give a sh** if they knew anyway.) - 8:12am at the "Penal Colony" Howard Beach annex. I managed to clock-in at 7:32am this morning (STILL EARLIER THAN MY 8:00am SCHEDULED ASSIGNED TIME HERE, Mrs. E.! NOT GETTING PAID FOR THIS! JUST TRYING TO KEEP THIS MISERABLE JOB! OK?) On the way, I got my "daily meal" purchased at Waldbaums... minus the rolls. Again, they had none. - When I got here, I spoke with Mrs. E. who seems to be in a good mood this morning (I wonder what kind of crap she's pulled, in pulling or will be pulling). - Me? SUDDENLY EXHAUSTED! It just SLAMS into and takes over all of me! And the day hasn't even yet begun. - 9:31pm and back at the Dung-heap Hotel. Just notes for today. It was, all told, an OK day. Mr. E. was in a good mood. Jigs, the physical therapist, implied

that Mr. has sores! I'm "concerned" only about the implication. UN-doubtedly, it will MY fault if he does! Screw this family and the agency and their "implications". I wonder if "Mr. Jigs" will get paid a bonus for making such a statement. - After the Hell of being in that Den of Liars out there in Howard Beach, I managed to make the trip out to Rockaway where there were some truly impressive clouds this evening. I got some photos taken of them. Not great because of the phone-camera, but some photos. - PenLib after work. MUCH progress on proofing this Journal! As I proof-read I NOTED THE SAME STOMACH TROUBLES THE LAST TIME I WAS HERE! Nerves? Most likely. (Or... maybe, just maybe... LEAD in the water.) - Got back to the little Hell Hole on 6 at just past 8:00pm. - I need to do laundry. No time. No energy. And at this hour, it won't dry over-night. - NOTE: Much younger boys coming in on 7th floor. NOT GOOD! They mean thefts and instigations of all sorts of trouble. - 9:38pm Signed in. Showered. Last night, slept under a doubled sheet. Not tonight. Warm 26°C. - Darsevid appears to be in a foul mood this evening. Radio on, but low volume. - Time to call this... a day.

Tuesday 16 August

5:55am at 34th Street and 1st Avenue waiting, as usual, for the M34 bus and... Dear Me: As your guts twist and knot each day, remember... The very same thing happened, daily, the last time you were here. This isn't new. It's part of being in the sHellter. Perhaps it's because, no matter what, unconsciously or other-wise, even in sleep, the mind and body remain prepped in a constant state of "fight or flight"... just as it was through child-hood. It's nerves, and being so, is controllable by your state of mind. - 7:35am Howard Beach on "doody-duty". Yes, the reminder of the previous "stay" helps a bit, I do believe. Proofing this is beneficial to better well-being. This morning's commute was much better. I even listened to music! Juan Luis Guerra. No "panic" along the way and no dozing. OK! But, no umbrella and... rain in Howard Beach. Alas. We'll see what the day brings. I didn't get to the market before getting here. There's coffee here. And Mrs. E. told me to eat what-ever is here. She told me again this morning. So, today perhaps I'll mooch. There's roast beef left from my yesterday's market. I'm good. - Last night got chilly. I used the sheet again. Time to think "blanket". E1 has his own linens. E2 has his nasty blanket. E3 will have something, no doubt. I just don't want to bring in anything more that will have to be brought out. - I still can't believe how early I was this morning. Got up on 4th alarm (4:45am). Took my time in the bowl (nothing). But made it very early. Warm shower this morning too. - Suddenly *very* tired. 7:57am This morning I read an e-mail:

"J, just wanted you to know that I'm thinking of you and sending warm wishes. I'm also

concerned about your health :(Let me know if there's anything I can do.

Thanks for the friendship, it came at a time when I really needed it.

Hugs and blessings

Belinda”

Meanwhile... at day's end... And well indeed, 'twas an eve-interesting, this. I've one more month to proof on this part of my Journal! It's almost complete. What then, there-after? I neither know, nor really care. It's the accomplishment alone, the documentation of... - Coming into the Dung-heap, a queue of considerable length. Too many young (in their 20's it appears), Black boys. *Something* is at hand. Them, and the attention to cleaning the common halls. I wonder. - A close encounter/altercation on the queue coming in. The typical: 2 Blacks v. the Jew. Jumping the queue and making their “excuses”. So “typical”, so very “common”. To be expected from that ilk. - But then, in the room tonight, Darsevid/RadioBoy made a “tent”. The “tent”: Apparently the crack got to him today and the light and conversation between El and myself in the room disturbed him terribly. So he pulled his funky comforter up over his head, secured it somehow and cocooned himself in. As El and I spoke, Darsevid raised and lowered the volume on his radio which he'd hidden inside his little tent. I *did* want to photo the farce but with crack-heads... not safe. One never knows what they're capable of pulling... usually violence, and that's something I certainly don't want (any more of). We opted to be mildly amused and ignore. - Signed-in as I got in this evening... after walking up the 6 flights. So, I got a bit of laundry got done, I showered after bed-check. Lights out (but radio still on) by 10:30pm. - Oh. El got a buzz-cut. Looking clean. 1.99\$ at the school where many from the sHellter go. The school used to do it for free and I remember Rey coming in several times with little nicks on his head. Ah, Memory Lane. - Must note: the e-mails from Belinda and PJ have become a connection to stability, sanity and general better over-all well-being. I'm quite blessed.

Wednesday 17 August

5:53am and back at 34th Street and 1st Avenue Good-morning Belinda. Good-morning PJ. Good-morning ShutupImTweetin. Good-morning Lou. Good-morning Correspondents.

06:07am We're at 7th avenue and it's “Tunnels Time”. Time to take my bowels into the City's bowels and ride the rails to... Hell. - 7:57am clock-in. - 8:10am Howard Beach. Today: CLEAR, BLUE SKIES. Just warm/cool enough to be a perfect day to put a blanket on the grass somewhere bucolic and doze. (FAT BLEATING CHANCE.) - No cramps this morning. Having read (in

previous posts here) that it happened before, and no longer drinking the tap water has helped! I'm not certain which helped more but that's not important just now. Still, knowing it was identical the previous "stay" I do believe it's something to do with nerves, stress and the water.

OK. - En route to the bus, at 32nd Street and 1st Avenue, a kid in his late 20's, Black, sitting AT the corner, ON the pavement, nodding, paper bag beside him. I have NO compassion, nor sympathy. I don't even have pity. It's an amazingly remarkable development for me: I can't even find it in me for such a thing. 56 years it's taken and finally! Why? Because: I AM in the shelter, getting up each morning at 4:30am to go to a job that I truly dislike *intensely*, to work 10 hours cleaning bowel movements and urine for 6.80\$/hour to come into a room where one of "his" people disrespects MY right to dignity and peaceful co-existence while HE spends the night getting so stone-drunk he has to sit in the street! I mean, frigg-realy. If *I* can maintain some decorum... Meanwhile HIS "people" tell ME that I have NO RIGHT to be in the shelter (Whites and Jews have no rights to shelter services according to "them") when I'M ACTUALLY PAYING FOR THE DAMNED PLACE by working and paying TAXES! Nope. No compassion there. - The 2 songs this morning: "Calling My Children Home" and "Sand And Water". - One item: Last night Darsevid closed our door (the hall light seemed to have bothered him... common crack-bastard that he is) cutting cross ventilation. My unders are currently on a chair in front of the fan, drying. OH! How "Homeless" can this get? - TO WORK NOW! - 9:17pm Dung-heap. Signed-in immediately upon arrival tonight. I'm even showered even! The damned radio going... not blasting though. Light on (thank me very much). BUT... I CLEANED THE '08 '09 TYPOS ON THE DIGITAL JOURNAL! AN HOUR AT SIBL AND I'M ONE MORE STEP CLOSER TO THE END! WOOT! (as 'tis said) Insert photos. Link all together. COMPLETE! From 1954 through... ALL! The story-board will be COMPLETE! I just wish I could be out having drinks to celebrate. But there will be time for that... soon... quite soon at this point. Then? Nothing to tether me to NY, NYC, ANY-where. All I can think of is: "The Letter", Macy Gray. On that note, it's time to try for some rest before BED-CHECK! and then something like sleep before 4:15AM tomorrow morning.

- This afternoon it got HOT again. Back up to high 20's and my stomach went *insane*. I truly need to get SOMEwhere cold. If I could, I'd move to Nunavut. I'd like that. "But down here in reality" I know there's nothing for me to do up there. Maybe the N.W.T. or Yukon? Something to ponder. - On the day, Mrs. E. came in this evening bitching because Mr. didn't come next door (BECAUSE HE DIDN'T WANT TO AND WAS, IN FACT, TOO WEAK TO GET DOWN ALL THE STAIRS SAFELY) AND because I'd given him ice cream (which he didn't eat) "after 3:00pm". Y'know

what? HE and I get along. Screwdares. - I NEED TO CUT MY TOE-NAILS! TRULY! - I'm calling this a day.

Thursday 18 August

11:50am (at the usual torture of the "job" And I just lost an entire entry that had been tapped-out on this damned phone! I'm just *SO* tired, I dozed and hit "back"! SHIIIIII.....! - Quick note: Mr. E. said his lower abdomen is painful so, after a good breakfast he went to the recliner. At 11:23am he was dreaming. Called out "Oh yeah..." and waved to someone. Just noting. - Meanwhile, it was a "cramps-less" morning! Woke at 4:35am, was at the corner by 5:35am to wait for the bus! How? I do not know. But the M16 bus came and by 5:42am I was at Penn Station. For nothing. STILL had to WAIT for a 6:11am A train... to Lefferts! No matter how I try, there's no early start to a day in NYC. MTA just screws absolutely everything! But that was OK this morning because by 7:03am I was coming out of storage! (I'd stopped by to put the "BlackNotes" book back in storage.) - Got the Q53 bus to Howard Beach. No groceries, no food this morning. But I'm good. - 12:21pm Ponder: The science of Physics claims that energy can be created but never destroyed, only changed. People, humans, are basically bundles of energy... charges that are produced internally keep our heart functioning. Energy derived from the fuel we take in as food. But independent. - Ponder: The death experience where people claim to see bright light, going through a tunnel, seeing relatives and such. Some describe it as re-birth. - Suppose: That energy that we are is never destroyed, even in death. Perhaps, we are re-cycled energy. Over and over again. Perhaps, the death experience is actually the moment of some kind of re-birth, where-by our energy is passed on, somehow, and we are actually born... again, and again and again. The tunnel is actually the birth canal. That light is, as some have said, the light at the end of the canal. Those "relatives" others have claimed to see are actually the new family into which we are re-born. And suppose, this continues on and on and on. Those who claim to get to Heaven find themselves in a life of comforts and contentment. Those who claim to get to Hell either re-live their previous existence or are re-born into a life of poverty, destitution, war, horror. Or, suppose, those who reach Heaven are not re-born at all and become part of an energy that maintains the Natural order of existence. Those in Hell are relegated to some chaos in Creation. Just suppose... Just suppose. - 5:43 and here we are at the Peninsula Library... Rockaway. - 9:13pm Dung-heap. As for the rest of the day in Misery Howard Beach... Mr. E. ate a light lunch at 2:00pm but he was REALLY good, even up to when I left at 5:00pm! (I gave him a hug and a kiss on the cheek and he laughed.) - Mrs. E. was cooking for the grand-kids and sent chicken cutlette over for me! Last night's slice of

fritatta was wonderfully sinfully rich! Tonight's chicken was SCRUMPTIOUS! I had to think: I'm actually getting one "home-cooked" hot meal a day lately. This morning I even had *hot* oatmeal for breakfast! I suppose I should shut up about the EXTREMELY LOW salary and dwell on: Being inside in foul weather, sitting in a recliner, having fresh hot coffee, being able to fry an egg, make toast, hot cereal and Mrs. trying to fatten me up. If not for this assignment I actually don't know WHAT I'd be eating since my stomach won't take the crap I used to eat. It hardly takes real food lately. - And so, after, to PenLib for an hour on the computer and "Dream" images on some pages. I don't have to sign for a computer now. I walk in, librarian sees me, puts my name on the list. (THIS place IS "Home".) - Leaving was painful again tonight. A beautiful storm was coming in off the ocean. Great waves! A charming walk or an exciting swim! Instead, I got a ride through the bowels of NYC. - Quick in through entry security/x-ray/etc. Walked the 6 flights of stairs. In the dung-dorm, 1&2 were in. I ignored the lot, put on flip-flops, signed-in and went for a shower. The stall was CRAWLING! *Roaches*. Oh well. They're clean, I suppose. - 9:30pm I'm nodding. Must nap... I *PRAY*... One earplug helps dull the racket of this dump. I put one into the left ear, I sleep on my right side so that ear is against the pillow. G'night.

Friday 19 August

5:45am on the M16 bus here. - I woke at 2:21am for potty. Back to bed and right back to sleep. 3 alarms on the phone and out of bed. Wahoo. Real, regular BM this morning. Delightful shower. But everything I touched made noise, tumbled, or something. (Oh well... my turn to disturb the useless in the room?) The day began. Beautiful temperatures this morning. But I ran for this bus at 5:43am and... I'm feeling rather "bloated". - The plastic coffee bottle that I use to make my daily "morning coffee" to keep in the locker at bed-side has a rather acrid odour. And last night I noticed that my towel, when damp, smells like "turtle water": like the bowl we kept those little "Woolworth's" turtles in. Hmmm... - 5:51am at 7th Avenue and... Here we go... the day commences...7:06am at 61st Street and Roosevelt Avenue on a Q53 bus! At 6:13am this morning... THERE WERE NO BLEATING A-TRAINS BETWEEN CHAMBERS STREET AND 145th STREET IN EITHER DIRECTION! I had to walk to 34th Street and 6th Avenue for the F train to Roosevelt Avenue in Queens to get a Q32 bus BACK to 61st Street to JUST MISS A Q53 bus! I feel like I'm about to have a stroke or coronary. I NEED THE BLEATING-FRIGGIN MONEY! And today is my *stress-Friday*: Work, then into Wall St., TD...finances that MUST be attended before the "case worker meet'n'greet"! Tomorrow: post office *before* work, then work, (I'm so out of it I can't remember routine!) - OH DEAR GOD GET ME OUT OF HERE... ANY

WAY AT ALL! DEATH IS PEACE AND I DON'T CARE HOW IT COMES... EVEN IF I HAVE TO TAKE THE OPTION!

- 12:19pm I was out of the room for MOMENTS trying to talk sense into Mrs .E. about Mr.'s dietary requirements (liquids to stop constipation) but she won't listen. Giving up, resolving to do what my training dictates and common sense indicates, I come back to find Mr. E. in the middle of the floor, *twirling!* *NO WALKER!* I got hold of him *JUST* as he went, gently, to the floor! *SUNUVABITCH!* HOWever... I don't know how, but I lifted 140 pounds of him up, and into the recliner! *ME!* I did it! Quietly. Calmly. He laughed! He found the whole ordeal ever so amusing. Thankfully, he didn't get hurt (and neither did I). - I've got the wife who just won't listen to me, rejects suggestions, information and such. The husband, my patient, has Alzheimer's and cancer of the Colon/Prostate and decides to take solo strolls. 6.80\$/hr. and a supervisor who takes ABSOLUTELY NO interest in my work AT ALL! SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE DEAD! And right now I'm not too certain "what" (or whom). - I'm on my 3rd coffee since 8:00am. And another 7 days before my 2 days off. - I get through by thinking... VT, NORTH, closer to the border, to the Province where my heart and soul are waiting for me. Soon. But certainly not soon enough. - Meanwhile, I do ALL I CAN for my guy. Comfort. Concern. Care. It's what I do... thanklessly... it's what I do. - 7:35pm MMLib IT CAN BE DONE! I got out of Howard Beach and on to an A train at 5:16pm. Then to the J train. Made it to the MCU, then on to the Nr.6 train and to TD and here by 6:30pm! And here, I had a couple of minutes to get a couple more tunes for the iPod before getting on this computer (and passing time). - The day? Well, it went. Mr. E. fluctuated between total lethargy and manic personality. Mrs. confided that she was certain that he'd be "gone" today. But I did know better. Still, she and her lovely little daughter-in-law kept second-guessing me and rejecting suggestions. The daughter tells me "according to my research" and "according to my training" (WHAT F'ing "*training*"? She's a dumb-arse "Hotel" CLERK!). Well, today I decided that I shall let them have their "research" and their "training" and I will do what makes ME comfortable and not them. I have 5 years of Hospice, a year of Psych/Med-Surg, 6 months Cardio and 6 months Respiratory. But, it's always the same... I'm just the "Hired Lackey" so if that's what they want, that's what they get. - OH GOD GET ME OUT OF THIS CITY! - OK. Well, now it's raining.. or I hear it's pouring. I have to get from here to the lovely Hotel de Marde (Hotel of Sh**) with-out drowning. But... I have my umbrella! So by the time I get to the door, all should be well again. - Although last night my Home-Town got a WHAMMY of a storm! Trees branches all over the place. Damn it! I missed a beautiful storm! (Bitterness!) - I'm out of here. Time to toddle. More when... - 9:20pm Hunee! I'm HOME(less)... Back at the Dung-heap, the

boys are all in, radio going and Darsevid's locker is covered by his comforter. Luckily the temperature in here is 26°C. Had it not been for the rain, I coulda done a wash. On a regular night, wash dries in mere hours/over-night. Toss it on the locker before bed, wake to bone-dry. (It was one of the VERY FEW things I'd missed when I'd left here.) But on rainy nights, it could take 2 days and I don't have the luxury of bringing wet wash to work on the week-end. Mrs. is "in" too often. Which reminds me: Only 5 hours tomorrow! O GAHD YES! FINALLY! The week-end hours! I really can't bitch. Today she brought me 3 chicken cutlettes (they don't eat *meat* on Friday... friggin typical hypocritical "Catholics", that lot) (never mind) and a slice of pizza. Now, if she'd learn to trust my medical judgement... - Anyway, the boys here are tucked in. Darsevid went storming out the door (leaving the radio on of course... WFAN... baseball BS). But I probably should put out the light. Not that anybody ELSE in this cell has to get up or out of bed in the morning... Tomorrow morning I'll leave, they'll be asleep, I'll come back, they'll be asleep. So now, I'll put out the light, put in my ear-plug and... Another night in... The Snake Pit. (WHAT A MOVIE! I remember seeing it and thinking of this place!)

Saturday 20 August

5:19am at 28th Street and 2nd Avenue and waiting on the 5:27am M15 bus (or at least that's what the "Arrival Times" board is telling me... more NYC BS): All those months before coming to the shelter I wished to get back to my "normal" routine... waking at 4:30am? Now I have it. Ah... but if only I could sit at table calmly, enjoying my morning coffee and cigarette instead of rushing to "sh**, shower and run". Never. Enjoy? Never! - Spoke with (5:24am and I'm on the bus) that kindly "security" guard this morning. I tend to think I'm the only one who speaks to her... nicely anyway. She always looks rather shocked when I say "Good-morning". No doubt, she's more accustomed to verbal abuse (and do I ever know how THAT is!). - 10:56 and back in "Doo-dooville" Howard Beach where I arrived at... 8bleating12 o'clock this morning! THREE DAMNED HOURS to take the L train to the A train to the shuttle and the Q53 bus. The longest wait? The damned A train at Broadway Junction! LOCAL! Then the only salvation was that the train skipped from Grant Avenue to RockBlvd and to North Conduit... At the post office? Pay-stub post-marked "11 August"! Then to Waldbaums for their "no selection" for food for today. I got yoghurt, fruit, PopTarts, honey for me and for Mr. E., yoghurt and cranberry juice. - *I didn't get to clock-in until almost 10:00am because Mr. was at table when I arrived and Mrs. was in a mood. Screaming at me about paying for the yoghurt (but not the juice). Then getting Mr. into the shower. I'm exhausted. Next, daughter rings. Explains Mrs. is very concerned and afraid of losing Mr. Right. But the 2nd-guessing.*

*I had to tell her I've 20 years of doing this! No avail. THEN "Rob", covering Melanie wants to "confirm" when I got here. "I need to speak with the patient." I almost gave the phone to Mr. Would serve them right. But when I said I'm usually here by 7:30am or so... "I've got it covered." he says. F***em!* - Louie the son came by. Mr. got a shave. And I'm ready for sleep. Nice beach day. Wish I could. But much to do today. No rest for the weary. - By the way: the brown towel at the shelter? I washed it yesterday. Stinks already. The hot water! No more wash in hot water! It'll never come back to white. - Well... 5:32pm Q53 bus to 61st Woodside. A Note: Mrs. tells me I need someone in my life to sit with at the end of the day, to have dinner with, to talk to. COULD YOU BLEATING-WELL IMAGINE GOING THROUGH THAT AGAIN? Besides... who the FRIGG is SHE to tell ME what I need in MY life? JEEZUS F.! - 6:18pm Q32 bus at 33rd Street and Queens Blvd. PopTarts! That's all. PopTarts. 6 of them. Meals for the day. Any more and I'll start shi**ing like a toaster! - Anyway... Since "Rob" or "Bob" at the agency gave me crap for clocking-in late this morning, I decided to send in a time sheet. *That* required a trip to storage, following the visit to PenLib where I bought more music (OK! I'M WEAK! I've ALWAYS opted for music over... EVERYTHING! Shoot me... O please, SOMEbody DO! Please! It wouldn't be murder. It'd be the kindest thing a human has ever done... EVER!) So, believe it or not, I found the time-sheets almost immediately! And off I went. Q53 bus... AND I WAITED! Got one to Woodside for a connection with a Q32 bus. AND I WAITED! And here me is, just crossed the 59th Street Bridge! I could grab the M15 bus to Hell. But I'm going to relax, enjoy a trip down 5th Avenue to 34th Street. Screwit! OK? OK then. - 8:04pm back at E4. And... THAT was rather pleasant... the buses ride. And it's cooled nicely in The City. The connection from the Q32 bus to the M34 bus was immediate (too bad) but I got to sit. Very important for me... to sit. Odd, but when I got off the Queens bus, I wanted to chat with the driver... we're "homies"... came from the "Outer Borough" into The City. I wanted him to know I'd left my "Home Borough". But the reality is, he could have been from anywhere and simply driving a Queens bus. Still, I felt like I'd bussed into a different country. I'm slipping. REALLY slipping. - I got to see a bit of Burlington Vermont on-line today. Almost reminds me of Rockaway; small buildings, low. Small-town. Like Rockaway. I like that... wish I was there already. Soon. Soon. - Coming into the cell? About 7:00pm. Darsevid and the bleating radio. But no E1 nor E3. I've washed my work scrubs. E3 comes in telling his experiences with his "water pill". Yes indeed. THE ONE THING that EVERY person NEEDS and one can NEVER find one when needed: a LOO! Too funny. - About 8:00pm, E1 comes in. Makes his bed. He has his own linens. Colour. (Quite frankly, I'm a bit surprised they haven't been stolen in this dung-heap. I'm actually expecting Darsevid to damage mine or the bed somehow. Wouldn't put it past him, just

because.) – At 8.17pm the radio's going in here, the TV in the "lounge" is doing some salsa-thing. And... it's miserably HOT in here! But then, it might be what-ever it is inside me that could be making me feverish... On that, I've my suspicions. But it hasn't taken me... yet. So there. - Gee! 10 minutes til sign-in. Then it'll be shower and me TRYING for SOME sleep (right). - The afternoon/evening went right by. Oh. And no rain. - It smells nice in my "niche". Fresheners in my locker and "Gain" on my drying clothes (they'd BETTER DRY!). - Stoopid Old Southern Black Man Alert! Loud! It's interesting how they seem to believe they MUST yell! Ah. What the Hell? - And the bongo/conga serenade from the TV down the hall continues to echo all over. - I'm quite tired.

Sunday 21 August

9:26am at Howard Beach (Of course. Where else would I be? Frigg me.) Quite the night, last night. All went... Radio on through-out. One ear-plug in. I don't like it, cutting air out of the ear canal like that, but it does dull the blaring radio. I don't know how the other 2 manage. But then, they don't get out of bed before 7:30am during the week, probably not before 9:00am on weekends and D(arse)vid doesn't get out of bed unless there's a bodily function or food or cigarette involved. Anyway, I was finally getting to drift off to sleep when... BED-CHECK! A quick 'lights on/lights off' and then, out in the hall... "YOU'RE TOO LATE! NO! YOU'RE TOO LATE!" accompanied by grunts and groans. Somebody tried to slip in to sign in AT bed-check. But the grunts sounded pitiful, like somebody who's other-wise mute. It was VERY "Asylum-ish". Almost sickening. But, oddly, I felt no sympathy nor sadness. Hell! I'd NEVER get away with pulling the BS some of these arses pull. No sympathy from me. Friggoff. - I begin to re-settle, drift off and... BING! BING! BING! BING! BING! Fire alarm! "Fire drill." It figured. They pull that BS in the middle of the night. They'd done it once before, 1:00 in the morning, Winter. Rationale tells me it makes sense: Everybody should be in at that hour. But logic dictates that it's quite abusive. I waited for the order to evacuate (being raised by a Staff Sergeant comes in handy at times like these... and more). I marvelled at how the ear-plug dulled the radio but the fire alarm came through clearly. I turned my head to the "open" ear. WOW! LOUD! But nobody in the room moved, save... Darsevid who laid there grumbling and cursing at the alarm. "HAH-hah!" I thought, how wonderful that *he* gets annoyed now, the worthless, inconsiderate piece of waste-rot. Then came the female voice in the hall: "Fuck!" said she, "It had to happen to me on my shift! Sh**!" Then, from down the hall: "NO! NO! NO! You know there's no smoking in the room." in a tone like a mother scolding her child. I grinned, listening to Darsevid's bitch-fest, happy that he

was annoyed until... silence... - 2:25pm SIGNED-IN for Ms. Henika at 2:21pm! Left Howard beach AT 1:01pm, jumped on a Q11 bus at 1:12pm. Waited for an A train that brought me to an immediate L train that brought me to and immediate M15 bus. HOT! SWEATING! Off to pee... on the 5th floor (D18). MEANWHILE... It's been quite the day. I arrived in Howard Beach by about 7:00am. Strolled calmly to Waldbaums, listening to music. Somehow I knew the rest of this day was to go sour. Waldbaums' rolls were ALL, hard and stale! No inexpensive cold-cuts. AND I was stupid enough to buy bread so Mr. E. could have some with his lunch. I thought I might have an egg sandwich too. Stupid me. - A calm stroll to the house and got there entirely too early and, considering this is Sunday, I never thought anybody would be awake so, instead of banging in I sat on the stoop to read the paper until I heard Mr. sneeze. Awake! Up the stairs I went to find Mr. up at table, in JUST a diaper, eating breakfast. Mrs. at the sink. I waited for him to finish breakfast. Mrs. left for a bit leaving ALL the dishes in the sink AND a bed with sh**ty sheets (for me to remove). *And then it happened:* He didn't want to shower! We got into the bath-room and his "game" commenced. Would NOT move close to the tub. THEN, as he's standing there, he pees on the floor AND starts to SHIT! NO DIAPER ON! I threw a couple of Chux on the floor, began to clean the faeces when HE DECIDES TO SIT ON THE COMMODORE... LID CLOSED! Bucket-time! A good head-to-toe WASH as he sat right there, on the toilet (lid closed). He got CLEANED! Then he took an attitude with me, wouldn't allow me to clothe him. I walked away, stripped the bed and went back. He'd gotten himself up and was standing in the hall with the walker, t-shirt only half on. I finished dressing him... Got him into the kuvung/licing/licing/living-room (frigging Huawei rot phone!) and into the recliner, and I went back to clean the loo. Daughter-in-law comes into the house to ask: Will he be able to get out of the house today? They'll be home until 2:00pm. Obviously... NO. OK. Back to "normal". I FINALLY got to eat something by about 10:00am. Oh, and the bread? I had 2 slices with vanilla ice cream and honey. (I did manage 2 tinned coffees, 2 yoghurts, a small tin of apricots during the day.) - NEXT! At about 10:30am I offered Mr. some jello. He truly needs better liquid intake and getting him to drink and getting the family to comply is almost completely impossible. He tried, as he does, to *use the spoon as a straw*. I did not intervene and he did not eat the jello. - 11:30am, too early for lunch according to Mrs. but she waltzes in, sees Mr. at table, notes the jello, "He have he lunch?" she asks, curtly. No. "Then why you give that stupid stuff? 11,11:30 he gets lunch." she snaps at me. Previously she insisted "not before noon". I gave up! I GIVE UP! The *bitch-fest ENDS TODAY!* I walked away, went to make the bed. She cooked him lunch, served and cleared the table. Sink full of dishes! SHE got him to the living-room where I offered to change

him (knowing it was needed). SHE waltzes out, goes to her sewing room. I changed Mr. Dyddie-full of SH** AGAIN! - Mrs. "hid" in her little room until 12:58pm when I went for the phone to clock out. She said something to me. I ignored her and AT 1:00pm I clocked-out. She has NO idea what happened in this house all morning and her abuse of ME? She can stuff it all as far as I'm concerned right now. - The decision to use the Q11 bus was good. The connections were very good. Getting into the Dung-heap was delightful. Seeing Ms. Henika today was up-lifting. Having gotten this journalled is a relief. Having done on the ohibe/phone is bleating pissed. But, it's done and I've stopped schwitzing so damned much. - Tomorrow, if the need presents, I'll tell Mrs. E. that I can understand why she can't keep help on and remind her of MY skills and "training" and remind her that she's free to seek someone else. I NEED THIS INCOME! NEED! NEED! NEED! BUT... She'll bitch once and I'll be finished! How bleating-frigging typical! I bust MY arse, GIVE them 45 minutes to an hour EXTRA most days, go the extra and... NOT EVEN A NOTE OF APPRECIATION TO THE AGENCY! ALL of them! Screw'em all directly to HELL! each and every one. - Meanwhile, voice mail. Mrs. MG! "Happy birthday. Hope the new life-style is rewarding. We think of you often." Right. You don't have mobility any longer, nobody to drive you round the town and round the world, cgeao/cheap bastards. (THEY couldn't send a nice letter to the agency either, and they've got computer AND PRINTER!) Annoys me. - I've pulled out of Life. Goodbye. No regrets. - 3:17pm on an M34 bus to MMLib. Ms. Henika has been dealt a double slam from the "system" and when I sympathised telling her about *my* morning she replied: "*She (Mrs. E.)needs to get somebody else and pay them a lot more money! Do they think just anybody will do what you do for the pay you get?*" COMPASSION! And she knows my income and hours worked. I pray for her strength to endure and peace in her life while she can enjoy it. - 3:47pm MMLib 5th floor and waiting for a 5:00pm appointment on a computer. I'm DRENCHED WITH SWEAT! This CAN'T be from heat/humidity. AND NO AIR CONDITIONING IN THIS PLACE! NYC? Freaking Hell-hole! This phone? Piece of sh**. OK. - Copied the time sheet at Staples on Madison at 38th Street. The bitch at the counter charged me 23cents to do it instead of showing me the self-serve (11cents). Skroo huh (screw her). OK? I want a copy because Mrs. E. *wouldn't* sign for Mr. E. so *HE* signed. I fore-see troubles coming from the agency. But I'm quite prepared to do battle. - AND we no longer have drop-boxes for the post here, in this "wonderful and so convenient city" so I have to go to a bloody Post Office! The BS I'm shoved into for 6,80\$/hr.! - 4:47pm I'm still waiting for the computer and am starting to doze off! Time to move about. - This day has been too much.. TOO, TOO MUCH!

Monday 22 August

Well, on recounting this here, over the course of time, I'd managed to get this day all wrong. My Mum had died, at the age of 55 years, on the 28th August in 1988, 23 years ago. And the entry for this day was sparse because, well, all day, 23 years later, I was still rather pre-occupied with the loss. But, since this is what was recorded, I'll keep this here...

6.05 Twenty-three years ago today, at approximately 10:30am, my Very Best Friend In Life took her last breath of Creation's Earthly air. It was a Monday then. Twenty-three years ago, and this morning it's as fresh in my heart, soul and mind. Mama, how I miss you so very, very much. Unlike me, you loved Life so. If only we could exchange places.

7:06pm waiting for a Q22 bus at B124th Street, Rockaway. And I'm in no hurry. The evening is UNBELIEVABLY MAGNIFICENT! And I'm carrying TWO jars of Bustelo Instant coffee! and 2 packs of cigarettes. I am a Happy man for the moment. I just came from PenLib. "Home"... but I can't stay. And on a perfect evening. Creation. And no Mum.

Earthquake in Howard Beach

Tuesday 23 August

6:08am at 34th Street and 1st Avenue on an 18°C morning. Clear. Breezy. - Something's "off" in my brain. I too me until the 4th alarm to wake this morning. OK, I shaved at long last. Showered well. Dressed. Got together everything that I needed. Grabbed the lift. Straight down and out... At the corner of 30th Street and 1st Avenue I realised that I'd forgotten the kippa! Had to put everything back into the back-pack and go BACK into the building which meant going through all the entry "security". That wasn't too bad at this hour. Not many people coming IN, especially at this hour of the morning (not too many going out either.. since most of them were still in bed). Back up-stairs in the lift. Open lock by lighter so I didn't have to turn any lights on. Kippa on. Back to the lift. Out-side, and still had my "meal ticket" in my pocket instead of in my back-pack where it would be safer. Panic. But that was OK. Just "off" today. - 9:20am at Howard Beach for another day of misery. - I was awake until rather late last night. El&3 were very talkative until Darsevid came in. Seems he doesn't like the "camaraderie" amongst the 3 of us so he put the volume on the radio up rather loud. We finally HAD to stop talking over the radio. But it was OK, really. I didn't get to shower until 8:15pm. And... to a night's sleep. The Howard Beach story du jour: I got to the train station here by 7:04am! Strolled... SLOWLY, to the market. Nothing of interest. I got 2 tins of whipped cream (on sale 2/5\$) and my yoghurt. Strolled to the house. Mrs.

E. was already at the front gate. We came into the house. I clocked-in because SHE IMMEDIATELY got Mr. up (at 7:40am), she stripped the bed and took the linens, and she'd departed. By 9:00am I had Mr. bed-bathed (because he REFUSED to get OUT of the bed and I wasn't going to have him filthy all damned day, what, since he sleeps most of the night on pissy sheets, and then got him dressed and to table for breakfast. - Now? I'm fatigued. He's in the recliner watching TV and I'm trying my best not to doze. - At 2.00pm, *EARTHQUAKE* 6.0 on the scale! Origin: 87miles south of Washington DC! I was sitting in one recliner, Mr. E. was snoozing in his recliner across the living-room from me. (1.52pm official time) I was rather dozey, but it felt as if the house had begun to "sway". For the briefest moment, I thought I was having some kind of dizzy spell, considering how terrible I've been feeling lately. But as I looked across the room, I could SEE the house swayed very gently. But traffic continued out-side. And Mr. E. continued to sleep. All was as if nothing happened. I grabbed the phone and rang Mrs. E. next door. When she said "Allo!?" I asked her, "Did your house just rock?" She rang off on me! Or so I thought she had. I tried 911 on house phone and there was no dial time. I tried on my cell phone and there was no service! NO CONNECTION. I sat, wondering how I was going to get Mr. E. out of the house in his weak state. But then, FINALLY, the neighbours across the street came out of their house so, since things seemed to be calm again, I went out to ask them. They confirmed. (2:14pm It's on CBS News) Apparently basement and 1st floor residents didn't even notice the whole thing. Imagine! So, since Mrs. is always in the basement net door, she didn't have any idea that it took place! Well... since it was all passed and done, I simply went next door to tell Mrs. E. of the incident. She didn't believe me so I told her to watch the news, it would be on there and I went back to the house to watch Mr. E. until the end of my shift. To Hell with the rest of them. - 9:18pm Room 6W-107 at the Crap-Hole. The "boys" here are tucked in. I'm having my evening PopTarts, awaiting "BED-CHECK!". We didn't have one last night. That's either inconsistent-continuity or consistent-incontinuity. Either way it is what this place is... BS! - As for and about today's "Earthquake"? According to the news, it was more along the lines of an Earth-"roll". It "rolled" so nicely that people on the streets and ground floors didn't even feel it. BUT... New Yorkers being NOT New Yorkers anymore, MOST left their offices for the day. The news kept referring to "post 9/11"! I mean sh**really! That was 10 years ago! But the REAL N.Y.ers are gone and what's here now is... well... DUMB! However, I left Mr. E. at just past 5:00pm. At 5:16pm I was on the Q11 bus. By 6:20pm I was in SIBL. And The City had a tranquillity about it... a strange tranquillity. - SIBL? "BONEY M"! on the iPod and some "stuff" on the computer. I Backed-up the "KalbahJournal" to the Flash-drive. I will never forget how she, Margot, told me to

go to “the shelter”, then asked for a kiss when I left! (Happy now, are you? Here I am... in the shelter.) Anyway, that’s documented on another journal. No need for it here. - This evening here, I came in behind a 21 year old fellow who’d come up from Florida on holiday and claims he got screwed by “friends”. (Can you imagine? I certainly can.) And this place, this shelter or the DHS anyway, is giving him a ticket back to Florida! Two guys in the hall confirmed that DHS will do that if you have a definite place to go to. But then you can’t show back here for a year. Oh well. (How about they move me to VT?) Seriously though, with all the Homeless people in this city alone, DHS has NO business doling out tickets to anybody... especially non-residents. As I say: If you can't take care of your own children, you've no business adopting more to care for. - Well then, meanwhile and back in the room, I chatted with E3 until sign-in (which was on the 5th floor tonight) and then went and showered. Day is done. - OH! I GOT THE CHANCE TO TELL LOU (Mr. E.'s SON THERE, WHAT Ms. Henika HAD TOLD ME TODAY! (LET THEM FIND PRIVATE DUTY AND PAY FOR THAT SERVICE) AND HIS REPLY? HE TOLD ME NOT TO TAKE Mrs. E. “PERSONALLY”. YEAH, RIGHT, OK, SURE, F** YOU TOO. - 9:39pm and I must toddle. More tomorrow.

Wednesday 24 August

6:22am and this morning I woke at 5:22am. When I left the building I actually walked directly onto the 6:15am M34 bus. - Rumour has it that it's going to be a “wash-out week-end” so I can't plan on the beach or the Fort. - I'm feeling “odd” this morning. But... Here we go... again. HELL! I want out of NY. - 9:55am at “HoBe House” (HOwardBEach at Mr. E. again, that is) Clocked-in at 7:40am *BUT*... I arrived to an open, un-locked front door! Mr. seated at table, *naked*. He'd eaten his pudding, taken his medications, and was in good spirits. *BUUUUTTT... THE SHEETS WERE F.O.S. (Full Of Sh**)! MAJOR!* In the loo was a bucket containing his shorts, soaking. F.O.S. And me, on the clock but *NOT* on the pay-roll with *WORK* to get done. Well... under-wear and t-shirt on Mr. On to making his French toast, juice, fruit, and tea for breakfast. He ate, I washed the shorts, by hand!, prepared the shower. Breakfast done, *thorough* shower. He sat on the commode and I stripped the bed, put together a bucket of ammonia and bleach to “clear the air”. The on to washing dishes and washing the kitchen floor. Got Mr. to the living-room. By 8:58am I'd done a day's-worth of work... done. JUST IN TIME! MRS. COMES IN! She goes into a *TIRADE* on how to feed, what to feed, when to feed. “He’s going all the time. Too much.” She got IT, the riot act from me this morning. “YOU. do what YOU do and I’LL do what I do. If that’s not good enough, call the agency now and let me get out of here.” The tone changed. “I don’t want you to have to

deal with that. I don't take advantage of the people." HELL! He *HAS* to move his bowels and because of her "what, when and how much" he got impacted! He was FULL of (sh)it! The poor guy! Well folk, she FINALLY agreed with me and agreed to let me handle the day! FINALLY! (Now I'll ABSOLUTELY expect a nasty call from the office, taking me off the case. Oh well. As Mrs. says "Thank you very much. God bless you." All said and done, I've done what I must, should and can. As for me not having "to deal with that."? SHE KNEW WHAT WAS WAITING FOR ME! SHE MUST HAVE STRIPPED HIM DOWN AND GOTTEN HIM TO THE TABLE! Liar, that she is... a good "Catholic" liar too. - Now it's 10:24am and I'm getting absolutely WEARY. - 9:27am back at room 6W107 Oh I got a call alright. About the *late clock-in on SATURDAY*! "Rob/Bob" *DIDN'T* "take care of it" AND "Ms. .Melanie" at the agency CLAIMS she didn't get the time sheet I'd sent. So I *KNOW* I'm pulling 45-55hrs now. ANYTHING SHORT, ANOTHER COMPLAINT to the Labour Board. NO PROBLEM! - The day? Quite well. Mrs. E. brought me a WONDERFUL chicken/mozzarella focaccia sandwich! My gad it was stupunderfab! DEElish! I'm eating SO much (and burning off so little). I won't be "bronzed" when I get to VT but I'll have weight! I prefer the weight anyway. And the food? At this point, it's the VERY LEAST they can do. - I took the Q11 bus when I left, again tonight. SIBL by about 6:30pm. I bought a couple "10,000 Maniacs" tunes from "iTunes" and got the "DunesSojourner" blog onto the Flash=drive. The "Gaston" blog has to be re-posted. The data is there but it comes up with the index! I don't know why. There's some good writing on there. I want to save it somehow... and the Flash-drive is small enough to carry with me. (NOT give it to someone else to hold. F***.) - Tonight I walked back to the Dung-heap. There was a wonderful breeze. The hurricane that's rumoured to be due here soon is probably making the breeze and sucking the humidity out. Ah... the wk-end. STORM by 2:00pm Sunday. Figures. My week-end off. - ANYway... there were thoughts I wanted to jot, things that came to mind during the day. I've forgotten them. I should jot notes. Writing still beats all. - 9:42pm and we're all "in". Earlier E3 says to me: "I'm gonna miss you when I leave here." (And earlier today the Physical Therapist/Jigs, says "You're so good with your patients.") WHAT THE ACTUAL F? I'm just sUch "the doll". (Oh bloody SCREWme for krise sake! REALLY!) - Darsevid's got the radio low. E3 got up and put the lights out. I'm aspirined and showered and PopTarted. I want a quick smoke before turning in. Oh, the ceilings are *pink*. It's the stuff they "paint" on where the old paint is peeling and/or there's been some kind of leak. REPAIRS! O MY!

Thursday 25 August

6:01am M34 bus. I shaved the callous off the right great toe this morning! RELIEF! It's been so large and so painful for so long. And now, if the MTA doesn't screw me over, it's post office day. But... - (At Madison Avenue at 6:03am) - 9:48am at "HoBe" No rest for the weary today. I got in at 8:03am and tried to "ease into the morning" but Mrs. E. just couldn't wait... she came RIGHT OVER from next door! Of course this meant Mr. *HAD* to get out of bed *IMMEDIATELY*! She comes in for his breakfast during which she starts SHOVING food into his mouth saying "I don't have all day." What the Hell? *SHE* doesn't have all day? *I* do! Go away! Let the poor guy eat in peace. She strips the bed, washes the dishes and leaves. *WE* went to the shower. And now, at long last, my bit of damp wash is on the chair to dry. (Since I don't have time to get MY personal affairs attended-to, I'm bringing some of my personal affairs here. And too friggin bad if anybody doesn't like it, at this point.) And I'm schwitzing already. Hmpf. And the humidity is up, the skies are grey and I ponder getting drenched (no umbrella) even though Hurricane "Irene" is still far enough away. - I didn't even have time to get to the market this morning but I did get to the post office. It's really great out on The Rock. But I'm denied the pleasure of being there. Friggin... never mind.

10:04 (Edit)

I looked at my pay advice. On a 55-hour week:

.BOTH SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

.PLUS 5 HOURS OF OVER-TIME PAY

.*TAKEN AWAY IN TAXES!!!!*

How I HATE, DESPISE, DETEST, LOATHE and ABHOR this!!!!

There's NO SENSE in trying. No incentive. It's ALL just plain SHIT!

It actually DOES come to being paid for the base 40 hours.

Death looks better all the time.

HURRICANE IRENE

A PARK AVENUE ATROCITY

When I left that miserable Hell-hole House at HoBe this evening, I headed out to "home", Rockaway, and to the Peninsula library where the librarian arranged to give me 2 hours on a computer! (It's a comfort and a curse to my heart and soul to be "home" where there are kind

people... especially after being in that Den of Pure Hell all day and yet, knowing that eventually, this same evening, I have to leave.) I corrected the "Gaston" Journal of prose, 40 pieces. Most of my on-line journals are now corrected and backed-up. I travel with my life history on a Flash-drive now. It's recorded. It needs detail, but it's "there", it's "here". It's a little peace to me. It's "available" now... to the World. - Leaving Rockaway was quite sad, painful really. And over the open Atlantic, at about 7:30pm, a RAINBOW! What a sight! - I got to the platform just as the shuttle train arrived. I was in no hurry, but the World apparently was. Away I was pulled. - At about 9:00pm I was back in the shelter, at the "security check"... to hear: Tomorrow the building will be evacuated (due to hurricane Irene). "If you have friends or family, go to them. If you have some-where to go, go there. You'll be given a pass until Tuesday when the building re-opens. Go to your case-worker. If you have no-where to go, go to your case-worker for re-assignment to another shelter. This building will be closed by 4:00pm tomorrow." - Ortiz, the kindest of all the security guards, passed me through the normal protocol, gave me the "Peace" sign, asked if I've someplace to go. When I calmly and matter-of-factly said "No." he replied: "Don't worry. They'll find a place for you." What could I do/say? He's a kind soul. He "rescued" me when I first came here and over the years, remembered me. Courtesy. Respect. - I climbed the stairs. On the 5th floor, we signed for our bed. Guys queued in the hall, looking for direction, information. All that was forth-coming was poor attitude and cryptic messages. "See your case-worker for re-assignment." - Now MY case-worker is on during the day and OFF on Friday-Saturday. I'm expected at work by 8:00am, work til 5:00p, can't be back before 6:30pm. I asked for information and/or direction. I was told: "Go to work, see the 'Emergency' case-worker" when I return. Then the woman I'd asked for help and gave me the "Go to work" yelled into the crowd: "Sign for your bed and go there! Nothing will be done until TOMORROW! TOMORROW! TOMORROW! We don't even know where you'll be deployed to. Come back TOMORROW!" I went to my bed, packed everything possible into my one piece of luggage. Most fits! But there's a tear in the luggage. Not large. But enough to compromise. Still, it's packed. - El tells me: his case-worker says that guys with no-where to go will remain here, yet others say we'll be transferred. (Last night I was told to go to work and deal with it when I return. This morning I heard the building will be shut at 2:00pm.) - I decided to call the agency and tell them I won't be available for work tomorrow. (IT KILLS ME! LESS MONEY AGAIN!). The fellow who answered the phone took my particulars. Of course, it's an "answering service". Yet again, I have the feeling that this message too will be "lost" some-how... especially at the convenience of "Ms. Melanie".) - Exhausted, defeated, I showered. Lights out. To bed. There is NOTHING I can do. The bureaucracy will run

as it will, no matter what. - David Hall (RadioBoy the Crack-head, D(arse)vid) played his radio long into the night.

Friday 26 August

8:45am and FRIGG! AN ENTIRE ENTRY FRIGGIN GONE! ONE BUMP ON THE BUS AND GONE! TODAY IS BS! And this nonsense of recording anything on this phone is... well... PURE AGGRAVATION! -

10:36am THE Main Library, 42nd Street and Madison Avenue, on the veranda, at a table. How cute! Outwardly, I am the epitome of tranquillity. INside me, there are blood-curdling screams of Chaos, agony, indecision. Outwardly, I am a passerby, sitting quietly beneath the old locust trees, enjoying the shade and the breeze. INside, I am solitary, abandoned, abused, tortured and tormented. It is one of those moments in all Time when ALL of Creation comes round and kicks me directly in the face. I am... alone. Some 200 telephone numbers on my "Contacts" and yet... there's no-one. 8 million people in NYC and I am... alone, single, solitary. The kindest words I receive are on social media, from strangers whom I've never met: Belinda, P.J. and "ShutUpImTweetin". From them come words of kindness, encouragement, concern. Not out of obligation for ANY reason. Simply... because. Simply... because. They DO provide solace and comfort. They truly, truly do. And today, at this moment, that means so much more than they, or anyone could possibly imagine. - 11:25am Still at my table. - This morning, sunny skies, very warm, breezy. I woke at 6:30am. Showered. Put on my jeans. Left the building. There's been no further word on the day. - I took the bus to MCU then the train to TD banque. (The tellers at TD tell stories of panic: A woman bought 150\$ in batteries. Another bought an entire stock of bottled water.) The radio encouraged people to go to the banque and get cash! I went to Jack's 99cent store. I NEED socks (got 'em). Then the bus to here, the library. From here, I'll go to SIBL. From there... the murderous mayhem of the shelter. Oh, I confirmed: Melanie got my message. No hard time given. Still, I do NOT trust her AT ALL! - I need to move along. To... ..? To... .. Creation will do what it must. - Still, it's interesting: Moe/Ev, Schmulik, Rabbi Lewis, no-one to turn to. Not one. I've literally and actually no place to go to, no one to turn to. If it wasn't intriguing me, it would do me in. - 1:13pm at SIBL: ONE PAGE SHORT! (or maybe 2) of the "Yehudabengagalut" blog on back-up! I ran out of time on the computer. - ANYway... I'm heading back to the Dung-heap now. From whence I journal and when tonight... nothing in Creation can

be certain. (I see me wandering a LOT, solo, in the coming hurricane.) - 6:28pm 5th floor. The shelter is “officially closed” but there are MANY of us still here. They told me that I’m to go to “Pamoja House”, Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn. I’m so hungry and thirsty and tired right now. And I’m running down.

PARK AVENUE SHELTER – HELL!

Friday 26 August (Recounted on Wednesday 31 August, 7:07pm at the “Science Industry and Business Library: SIBL) At 6:28pm I was still on the 5th floor of the shelter, waiting to hear definite word about my “deployment”. It was *miserably* hot and humid in the building and there were many who, as usual, just didn’t bother to bathe for the trips we were to take so the entire place STUNK! Alas. No directions were given, just rumours. I sat in the West Hall, on the floor, waiting. Suddenly, somebody came along and yelled “Gentlemen! The line is over here!” and pointed down the hall toward where I was sitting on the floor. I was suddenly a “line”. To where? Anybody’s guess, but I just sat where I was and decided to follow it when it moved. As it moved, we went round the corner to the lifts where the one line became 2 because somebody decided to lean on the opposite wall, thus creating the illusion that there was a “shorter line” on that side. Come to find out, there *should* have been a queue over there... as I was to learn, for people “with mental health” (the word “issues” wasn’t necessary I suppose). “Gentlemen! Those with mental health line up over here!” was the command. (I have “mental health”... of some sort. But I didn’t bother. I stayed where I was.) Nobody knew where we or they were going but that didn’t matter at this point. It was already going for well past 5:00pm, the hour by which the doors to 30th Street were to be locked. - Finally, I went into the office and toward the desk where Mr. Hamilton was seated. “You still here?! I thought you’d be LONG gone by now!” He smiled and did that little “knuckle-knock” that’s replaced a hand-shake. He asked if I had any-where to go. I humbly told him I didn’t. He asked if I’d like to go to “Pamoja” and since I had no idea what my alternatives were I simply said “Yes.” “Then you have to go across to Leton. She’s got the list for Pamoja.” So across the hall I go, with 2 other fellows following me. - In the office, the “security guard” asks why we’re there. I tell her “Mr. Hamilton sent us here to see Ms. Leton.” WE WERE IN! We 3 began ANOTHER queue! – At Leton’s desk, she greeted me with a broad smile and warm

welcome. Put my name on the list and said: "Go pack then get something to eat. They'll call you to go downstairs to the bus when it gets here." "I'm already packed (I'd left the luggage up in the locker) and what should I do if I don't want to eat?" "Go get your things and come back down here. They'll call for you." she said, so kindly. OK. I went back up to the dorm to get the luggage. E3 was there, packing. He'd just come in a short while before I arrived. They'd already told him he was going to 125th Street. (VERY few knew exactly what or where the destinations meant but it's what we were told so we went along). We chatted a bit as he packed and then, we left together. I had the sinking feeling things wouldn't be the same when we returned, especially since there were so many stories about WHY we were being evacuated: (a) There's a "Callahan" coming up and the cleaning staff feels they can't do everything needed whilst we're here and (b) the earthquake made some cracks in the old building larger and we have to get out whilst the building is inspected. But that's about all we heard... and nothing was said to contradict or correct anything. We just followed along... blindly, as usual. Still, there was an un-easiness inside me as I walked out the door and down the stairs to the 5th floor again... to wait... to be called. - I don't know what time it was when the call came but it was still evening light. Leton came in: "Those going to Pamoja leave NOW! Go to the 1st floor. The bus is waiting. You'll be given directions when you get to the 1st floor. Go NOW!" And so? We went... NOW! - On the sidewalk out front of the building there was a crowd. At the curb, a large school bus. However, there were considerably MORE of us than seats on the bus. This was going to be interesting. Suddenly, some woman comes into the crowd yelling "Everybody for The Bronx come over hear and listen for your name to be called!" I went over to her and asked "Where is the bus to Pamoja?" "You have mental health issues?!" she snapped at me. "No." Well then you're not going to Pamoja." "I was told I was and am on the list." "They changed it. You're going to The Bronx. Wait here for your name to be called. That's the bus." Oh great! I don't want to go to The Bronx. I have yet to hear anything good about any of the shelters up there. But, the fact remained, it was there or... I pondered the alternatives: bridges, parks, The Bronx, Rockaway, outside, the bunkers of Tilden? Couldn't go to them... not in a hurricane. Rockaway was being evacuated... *mandatory* evacuation. I waited. I watched. - A laugh? The guy who used to be on the 5th floor, who left and would come back to the shelter to do his laundry for free was there! We got talking and reminiscing. He claims he's just in for a few days whilst he looks for another place to live. Claims he was doing very well but the girl-friend got to him and left him with nothing. Me? I listened. Fine. What-ever. It was good to talk with somebody at this juncture. We waited. He suddenly realized he had to go back into the building, took his bag and said he'd see me later. Alone... again... waiting. (Continuing this

recap on Thursday 1 September 6:45pm at PenLib) Then it came... the calls to the bus. I waited. I listened. I didn't hear my name. The school bus filled. It waited. The case workers who were doing all the calling were confused (go figure). SO MANY PAGES! SO MANY LISTS! Nobody seemed to know what was going on and it was getting later and later. At this point I just accepted the fact that it was going to be an EXTREMELY late night. Most of the time it is. For some reason, the NYC shelter system can't get anything accomplished before, well, about 1:00am in the morning. This, it seemed, would be another one of those nights. I waited. The school bus pulled away and the case-workers searched for MORE lists! - It was getting dark when the 2 white vans pulled up to the curb. It was much darker when somebody finally instructed: "Fill the vans and let them go!" My name got called and I boarded one of the vans, having absolutely no idea where I was headed, other than up to The Bronx, and even THAT much really wasn't guaranteed. It was DARK already. I don't know the hours because I wouldn't dare to take my phone out to check the time. But... - The trip? It was, indeed a "Trip". The driver took us round blocks in Manhattan to get to the FDR to the Willis Avenue Bridge and the Bruckner Expressway (in... The Bronx). At some point I looked out the window, into the darkness and saw "St. Ann", then "St. Mary" on the street signs. I knew we were in the South Bronx and headed not too far to the north. Round corners. In and out of streets. Then, at long last... 165th Street! OK! We were above 161st Street. Not too bad. And then it hit... MELROSE! PARK AVENUE! NOT even a "good" neighbourhood. But then, what did I expect? We were "Homeless" men and shelters aren't Hiltons. - We pulled up to a gate that had been covered in that artificial grass stripping. The gate opened and we went into a parking lot. Off to the side was a loading dock. But the building looked immaculate! Brand new! Quite nice! I wondered. We were told, by the driver "Gentlemen, you're home." In other words "Get the f... out of my vehicle." I was exhausted! Hungry. Dehydrated. And the luggage was heavy when I took it from the back of the van. - Up a ramp and to the end of yet another queue! But as I say, this wasn't too bad. The place WAS immaculate and impressive. A woman came out, offered cups of water. Some idiot from 30th Street asked about food. The woman said "We have food coming in from DHS. We weren't supposed to be open until September but DHS called and insisted that we open NOW for the emergency. We have no food on the premises so we're waiting for a delivery." Somebody joked "Fried chicken?" Somebody else joked "Rice and beans?" The woman, kindly enough said, "We know you're tired and it's late. So we're going to take very good care of you." and she continued to bring cups of water to us. I had one, sipped slowly. It was refreshing and just what I needed. I hadn't eaten anything since the pecan swirls this morning and I could feel my blood sugar dropping... in my arms, hands, legs, head, eyes. - We waited to

enter. - At some point as we waited, the gate to the parking lot opened... a van pulled in and as the doors opened... IT WAS OUR SECURITY GUARDS FROM 30TH STREET! WHAT A SPECTACLE! WAVING AND GREETINGS FROM THEM AND US! IT WAS THE MOST COMFORTING EVENT OF THE EVENING. THEY WERE FAMILIAR TO US AND WE TO THEM. Even the boundaries between them and us were broken. There was a camaraderie suddenly. I have to admit, I was relieved and comforted to see them as well. And the arm-waving and smiles helped. We weren't strangers... we were "close friends"! - And then, at LONG last, I was IN the building! The place sparkled! Clean floors! Fresh paint! New. New. NEW! Everything was un-used! Just impressive! And there was AIR CONDITIONING! AMAZING! We were all told to have a seat. Food was served. And yes... fried chicken, potatoes, rice and beans! Hefty portions of each! Plates were distributed. I, however, was stuck at the "Security" as they pulled my luggage apart and then it began: NO CHARGERS! (cell phone, iPod). NO MEDICATIONS! (vitamin C, aspirin!). NO MIRRORS! (I had my small locker mirrors, 2). NO FOOD! (My instant coffee!). Things just kept going on me, all put into envelopes and bags, carefully marked with my name and the date. I was assured that I could have everything back when I left, but for now, it all had to remain with "Security". I doubted I'd ever see any of it again, but there was nothing I could do about any of it. - I was "invited" to have a seat in the waiting area. I didn't mind at all since I was about to pass out (or on) by this point. Hunger and dehydration were taking their toll. I sat. Plates of food were distributed and suddenly... the distribution stopped. The food was gone... *I hadn't eaten*. At this point, I didn't really care and didn't really want to. I wanted more water to drink and to shower and get some sleep! Some restful sleep! Little did I know that this was the beginning of the "normal" routine for the next few days. - We were called, 1-by-1, into the "office" area, given a combination lock and assigned a bed. I got 210-8, meaning, room 210, bed 8. I didn't care. We were all "*escorted*" up to our room. At the time I thought it a nice gesture. I would soon learn it wasn't kind at all, rather another way in which we were to be *controlled*. But for now, I went. - The room was, well, NEVER TOUCHED! The linens were brand new, though you could see perfectly through them, the thread-count was probably 10 per inch. The fleece blanket was still in the original bag! The locker? Unblemished! The floors shone like glass (not very safe, but then, no food was allowed and that included beverage). The mattress was an actual mattress and the bed had wood where ours have old springs. It was SO comfortable! Even with the fact that there were 8 of us in the room. The spacing was, well, it was OK. A little tight between beds, and the lockers faced forward between them. But it was truly welcome! - I made the bed and prepared to shower. One of the "Security" people came to the door. "Lights Out" at 10:00pm usually. *THEY control* the

lights. We have no switch. When the lights are out, they're out. I mentioned a shower. He gave me a grimace. It wasn't permitted. Showering had to be completed before lights-out. I asked: "You're not telling me that after all this, I'll have to get into this bed with-out showering?" He said he'd look into it. I thought "I'm taking a shower while you look into it." In only moments he returned to say that a "quick shower" would be OK. I bolted. - The bathrooms? Ah... again, all brand new, never used. BUT... NO MIRRORS! My beard trimmer had been taken as well as a razor. But in here, they would have done no good. NO MIRRORS ANYWHERE! So... I began my trepidations. Nothing too serious (I was exhausted). But into the shower I went. BRONX WATER! JUST MAGNIFICENT! EVEN IN SPITE OF THE RATHER DIRTY SHOWERS, THE WATER FELT SO GREAT! I wanted to linger but didn't dare. - Shower done, I returned to the room, returned to the bed and got under the blankets, awaiting "Lights-Out". When they came, I too went "Lights-Out"... at LONG LAST. It may have been close to 2:30-3:00 in the morning when all settled. But we were, officially, *EVACUATED*! I curled under the fresh, NEW bed linens and drifted off to... sleep.

Saturday 27 August

As per my usual routine, I'd set the alarm for 4:30am this morning and woke to it, some-what rested. Maybe it was because of the stress of the previous events. Maybe it was because... well, just because. This was quite a different morning: There was no coffee made as I had on 30th Street (in the water bottle that I keep in the locker.) - I don't wake well with-out morning coffee, and there was no way in Hell (or this shelter) that I was going to chance a morning smoke in the loo. So I had to go with-out this morning until I escaped and escape I did! Up! Out of bed! Into the loo. No morning BM. No time. No urge. No what-ever. I headed right for the shower. In. Suds. Rinse. Out. Dress quickly. I had plans. I was back on the "Home Turf" (The Bronx, MOST of my entire life-time is here, in this borough) and there were places I hadn't see in many years and I was looking forward to getting to see them NOW! The REALLY BAD NEWS? ALL, and I mean "ALL" public transit was to shut down at noon today in preparation for Hurricane Irene so I had precious little time. Although, I did plan on getting to the Bainbridge Garden to see the old stone wall I'd built (now, some 5 years ago) I thought: If I'm there late, or, for that matter, if I'm pretty much any-where in this borough and transit shuts down, I can certainly walk back. After all, in all the time spent with Margot, I walked the entire borough, many times. Today would be nothing! So, I bolted for the front door. BUT, BEFORE leaving the premises I stopped at "Security". "Would it be possible to get my chargers for the day since I'm leaving the building?" "Sure!" and

the little brown envelope was given to me. I had my chargers (and they'd never get them again!). NOW I was OUT! - First things first: Coffee! There's a Hess station down the block and there-in is a little store. COFFEE! LARGE! 1.95\$ WELL WORTH THE INVESTMENT! I was ready! AND... I KNEW EXACTLY WHERE I WAS AND HOW TO GET TO WHERE I WANTED TO BE! A quick stroll across 161st Street and up to The Grand Concourse! WOW! It was SO delightful to be back in a place that I knew so well, even if it no longer feels like "Home". The changes in the population and the destruction meted out by them has taken away any and all connections to the place. It's a shame, but a fact. Still, I waited for the Bx1 bus at the corner, across from the grand, old court house. The memories of that place, the tenant/landlord courts, the access to the legal libraries in there. Tough but wonderful days. - The bus arrived. I boarded and up The Concourse we went. Up past 170th where, in 1971 I bought my first Reggae record (Penny For Your Song, Jr. Soul), up past Fordham Rd. where once upon a time, the world came to shop, up past Bedford Park Blvd. and the little house where Viv and Rolande and I had such fun, where Clark would come to visit, where my Mum had come to visit, where Liz and Pattie came to visit (and then proceeded to use all my towels and then insult me as they left... the early 80's). The house is still there, looking cute, but rather destroyed. I got off the bus at 201st Street and strolled over to the

garden. - LO! And built YEARS ago is did one hell of a of photos with the photos, but the place get in close enough. the gate locked. I anybody today completed, I strolled to Bedford Park where story has it, stained glass Anita decided to acrobatics on the through one (back in father, my "great replacement. - A left



BEHOLD too! The wall I in PERFECT condition! I great job! I took a couple cell phone. Not great was locked so I couldn't (I was relieved at finding didn't want to meet anyway.) - Task down Bainbridge Avenue Blvd., Mt. St. Ursula... the family "bought" a window when cousin perform some sort of stairs and went flying the 30's) and Edmund, her uncle" had to pay for the onto Bedford Park and

down the hill to Webster Avenue. It was still entirely too early for anything to be open (and in light of the pending hurricane, there was doubt that anything would be open soon any way), I caught the Bx41 bus south to Fordham Rd. I intended to check into the Kingsbridge Rd. library (the “main” library and what I’d come to journal as “BxLib”) for a bit but, there was the sign: CLOSED (hurricane again). So I walked across The Concourse and over to Creston Avenue. The 1970’s came rushing back in my memories as I walked south to the old building I’d lived in. It’s been cleaned since. The brick is beige again, on the building and the back of “The Paradise Theatre”! Not that dingy black, as it was. The court-yard is now gated. The fountain is gone, replaced by some sh**ty brick cylinder with an arborvitae in it. But the old place still holds some charm, I have to admit. In front of the house, on the sidewalk, a man of perhaps his early 50’s was standing. I struck a conversation. He was the super next door. From Albania (go figure... the borough is now Albania) and had been there some 7 years. Says he, when he first arrived, he was one of “VERY FEW non-Blacks” in the area. But recently, the area is changing... to Albanian of course. I asked how much the rents are these days. My old place (275\$/month for a 1 bed-room when I lived there) is now 1195\$! Go figure, the neighbourhood is crap and the rents are higher! Hmmm... Well, this fellow and I talked about The Bronx and other things for about an hour and then he had to go. It was comforting to talk with someone, especially someone who “lived and resided” in... The Bronx! - I walked back up to 188th Street and across The Concourse. I passed Union Hospital. In 1933 my Mum was born there. Tiebout Ave. In the 30’s, my Grand-parents had just moved into The Bronx and were living there, having immigrated from Germany. (Kingsbridge Rd. was Opa’s restaurant!) This borough seethes with so much of MY history! Strangely, I don’t miss it any longer. It’s changed so much and not really for the better thanks to politicians and the calibre of person now residing here. I guess it’s best this way... there’s no pain involved with being here anymore. (Or is it that I’ve worn down and out over the years. Too much pain already and no room for any more?) In any event, I strolled down the hill to Webster to catch the bus before it got to be too late. - I still hadn’t eaten anything today and the morning was done. I grabbed the bus down to 168th Street and decided to stop in at the super-market to see what could be gotten to put into my stomach. - Associated supermarket! YAY! In I wandered. It stunk in there, just like the markets in these areas of NYC. But it was clean enough. What to get to eat that I wouldn’t have to bring back with me? PopTarts! OK! But they didn’t have the tinned coffee so I decided on Coke instead. I needed caffeine and the sugar wouldn’t hurt either. And the PopTarts were quick, easy, compact. 8 to the box. I got them and headed out the door to EAT! and walk some more. - By now the wind was picking up quite impressively and the sky was

darkening so I didn't dare venture TOO far. Still, I headed up toward The Concourse. In my mind I kept thinking of uncle Eddie's lot on 164th and Valentine BUT it was 184th! I realised my error when I got to The Concourse but, I was eating en route and didn't mind my mistake. (Tuesday 6 Sept. 2011 SIBL, I continue...) I took my time, eating my PopTarts and walking along. Eventually, I had to get back to the shelter. The wind was picking up and the drizzle had started. - Re-entry was the usual: Standing and waiting, on the street, at the gate, outside the parking lot, hoping that someone would notice that I was standing there, in the drizzle. Moments passed and a "ParkAvenue Shelter Security Guard" came to open the gate. - Entry into the shelter: Go to the security office to retrieve the meal ticket left there. We have to leave some kind of ID with security when we leave and retrieve it upon return. They claim it's because they have to keep a record of everyone who is in the building and who is not... in case of emergency. What-ever. I held my breath a bit, thinking that the chargers that I'd retrieved would show on the x-ray. Somehow, miraculously, they didn't and I was in possession of my "possessions" once again... well, some of them anyway. These were important to me, in case I found a way to charge the phone. (Had I been able to do so, I wouldn't be recounting this, more than a week later!) - I'm not certain what the time was when I got back but it was probably round about 1:00pm. At noon, all public transport shut down. There was no-where to go and even if there had been, there was no way to get very far. In spite of the fact that we'd been brought in quite late last night and this was a week-end, we were "*FORBIDDEN*" to stay in the dorms! And we wouldn't be allowed to go there until at least 5:00pm! I over-heard the Directress yelling at a security guard "THOSE ROOMS HAVE TO BE CLEAN!". The implication was most clear: They felt that the rooms would be dirtied just by our presence in them! Well, the insults began rolling at this point. We were instructed to sit in the "Recreation Room" either on the 1st floor or in the basement level (which is where the cafeteria is) until called to go eat. The only thing in said "Recreation Room" was a flat-screen TV, certainly NOT on any news channel but "TNT" channel. As was said on Sunday: "TNT. ALL day. EVERY day." We were about to experience a hurricane of considerable strength and were NOT allowed to follow it on the television. Oddly (or not), we were forbidden any radio in the building, never mind anything else electronic (hence, the confiscation of chargers). It was truly becoming "*LOCK-DOWN*"! No joke. For the longest while, I sat, on a table, in the 1st floor "Recreation Room". It was nightmarish! The TV was at high volume, but that was because of the yelling of the "inmates". The Latinos were all out-yelling each-other and the Blacks were simply yelling AT each-other. The few Caucasians present were either trying to sleep, or simply staring at the TV, blankly. It truly looked like a scene from some horrid asylum. If I didn't know I'd

swear the food had contained medications of some sort to dull everyone's senses. I resolved today, I would NOT eat anything offered by the place and drink ONLY beverages purchased outside the building. Not that I was paranoid. Actually, I'd had more than I could stand of being denied personal rights and freedoms. I thought, if, by chance, we had to stay longer than through Monday, and I didn't eat, I'd eventually become ill from hunger, brought to the local hospital (Lincoln, no doubt) and tell my story of the deprivation of human rights in the shelter. Ah, the Rebel in me... silly, little, me. Still, it was a resolution and I stuck to it. – At 5:00pm the crowd was *permitted* down-stairs to the cafeteria for “dinner”. I was to learn, later, that breakfast now consisted of cold cereal with milk and an orange... lunch was cold sandwich, milk and juice, piece of fruit. I never asked about dinner (and didn't much care to know). At this hour, we were also *permitted* to go to the dorms and so, that is what I did, after stepping out to have a smoke. There would be no smoking in the loo in this building! Not by me anyway. - In the dorm, some of us were already there. The fellow in Bed 1 struck up a conversation. At first he seemed OK. Seemed to have plans and aspirations. As he spoke, I took out my needle and thread and got to work repairing the tear in the luggage. At one point, Security (ParkAv) came by, saw me sewing and stood at the bed staring as if he'd never seen anything like it! I expected him to confiscate my needle and thread (he didn't). Meanwhile, “Ken” (I think that was his name) began repeating himself over-and-over-and-over again! His volume grew louder and his tone more irate. It suddenly occurred to me: Probably Psych! When I tried to respond to his enquiries or statements, he completely ignored me. At last I'd had more than enough and asked for some peace. It wasn't forth-coming so I pointed out to him that I was tired of his repetitiveness and asked that he leave me in peace to finish what I was working at. “You think your life is so perfect! Well MY life is NOT linear like yours. I've been to places. I've been to New Orleans and Austin! I haven't just been here. My life is not linear like yours!” So I calmly looked up and asked, softly “Just how long have you been Schizo-typal?” and he went into a *tirade*! “How DARE you? How DARE you sit an diagnose me! Who do you think you are? I am NOT schizophrenic!” I replied “I didn't say you are. But schizo-typal... you're really quite text-book. Had I the DSM IV here I could show you.” He retreated... RAPIDLY! (I thought: *BINGO*! I passed that exam. I hit the diagnosis! I still recognise certain symptoms. My education was not for nought.) And I returned to my repairs. - For the next few hours, I don't really recall much of what I did, other than to look out the window at the increasing wind and rains. The old Black man in bed 4, frail, thin, coughing terribly had me a bit concerned: emphysema, TB, a cold, flu? He laid in bed, under the blanket, coughing. I watched the weather change. - By about 9:30pm I'd gone into the shower. It was, I

have to admit, a wonderful experience to be back in Bronx Water! How CLEAN! I could have stayed in there for eternity. But the fact remained: After 10:00pm, the showers became “*FORBIDDEN*”! AND, if we weren’t IN the bed at 10:30pm, we lost the bed. (I was to learn later that 2 fellows were tossed over the week-end: One on Saturday night and the other on Sunday... *IN THE STORM*! For what reason/s I don’t know. But to toss a Homeless person out into a *HURRICANE*? This was rather indicative of the general atmosphere.) Shower done, I returned to the bed, to wait-out the storm. - Got to talking a bit with the fellow in Nr.2. Nice guy! Truly. And from the “Borden” shelter! (Geo.! D15! had been sent there when he left 30th Street... so, SO long ago now.) So we weren’t the only shelter to be evacuated. And talking with this fellow was a pleasure. - 10:00pm brought the announcement: “LADY ON!” The Directress was coming to do bed-check! She announced so that we could be “properly attired” for her presence. Right. She came in, looked and left the room. At some point there-after came the next “announcement”: “LIGHTS OUT!” THEY have control over the lights in the dorms, WE do



not (this would present quite a problem later in the night). So the lights flashed off, then on, then off... for the night. The day was done and we were too. - The old guy in Nr.4 coughed fitfully all through the night. Kept me awake, noise and concern. And it was good that he did... At some point in time, as I lay in the dim light coming through the door from the hall, I happened to notice the sound of water dripping “above” the ceiling. We were on the top floor so that meant the water was coming through the roof! I lay in bed, listening to the water and to the old guy coughing when suddenly I heard the splash on the floor! The water was coming in through the ceiling light fixture! I could barely see it in the dim light from the hall! But there it was! I got up, moved my bed to the side. Next, the idiot in Nr.7 (I was Nr.8) began getting wet. The leak was

spreading and coming from the light fixture over HIS bed too! The floor was wet! Shined,

polished stone and wet! The air conditioner was still on. The place was now *COLD* and *DAMP*! And the old guy in 4 coughed so that it sounded more like Cancer than much else. I went out to the slop sink, across the hall and round the corner and got a bucket. The “guard” on the floor didn’t bother to ask why. I didn’t bother to say why. I parked the bucket on the floor and tried to get some rest, but rest was not to come tonight. The leaks got progressively worse and the coughing did as well. - I think it must have been round about 2:00am when I went down to the 1st floor to tell of the old guy’s coughing (never mind the bit about the leak... I figured this was a shelter and leaks wouldn’t matter to any-one... I was correct). I went directly to “Administration” thinking; if the old guy is in need of hospital, it should be done expeditiously. Admin. would be the ones to phone. On the 1st floor I approached the evening Director: “I thought you should know that the old guy in bed 4 is coughing so terribly that it sounds like he’ll bring up a piece of lung with another cough.” The reply? *“How did you get down here?”* “I took the stairs.” *“Security was supposed to stop you. You’re not allowed down here at this hour!”* (After lights-out, we’re not “allowed” to be any-where other than our bed! More violation of humanity and dignity!) The Admin sent a security guard up to the room with me (OH FORBID we should be walking about the place alone!) where he simply asked the old guy if he was OK. Period. Asked him if he wanted to go to hospital. The old guy said he didn’t. They left it at that. There was no mention of the bucket on the floor... the BRIGHT YELLOW bucket on the grey floor. - I let it go. No sense in pursuing any of it. - By now the wind was beating against the building, the rains were whipping round in the winds and the night was well into turning into the next morning. All the while, the water was coming down from the ceiling onto my bed and Nr.7. (Wednesday 7 Sept. SIBL 6:59pm) Not to mention, it was puddling on the floor as well, and on a high-gloss surface, that’s just what was needed... one slip... BANG! Concussion, if not something worse. But they didn’t care. -



At some point I had to get a mop and that meant walking into the hall and round the corner again. And mind, I was “attired” in my pale blue scrubs! A “Security Guard”, sitting on a chair, looked at me as I came through with the mop. He didn’t ask, but I told him about the leak. He came to “look”. Nothing more. Next thing I knew, all through the night, idiots came and went, little flash-lights in hand. They came into the room, looked at the water that was, by now, an almost steady stream coming from the edges of the light fixtures. At one point one of them simply told me “We’re here to look at the leak.” “Look at” and nothing more. Nothing said about getting us OUT of the room. Nothing said about the wet beds. Nothing said about the potential danger of slipping on the wet floor. Besides which, the lights were out, the floor had a very high-gloss finish and the water couldn’t actually be seen! I noticed it when I stepped down off my bed and, in flip-flops the water came over the edge of them and I felt the cold water on my feet! - It was a night of NO SLEEP! Between trying to watch my bed, listening to the potential leak in the corner of the ceiling (water coming through the roof and tapping on the ceiling in the room) and wondering if the old guy by the window was about to cough his lungs up, I lay there all through the night...

Sunday 28 August

23 YEARS AGO TODAY.. MY BEST FRIEND, AND THE BEST PARENT A KID COULD EVER HOPE TO HAVE, TOOK HER LAST BREATH OF EARTHLY AIR, CLOSED HER EYES AND LEFT THIS WORLD, AND I’LL MISS HER, MY MUM, FOREVER. She SO Loved “Life” and was given only 55 years of it. And here, in this borough that I called my “Home-town” for most of my own life is where she was born, went to school, and on these streets, so many years ago, played with her friends. This place, The Bronx, this world, will never be the same with-out her... and neither will I... Never again.

At some point, during the early hours of this morning, I dozed off. I don’t remember when. All I know is that my next “event” was when somebody from the damned shelter came into the room and exclaimed “This is bad!” Oh my. Really? The water hadn’t been mopped for a while and the way these morons realised there was a leak at all is because the water had gone out of the room and into the hall! - I got up in silence. I figured there was no sense in saying anything because these people were obviously hostile toward all of us (residents from 30th Street and the staff from 30th as well). Telling me that I was *forbidden* to leave the room/floor after 10.00pm didn’t make me comfortable at all either. So I simply got my things together and went down the hall to

the shower. Brushed my teeth, took my shower and went back to the dorm to dress. There was a hint of day-light by now, dim day-light, shrouded by the remaining clouds from the night's torrent. - A while later, as I now recall, the Directress came in and actually ASKED if we wanted to be relocated! As if we should STAY in the room! When I said "That might be in your best interest before somebody slips on all this water." things began moving. She made the announcement that we would be relocated to another room, to pack our things and get ready. Then she asked if I and Nr.7 would need linens! I'd pulled mine to the top of the bed to avoid any further damage to them from the water but they'd already been wet. So I simply said "Yes." as did Nr.7. - Some time later we were assigned new beds/dorms. Unfortunately Nr.7 went to the same room as I, and to the bed beside mine. (I went from room 210.bed8 to room 213.bed10 and Nr.7 to bed9) - The new room had 10 beds in it. I got the one directly inside the door. Not great, but I didn't mind too much because it had the electric behind it. I could charge the phone at last! And since it was Sunday, I THOUGHT we'd be able to stay in the room during the day. New linens were on the bed when I arrived! And another pillow. The pillows were so horrid that even folding them in half lent no support for the head. So I took my first pillow, added it to the second and it was rather comfortable. When I was done making-up the bed and putting my belongings into the locker, I went down-stairs for a smoke. As I was leaving the building, I bumped into the Directress with whom I spoke about last night. I told her that I'd gotten no sleep because of the water and the old guy. She told me "When you get to your room, try to get some sleep during the day." WHAT A CROCK OF SHIT THAT TURNED INTO! - On my way out of the building, I asked, again, what the circumstances were for Monday morning and explained that I had to go to work early. Again, I asked an anonymous woman who refused to identify herself. But she told me to go into the "office" (area) and ask another unidentified woman who should know. I went in and there, THERE! TWO OF THE BRIGHTEST FACES I COULD IMAGINE! Ms. FIORD AND Ms. PAX! HOME PEOPLE! (At this point I knew I was on the edge because I was actually THRILLED and COMFORTED to see 2 CaseWorkers from 30th Street). I gave my condolences to Ms. Fiord. I'd been told that her husband recently died. She was taking it very well. Ms. Pax was ever so pleasant as well. It was more like seeing old Friends... on both sides. We chatted a brief while, I asked about Monday. Neither of them were being told anything either. So... I went out, had a smoke, bought some coffee at the corner Hess station. The wind and rains were coming from all round! But the rains weren't torrential as such. So I made the trip in my "Jack's 99-cent" poncho. Only the bottoms of my jeans got thoroughly soaked. My sneakers held up rather well enough. - As I stood in the gas station, sipping and enjoying my morning coffee, the clerk told me that I

could take my time and enjoy the coffee. I was so appreciative! A stocky Black man came in, well dressed, casual. He was offering car service if any-one needed. We got to talking. "Greg". A Minister/Pastor. Christian. We chatted about the weather, world conditions in general, and light religion. It was SO DELIGHTFUL! Talking with a "human-being" and one of substance and education! I wished it could have lasted much longer but he had to get going and so too, did I. We shook hands. He left. I finished my coffee, thanked the clerk and headed back out into the rain. When I got back to the damned prison, I had to stand in the rain, on the street, and wait for rather the longest while, for someone to come open the gate. Once in, I had another smoke, under the portico at the loading dock with a few other residents, and went into the building with the hope of relaxing and resting. As I walked in, the fellow who'd been in bed 210-2 was leaving. I gave him the rain poncho... and came back into the room. - In the short while I was gone, SOMEONE had taken one of my pillows! Just a note: I happened to notice that Nr.7-now Nr.9 (fat faggy fellow) had about 5 or 6 pillows on his bed! Would he have taken mine? No doubt! I was just settling-in on the bed, looking forward to a nice nap when one of "OUR" Security Guards from 30th St. came in: "I'm really sorry to tell you this guys but they want you all to go to the Recreation Room down-stairs." She honestly was sorry to bring the news. But Nr.7 went OFF! And I mean "OFF"! He sat bolt-up-right in the bed and began SCREECHING at the poor woman (Corona was her name): "What the f*** is wrong with you people! You can't get anything right around here! First you tell us to come here and stay. Then you change it and tell us to get out! What the f*** is your problem? You stupid c**t! I hope you get breast cancer and die!" Ms. Corona simply said "Sir. I didn't make the rule. I was sent here to tell you. That's all. I'm sorry about it. But don't talk to me like that." He kept *screaming* at her in a shrill screech! I shut-down for the most part. But had he gotten up, I was prepared to defend Corona in what-ever way I needed to. As he screamed, she asked him if he needed some kind of medications. I don't really recall what he said but he obviously needed something to shut him up at this point. - Finally, Corona left the room and Nr.7 kept his tirade going for a while longer. I simply got up, got myself together as much as I could and headed down-stairs. I mean, why bother saying anything to deaf ears? Especially when those deaf ears are attached to a somebody who had made it abundantly clear that they despise you for no particular reason already. I ended-up in the Recreation Room in the basement level. The TV had... "TNT" on. But the volume was lower and so was the volume of talking amongst the folks. I looked about a bit and there... on the wall... "Darsevid"! The sh**turd was HERE too! Thankfully, not in the same room as I. He glanced at me and then looked back at the TV. - As I sat there, solo, trying to get comfortable in a plastic chair, I

over-heard one of the “FJC Security Guards” from 30th Street say to another “I can’t wait to get back to 30th Street!” and my heart just about came up into my mouth! *THEY TOO?* I HAD to ask... and sure enough... the staff at ParkAv. Shelter was treating *THEM* in the VERY SAME manner as they were treating US! Condescending. “Barking”. Snapping orders. I’d learned that ParkAv. had THREE security companies present: Their own (who were miserable, abusive, pathetically repulsive and nasty), “Archangel” (whose people were rather kind... particularly the night crew) and OURS... FJC! THREE Security companies! What the f*** did they expect of us!? Their own security treated ours like sh** whilst they, the ParkAv. crew, sat back and did nothing. The “Archangel” crew pretty much avoided our security altogether. The whole thing was just unbelievably degrading, demeaning and insulting to us all! But, there we were, trapped in this place as Hurricane Irene gave us something more like a heavy rain storm than a hurricane. Still, there was no-where to go to and no way to get to any-where since ALL public transport in the city had been shut down completely. - Eventually, I fell asleep for what I think was about 90 minutes in a plastic chair... When I woke, it was only moments and the announcement to queue up for dinner came. I sat. I had no appetite. I wanted OUT and didn’t want to eat anything from these bastards and bitches. I sat, watching “TNT” and wondering what the night would bring and looking forward to tomorrow when I had to get out and get to work! *That* presented another problem: Was there a time *before* which we were *not* to leave the premises? Would we TRULY be sent BACK to 30th Street tomorrow and out of that hell-trap? I’d already asked about 3 people and not once could I get an answer. Seemed *NOBODY* knew *ANYTHING* about much of *ANYTHING*. (12 September 2011 Pen Lib 6:35pm and continuing this recounting) But that pretty much covered the entire farce... *NO INFORMATION FROM ANYBODY AT ANY TIME AND NOBODY WOULD GIVE THEIR NAME!* The whole situation was suspicious. - When dinner was finished, or at some point in time, we were *permitted* to return to the room. - In the course of some conversation between the Directress and one of the “residents” I over-heard that the “curfew” was NOT 10:00pm, as we’d been told last night but that we were expected to be *IN THE BUILDING BY NOT LATER THAN 10:00pm!* The Administration changed the rules, regulations and any and all information at will, at random. It all came to feel increasingly like we were incarcerated, in some sort of insane asylum! We’d come from Bellevue... the original Psychiatric Hospital-now-shelter but *THIS! THIS actually WAS INSANITY!* Even my days of working in Wingdale Psychiatric Institution weren’t this bad! But that experience helped me get along in this environment. I “knew” what was going on... it was an attempt to “break” spirits (in case anybody had any ideas that we might turn this place into “our” place). Anyway, I kept my mouth shut

about it. Who the hell would I tell anyway? I went to the dorm (213-10) to prepare for the night... I doubted I'd get much rest (and I was right again). But I needed... NEEDED to shower and recline! That's all I wanted. - It was getting late. I'd been told to come back down-stairs for the evening shift to ask about tomorrow morning (Monday). So at this point, that's what I did. Down to ask about. Some unidentified woman appeared. She asked if I had *a problem*. I said, after a fashion I most certainly did: I needed to leave VERY early in the morning on Monday and needed to know if I should bring my possessions with me when I left. FINALLY A DIRECT ANSWER! I was told to bring my belongings with me and when I got off from work, go directly back to 30th Street. *OH MY GOD YES! BACK TO 30TH STREET!* I was ecstatic! Back up to the dorm! Off to the shower. A nice, comfortable, warm shower, and back into the room, on the fresh linens. I got as comfortable as I could, waited for the "Bed-Check". - At about 10:00pm or so, an "Archangel" security guard came round, looked into the room, checked the beds. On his way out, he went to close the door! We needed that door open for ventilation! 10 beds in the damned room and with the door closed there was no air! I said, nicely, that we'd like to keep the door open for ventilation. He told me we couldn't because it was a "Fire Door". That's when I began to lose it. BS! It was my last night. What the hell did I care? I told him, sternly, that the door to room 210 was open ALL through the night, even through the leaking. THAT wasn't a "Fire Door" any more or less than this one. Also, if we need to keep the door open for ventilation, or other-wise, we have the right to do so. He began to argue and I simply interjected "So in essence, you're going to lock us in?" "There's no lock on the door." "Then you're going to shut us in? Have you ever heard of the 'Callahan Decree'? I believe you're in direct violation of that. I suggest you look into it before closing us in here." He said that there was a Supervisor from DHS on the premises this evening and that he'd send him up to the room and I could discuss the issue with him. Well! The young Dominican fellow in the room (a little loony but fine just as well... for the evening, though I'd probably drug him or me if I'd have to spend much more time with him) jumps up from his bed, runs into the hall yelling "No! No! No Supervisor. It's OK. OK? Don't get no supervisor. It's all OK. OK?" It was very strange but I never heard a reply from anybody BUT... only brief moments later, the same Archangel "security" guard returned, with the piece of cardboard that was in there to keep the door open and which he'd removed from the door, and he replaced said cardboard and bade us all a "Good night". Shortly there-after came the fellow from DHS (or, at least I thought so because he was wearing a DHS jacket). He came strolling in, all smiles and commented "I'll bet you guys wish you could stay here instead of going back to Bellevue tomorrow." I replied "Bullsh**!" "What? You don't want to stay here? You prefer 30th Street?" "If

the subways were running right now I'd be on the A train until I could get back to my old room and bed! I've never been so happy to LEAVE some place as I am to get out of here." He just looked a bit surprised and let the issue ride. They left and in a few short moments THERE-after... darkness in the rooms (not in the halls, however). It was "lights-out" at last! I curled up under the blanket and hoped for sleep! I waited for a bit though and when I figured that nobody would return, I FINALLY got to plug my phone into the outlet behind the bed, ran the cord so that it couldn't be detected from the door and put the phone under my pillow. HAH! Good-night INDEED!

Monday 29 August

After a night of precious little sleep, I woke, with the alarm, at about 4:00am. I was determined to get the hell out of that place as quickly as possible! I couldn't have a bottle of water in the locker and they'd taken my instant coffee. So I'd planned on going to the Hess station for morning coffee. I still had no idea if or when the subways would be re-open but I really didn't care. One of the best things was that I knew where I was and how to get to the train to get the hell out! Or, so I thought. The plan was to walk over to The Concourse and take the D train from the under-pass instead of walking UP to the Concourse and then having to walk DOWN the STAIRS to the subway... well... I got up, went right for the loo and then to the shower. Oddly, it was a bitter-sweet moment: There is NO water on Earth like in The Bronx! I always felt so perfectly clean after a shower "at home" (and let's face it, The Bronx really is "Home" after all the years I lived there... I know this place better than any other place on Earth). Even Viv commented when she'd come from Montréal. Everybody who ever visited said that the water tasted wonderful and made you feel clean. I'd been bathing in "lead water" for weeks at 30th Street! I wanted to take water back with me! But, again... no bottle! Anyway, into the shower, lingered a bit and out! Into the dorm, dry and dress. I was already packed. Just threw my night scrubs into the baggage and walked over to the elevator. We'd been *FORBIDDEN* to take the elevator... yes... *FORBIDDEN*, even though some of us had heavy baggage (like me, who'd packed everything except my cleaning supplies). But I figured that there was really nothing much they could do to me now except give me some kind of useless lecture on how I had no right to take the lift! To HELL WITH THEM!! Oddly, one of the nicer staff was getting onto the lift as I boarded. He came in and said "I'll go with you so nobody has anything to say about you using the elevator." I was tempted to tell him to shove all the "them" but figured it useless to say anything to anybody any more. Besides... I was LEAVING!

and I wasn't coming back! I said nothing, not even "Thanks". - On the first floor, about 5:20am I told the "Security" that I had a plastic bag with an envelope in it and one envelope in the "Medications" (Vitamin C and a bottle of aspirin! Damned retards in this place!). There was no trouble! He notified some other "Staff" person who asked me for my "Meal Ticket" (I'd been using it for "general admission ID" all along) and went directly to get all. In moments, I was OUT ON THE STREET! AND SO *HAPPY* TO BE THERE! It was still dark. It was calm. It was almost comfortably cool. It was QUIET! It was... *THE BRONX*! I walked down to the Hess station, got a medium coffee with half'n'half and headed out on my new adventure of the day. I stopped at the corner to finish my coffee and went to 161st Street, hung a right and headed for The Grand Concourse (and Boulevard) (though NOBODY seems to know that that's its actual and OFFICIAL name!). Went directly under to where the entrance to the D train SHOULD have been. IT WAS GONE! I MEAN "GONE"! CEMENTED OVER! Bloomberg and his band of MTA thieves changed SO much on the system and this too fell prey. So I simply walked over to River Ave., down the stairs and off to the D train to 125th Street for the A train to... HoBe! I was OUT of Hell! I was back to my "normal" routine. I had my luggage with me. (Thankfully I could tell people that I'd been in The Bronx because of the evacuation... I didn't have to say from whence.) THE NIGHTMARE WAS ALMOST OVER... I say "almost" because I didn't trust a damned soul at Park Ave. I was told to go back to 30th Street after work. But in this system, so much changes so quickly and so often that there's no trusting the word of ANY ONE! I was anxious during the day and making alternate plans of where to spend the night... ANY-WHERE EXCEPT... I WOULD NOT GO BACK TO PARK AVE. SHELTER! And so the day went along... - The rest of the day? Oh... I made it to Howard Beach (and the Howard Bitch) alright. And the "routine" picked right up where it had left off. I didn't ask if anybody had been there during the storm and I didn't give a flying rat's arse one way or the other. There was light talk about it all, and yes, I was asked about the luggage and yes I said that I'd gone to stay in The Bronx and had left directly from there this morning. And nothing more was said. - Tonight, I RETURNED TO 30th STREET! And when I got in, it was AMAZING! There was such a sense of "belonging", un-spoken familiarity and camaraderie. Even to the point where some of the "barriers" between residents and staff, especially "Security" were lessened. One guard, the one whose name I never got but was the one who will remain in my heart with only the VERY BEST and FONDEST wishes told me how miserably they were treated at Park Avenue. It was REPULSIVE! But, the bottom line? We were all so happy to be back in our hovel and the "Bellevue Psychiatric-Hospital-30th-Street-Mens-Shelter" again! (Well, most of us anyway. The misery continued in the room where... David had returned too. We signed-in and

of course, that was the time for all the stories to be exchanged since we'd been thrown to the Diaspora. Some had good stories, others had horror stories. I went for the nasty leaded shower and got into bed... MY Bed... with the fresh, clean linens that were there when I returned. - THE HELLISH HORROR NIGHTMARE WAS NOW IN THE PAST... and things rather quickly settled back into the normal... Bedlam (in OH! so many ways).

Tuesday 30 August

1:54pm (How-weird Bitch) I'm recording nothing, save one incident, on this day... the 56th anniversary of my birth. It's not important to me, never has been, isn't now, never will be. I'm tired and exhausted, fed up.

The one note: I was given an envelope on which was written: "Happy Birthday Giuda" and inside, a 50\$ Visa gift card. I can't even say that I appreciate it because, in fact, I've WORKED for it... AND MORE! I don't see it as a "gift". I see it as a bit of a deposit on SO MUCH MORE THAT'S OWED! But I was "gracious", polite, well-mannered and said, much to my disgust and chagrin... "Thank you!" And since it's my "Birth Anniversary" day, I will record here, my truest sentiments: FUKKIT! FUKKITALL! If ever anybody reads this and finds this offensive... FUKDATTOO. Thank you for your kind understanding.

Wednesday 31 August

5:50am at 34th Street and 1st Avenue and back to the routine! But, as I left the shelter this morning, oblivious to the world, from behind me I heard "Good-morning Mr. Kessler." 850-plus Homeless people in here and because of those 3 days in HELL (ParkAv), the staff remembers MY name! And in a positive manner. Yes... there are blessings left in Creation. The voice, the greeting came from somebody in "Operations"! - Happy 56 years. That was a most wonderful "gift". - 5:57am on the M34 bus. Meanwhile, this morning, we are in "groinal" pain. The heavy luggage on the week-end plus having to lift Mr. E. from the floor, alone, AGAIN, yesterday, something got pulled. But, here we are, off to "work" anyway. Off to the post office so as to get documentation to satisfy somebody else... In spite of personal pain. Y'know? Creation is just... illogical, irrational. But 6:00am on Madison Avenue, NYC is quite pretty. - The World is beautiful; people will f*** it up. - I don't care. I don't care and I can't care... not any longer. - 6:54am Q53 bus. This makes me nervous: Immediate transfer to the A train, followed by an immediate transfer to the Q53 bus.

Hmmm... When transit flows, The City goes... right straight to Hell... sooner or later. - 9:28pm
Room 6w-107 I made it to the post office this morning (pay-stub and notice of "Annual" evaluations from the agency... sh**) and I made it to work by 7:48am or so. OK. But I should have gone to Waldbaums for PopTarts because I got nuttin' t'eat before sleep t'nite. AhhhLAS. - Mr. E. began in a good mood but changed to horror as soon as it was time to get up. Really combative this morning! It became a "Wingdale" (psychiatric institution) morning as his arms flailed. But he got a good bed-bath and he ate well. Me? I stayed silent most of the day. By 4:00pm I was back on the "Good Guy" list and when I told Mrs. about the morning and the tantrum? She looked at him, then looked at me with a grin and said "You lie." And we laughed. (And I thought, in my heart: "You stupid bitch.") - After leaving Hell Beach, I took a quick trip to SIBL this evening. A "SEPTEMBER" page added to this Journal! SHIT! (And that almost covers my true sentiments on the matter.) The Summer is GONE! I got ONE day at the beach all season! ONE! GONE! I can't believe it! AND... I'm still in this hole, and this city, and this state! THIS SH** MUST CHANGE! - I've begun the recounting of the week-end at the ParkAv Shelter while it's still SO FRESH in my mind. I've chosen to document in "MSWord" then add it in here. This way I can print it and mail it out as well if and/or when the time comes to do so. I doubt I'll forget anything... that terror, trauma. - Then, this evening, I get here... there's a note on the locker: "EVERYTHING MUST BE REMOVED FROM THE TOP OF THE LOCKER" (the only thing ON the locker was the note) "FROM UNDER, ON AND AROUND THE BED". TONIGHT? I HAD to wash my scrubs! It's why I came in at 8:00pm! Well... as I record this entry, the wet scrubs (washed) are presently ON the locker to dry over-night. El says somebody came round to measure the window. Hmmm... OK. Let's see what crap they use to replace the missing window and when. (Y'gotta luv this place.) - Security's running about looking for somebody. She comes into the room asking our "room"(bed) numbers. Why? I doubt even she knows. But she was asking everybody in the hall for their "room"(bed) number. Life back at 30th Street. How wonderful. The comfort of utter chaos and just the right amount of a splash of complete insanity. LONG LIVE BELLVUE! - In addition to this morning's "Goodmorning-by-name"? The guy doing sign-in remembers my bed number. I'm "known" by staff. Hey! Not for any wrong so it's very right. - 9:49pm Showered. Lights are out. The radio's on but not blaring. I need a smoke. NO FOOD! But it's OK. - Summer... Gone. FTW! THERE! Said it. Done.

18. September 2011

Thursday 1 September

7:42 HoBe: And so I get to 6W-107 just past 8:00m last night to find a “notice” on my locker: Remove all items from top, nothing on floor or bed. I washed my scrubs... (They dried on top of the locker over-night, thankfully.) - The fellow who over-sees sign-in remembers me and my bed number! - The radio volume went down, then off at 11:00pm. - This morning, RUDELY awakened: David closed the door to the room at about 2:15am, essentially cutting-off much needed ventilation in the room, and the air got stale and horrid. At 4:00am the floor-cleaning crew was at it in the hall, cleaning and banging. I must swear, they make as much noise as they possibly can... intentionally. It must be intentional; nobody can find enough material in an empty hall to make that much noise. And, at 4:00am? Why? So I went for a pee, returned to the dark dorm for my coffee and toddled off to brush my teeth. I'd truly rather have slept MUCH longer but... Then to the shower, dress and OUT! - I arrived at 34th Street just as the M16 bus did! Then at the A train by 5:46am and... waited for the 6:09am train to Rockaway. When the 6:09 pulled into the station... it was a Lefferts train (heads off into the wrong direction for me). But I took it and half-slept along the way and grabbed the Rockaway A train at Euclid Avenue. - When, at long last, I got to Howard Beach, I made a quick run through Waldbaums for yoghurt and PopTarts and here I am, at the pit of abuse. - Terribly tired this morning. Still trying to compensate for the horrid week-end, last. - Back at shelter, the dorm is a bit of a mess due to the repairs to cover the incompetence about the place. There's a “Callahan Inspection” coming up. Each day the lockers and beds get moved and never returned to their place. Such a delight. We're Homeless... useless, no value, due no respect. So the “administration” turn us about with-out a care. Oh well. - 8:00am Time to get on with this day. - 10.17pm at room Nr. 6W-107 and the crack smoking is in full swing as David talks to himself, stoned. A new addition to the monthly foray: he's peeing on the floor these days. It just keeps getting better. Saying anything is useless. I talked with El about it. We agreed: It's once a month, he (David) isn't violent, we *know* what we're dealing with and, if WE bitch, WE get moved. Since 3 of 4 of us get along... we'll settle. - So... Mr. E. goes into hospital

tonight. SCREEEEW ME! Hopefully he'll be back on Saturday. But... And Monday is Holiday Pay! DAMN IT! MORE lost revenue. - Mrs. cooked eggplant parmigiana yesterday and made extra for me. I had half for lunch. She gave me the rest to take! I can't bring that in here but I accepted it. Oddly, as I was coming back tonight, a young guy comes on the L train, Homeless. I passed it on to him. Either way, a Homeless man got fed with Mrs.' cooking today. - Mr. was in combat mode this morning. Bed-bath, breakfast and not much more. - After work, to PenLib. 2 more tunes on the iPod: French and reggae. OK. I shouldn't but... music is my only "escape" from all of this, as it has been all through my life-time. - No rush returning, so I got in at 9:00pm. Signed. Chatted with El a bit. And, I have showered. - 10:31pm Radio blaring. David talking into his locker. I truly want to hurt him... or put his radio out of service. But I'll be up at 4:30am tomorrow morning. I'll think of something. Indeed. - I'm getting hot flashes lately. Hormones? I certainly hope not. I kept myself so... so... so what all those years. Creation can't put the Big Kabash on me now! (and the radio volume goes up). - We're in for a rough night. *They're* in for a rough morning... if not a rough night. - 10:36pm David gets up, turns on the light. An idea for 4:30am tomorrow morning: turning the light on whilst I get ready for... WORK. - I'm to understand the case-workers are quite familiar with David. I see Ms. Henika on Sunday. I believe I'll be asking for that single. I have to complete the mandatory "Annual Review" at work on the 20th. Keeping the certification is in my best interest. They calculate how many "work hours" I've completed through the year. There's a minimum to maintain "certification". Then... POUF! GOTS T'GO! As long as I remain "certified" I should be able to carry it with me where-ever... I should think. - Time to try for SOME sleep now (and David babbles on).

Friday 2 September

7:53pm on a Q60 bus at Broadway and Queens Blvd. - The day went along thus... At about 6:30am I boarded the "6:00am" M34 bus at 34th Street and 1st Avenue (as usual) and headed to Madison Avenue for the Q32 bus to Woodside, Queens for the Q53 bus to B116th Street, Rockaway and the post office (Rockaway Park). - From the post office, boarded the Q53 bus back to Queens Blvd. for the Q60 bus to 2nd Avenue in Manhattan where I immediately got the M15 bus back to 34th Street for an immediate M16 bus to Herald Square from where I strolled to the agency office. There, I handed-in my "Professional Evaluation" and completed my "Supervisory Evaluation" and changed the mailing address for direct mailing (and no more "Fort Tilden" address which hurt me more than I can describe) and changed my "direct deposit" of pay to TD!

- That all completed, I was out of the office and on to the R train to City Hall, MCU, where they won't let me close the savings account and keep the chequing account. So? Screw 'em! The pay will go to TD and MCU can suck arse. - Walked to Church Street post office for the money order to deposit MOST of what was in the MCU account into TD. Walked up to Broadway to TD to make my deposit and had a lovely chat with the teller there. - ON WITH MY OWN DAY! - I got an A train from Chambers Street to RockBlvd. to get the Q53 bus to PenLib (BACK to Rockaway again) until about 5:30pm. - Left the library to catch a Q53 bus to Metropolitan Avenue for a stop at Staples to copy documents I need for Ms. Henika on Sunday and then walked to 71st/Metropolitan Avenue for a 7:00pm Q23 bus to Queens Blvd. Stopped at RiteAid for crisps (potato chips) and coffee(tinned) for dinner (which I've just finished as I travel). - On to a Q60 bus on Queens Blvd.... the one from which I now journal. - WELL! (breathe) At 2nd Avenue at 60th Street, I shall board an M15 bus south-bound to 30th Street... and return to the Hell that is the shelter. Hell tonight only because of David. But... may he be laying on his bed rotting quietly but quickly when I arrive and may death come rapidly to him. Amen. Amen. And right now, I WANT A BLOODY FAG! (What I wouldn't give to end a day, sitting in a comfy chair, quietly, with a smoke and a nice martini! But that's just too "human"... for me... these days.) At 45th Street and Queens Blvd. Almost to the bridge back to that God-forsaken island of Manhattan. Soon... this day will be... gone. Tomorrow? I'm not certain but I've no work. Mr. E. being in hospital. I could go to the beach if good weather. Sort/Pack storage if not. The morning will tell... when I wake again at 5:00am (to GET OUT QUICKLY!). - OH! This morning, as I left, I flipped the light on. Sorry Anthony and Guillermo. Eat sh** David!

Saturday 3 September

9:30am on the M15 bus. It's a damned shame to have a day off from work and to have absolutely NO idea what to do. I'm just so accustomed to working, I'm at such a loss here, this morning. - Last night was restless. David, up and down, in and out of the room. And my leg cramps are getting much worse. I wonder what the HELL that's about. The fingers on my left hand too. - Well, this morning we're headed for Pier 17, Century 21, down-town Manhattan "touristy" things and adventures. Then... mayhaps the beach or somewhere to get/buy boxes to pack (properly) storage. The weather is fine for the beach but it's the laundry after... in a face basin with "leaded" water... that turns whites into beige... and leaves an odour. Well. Well. Soon this day will be done. - 1:08pm on a Flushing (Nr.7) train to the Q53 bus: Although the chatting with the fellow at "Alamo" flag store at Pier 17 was REALLY fun, I spent ENTIRELY TOO MUCH MONEY on

“stupid stuff”. But... And underwear at “Century 21” store? THE PRICES WENT UP BY 2-3 DOLLARS! Damnit! Still, I need new underwear. I bought 2... and used that gift card that the “Ungratefults” were so “kind” to give me for my birthday. - I noticed today, more-so that before I have to say, that there is NO “finance” in the “Financial District” of this city any more. SCREWED! The whole city is shot completely to Hell anymore. 99 John Street where I used to work at “Duncanson and Holt”, a re-insurance company, 95 Wall Street where I worked at Chemical Bank (and SO loved it) is now “residential”, the Barclays Bank Building... residential as well. This city is GONE! - 1:26pm On the Q53 bus and... NO AIR CONDITIONING! BLEATING HOT! And it's a hazy day. Not a “beach” day for me. Too damned hot. I’m going to Staples, look into buying some boxes for packing storage things. Then to storage to sort and hopefully re-pack. At least it should be a bit cooler there. - The guy at Alamo knew Burlington VT. He says there’s “a lot of Homeless” folks there. This is *NOT* good news. I’m staring at a seriously major depression as it is. News like this is a speeding car headed for a very high, rocky cliff. - Whilst at the Pier 17, I had 2 “Cadbury” chocolate bars and tinned coffee. Meal. - The sun is beating in through the bus window. I’m hot, tired. - 1:58pm HELL! I fell asleep on the bus and woke at Jamaica Avenue! DAMN! It's been YEARS since I last did that! And it was a “deep” sleep! BURN-OUT! - 2:03pm Q53 bus, Myrtle Avenue and back on the route. *SO TIRED!* - 5:30pm “I-Hop” on Liberty Avenue! HUNGRY!!! and EXHAUSTED!!! I decided to “treat” e for a change, so I came in for a “real dinner”! I ordered a fried chicken dinner. God help me. Hot food. Nothing substantial in 2 days and now this? OK! I've no doubt it'll either come right through (which wouldn't be too bad... considering) or it'll add to the “blockage” that has become “normal” for me. - At Storage: I'd bought 8 boxes at Staples (off the gift card). 3 are packed. 1 is “tossed”. I got tired and decided it was time to go... HELL! I had to *STUFF* the locker! I PRAY Mr. E. doesn't come back until tomorrow evening. I NEED to get a whole day to “fix” my mess in that locker now. - 7:04pm Q53 bus back to... This is the difficult part, having eaten (4pc. fried chicken, mashed potatoes, corn, biscuit, salad, coffee, cola) and talked with a charming waitress... and being “People” only to go back to where I have to watch everything and everyone and deal with junkies, thugs and general trash-rot, and become a piece of paper and a number again. Well, for a while I was “human”. I won't do it again too soon. But for what it was, it was good.

Sunday 4 September

9:45am Q32 bus at 36th Street and Queens Blvd. To think, I slept-in until 7:34am this morning, bounced up for morning coffee, loo, shower, leisurely dress. Signed the “sign-in” roster list at

about 8:30-something. I was Nr.8 on the *hit list and by 9:18am I was out of the building and now, I'm already back in Queens! I'd taken the M15 bus to 57th Street and as I waited for this bus I untangled several metres of black thread that had become all tangled in my back-pack. (Finished the task moments after boarding the bus. YAY ME! ALRIGHT! OK! WOOT-WOOPIE HURRAH! and sh**.) If it can all go THIS well THIS morning, why can't the World go THIS well EVERY day? Hell. - Last night I "tweeted" on the social media until almost mid-night. (The bus driver just told a passenger "Chief! You wanna use your cell phone? Go to the back of the bus!" BusNr.6082 for the record. Bless this driver. The turd-head passenger was LOUD!) Tweets done, lights out. David woke once (that I know of), lights on, opened his locker, lights out. E3 tells me David's flat broke already. He just got his cheque on the 1st and is asking people for money! Blown on crack. How the Hell? Useless humanity. Where's Aldous Huxley when we need him? (Re: the book "Brave New World") - WOODSIDE! 9:56am. I'm about an hour ahead of where I thought I'd be this morning! - 10:15am Q53 bus. Something, I fear, is about to go terribly wrong: I had time to get coffee, cake and cigarettes and finish the cake and coffee this morning, and board 3rd person on the bus. Got a good seat. It's all just too "good", too "right". HOWEVER we've another spiffy driver who just yelled at a passenger for dumping rolled coins into the fare-box. "You can't just do that. If I can't un-jam that, you know what the next step is? Out of service! You watch everybody get off the bus." It's bus 3727 by-the-by. (I've taken to keeping note of the "good drivers/bad drivers" and logging the on this journal... in case anybody should ever read this and notice.) - 10:20am on the route. A hazy day again. If this was a regular week-day I'd most likely go to the beach. But it's a holiday and the temperatures will be in the high 20's. I'm going to pack the stuff in storage where it's cooler. This Summer has left me completely defeated. - Ms. Henika tells me this morning, she was a Biologist back in the USSR (you don't know how lucky you are boy. Back in the US back in the US back in the USSR) (I'm old. I digress.) Another professional in the bowels of NYC society. She just couldn't make it in her profession when she came here. Well, of course not! This is the USA where such educated specialities are no longer valued, let alone, respected. - She also tells how horribly *SHE* was treated at the Park Avenue Shelter! She says "I just wouldn't let them do that to me... even with my poor English." "Humble Dignity" I call that. SO MANY MORE should learn that. - I have to start writing notes about that Park Avenue incident. Only a week ago and things are fading from memory. - OK. 10:30am Grand Avenue/Queens Blvd. I need the loo... - 4:06pm I'm at Ocean Pkwy., Brighton Beach, Brooklyn and I just received the call: Mr. E. is back! HOLIDAY PAY TOMORROW! YES! - 8 boxes of "storage" packed this morning. I need 8 more. DAMN! And I threw so much of my belongings

there out! - Just to mention, here, at the ocean... I truly miss ocean air... the water in it. There's a certain "feel" on the skin and in the lungs. (Truth? I just SO HATE Manhattan.) - Now to Kings Hwy. I'm going to see if I can't get a blanket for the cool nights. My legs cramp so terribly lately when it gets cool at night (though so seldom). - Storage is closed tomorrow. I'd've packed but... HOLIDAY PAY! YAY! - Sheepshead Bay. 4:13pm Another day just went right by. But have I covered some ground! "Lazy Homeless Person" that I am. (Yup. That's what they call us.) But I'm really quite fatigued and dehydrating now. - 9:38pm and WELL! Back at the Rot-hole where it's HOT as HELL in this dorm tonight! SLIGHT draft. I just hope my shirt and jeans dry before I leave in the morning. When I finally got in at about 5:30pm I washed. Jeans, shirt, unders, 3 pairs of socks. The towel got a blast of bleach and... it's STILL BEIGE and it STILL gets funky when wet! If that's cotton they wove dead boll weevils into it! I need a new towel! - But in Brooklyn today, I got 3 new t-shirts (1.99\$ each) and a new shirt (16.99\$) in a most interesting shade of something between dark teal and steel blue. Even the gal at Jackie's, where I bought it, commented on the colour. - Well. I didn't go to Kings Hwy. I decided to come right back here. The damned train ran SO BLEATING SLOWLY ALL THE WAY IN! For most of the trip I slept. Hot. Humid. And at 34th Street? Bleating tourists just scattered *all* over. 25 minutes wait for the cross-town bus. I was quite "ick" by the time I got in here. But I was solo! The only one coming it at the time! I even had a chat with the DHS guard about how "stupid" some of these residents are. He made the perfect comment: "If these people had any respect and sense, we wouldn't have to be here." WOAHA! SO TRUE! UNDENIABLY! Some of these guys are just too brilliant to be in a spot like this. To them, I give respect! - Tonight is "WBAI" night on Davids radio: old radio shows and "Standards" music. Good radio. Good for mind-wandering down Memory Lane. - 10mins to bed-check. I'm totally fatigued but not too sleepy. A nice vodka-tonic would be most welcome this eve. I was looking forward to one tomorrow... at my "413". But no... work... again. Alas. - 9:53pm and E3 just in. I said: "We waited-up for you." and he said "You did?" "Of course we did." "Oh that's nice of you. I didn't think anybody cared." (He's already told me he'll actually miss me when one of us goes. It's actually a wonderful relief to have somebody in this pit who's capable of a pleasant sense of humour. It truly is!) - And now? I need to get some rest. Some *broad* was at the sign-in table tonight. I wonder about bed-check... we're half-nekkid in here tonight. (And I'm waiting to get some BS about my wash being on the locker. To Hell with them. It'll be gone by about 5:30am tomorrow morning.) - "Holiday/Sunday" commute in the morning... SHOOT ME NOW!

Monday 5 September

8:05pm 6w107 This morning I was at 34th Street by about 5:45am or so... No bus for the longest so I *walked* over to 33rd Street and Park Avenue. 3 minutes to wait for the Nr.6 train and the trains were running 23 minutes apart! This whole city has gone right straight DOWN THE OLD SH*TTER! OK. 14th Street to try for the L train. *MORE* waiting and “information” signs that made no sense. I got on the one that came into the station. At 3rd Avenue... wait... and wait... Announcements: 1.Waiting to space trains. 2.Held by dispatch. 3.Train traffic. 4.Signal trouble. 5.Construction, trains running slow. That pretty much covered every recorded message they have! I GOT OUT! *AN HOUR HAD PASSED* and I was at 14th Street and 2nd Avenue waiting for the M14 bus! FINALLY! A bus... to 8th Avenue to *WAIT* for an A train that ran *LOCAL, EACH AND EVERY STOP* all the way! *I clocked-in at 8:05am! AND... Mrs. E. was waiting for me out-side.* “I’m so afraid you wouldn’t come!” (BULL-SH** lady!) PIC/VNS (the agency) gave her all sorts of crap yesterday. Even sent somebody at 2:00pm. SHE and Marilyn (her daughter-in-law) BOTH specified they wanted *ME* on the case. PIC (“Partners In Care”, a subsidiary of “Visiting Nurse Services of New York”) tried to tell her/them they had to take whom-ever got sent! (Now I know what I’m dealing with... Back-stabbers there... my “employers”.) Anyway... we get into the house, she says “Make your coffee.” We talk and chat a bit. She says “Good luck.” and leaves. I finally got Mr. out of bed (with minor problems) at 10:00am! No shower. Light wash. It’s all I could get. He was a mess! But after hospital visits, most patients tend to be. - The day? *I had oatmeal and 2 yoghurts for breakfast. Lunch, 2 eggs. Ensure. FELL ASLEEP from 2-2:29pm!* Mr. was on the recliner all day. Tired. I have to admit that I do feel horribly sad for him... most of the time. - And today... I left at 5:15pm (15 minutes of service to the client that my employer will over-look and not pay me for.) An A train to 34th Street upon which... I *slept again*. At 34th Street some idiot comes to *ME* to ask about the bus. WHY? I look like I know? Like I’m a nice guy? SH**! The answer only took a nod, and I truly wasn’t happy about THAT much! - How I truly HATE NYC! Sorry Mama. It’s nothing like it used to be. I think you’d hate it now too. - Back at the Dung-heap at 7:00pm. In and up to the floor. (Note: Nice guy, good looking, 5th Floor, “Victor”, talked with me, introduced himself. My “new Charlie”? I wouldn’t mind.) - Got to chatting with the Security Guard on the floor here. Mentioned the “E2” situation. *She came to see... HE WAS HER NEIGHBOUR IN THE BRONX! HE GOT TOSSED FROM THE BUILDING, BY THE LANDLORD BECAUSE OF DRUGS AND NOISE, ETC! Imagine THAT!* She said we should file a complaint down-stairs. But... it wouldn’t do us any good. Still, she said let her know if we need... WILL WONDERS IN THIS PLACE NEVER CEASE? (I hope not!) 8:32pm Last night’s wash is *still* damp.

I'm sweating. 27°C in here. I'm SUPER sensitive to heat lately. I sweat like mad, even in a breeze! Old age? "Man"opause? HELL! I need to go NORTH! SOON! - Finished the last 2 PopTarts. Time to sign-in. Coffee made for morning. I need a shave (not happening tonight though). - Oh, one of the air fresheners in the locker leaks. Whoa! Smells... pretty?

Tuesday 6 September

5:41am at 34th Street and 1st Avenue (again) The day commences. I almost got caught with a smoke this morning. It was just a warning from the hall. "No smoking!" (Actually, as I'm to understand, they need to SEE you with the cigarette... smoking it, in order to make anything of the matter. It makes sense though. There's no proving that the person in the stall was the one smoking... considering how many of us smoke in here. The smoke very well could have been the previous "inhabitant", as it were.) - 5:46am M16 bus arriving! I'm about to be EARLY (they'll take care of that... our department of "rapid" transit here)... in the drizzle. And to think: I almost didn't bring the umbrella. - Last night, at about 10:06pm, the kind security guard announced "Gentlemen, it's after 10." David had just turned the radio off. All went ever so quiet. (She came round because of the radio. Now I ask you: Respect? Yes indeed... and I have MUCH for her... along with sincerest gratitude.) - This morning, I woke at 4:21am... no alarm. - It's delightfully cool this morning. Thank the Weather Gods. - Now? Running early. I've confidence that the MTA will "adjust" that. - Ever so overly-friendly, chatty driver on this here bus this here morn. This city HATES peace, silence, night, serenity. I... HATE this city. - 9:07pm 6w107 22°C. in here! Breeze! And the light's on (I put it on). Out-side, the rains are falling. A very cool night (and me with-out a blanket). No complaints though. No sweat! Literally. And oddly, tonight I don't feel *compelled* to shower. - The day went well enough. Mr. E. was a delight but he's got the trots. Hopefully not *C.Diff*. Folks get that from hospitals. And I was on the "Good" list all day with him. - I got an hour on a computer at SIBL tonight. Only the catch-up on the "Park Avenue Shelter" atrocities. (Admittedly, music... So. African! My old music collection is coming back!) - And now, 2 pound cake slices before bed. - Vivian (the Greek security guard) is on the floor tonight. She remembers me, I remember her. Old times. - David is quite fidgety. Gee. Radio on. Baseball. But not LOUDLY! - And I'm looking forward to closing this day. T.I.R.E.D.

Wednesday 7 September

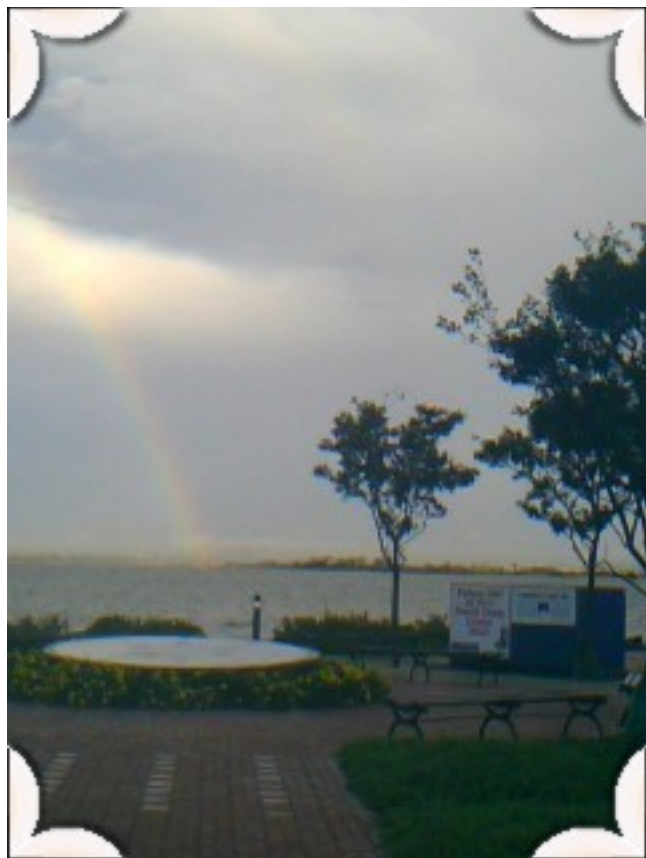
10:02pm There were things I wanted to note today, thoughts mostly. But I can't remember. Alas.

- The rains are coming. Rumour is, through the week-end. Today it came and went. This evening it wasn't bad but just a bit ago, strong wind! (HELL! Humid and back up to "82°F" coming again. NO!) I got up on the window sill to close the top window a bit (on request from Es1 and 3 since I'm the tallest in the room... although David is as tall... but, we face the fact that THAT is utterly useless no matter how you shake it). Last night somebody closed the damned door during the night! It cuts the ventilation! And I had to get ready for work in darkness this morning. Well.... - Tomorrow we're to remove linens from the bed so mattresses can be inspected. "The Callahan" is coming. - Mr. E. has quite a case of the trots. If they don't stop tomorrow I'll become concerned. Truly. - Mrs. made lasagna and brought a large plate over for me today. (I almost have to wonder if she isn't poisoning me. I wouldn't doubt it.) - Well. No shower again. I don't feel "ick" tonight. No heat/humidity/sweat! - Woke at 5:00am this morning. Made work by 7:33am. - I need a blanket. I'm sleeping in scrubs under 2 *doubled* sheets. - Time for sleep. CBS.FM ("oldies") on the radio across the room (David) tonight. Low volume. And I've had 4 PopTarts. - G'night.

Thursday 8 September

6:06am Flushing (Nr.7) train at Court Square station. At 3:50am this morning, the light came on. Darsevid. WHAT IN HELL'S NAME? Ticking and banging about in his locker. I rolled over, had my coffee, plugged in the iPod to charge, laid back down to wait for my alarm and woke at 4:30am. - RAIN this morning. - 6:19am on a bitter-cold Q53 bus! The air-conditioning must be set at "Antarctic"! In the mini-deluge of this morning, I *walked* to Park Avenue and 28th Street having JUST missed an M15 bus! Not thinking, I headed down the stairs and to the train for the Nr.6 train but... UP-town! instead of DOWN-town as I should have. And so it came to pass that I am where I am at the moment... SCREWED! - Nothing says "Morning, NYC" as well as being drenched on a cold bus at 6:24am in the morning. - *Observation: I am 2 distinct persons. When out of the shelter, I can be compassionate, civilised, enjoy listening to my music, bopping a bit to the beat. BUT... as I return to the shelter, I become defensive, alert, aware and music becomes an annoyance, a distraction. I'm more apt to 'fight to kill'. I become the antithesis of who/what I am "generally". I've noticed this more lately. I've become aware of it. Not to say that it's negative in any manner. But as I have said before: Considering child-hood and more recent years (journalled and not) I'm surprisingly stronger than I'd ever thought. - Yesterday I bought Tallis Scholars, "*Missa Et ecce terrae motus*" (Antoine Brumel)... the entire (9.99\$). This morning's music. How I

remember that morning, YEARS ago when I lived on Jane and Hudson Streets in “The Village”, walking along the Hudson River to 95 Wall and, so *VIVIDLY* in my mind, I looked up at the WTC



Towers and “saw” them in flames, smelled the smoke, felt the trembling! It happened well before 11Sept2001. I was listening to this same music then. - 7:52 Q53 bus to Howard Beach at B94th Street and I’m late but don’t really care. I caught the most amazing *rainbow* as I went to the post office this morning. And as I stood on Beach Channel Drive (Rockaway) taking some photos, the Q53 bus I’d come into Rockaway on stopped, the driver yells “**That rainbow is falling right on the WTC!**” and so it was. Sometimes we actually *are* where we *should* be *when* we should be there. And now, 7:57am crossing Broad Channel island? The sun is just BRILLIANT! (And French music... Roche VVoisine “*Au bout de l’île*” on the iPod.) There are fleeting moments during the course of a life-time when...8:05 Broad Channel and for some reason, my mind has me headed to

Middle Village, Queens, but I’m going to Howard Beach! Short circuit in the brain this morning. And THIS morning I’ve NO emotional attachment to Rockaway... as if... the heart... is dead. - 8:14pm at Aqueduct/N.Conduit A train station. I left PenLib at just past 7:35pm. I’m praying I make sign-in at this point! - A good day at the little Hell-pit of HoBe. Mr. E. was in good spirits, no trots, got a bed bath, ate a great breakfast. Daughter brought pizza for both of us at lunch time. I ate the rest of the lasagna and a slice! - At PenLib, I copied the rainbow pics to the “WordPress” blog. Copied ALL images from phone to the Flash-drive and printed a copy of the “Callahan Decree” (which I will keep handy at the shelter... just in case). Grabbed images to the Flash-drive and HTML coding for printed “statements” that I bring in to the “case workers” on our “meet’n’greet”. Productive. Joel, one of the librarians at PenLib, was quite chatty. Too bad I couldn’t have stayed longer. Ah, but I don’t reside there of late. - Today got HOT! Tonight, warm, humid. -There was a “bed inspection” today. I wonder what awaits. - We’re heading

UNDERGROUND! At long last! - 10:05pm 6w107 "The Coalition" is JUST finishing "bed inspection" on the floor! ALL day we're out but they wait, send one woman to inspect some 800 beds and she checks the corridors, slop sinks, showers, et al! And tomorrow will be similar. Such is the routine of the Homeless... to be at the mercy of.... ? But in *THIS* little corner of Hades we don't get peace until at least 11:00pm when the bleating baseball game on the radio is done. So it really doesn't matter much anyway. Even now the radio's going and our David Hall is mucking with the volume. No peace... - Oh... The trip back? Shocking! I was coming into the building at 9:15pm. The Rockaway shuttle train came in due course. The A train *zipped* in and down the line. The L train was running close. Worst part was the M15 bus: NOT ONE to be seen or found on the avenue, so I *walked* from 14th Street to 30th Street. JUST MISSED a "Limited" bus at 24th Street when the bastard pulled away from the curb *AS I ARRIVED*. Typical NYC of late. Then we had the usual idiots at the entrance: slow to put things into the x-ray, sh** in pockets, etc. I walked up to the floor. A wonderful security guard who be-friended me last time I was here met me at the top of the stairs. Then Ms. Leton comes buzzing by (comments to security "He's a sweet man." pointing at me). - Signed in at about 9:30pm! MADE IT! OK! - The woman from "The Coalition" looked into the room. Alleges floor-cleaning and painting will commence tomorrow. (The "Callahan" is Wednesday.) Beds to be stripped *AGAIN* tomorrow. Oh well. - Meanwhile, I'm going to try for *SOME* kind of rest. Tomorrow's "Run Day" after work. - (David's bumping his locker, fidgiting in the bed, belching. THAT NEEDS to GO!) - One closing comment: As the woman from "The Coalition" was in the hall, a guy from the 3rd floor comes out of the shower in nothing but a bed-sheet wrapped like a toga! *SO FUNNY*... It surprised the woman who instructed, politely, that he'd better get some clothes on. *Just so funny*. - Enough... the day is done (the bleating baseball is not... unfortunately). I want a smoke but...

Friday 9 September

6:00am M34 bus A bit of pain this morning. Dull. Like "post-kick". Lower abdomen. Not a "cramp". It just feels as if I'd been kicked. - Ever so tired this morning. - Warm weather at 6:00am. Is the hot weather back? Please no. - Madison Avenue at 6:03am and Friday commences. Week-end off. BFD! (Read that as you will.) - 7:42am O.K.! HERE WE GO!: A 6:23am A train to Far Rock! How pleasant? Quite, particularly because of the fellow sitting across-diagonally headed for "JFK/SFO", "Kennedy airport NY-San Francisco CA. (Too bad I couldn't fit into "carry-on"... heh.heh.heh.) And funny? I tried taking a couple of pics and...next thing I know I'm looking up, at my station, *as the train doors close*! NO PROB. I got off the train at Howard

Beach/JFK station and had a nice stroll from there. Probably about as far as N.Conduit but much more residential ("Old Howard Beach" as it is). Quite the delight, whilst listening to "*The Lunatics Have Taken Over The Asylum*" (indeed they have... 30th Street. and here at Howard Beach...) Clock-in, 7:16am. - At about 7:45am Mrs. E. comes by. She tells me, Mr. E. was "a very bad boy" last night and in pain... yelling because of, let's call it "bottom pain". Well, yes, his "hole" is a bit raw. That's why I made-up the ointment mixture to apply! Says Mrs. "I told Marilyn. 'J. does everything he can. He takes GOOD care of your father.'" SO! I've been correct all along about the daughter... bad-mouthing me. OK. From now on, *SHE'S* on my "Watch-The-Back-stabbing-Bitch" list. - *I AM SO BLEATING TIRED OF THIS SHIT!* I spend 9 HOURS EVERY DAY with *HER* father, she buzzes in sometimes, and only for 5-10 minutes. *SHE* won't help her Mum or tend to *HER* father so I, a non-family person comes in. Right. F***U dear. - Meanwhile we're all a-buzz about "terrorist attacks" this week-end. Bleating morons. Over-kill sensationalism. I'm quite fed-up with that as much. - Finish my coffee. Smoke. Pee. Begin the day. - Screwit! - 11:10am VENT-TIME! Just got a call from Guerda, the "Charge Nurse" on this case. She tells me that Marilyn-the-Daughter claims that Mr. E. has a decubitus ulcers (BED SORES!) (Subsequently, Mrs. E. swears Marilyn didn't say that.) Wife says she's happy that I'm here. Says it's a misunderstanding or miscommunication. Me? I'm tired of the "second guessing"! They don't F***ING TRUST ONE DAMNED THING I DO HERE! *THEN....* I learn that "Partners In Care" (the agency) screwed my "Direct Deposit"! but TD banque fixed it. Now my chequing and savings is with TD! I'm moving closer to moving out and moving on! - 9:19pm back at 6w107 Left HoBe at just past 5:00pm with Mr. in a good mood (and wet drawers for his *daughter* to deal with). Mrs. was delightful but sorry that I wouldn't be there on the week-end. If I didn't want the little bit of income I get (VERY LITTLE) I wouldn't be back AT ALL... EVER! But my goal is Thanksgiving... Canadian in Burlington... VERMONT. With direct deposit into the same banque now, saving should be easier, goal more attainable. I hope. So... as I'm leaving the E.-house, the guy down-stairs wants to talk. Talk about some "bomb" on Sunday. Talk about how "we" should've taken out al Queda in the "5 or 6-day war" (Israel). Talk about how "we" (the U.S.) must be in Israel because "you" (Jews) will just kill EVERYbody so the U.S. has to "control you". Ah... Howard Beach. The "f***ery" never ceases out there. Maybe it's too much "salt" in the air, them being on the shore and all. - I got the Q11 bus up to Staples. Got 8 more boxes and onto a packed, OLD Q11 bus to Liberty Avenue where I dropped the boxes at storage, got more Vitamin C at storage, pee'd at their loo and left. Cigarettes at CVS and by 7:15pm I was on my way back to the Dung-heap. - As I'm walking up 1st Avenue, having come off the bus, a young fellow (White) asks for directions to the shelter. He had

a cane and a terrible limp. I took him along. Got him in. Waited for him to go through security. (In his “luggage” were several bottles of very good cologne!) Then parted at the lift... after giving directions on how to get to “Intake”. In the past, some people here were kind to me. I pass that kindness along. - OH KAY! For tonight’s *story*: I flip on the light to come into the room and David Hall (of bed E2) gets up mumbling something about a “stupid ass”. He’s obviously pissed because I put on the light. Odd; he doesn’t mind putting the light on, off, on, off during the course of a night. Personally, I ignore him, watching from the corner of my eye. The radio is on (of course). I get my little wash together and head across the hall. Next thing, David pops in, looks about, leaves. No problem. When I came back to the room, Nr.E1 is situating his bed. Seems David’s smoking and such, in general, is disturbing HIM TOO. We’ll be heading for Administration on Sunday. If they’d move just him and me into a 2-bed room it would be fine with me. We’ll see what... - 9:49pm Waiting for “BED-CHECK”. A smoke and I’m DONE! My eyes are closing already.

Saturday 10 September

8:36am at 59th Street and 3rd Avenue and I just missed the Q32 bus! And now... another 20 minutes to wait and I can’t see the bleating screen on this piece of sh** phone! No journal, no Twitter to pass the time! - 8:56am ON the Q32 bus at last at 64th Street and 3rd Avenue. So... last night’s wash wasn’t dry this morning. And I cut the 4:30am alarms off and woke at 7:30am! Well, it doesn’t look like I’ll be getting the beach (A.FRIGGIN.GAIN) this week-end. It’s over-cast and breezy. - “Tony”(E1) (finally introduced his self this morning) and I are to go to someone tomorrow concerning David(E2). Cruz(E3) tells me, this morning, David’s complaining because Tony complained about the smoking in the room! Sorry? WTFrigg? Smoking ANY-where in the building is prohibited... PARTICULARLY IN THE ROOM! WHAT THE FRIGG gives sh** like David the sense of entitlement and exemption to rules and regulations? It’s things like him that have stopped me from being socially helpful. And call it/me what you will but MY PERSONAL, DIRECT OBSERVATION has/have shown: *CERTAIN ETHNICITIES* are more prone to such crap. Period. AND... I’m to understand that David has stated that “Whites” are “trying to take over” in the shelter! Staff and residents! According to David Hall, Whites “have to go”. I’m thinking: time to post a picture of this one here. Shall do, ASAP indeed. - Meanwhile, back in Queens... to storage to re-pack. PenLib to print “paypuhz” for tomorrow’s visit with Ms. Henika. Maybe a trot to the Fort, weather permitting. - I’m in jeans and t-shirt. Odd... I’m not in scrubs. - 1.33pm Q53 bus to The Rock. 3 hours in storage again and STILL not right. 16 boxes, neatly

packed and still stuff to be organised. This is not “me”. But then, who knows? - My back is out too. - No beach. No sun. No sh**... rather... all sh**. Now to hope to get time on the library computer to print a statement for tomorrow. And the account of Park Avenue Shelter atrocity



STILL needs to be completed. - Meanwhile, traffic is miserable on Cross Bay Blvd. and our “driver” keeps aiming for stop lights. These are the days. - The big buzz is that we’re to be bombed tomorrow. If so, I’d like to know where and when. I’ll be at the site. Kah...boom (‘n’sh**). Bunch o’ dumbarses who buy into this bunk. - Headache to go with back-ache. Jolly la dee da. – NORTH CHANNEL AT LAST! 1:42pm. F.R.I.G.G.! - And... 6:17pm Q22 bus at B149th Street to... return. Got my statement printed at PenLib. then to the Q53 bus to “my” Waldbaums (Rockaway). And a late lunch at the table by the Ft. Tilden post office. The sky had cleared. The breeze was delightfully cool. Lunch was rejuvenating. And so, a stroll down toward the beach. - No huge waves on

the ocean. No horses a the stables! No “Kimmie”. No “Brian”. (The horses for the park Rangers at the Fort.) The Fort is... some-what some-how desolate. Sad. - I want to get some soil before I leave. A bit of “real estate” to have, no matter where this old world drags me to. - 6:35pm and back on a Q53 bus. I boarded at 6:30pm. It took this long to connect to Internet so I could continue posting from the phone. - Coming into Rock Park, “Fat Tim” or Jim or what-ever (he still owes me 7.47\$ for the beer. 3 years ago when I was here, I told the folks on the porch that I was on my way to the market and asked if they needed anything. He said he wanted beer. So, while I was at the market, I got him his beer... Little did I know at the time, he expected me to *supply* him with beer... he had no intention of paying.) was on the street, Phil (from the house I’d left out of here) and his bit of *stuff* were on the porch. And me? Glad to be on a bus and not having to deal with the likes of them. (I get more than enough of “that” in the shelter every day.) On the way out of Rock Park... B116th Street is empty. Even here, at B94th Street, the bus has

plenty of empty seats. Rockaway is done for the season. Time to rest and recover from the Summer. “They” (D4D - “Down for the Day” visitors who come to the beach and leave their garbage behind) have gone home. It’s *now* that I miss it. But this evening I thought: I won’t come back. Too many people I want never to see again. Come back to Neponsit? Oh... it might have been. But no. No more NYC. No more NYS. No more NY. Enough. Enough. I’ll miss Jamaica Bay. I’ll miss The Atlantic Ocean. I already miss Tilden. But it’s time... time to leave. Time... - Now to Staples. A photo-copy of pay-stubs and back into that god-forsaken city. The peace of today was welcomed, needed, appreciated and short-lived. Soon... one way or another... I’ll make it last. Soon and very soon. - 9:36pm 6w107 Comment: This morning, as I waited for the Q32 bus, a man came walking round the corner, he carried a small ironing board. I saw it as a surf board, then a “boogie board”. Rockaway. Board under arm is for the beach. Culture. - OK. A tweet from P.J. “Stay uptown...” tomorrow. Apparently the news is carrying much about NYC being bombed tomorrow. As I got off the bus at 30th Street and 2nd Avenue this evening at about 8:25pm, the police pulled an SUV over. Flash-lights out. The inspection! At the end of the Q60 bus run in The City, cops, flares and more inspections. Yes. “Al Queda” won in 2001. And every year we are reminded of their victory. I remember every time I think of Wall Street and the whole “Former-Financial District”. GONE! And my C.V.? So little is verifiable any more... everything is GONE. - Time to leave... for the final time. – David Note: Quite flatulent again tonight. Loud, in volume. LOUD, in odour. And now, 9:48pm, muttering and mumbling something indecipherable. MICA! He SHOULD be “Psych”... and NOT “GenPop”. But... we’ll see what tomorrow brings.

Sunday 11 September

DREAM:(6w107 8.37) I was in somebody’s home, not mine, not a shelter. In a good mood. We (the other guy and I) were getting ready to go some-where. I looked in the mirror and noticed my hair was quite long in the back. I commented that I needed a hair-cut and was disturbed by this because there was no place to go to. Something happened, I don’t know what, to put me in an extremely BAD mood! I was on the phone to Air Canada. Bought a ticket to Montréal but with no particular date. I had to go through some pre-flight interrogation, similar to customs but it involved interrogation. Where was I going? Montréal. When? As soon as I get to the aeroport. Why? To get out of and away from here! For how long? I don’t know just now. What am I taking? EVERYTHING! Where will I be staying? Anywhere I can find. A young, thin, blonde, wavy-haired guy conducted the interrogation. Meanwhile, a young, short, dark-haired gal grabbed my back-pack from the floor, began to

rummage through it. I didn't want her to see/know what was in it:

"Why are you searching through that now? I'll be re-packing it. It's not packed for the trip."

"It's not packed for your trip?"

The guy told her "Leave it alone if he's going to re-pack." She put it down. I zipped it closed.

Next thing, I'm being told there's ANOTHER procedure. Go to a counter. I became enraged!

ONLY for ME! Others passed after the 1st bit! I had to queue at another counter with about 7-8 non-English speakers who were, I thought, being deported. This time, a large book in the desk.

Reading and math. The book was hand-written. I was the only one required to read it! I lost my temper, refusing to participate. I YELLED! HOLLERED! I was allowed to pass. Back in my room it occurred to me: Ticket purchased by no date! I had to ring-up Air Canada to find out when I was leaving. "Any time" I was told. I woke, aggravated.

(But I have to note that the elements of this dream are SO attached to actual events... of my past, connected directly to my present. THIS dream is almost frightening. It's as if my brain is flashing my life story. I wonder: Is Death coming soon? I should be so lucky.)

8:29am 5th floor "Lounge" and I AM SUDDENLY SO DAMNED TIRED! I was fine when I woke.

Fine when I showered. Then, as I noted the dream all energy drained from me! Tightness in chest. Hands trembling. Eyes unable to stay open. *THAT* tired. Inexplicable. - Anyway, here I

am... waiting for today's "greet'n'meet". - 10:06am out of the building, on the RUN at 60th Street and 1st Avenue again where I just watched the Q60 bus leave! But that's not the "best". Oh no. This morning's "CaseWorker News": I have a "mandatory Housing Interview"... TUESDAY AT

3:00pm... in BROOKLYN! BED-STUY I believe! Rent is 30% of income. OK. Good for 1yr. "Sect.8 HPD" and after 1yr I can apply to ANY OTHER HPD housing. The *KICK*? If I refuse (or decline) OR if I don't go to (or miss) the interview it's not "FTC" (Failure To Comply) it's a "*Sanctionable VIOLATION*": "*out on the streets, NO SHELTER SERVICES ANYWHERE for 3-6 MONTHS*". (I'm told it's a Bloomberg decree... Michael Bloomberg, the current Mayor of this city, who's made being

"Homeless" a punishable offence. These days, the police now have the authority to *force*

Homeless people into shelters. Refuse, and it's a jail sentence and a criminal record. So if one had a completely clean criminal record and is merely Homeless, one now has a criminal record...

suitable for searching, should one go job-hunting to get away from being Homeless. And oh... the aforementioned "DHS vans" that park out front of the shelter some nights? SOME of them are there to take us, the Homeless, to places out-side of The City... deportation, if you will. This city has gone completely repulsive!) There's NO recourse. There's NO appeal. Only SANCTION.

PERIOD! - Essentially, needing to work to receive income toward financial success and

independence has NOTHING to do with Bloomberg's agenda. So? I must call for the day off on Tuesday... I was going to request a half day for DSS/FoodStamps (another service that disregards WORKING people). Now? It's the ENTIRE day! The "System" is built to ensure the failure of those who seek and need its help. But it's also built to guarantee its own existence... eternally. Understandably... there's employment and cash-flow involved... not for the "Client" ... for the "System". In essence: F*** the Client, s/he's useless to begin with. - I shall go, to DSS in the morning AND to HPD in the afternoon. We shall see what comes of it. I'm NOT "defeated"; I'm tired and disgusted and fed-up. Fortunately I tend to trust (with-in reasonable limits) my CaseWorker. We shall see. - Next issue: David. I asked if 2 of us in the room complain, will it get him out. "They will tell you that this is not a hotel and if you are uncomfortable where you are, you don't have to stay here." There are SO many people seeking shelter in NYC now that they'll do ANYthing to encourage the Homeless residents to leave. She (the CaseWorker) KNOWS of David ("piece of sh***" was what she called him) and his own CW (Ms, Fiord) can't get rid of him! No telling why. But... maybe my housing is the blessing. I can "take care of" David... then leave. A thought for contemplation and planning. - 10:36am Q60 bus 42nd Street and Queens Blvd. Over-cast. No beach again today. Not as tired no as I was but *HUNGRY*! Plan? A few hours at storage, perhaps lunch at Tilden then early back to Dung-heap. I MUST wash my work scrubs early so they'll be dry tomorrow. - 2:45pm M15 bus Essex at Delancy Streets from the J train: If I'm correct and 1013 is where the "Housing" is being offered, it's a "3/4" which means sharing, perhaps having a "bed-room" for which I'd pay rent and SHARING kitchen and bath and front door. Could be me, alone in "the room" or bunk-beds. Could be 2 or MORE in the flat. And the place is ON the J elevated train! And yes... Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn (not the "best" area to be in... especially after sun-set). I don't have enough money yet, to land comfortably on my feet but... I'M PACKING TODAY... TO JUMP! - 3:10pm 5th Floor "Lounge" with 5 others in waiting and Ms. Henika is just calling from the list. - I'm ever so tired. My blood sugar is plummeting. My lips and arms are tingling. I think I need to eat but there's no time for that. I need to know wha.... 3:26pm DONE! I'm still not certain where to get into the building for this "Housing" thing but... Ms. Henika tells that the place is beautiful: *Single* occupancy, separate loo, stove, micro, table, 2 chairs, bed. Reg. rent: 962\$/month regularly. For me: 30% of my income. BUT... she'd sent 3 people on this same place before me: 2 "not Black", 1 Latino. All 3 liked the place. None were accepted... by the building management. We shall see. (I appreciate having her in my life right now. She's straight-forward, and brutally honest... I appreciate that... SO MUCH!) - Meanwhile, David is in bed, radio a-blarin'. I'm dropping things in my locker and will try to figure something to eat...

something, somewhere. 4:47pm The river park. Meal: Pre-packaged pastrami (2 packages) on roll. Greek yoghurt (1). Choc. Chip PopTart (2). Small bottle of "Vitamin Water" ("SturD"). Food! And as I began to eat, a gull came down and caught a crab (so funny... a gull catching crabs... I did that, caught crabs, and had to douse in kerosene to get rid of them!). - The scent of the river isn't so very pleasant but it IS welcome. I miss being on the ocean. Alas. - It's getting chilly. I've wash to do. I want to meet with Tony (El). I should get going. - I've no cash any more. Victor needed money so I gave him my bag of change. A few dollars in it. But he asked so nicely and he does, I'm pretty sure, need. If not? The money will burn him. If he does need, may it bring him good health. - I want a smoke. Can't have one here. Especially because of the cretins and urchins. (a.k.a. children) (screaming like banshees, the little sh**s). As long as the little entitled, nasty things are about, it becomes quite "illegal" to smoke... even in open spaces. This city is nothing but trash-rot anymore. - Toodles. - 5:45pm 6w107 Tomorrow's work clothes are on the locker to dry. Smellin' GAINfully good! David is STILL in the bed, radio on, volume low, he's under his "blankey". I guess crack-heads catch a chill at 25°C. Worthless piece of utter and complete worthlessness. Awful. Simply disgusting. HE is the Homeless that people attend; the Homeless that nobody wants. And THAT is what makes existence difficult for all Homeless. "Take 'em down" Hall. - And Tony? Supposed to be here at 5:00pm? Another one? No show. I don't care. I can't care. - IT MOVED! David moved! To go to dinner. Oh what I COULD do in his absence to make him miserable. But (a)I'm too tired and (b)I just don't want to be bothered at the moment. So perhaps I'll nap. - Still waiting for the "big boom". All the hype about being bombed today... still waiting.

Monday 12 September

10:52am Howard Beach, I had an entire entry done just now but dozed momentarily and erased the whole thing! I'm on the very edge of a "Burn-out/Melt-down", physically and menralky(mentally) (friggin phone). - At 10:38am I rang Melanie (Madame Supervisor) to get tomorrow off and she went into a *tirade* about *ME* putting *HER* into a "situation". "*You can't call me today to tell me you need off tomorrow!*" F*** U darling! I didn't learn about the housing sh** (form DHS) until yesterday when your tired arse wasn't at work. AND I don't WANT to go to the DHS appointment to interview for an apartment I don't want in a borough I've never lived in, in a neighbourhood where I'm likely to be assaulted, mugged, robbed or murdered. (But our Mayor/Dictator Michael Bloomberg *DEMANDS* it and I, being Homeless, and no longer eligible for nor entitled to courtesy, respect, consideration or dignity... Well... toss me as suits *YOUR*

fancy.) As well, DSS (Department of Social Services/FOOD Stamps) *lost* my paper-work so now I *HAVE* to go into the office! Not to mention the fact that I'm certain that neither she nor Partners In Care would do anything for me, IF I were to lose the only place of shelter that I currently have. I mean, seriously? Their "competitive salary" is what's taking me so long to get back on my feet, back into a place of my own... OUT of this Hell-hole city! Not to mention, their "competitive" salary is what's keeping me in need of Food Stamps. So... that being said, (which I didn't bother to tell Ms. Melanie for the same reason I don't chat "quantum physics with gold fish) I stood my ground, politely, and indeed... got the time... to keep my humble place of shelter and to work on keeping my rotting body moving. - I discover now that the phone charger isn't working properly. I had the phone on the charger for 4 hours last night and NO CHARGE! - Mr. E. is officially "Hospice" now and I'll probably be dismissed from the case... soon, in spite of the fact that I'm perfectly qualified for "Hospice" and that it's my heart and soul when it comes to being with some-one who needs help this way AND it's the kind of patient I purposely asked for when I started working with PIC. Oh well. I do have "other plans" anyway. Truly, I CAN say, in ALL honesty, the one who will be at the "loss" is Mr. E. But that's something that's out of my hands now... or soon will be. - I'm teetering ON THE EDGE...5:44pm PenLib WELL! *This* day went well enough. But one thing on my mind: Marilyn rang to say they're asking to keep the same team when Mr. E. goes "Hospice". However, she mentioned that her Mum "has issues with" me. "Issues"? OK. Let her find better. NO PROBLEM! And I won't even wish you "good luck". *Issues*. She never spoke to or with me about "*issues*". Back-stabbers. - 9:24pm 6w107 Another day... I don't know how, but I wasted the whole hour at PenLib. Nothing accomplished in an hour. (David has a new toy! The radio is on, volume at reasonable, but he's got his mobile phone working and he's got annoyingly loud ring-tones that, because we're all in here, he's running through. A 64 year old "brat" complete with infantile tantrums. He does his "people" great justice. Between him... oh, now we do our little "mumble'n'groan"... him and the fly in this room... give me the fly. Oddly, it comes to me... David's just TOO filthy, even for a fly.) Where was I? Oh yes. The new account at the banque isn't open yet. "Customer Service" today tells it takes 48 hours to appear. Oh well. Expect nothing and never be disappointed. But I got some pictures to here (the "WordPress" digital journal) to insert along the way. That was my "accomplishment" at the library today. I left at just past 7:00pm. The Shuttle caught an open South Channel bridge but only momentarily. I love that and miss it so: getting on a train to leave Rockaway and the bridge across the channel opens... an we get to sit where-ever we are, until it closes. It's part of the Rockaway that I've loved so. - And so... I got back into the Dung-heap by about 8:30pm. Sign-in on the 5th floor. A hearty

hello from Victor (in passing him on the stairs). - Rumour has it: Tomorrow's the "Callahan". Interestingly, one thin coat of "floor wax" has been hastily slapped on the floor here AND THERE'S NO DRINKING WATER! The cooler hasn't a bottle installed and there are none to be found. (Some of us residents know where the bottles are stored and I've already taken it upon myself to replace some.) But tomorrow, round-about 5:00am, the pounding on the door and the announcement "BREAKFAST!" The shelter *ENSURES* that *NO RESIDENTS* are in during the "inspection". *EVERY*body MUST be OUT! (Even, I think, David. But I don't know for certain.) I remember 2 inspections: I recall the 1st, vividly... the shout of "Brrread fox!!!" first thing in the morning. I'm not clear about the 2nd. It's probably documented here some-where. - 9:47pm Cruz just put the lights out. D.Hall was laying in bed but, per always, *NOW* he decides to rummage in his locker (in the dark.) - Work? Oh Marilyn came by. She was *SO* sweet and kind in spite of her earlier "issues" bit. She doesn't know that I'm aware of her 2-faced bitchiness. Well, no matter. Hospice to come. Mrs. E. came in at 5:03 all nice-nice. And I said nothing about not being there tomorrow... She can add that to her "*issues*" with me. Shame: I adore Hospice cases/work. I'll do ALL for Mr. E. but now? Precious little else. - I'm beginning to nod here! SO TIRED! May as well crash now. No shower tonight. I'm too sleepy... "Goo night."

Tuesday 13 September

6:40am at the M34 bus stop and... Major hoo-ha's this morn. The "Callahan" at the Dung-heap. And some kinda disaster at Park Avenue and 34th Street. (And 68°F. Delightful, rather.) Last night I had to laugh (to my-self): Security yelling in the echoing halls (per usual disrespect) at about 11:30pm. David jumps up and closes (just hearing: taxi accident on Park Avenue) the door, goes back to bed, turns his radio on. I mean, WTF? Noise in the hall bugs him so he turns the radio on. Bleating-friggin retard, that one, to be certain. - 8.01 and only at 88th Street/Boyd station! FRRRRIG! An HOUR from 34th Street! I've got to get all the way out to B59th Street... ROCKAWAY... ARVERNE... and THEN, into BROOKLYN by 3:00pm! NYC... transit... BS! - 9:48am at the bus-stop for the Q22 bus at B73rd Street. It took me TEN MINUTES JUST TO LOG ONTO this PHONE! - Got to the Food Stamps office shortly after 8:30am and the queue *JUST* to get IN was *down the block*! At about 9:37am, some nasty bitch was giving RETURN DATES (mine is on Thursday... how sweet... SCREWME NOW!) because "I only got 1 worker an' I ain't gon make her take all y'all!" says the cotton-picker. So, I let her do her speech, telling me to be here at 8:30am, bring all my papers and that my case will be closed on the 16th if I don't. I didn't

bother to look at her, in mid-speech, took my ticket with “9/15” written on it and walked out. FRIGGIN WASTE-ROT, THEM. *ANOTHER* DAY OF LOST PAY? Because THEY'RE *INCOMPETENT!* - BUT... it's beautiful beach weather. And I'm headed to the banque to check on the savings account status. PenLib opens at 1:00pm today. Too late. - *THIS* is to be a day that, IF I *don't* go for my pills and Atropa martini (OH! And Atropa is now “in season” for fresh!) it will be *ONLY* because of my resolve to make somebody ELSE suffer. THAT is my “today's goal”. - 10:01am B96th Street at Rockaway Beach Blvd. waiting for the Q53 bus. TWO Q22 buses have passed already. And I'm HUNGRY now. HELL! - As I waited at Food Stamps this morning, 2 guys, from a “Drug ReHab”. Swan Lake, NY! (My child-hood up that way in the NY Catskills.) One admitted to going into Monticello (the old man's side of the family came from and still is there), stealing somebody's air conditioner from their window to install in the rehab house. Proudly too. (And the Muthuh-shizit is White). And I'm *TRYING* to *work* for an *HONEST* dollar? Y'know? **I'M** the one who's got it wrong. Seriously. Time to *TAKE* what I can... no matter what/how. At this juncture, this sh**'s GOT to STOP! - 10:08am THIS Q21 (“local”... ALL stops) BUS CHANGED FROM A Q53 (“limited stops”) BUS AS IT PULLED TO THE BUS STOP! This world is irreparably, hopelessly SCREWED-TO-HELL up. And I'm sick and tired of it... *ALL* of it. Now... local all the bleating way! HELL-ALL! Life is a *curse*... but today, others will go down if I can manage it some-how. And I don't really much care who and how. - 10:22am Diversion... About this morning: I woke at 5:00am exactly. The phone/alarm was charging over-night but had turned itself *OFF!* So I woke “luckily”. Late. But... Sh**ShowerDress. At about 6:15am some goon flips the lights on, prances in and announces “Gentlemen! Put ALL of your things in your locker before you leave. Linens. Pillows. Everything. Don't leave ANYTHING out. No shoes under the bed. Inspection today. Things might get lost in the scuffle.” Sh**-for-brains. “*might* get lost”? More like: *WILL be TAKEN*. I was dressed, paid no mind to the screeching bonobo, walked out. MY “*EVERYTHING*” was already packed in the locker. (I just hope I remembered to *LOCK* the damned thing.) - (I am SO BLEATING *TIRED* right now. And SO *AGGRAVATED!* -10.21! THIS DAY IS SCREWED... NO... F***ED! Hopeless.) -2:25pm on a J train to Myrtle Avenue now. WAHOO! Savings now with TD! Wondering if I should just tell the racists at MCU to stuff the accounts there or... Y'know? Next “adventure”: Screw the racists at MCU. “I heart TD”. Especially since *THEY* phoned me! Yes they did! Saw my twits on Twitter, “Direct Message: asking me to send them a phone number where I can be reached and BrrrrrrING! There they was! So. OK! - Catch-up: From the “Bitch-pit of Rockaway DSS FS” via Q22 bus to Q53 bus to Q54 bus to TD. MAGNIFICENT chat with the REALLY NICE “Trontonienne” who opened the account and

talked “Canada”, “Ontario” and “Québec”. LUV IT! Next: Q54 bus to Staples on Metropolitan Avenue off Woodhaven Blvd. where the same bleating copier is jammed like it has been *EVERY* time I’ve been there in the past month or more. A woman was copying *reams* and when she paused, I asked if I could make 2 copies (The “Direct Deposit” form for PIC to replace the one THEY screwed up so nicely.). SHE LET ME MAKE COPIES ON HER CARD! 22cents. But... C’MON! WOW! How GREAT of her! THANK YOU WONDERFUL LADY! Out of Staples and a walk to the post office on Metropolitan Avenue to be confronted by a nasty Asian clerk but the place was empty! Brief. Direct Deposit form posted “Certified. Return Receipt”. (Damnedest shame when one can't trust one's own employer... AND that employer is “HEALTH CARE”?) And to the street again. CVS for tinned Starbucks, 2 “Balance” power bars (210 calories each) and a pack of cigarettes. (TD rang whilst I was there to ask me about my “wonderful” experience this morning. How about that?). TO THE LIBRARY (North Forest this time) to up-load images to “WordPress”. - At 2:02pm I was en route to a Q53 bus. Nice schmooze with a woman named Peggy. TWO Q53’s and a Q21 bus came in about 7 minutes. And AS I got to the platform for the train, the J train pulled in! And here I am: on the J train heading to Chauncey Street and... WHAT-THE-HELL-EVER. 4 more stops (at 2.41pm) for the MTA to screw me into bloody pulp with some kind of “delay”. I’m not hanging to this “apartment” but I MOST CERTAINLY WILL NOT BE “IN VIOLATION”!!! Well... my guts are *knotted* in anxiety and I’ve had to pee from since about 10:00am this morning. Here we go. (I wonder which case worker will be at the interview. Ms. Henika please!) 9:29pm 6w107 Having my nightly PopTarts before bed... A Homeless fellow on Twitter, “bostonhomeless” got me hooked on these by mentioning one evening that there were people giving them away to the Homeless in... well... Boston, and he got there too late to get any! For some reason, I got an urge for them and I've been “on” them ever since. - OK NOW! How to begin? Well, I made it to the building with the apartment by 2:50pm. But thankfully, there was a woman at the corner who confirmed (as I’d thought on Sunday), the address isn’t 1031... the entrance is round the corner at 880! Leave it to DHS to screw things up. And had I NOT found the entrance and missed the appointment I’d’ve been thrown out of the shelter AND SANCTIONED 1-3 months! BASTARDS! Slick sh**... like always. So I go in. A man and a woman behind a glass “reception-type” window. I needed to sign in. But WOW is the lobby well-appointed! OK then. We got chatting. Great fun. I was directed down a few steps and to the right to a *charming* seating area. As I looked round the corner expecting Ms. Henika or Ms. Fiord I see... Ms. PA! Bless her! She seemed distant at first but we got talking. I was able to tell her how much she actually helped me cope when we’d first met. She *truly does* want to help Homeless guys get

back on their feet. But she tries, if there's hope she keeps trying; if not, she retreats and focuses on those who try to better their lot. Anyway... a Ms. White came to talk with her. I know this Ms. White from some-where but I just can't place her. Next came Ms. Green(e) to see me, alone, for general questions. (Both women, by-the-by, are Black.) We went to her office. When I did the gentlemanly thing, allowing her to go in first, she declined. "Can't see 'em when they're behind you." I joked. Her expression led me to believe that was *IT*. But she was most pleasant, asking income questions, telling me about the apartment (capped at 611\$/month), a light talk about the "GenPop" there. (I need to try for sleep at some point tonight here.) They appoint "Social Workers" to the residents to whom residents report regularly. The one they'd appoint to me is a Black guy who seems quite nice. But I'm thinking it's all too much like the Park Avenue shelter situation. We'll see what comes of it.) - I HAVE to try for sleep! I'll fill in tomorrow. Right now, I'm going to collapse. OH, but... when I got in this evening, on the bed were: New linens (starched and they appear to have been ironed but I doubt that part), a blanket (at last!), on a new mattress, but a sh*tty pillow. Oh well oh my! "Callahan". Bless you sir. THANK YOU SIR! - 9:52pm I'm outta here... Good-night!

Wednesday 14 September

After quite the night with our David Hall (E2) I'm at the bus at 5:39am - 1:08pm at HoBe and I want to finish yesterday's events: From what I understand, the place is all "Single Occupancy". There's "24-hour Security"; all visitors must be signed in and no visitor is allowed to "stay" more than 14 days. (It's like a mini "Century Village" retirement place in Florida of sorts.) There was no mention of "percentage of income" for rent, only a "cap" of 611\$. Me? I'm thinking: WHY would I want to PAY rent of THAT amount on a place in a neighbourhood that I DON'T feel safe in and DON'T want to live in? Well, as I'm to understand, it's just another "Bloomberg": In the shelter and working? NO! You WORK? You're OUT! No matter what, how or where. A place, ANY place becomes available, you GO! Is CAMBA (the owner of the building) happy about this situation of taking-in the Homeless? Not really. But they've little choice. They have the place, I'm in the shelter, I work, they MUST take me and I MUST accept. The ONLY way it fails is if my income doesn't allow me to pay the rent (what-ever that is). OK. I was positive in tone, co-operative in manner. The Gentleman at all times. I made it more "social" than "interview". I don't care about getting this place. I don't. Another point: Ms. Green mentioned apartments above, to left and right but not below. Is the one they're offering here on the ground floor? - I got shuffled across

the hall to meet a Mr. ? (can't recall his name... didn't get it from the beginning.) My "Case Worker"! If I need social services, some kind of tenant intervention, he's the one I go to. HE asked for more personal information. Arrests? Drugs? He copied driver's license, birth certificate, passport, Social Security card. Do I LIKE that? No. Not at all. Do I care? HELL NO. I've been prepared for "The Grand Check-Out" for a while. Screw me over... push me out. Even my "Good-bye" is written (soon to be added here or on "DeadArtist"). Again, I was charming. NO-ONE can say I wasn't co-operative. Screw'em. Period. - The whole process took about 30 minutes. The interview with the previous fellow from the shelter lasted about 90 seconds, says Ms. Pax. OK. Fine. I really don't care. But I smile. I congratulated Mr. on having such a lovely bldg. "A little Heaven in the middle of Hell". That's how *HE* described it. That prompted me to ask: Bed-Stuy or Bushwick? The place is in BUSHWICK! VIOLENT BUSHWICK! Bloomberg and DHS will DUMP ME into Bushwick. Again... I see and learn one MOST IMPORTANT FACT: NOBODY GIVES A F*** ABOUT ME, THE PERSON. NOOOO BODY! - With that in mind, I asked Ms. Pax how she was getting back to the shelter. I thought she'd be brought back by van. Nope. DHS drove her there... and dumped her. She told me "I was SO HAPPY when you came! I knew YOU would know how I can get back." So screw me. And, of course, I DID get her back to where she could clock out. We took the J train to Essex and the M15 bus... We parted at 30th Street and 1st Avenue. I went along on my way, primarily not to be seen with her. She's very kind, and I don't want too many of the shelter-rot to see that part of her. If they do... they tend to see it as weakness and they take advantage of that... like rabid, savage scavengers. She yelled to me "Thank you!" I just smiled and waved. - I walked up to 34th Street for the bus to SIBL... I STILL hadn't eaten and STILL needed to PEE! But... What crap! I was SO exhausted by 6:40pm when I got to SIBL. Imagine? About the same arrival time as when I worked the whole day! But at SIBL, I worked on the "Park Avenue Shelter" journal entry, on the Flash-drive files and... *RED SCREEN* on the computer!!! I've NO idea what work got saved but there's *SO MUCH* missing and the longer I take to finish, the more I forget. (OLD AGE, DAMN ME!) Well, I left at about 7:00pm... defeated by fatigue... and not eating! - M16 bus to 28th Street. As much as I hate to, I went to Gristede's: 2 pre-packaged pastrami cold-cuts, 2 small stale rolls, a vanilla Hershey's drink, box of PopTarts, a bottle of Fiji water (they'd taken ALL of our bottled water from the shelter and I NEED my morning coffee and I'm NOT drinking the tap water any more). On the corner, I tore the rolls open, put the pastrami in each and took a walk to eat. Across 28th Street to 3rd Avenue, up to 32nd Street and to 1st Avenue. The rolls kept sticking in my throat but I knew I HAD to eat before going back into the Dung-heap. It was painful, but it was food. - Getting in at 7:45pm (yup, 19.45

on the military clock) went easy. In fact, as my back-pack came through the x-ray, the DHS guy grabbed it so that the water bottle (in the bag) wouldn't spill! They actually TRUST ME! - In the dorm/room/cell, David was in. I flipped the light on. A bag of crisp, fresh linens, a slightly torn pillow, "new" mattress. Ah... what these pricks do to cover the truth for a "Callahan"! Even then, pillow and mattress are slightly torn. But I just don't care. I just DON'T. - Well... to finish with a BANG! Literally... The bed got wiped-down and made-up. I showed Tony how to make a bed with "hospital corners". He's really looking into the CHHA training. Obviously he wants to get out of his current situation and I know, all too well and directly personally what that's like and where he is (flashbacks of me!). We were having a pleasant evening. Even Cruz was enjoying the evening and then David Hall, the one who will NOT so much as leave the building... EVER... (suspicious, that, as Tony and I discussed earlier this evening) our crack-smoking Parolee got ticked. The radio volume went to HIGH and the mumbling, muttering and pacing began. The rest of us just went about our business. By the way, water has been returned to the cooler. I made my coffee for tomorrow. - Signed for the bed at about 8:35pm, showered and settled in for the night (27°C again). - The lights were off, door slightly open, 11:00pm or so when David got up and closed it, mumbling something at nobody in particular. Next thing I hear is his ring-tones! 11:15pm, dark, quiet and he's playing with his ring-tones! I got up, grabbed my toilet paper and headed for the loo. I didn't "go" all day anyway. BUT... I must've pushed the door open a tad too... *BANG!* I paid it no mind and went to the loo to "sit a bit". A few moments later, David came in to pee... and probably check to see where I'd gone. Dumb sh**it that thing. I ignored. WHEN I WENT BACK TO THE ROOM? I noticed the closer-gadget had been pulled from the top of the door! SOooo... it no longer closed by itself! HAH! I left it W.I.D.E. OPEN and went back to bed. A moment later, Cruz gets up, goes to the loo. When he came back he tried closing the door... it stayed open a bit through the night. Well... funny thing: Earlier, Tony said that David's lucky that "we're" not the kind to "kick his ass". I said "Maybe YOU'RE not..." and told him how I'd welcome the opportunity... out-side of the shelter. Now the door's busted. OK? OK THEN! THIS Wednesday night should be interesting... - Now to bring things back to today... having done the "yesterday" and "last night" notes... - It's 4:48pm already. Almost time to get the HELL out of this place here in Howard Beach. (Obviously, it hasn't been all too bad since I got all of that previous information in. Oh well... Mrs. can add this to her list of "issues" then.) - THIS MORNING... I was up at 4:30am this morning and never tried to be quiet. By about 5:39am THIS morning (Wednesday now) I was at the bus. I headed for the post office this morning. On B116th Street in Rockaway, I saw Geoff (RAA!) but didn't acknowledge him. I've nothing to say... to ANYBODY

ANY MORE. At the pot office, the letter from “Partners In Care” confirming our TWENTY-FIVE CENT RISE IN PAY! BFD! I went to Waldbaums (Rockaway) for food. It was 7:39am already. Man! MTA can screw-up a day. - And now, at 5:58pm... A Train (waiting to get the HELL away from Howard Beach...) - I got to the job at about 8:12am. I get to the top of the stairs inside the house and Mrs. E. (Maria) is mopping the floor. “You had me so scared! I made Guerda call your office when the girl came instead of you! I thought you were sick or never coming back!” I actually got the opportunity to confirm: she actually DID! As Guerda told me later: “YOU were MISSED!” Even Marilyn rang to make sure I was on the case today. (we’re going underground so no posting for a bit) SIBL at 7:42pm The “Park Avenue atrocity” notes have been added to the August page! At last! There’s probably a lot more that could be added but the gist is there! - I’m feeling like sh**! Scratchy throat, runny nose. I hope it’s just fatigue and stress and that it’ll be gone in the morning. I actually *DREAD* going to that room at the shelter tonight! No doubt there’ll be some kind of confrontation because of last night. But... WTF do I care. Really? Right now... I stayed a little extra after work to talk with Mrs. She needed the conversation. I wish I could’ve stayed longer to talk with her a little more but... I’m thinking of ME now. And now that I know how back-stabbing they all are? I’m not going to put myself out any more... not even once more. I got there and got done and that’s what counts at the moment. - I need to pee and really should before they close the loo so... until I’m back in 6w-107... CHOW 4 NOW.

Thursday 15 September

5:35am 34th/1st (72°F) Woke at 4:12am this morning. Head aches. Feeling fatigued. Last night was a rip: Cruz was stoned, had a LOUD phone conversation followed by dumfux coming in, turning the lights on, buying cigarettes and such. Must’ve been 11:30pm when it finally stopped. David played with his radio until the same time. I wonder how it is that I don’t simply collapse. - 5:42am M16 bus and there’s about 10 on the bus... YELLING! (The guy from the room next to “us” at the shelter just got on! He doesn’t speak to me. Just as well. I’ve nothing to say.) - The vitamin C tabs went down wrong this morning. They’re stuck in my gut. It’s to be one of THOSE days. - What I wouldn’t give for quiet. - Today I get screwed out of Food Stamps. Bleating-friggin bastards. But work and income are more important now. Food Stamps won’t get me OUT OF NY! - (6:53am and it’s taken 40 minutes from 34th Street to Boyd... AND a transfer at Grant Avenue! And I half-slept all the way. TIRED!) I need to get to the post office TODAY, send my time-sheet (even though Ms. Melanie will deny having received it). - 9:10 HoBe and just for the record: I got here

at 7:03am! I wake 30 minutes earlier than usual and I arrive to work at about the usual. Do I hate this city! Every “Real NYer” I’ve spoken with in the past few months agrees: this city, the whole thing, has turned to sh**. Meanwhile, I’m so damned tired at the time that I keep nodding off. At one point, in Penn Station this morning, I felt as if I couldn’t take the stairs. Waiting for the train, I almost fell asleep *standing* on the platform... *uncontrollably*. But I WANT ENOUGH MONEY to GET OUT OF HERE and not have to worry for a while, so here I am. - It’s good being here though. Comforting to know how much my efforts are appreciated (by somebody, I’m sure... even if only by me). It makes ALL the difference in Creation. - I have to go find something to eat... May as well... whilst I may. - SIBL 5:13pm I can’t believe I made it here! I stayed a bit longer at the house (work) and as I got to the bus stop, there was the bus! And I knew the driver and we chatted along the route. At Liberty Avenue, I made it up to the platform as the A train pulled in and took that to 34th Street. - Went to the Main post office in Manhattan to post the time sheet and today I used the automated machines. Quite nice, really. Then, if you can imagine this, AS I got to the corner to catch the bus? There it was! And here I am! And 21 minutes remaining on this computer! - The weather’s gone really nice: the temperatures dropped very suddenly. This morning was hot and humid. Carmine (Mr. E.) was in good spirits but we went through another clean’n’change on the floor in the bed-room this morning. He started to get up and out of the bed and, as he does, he decided he wasn’t going to walk... or stand. So, I did what I had to do... on the floor But all went very well and he *LAUGHED* so much because of being on the floor. What shocks me in a way is that I have the strength to pick him up and put him on a chair! Especially since I’m feeling as if I’m coming down with a cold. (I think the “cold” symptoms are actually FATIGUE from not having slept well in the past few nights. David is being a pain in the arse. Not to mention the anxieties associated with the Food Stamps and that Housing farce.) As Mum used to say “This too shall pass.” (I wish I would.) - I’ve eaten rather well today, thanks to the food in the house. I even fell deep asleep for about 20 minutes whilst Carmine dozed! So, the day was quite OK all told. - Time sheet posted. An e-mail sent to PJ in Burlington (VT). And here I am... indeed.

Friday 16 September

8:17am at HoBe. Yesterday: Forgot to mention... GARY Russo (Fort Tilden, building T6/7 performer/singer) He's known as the “Subway Sinatra” and on “Fox5” television program “Inside...something...”. Imagine? His 2 girls and “wife”. His little girl being her usual anti-social and

the wife in tears... fat bitch the public should only know the truth. Personally, I don't think he's all THAT much like Sinatra but he IS GOOD! and I'm hoping the publicity brings him MUCH (and the "wife" doesn't benefit from his hard work any more). His is a tale of "woe", as Penelope would tell it. Apparently he gave the wife everything and she took it... and more, then dumped him, having an affair of some sort and now he's all missing his 2 daughters and the wife is being the bitch, trying to keep them from him. But, as I say, that's as Penelope tells it and we already know about Penelope and how she "tells" things. ANY-way... that was a note and it's noted. -

Meanwhile... 8:25am 'twas 13C at JFK at 5:00am this morn! YEAH-HOO! - I've tickle in throat, bit of a cough, drippy nose. Hopefully it's nothing. - 5:49pm Q11 bus to Staples. Sneezy. Scratchy throat. Not good. Last night, TonyE1 told me his case worker had these symptoms. "Something going around." And I've got bleating-friggin DavidE2 closing the damned door at night, no bloody ventilation. Well, let's hope I have a "bug" and spread it to the others then and that THEY get it worse. - This morning, I kind of took my time and connections were amazing! The train pulled in only moments after I got to the station AND it was the Rockaway train! Clock-in 7:13am. Carmine? MARVELOUS MOOD! ALL DAY! OK. So he slumped to the bed-room floor this morning and Maria saw. But he *laughed* making me *laugh* making her smile. All was well. - My pay... HERE WE WENT AGAIN! Only THIS time TD banque couldn't find the money (I believe it was the Latina rep who didn't want to bother looking). So I rang Marcia at the agency office, who changed my direct deposit to chequing. I wanted savings. But at this point, I'll handle the transfer. Just PAY ME! When I called TD the 2nd time? The rep found the deposits: one was 2.12\$... Retro-pay because of the whopping 25-cent pay rise this month. O woot (sh**). So, we'll expect some drama next Friday... again. - The strange bit: my balance is actually what my 60% savings should be! Of course, NO FRIGGIN FOOD STAMPS might change that but I've actually saved 60% of my income with-out trying! How odd. How great. - Myrtle Avenue and this will have to be... To be continued...

Saturday 17 September

5:51am 34th/1st Temperature: 53°F And... In "the city that never sleeps" the first "week-day" M16 bus from here is at 5:13am. The next is at 6:03am then 6:33am. First "Saturday" M16 bus at 6.49! On Sunday, the first M16 5:13am, 5:58am, 6:57am. First M34 bus departs at 6:27am. And now? At 5:55am? The sign tells me that the M16 bus is *DELAYED!!! BS!* - 11:am12 HoBe, I arrived to work at 7:13! Great! I walk in, Maria's in the kitchen and Carmine's sitting at the edge of the bed... the

hospital bed is coming today on top of everything. I had to land *RUNNING*! After a slow while and a breakfast (Maria even made french toast for me!) we got to the SHOWER! I was SO relieved! It's been days of bed baths. And so, dried and dressed and to table (we left the bathroom in the chair, I sometimes have to bring the kitchen chair to the loo, have Carmine sit in it and I have to pull him along to table... they're too friggin cheap-arsed to get a legitimate wheelchair). No sooner did we make it, showered, etc. when... VOMIT! Floor, fridge, my shoes, his shirt and pants. And not once but TWICE. Starting all over... clean the floor, him. I went into "Yeah well" mode, shutting everything in me down, and soon had everything cleaned... floor and all. Diaper and furniture... by 10:30am.-11:39am Nodding off! - 9:34pm and in the "comfort" of the shelter on my little metal bed. - So Maria left after the fiasco and I got something to eat whilst Carmine rested. He'd lost palour, grey-blue pale lips, but it returned. So we let him rest. - AT 1:00pm (not *before*) Marilyn and Lou (the daughter-in-law and son) came to relieve me. I headed to the Q53 bus to PenLib. There, I printed the weekly statement on a computer that screwed my "statement" template. But...I got it repaired and done. AND I GOT, on "iTunes", "*REACH OUT OF THE DARKNESS*" by FRIENDS AND LOVERS! I think it's SO groovy now. - Q53 bus (*Native New Yorker* on David's radio... Mama? Indeed... THE "native New Yorker"... I'm glad you're not here to see where I am today.) (and Cruz3 takes it upon himself to close the light... he's drunk again tonight. You can smell it when you walk in the room.) OK. Q53 bus to storage for antihistamines (DayQuil) and an argument. I asked the Pakis in the lift if they were going to the 4th floor. She said "No." and when I got to the floor, there they were! ("*Walkin In Rhythm*" on the radio and memories of living in... KINGSTON, NY and Frank, Chrissy - David's got the "Oldies" station on the radio this evening.) I commented, almost to myself, at how interesting that I asked them if they were coming to this floor and was told no. *She* was in the mood. But I let it go. *THEN*, in the aisle, *HE wanted* me to remove the step-ladder to get by. I made room. They're diagonally across. Speaking what-ever she clearly said "Fuck you!". I ignored, got my tablets and went on about my business. Seriously! These "immigrants and refugees"... come to THIS country and behave like the savages that they truly are. No doubt they weren't wanted in their "Country of Origin" either. - RiteAid: cigarettes, soap, shampoo, 2 vitamin bars (starving me), clear rubber bands for m'teeth (they've been held together for YEARS now... imagine). - The Q53 bus to Q32 bus into The City and off at the library to "twit"-a-bit. Had a conversation going tonight and then... the battery on the phone went! - Walked to 41st Street and 2nd Avenue for the M15 bus down to 28th Street. - In at about 7:53pm to David... in silence until 8:23pm! *THEN* the radio went on! (And still is.) I

signed, shaved, showered. Ate 4 PopTarts. And it's 20°C in here, in the dark, and nobody's talking. But Tony and I exchange knowing looks. - Soon to bed... HOPE for sleep at 10:00pm.

Sunday 18 September

6:10 34th Street/1st Avenue and... Even transport in NYC is no longer "work-friendly" with buses not running all night, spacing between them and week-end schedules being so sparse. This city has become "Bumpkinville". Time to... say good-bye. - Not bad: 56°F. - My sinuses are kicking butt this morning and congestion in the chest. No medications last night. I don't want anything to make me "out if it" until I can't take any more of this illness. The population on the ward in the shelter is changing again. And Cruz3 has gone mad. Last night he was telling David2 "NOBODY could sing like he could! He had a great voice!" (He was referring to Louie Armstrong!) Cruz2 now IDs himself as "Black". Sucking-up to David. Oh well. Screw him. Indeed. - Meanwhile, the charger for this bleating phone is shot. I need a new one... and NOT "at no 20 bucks neither"! - I almost rather dread work today. The daughter-in-law/son will be in. I just don't appreciate being ignored. - The hospital bed is in though. Jolly. - M34! and... we're off and RUNNING... again... as always. - 8:09pm 6w107 "The Shadow" old-time radio show is on the radio!!! "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows." Hahahahahahaha... - The day... M16 bus to the E train which took me to Jackson Heights, Queens, where the bleating R train *wasn't running*! So I went up to take the Q53 bus from 75th Street and Broadway. (Sometimes it really is rather amazing how well I know how to get around SO much of this damned city... now when I want so much to be AWAY from it!) Got to work... 8-bleating-friggin-30! Didn't clock-in. (Carmine signed a time sheet which I posted from Farley at 4:10pm this evening). Louie-the-son was at the house with Maria-the-Mother(F)/Wife. The hospital bed and "transport chair" (YAY!) arrived. Carmine was still asleep. Louie made me a coffee and left. Maria made Carmine's breakfast. (A subtle hint: "get he out of bed." as she says it.) Then she left. Carmine got a great bed-bath because of the hospital bed. His bum-rash is looking very good, thanks to Danielle's concoction and my application of same. And he was in good spirits! I got him into the transport and to the DINING table! He enjoyed that. - It was a non-stop morning. Always something to do. It went by quickly... and very well. - Got the 1.08pm Q11 bus and an A train to Fulton Street for the Woodlawn (Nr.4) train to City Hall, then to a Pelham local (Nr.6) train to 28th Street and. arrived just past 2:30pm. Walked to the Dung-heap. Appointment with Ms. Henika today. THAT went very well. We discussed Tolstoy! and Russian language. We're figuring I'm not getting the Bushwick place. I

told her I'm saving for rent and a ticket OUT of NY. She smiled. She's got a cold or something. But in moments, I was out. I was in her office with-in brief moments too. Almost no waiting! - Back out the door. M34 bus to Madison Avenue. Staples to copy the time sheet I'm sending into the agency. (Just in case Ms. Madeline fails to receive THIS one TOO!), a stroll to "Jack's" for 2 ponchos (I keep one in the back-pack, and I gave the other to the guy from Borden when we were at Park Avenue Shelter, but for 99cents? Two more while supplies last), box of envelopes (for time sheets, Irish Spring and noshes. Then to the post office on 8th Avenue to post the aforementioned time sheet and then... I intended to go to RiteAid for toilet paper, cough drops and razors. Intended to find a new charger for this damned phone upon which I now tap (at 9:49pm). And DID? Got on an M16 bus and strolled into the Dung-heap at 5:00pm. Straightened the locker. Washed some under-things and... I wanted to nap but that didn't happen either. - Now, 9:55pm and I'm showered and ready for lights out. - And back down to half-charge on the phone. Tomorrow... "normalcy" in HoBe... O THANK THE METAPHYSICAL!

Monday 19 September

5:58am M34 bus. *"Hey. You could at least close the door. You BROKE it."* (David Hall yells at me at about 5:50am this morning as I'm leaving. THANK YOU D'WAD, FOR THE SMILE AND JOY YOU GAVE ME THIS MORNING! Now do us all a kindness... pull your "blankey" up over your head and die... before I get back from... WORK!) - No time to take a dump this morning. Woke at 5:03am. *REALLY TIRED. REALLY CONGESTED* chest. Brush teeth. Shower. Dress. When I came back to the room from the shower, the door was closed, the funk was awful. Flatulence form that slob in the corner... David Hall! Tony(E1) had covered his head against it. So I left the door open (for light and fresh air). - As I'm leaving, I got to the water cooler and hear "Hey!"... softly enough. I looked round. David standing at the fire doors. I waved him off... wordlessly. He wanted to pick a fight first thing in the morning because of the door. TOUGH SH** THERE BONOBO BOY! If the door being open bothers you... consider it a return of your own courtesy. - 22:05pm! 6w107 Got in at about 9:20pm! Went to PenLib after work. Q53 bus to Queens Blvd. Waited for a Q60 bus that didn't come. So, I took the M train to Roosevelt Avenue for the F train to 34th Street to transfer to the M16 bus to 28th Street. RiteAid for cough drops and razors. WALKED up the 6 flights. Signed-in and hobbled to here. "Everybody home." as Santiago used to say each evening he did bed-check... back in the "5W-101" days. - This morning, 7:16am clock-in. Fairly easy day. Figured how to wash and dress Carmine in the bed. Good going. And his appetite was

stupendous! It makes me happy when he eats well. So little left in his life. At least let him enjoy food. - Maria cooked manicotti last night. I had 3 for lunch. Hot food! And, during the day? Not much to report. - This week the UN General Assembly. President in town. Traffic screwed. This afternoon, water main break on "Upper West Side". Screwed subway (A,B,C,...) so I took the "alternate" transport. - Now, 10:18pm, light still on, radio on, David out of the room, Tony asleep. (He'll be working for Parks! Bless him. They provide shirt, pants, cap, jacket and boots! General uniform. I'm truly, honestly and SO sincerely happy for him and I SO hope this job pays him well and helps him back to a world away from here... soon.) 10:20pm and David just came scuffling in, mumbled something, un-plugged the radio, put it on top of his locker and scurried out. Hmm... (I just put out the light. No doubt David will bitch.) - No shower tonight. Too late. Tomorrow I have to be at the agency office by 8:30am. Too bad I won't sleep any later... much. From here to there is a snap. I could sleep in until 7:00am ... but I won't. HELL! No staying around in here! - 10:27pm Somebody came through the fire doors and belted "HEY!" And there's an acrid smell wafting into the room. I wonder... David's smoking crack in the loo? - Aw... 10:29pm David's in, right to bed. No doubt he's been party to the acrid smoking... Crack-a-lackey. - 4 PopTarts. Time to try for some... "sleep". Hopefully NO SNEEZING (me).

Tuesday 20 September

9:20am Q32 bus stop, 33rd Street at Madison Avenue. Mad Drizzle! No umbrella! But... I woke at 6:30am. Just toddled to the loo, brushed teeth, showered, dressed and headed out the door this morning. I rode the M34 bus with Tony(E1). David tells him (Tony) that we "Whites" have got to go, that I'm a "Muthuhfukking Jew" who *really* has to go. I told Tony that I know David's on some kind of parole and as long as he doesn't touch me or "mine", I ignore him. I know he's trying for physical confrontation so that it will appear that I'm the aggressor. NOT HAPPENING! Honestly; HE gets away with the radio (prohibited in the shelter), playing it through the night (prohibited), smoking cigarettes AND CRACK IN THE DORM (prohibited) and now the racial crap? And *WE* have to go. Well, this is where I start to have MY fun... AUTONOMY... and total disregard for others. Yoobetcha. (I wish I could find his charges/criminal records. Will have to work on that.) - The City is a disaster this morning. The U.N. General Assembly is screwing traffic. But I will NOT take the subway. - Stopped at Jack's 99-cent Store this morning to get a

new phone charger (5\$), deodorant(3\$), new reading glasses (3\$). I'm good. - Got ONE box... BOX of latex gloves for work. I'm set. Takes so little. - And I'm QUITE QUITE QUITE HUNGRY! NEED FOOD DAMNIT! - 9:22pm back at suite 6w107. I come in this evening to a note a-top the locker: I've been summoned to SEE Ms. Henika TOMORROW AT 8:00am WITH REGARD TO A SECOND HOUSING APPOINTMENT ON THURSDAY AT 2:00Ppm. I'm going to lose TEN GODDAMNED BLEATING-FRIGGIN HOURS OF PAY THIS WEEK! Because of a damned place I don't want in a neighbourhood that's UNSAFE and all because Bloomberg wangled some bunk about MANDATING this housing BS! If I don't "comply" I get "sanctioned", tossed out of the ENTIRE shelter system for 30-90 days! More stress. More BS. I think of P.J.: Stick with it, don't jump before I'm truly ready. But this is getting me... physically. - This morning's fiasco with the mandatory visit to the office cost me 3.5 hours. When I asked to make the time up? I was told that it has to be done at once, same day. Work until 8:30pm! I have to be in the shelter by 10:00pm! I'd get in JUST IN TIME TO LOSE MY BED! OK? AND... I think about getting to work and clocking in 30-45 minutes early almost EVERY day for 2.5 months. Add: not getting proper over-time pay for 10 hours on week-ends. This is mounting inside... weighing too heavily on the mind. David Hall's "They got to go." (Tony and I... The "White" ones in the room.) Radio, defiantly loud (even now, 9:37pm). This is ALL with-in a breath of... THE END. I work so hard to get out of this and it just keeps running into morons who thwart my each and every attempt. Death. The end. Death. The REAL peace. Time... running rapidly... out. - 19 days. 19 days. 19 days. - Guerda (the current "Charge Nurse) came to the house at work today. Saw Carmine's bruise. (I FORGOT TO TAKE THE ASPIRIN OUT OF HIS MEDICATIONS! SH*****t!) We talked. She talked to Marilyn. Things should settle. It appears that *I'm* being blamed for the bruising. Well, *of course*. I've been through all of this before. Same BS as happened with Mr. TG. when the wife beat him over-night and I came in the next morning to find him with a blackened eye. It's easier for "them" to blame me, and now I have a Nurse and a supervisor who won't even bother to give me any benefit of doubt. Nice way to work... to be. - Melanie got a dose of "me"... sh called about 5 times during the day. Mrs E. took the last call as I was cleaning sh** just before leaving. - Mrs. Diamond rang twice. "If you ever come back to NY please call me." First of all, I haven't left. Second of all, no. If I ever leave and come back, I'm most certainly NOT getting back into THIS screw-job... for ANYBODY! - I'm tired. Time for a quick smoke. TO HELL WITH THIS DAMNED DAY! - 10:20pm The room is dark, the door is closed and starts moaning loudly! 10:23pm and he's hacking something out of his throat. Yelling "Can't sleep!" And of course, his radio is on... not "too" loud. But... "Can't sleep"? Well gee... good for YOU this time! - I'm thinking:

Atropa is in season, I've some put up already, many pills available. Perhaps it's time to check out... just... check out. (But I'm takin' some down with me when I go. One way or another.) - 10:26pm and David yells "I got a bad cough." Cough cough. It's all intentional. He's trying to annoy somebody into fighting with him. I guess the weed or crack (or both) he smoked in the shower room earlier wasn't "good stuff". - If the conviction record I saw earlier today is his, I think his weed and crack are violations of parole? It might not be good if the Parole Board got involved... A thought. - I'm going for a nap. Tomorrow I'll NOT linger about in here. 4:30am here we come.



Wednesday 21 September

5:35am at 30th Street and 2nd Avenue. To the guy in the lift with mop, yellow bucket and nasty-assed attitude this morning... Mr. "ExCUSE me!": Guess I showed YOUR ass when I helped you get that friggin' bucket out of the damned lift. Huh? Dick! - 5:43am REALLY REALLY BAAAD MOOD THIS MORN.

7.06 Dearest Lydia:

I did not make the 8am rendez-vous this morning because, you see, I have an agenda and positive plans for my rather near future, neither of which include you, the shelter, DHS or anything even remotely associated with any of such items, persons or topics. This morning I chose to go to work, to earn a guaranteed income rather than forfeit several hours' income to sit with you discussing potential, but not guaranteed housing in a neighbourhood which will jeopardise my general well-being in the first place. I NEED my income. Therefore, I NEED my employment. I will NOT jeopardise my employment simply because some idiot, removed from and certainly not concerned with or about my well-fare pulled my name off some obscure list and decided to play with my future well-being.

I will, however, make the appointment scheduled for tomorrow (though not happily). You may

verify that point by contacting the person(s) whom I shall, no doubt meet, including but not limited to the security person(s) with whom I shall register upon entrance to the premises. Period.

(No. It won't get written nor delivered. But it just HAD to come out of me before it grew into an actual tumour.)

- 7:22pm at SIBL with 24 minutes on the computer and not much else to do I'll try to add a couple of the day's events here... OK. This morning was a fright since David(E2) was yelling (I'm supposing it was in his sleep?) all through the night! For the briefest while the room went silent and I fell asleep. I'm returning to the general attitude I once had here (D18): "Just so long as he kills me straight-off, I don't much care what happens to me in my sleep. Hopefully I won't be in pain, be a burden, linger. Just DIE!" I need sleep now more than ever and I'm not being allowed to get it. Especially in light of the rumour that David would like to see Tony and I "out" of the room... one way or another. (Note: Last evening I checked on-line to see if I could find why he's on parole? There are several David Halls listed on the NYS Corrections site but there's one that fits his location and age. "DWI and 2 counts Drugs". "Released". Yeah. Into the shelter! SCREW US ALL TO HELL!) I'm shutting-down lately. Not worrying so much about what happens (to me anyway). - So back to this morning: I woke at 4:30am and just got right up and right to the affairs of the morning: coffee, bowel dump, shower, dress, out. I decided that getting the income from today at work was more important than sitting with Ms. Henika for what-ever time for what-ever she had to tell me or any papers she probably wanted to give to me. Was it the right decision? To me, it was. - Got to the house (HoBe) just past 7:00am. Mrs. was at home. Marilyn took the day off (WHY?). I knew that didn't mean well for my day and sure enough... Carmine (Mr. E.) was asleep when I arrived but Mrs. decided he *HAD* to wake up *THEN*! So I just gave in, put my coffee on the boil and went to work... *BEFORE* 8:00am (which is my "official" start time and before which, I do NOT get paid)! Mrs. put the breakfast on... *AGAIN* this morning before Mr. was even cleaned! and then left the house. HURRAY! - The "Mr. clean-up" went well and we were at table just after 8:00am and he ate exceptionally well. - The day was rolling along well until... Marilyn decided to come over (and that's never good). She wants to know how to get Carmine out of the house for a while! The man can't stand on his own legs to get dressed, rarely walks more than 10 steps and she wants him to descend 12 stairs in the house and then 7 granite steps out-side! She mentioned a stair-chair thing. I told her that was fine for inside but that I certainly won't be taking the responsibility to take him down those granite stairs. "That's not what I'm asking here." she snaps and leaves, in a right snit. - I'm fed-up with this BS! I actually told her that

I spend an average of 55 hours/week with him. They get the benefit of about 45 minutes-1 hour's work out of me... OFF THE CLOCK every morning. *SHE* wants certain things done certain ways. I invited her to begin looking for somebody who can do the job better. I don't really care any longer. I won't hurt Carmine, no matter what, and her intrusions aren't worth the aggravation. - OK. This afternoon I told Mrs. that I have an appointment tomorrow. I *MUST* leave at 1:00pm. She was OK with that. When I told her that it would take me about 2 hours she said "Don't worry." We'll see where this goes. But I DO HAVE TO MUST ATTEND THE SECOND INTERVIEW! And so I shall. - I left the house at 5:00pm this evening and when I got to the bus (Q53) a message: Aziz is back in the shelter! On the 8th floor! I left him a message. I'm looking rather forward to seeing him this evening. I hope he stops by. - OK. Up to now... and now to include this. - Here's hoping for a quiet night. I have things to accomplish in the morning and WORK to get to! So now it's time to close THIS BLEATING-MISERABLE-FRIGGING DAY!

Thursday 22 September

6:43a, Q21 bus to 157th Avenue and 90th Street, HoBe to post office. And... LAST NIGHT... I go to sign, 8:45pm and there's a note on the sign-in list: "see case worker". Dick-heads, the lot of them. My case worker LEAVES at 4:00pm. How about THAT? Well, I knew it was about the Housing interview so I went to the dorm to relax (what-ever). Round about 9:55pm, "knock-knock". "FOUR!? They're calling for you. See your case worker on 5." (She's not there!) I go. On 5, the NastyNigerian security guard barks at me: "May I help you?" "I've been summoned." "E4? This way. Come." Into the office. Mr. DIMSKY! O JOLLY FUN. He reaches up on the table, tosses a print-out. It's a note from Ms. Henika... See her tomorrow (today) at 8:00am! I thank Mr. Dimski and depart. - HOW? SOMEBODY JUST TELL ME HOW, IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN AND HELL, WE ARE EXPECTED TO JAUNT ABOUT THE CITY, SIT WITH WORTHLESS CASE "HANDLERS" (NOT "WORKERS"), TAKING TIME OFF FROM OUR JOBS, MAINTAIN INCOME, IMPROVE OUR LOT? WTF? TELL ME I'VE A BLOODY INTERVIEW! TELL ME WHERE (THEY CAN'T EVEN GET THAT PART RIGHT) AND WHEN. LEAVE ME A NOTE THEN LEAVE ME THE HELL-ALL ALONE!!! I expect some Department of Homeless Services retaliation... I didn't "see" my case worker yesterday and sure as ALL-HELL I won't today. But I WILL make the interview! - I was up at 4:02am this morning and so was David. Smoking in the loo. He doesn't even hide! - 7:01am and I'm already in Rock Park. - 7:25am Q53 bus Rockaway Beach Blvd at B101st Street en the way to HoBe on this beautiful morning that's also foggy, warm

and humid. Rockaway. As I'm in the post office this morning the phone rang. Aziz!! He's now on the 2nd floor. I hope to see him this evening. - 2 "correctly addressed" pay advices (at long last they got THAT much right), a note from West End Temple (in Neponsit)... tickets for Yom Kippur service: 350\$ (un)HolySh**! (THE MOST important day and 350\$!?! to attend services? The world is just wrong.) A letter from TD: Can't open the account, please call Customer Services (which I read as: "See Case Worker"... frigg-all). OK. Done. - WALDBAUMS (Rockaway): 1 jar instant coffee, 2 yoghurts, small. tin of apricots... 10\$ but QUICK! - To the bus. - 7:32am Broad Channel island at 16th Street at Cross Bay Blvd. - I've been trying to figure how to get to Burlington for 2 days, 1 night, to do a job search. Cost. Time. I might stay in a shelter there. I could try to maintain my shelter here. If I had the money I could figure the rest. But between P(artners)I(n)C(are) (where I've already lost 3.5 hours annual health) and DHS housing BS, it's going to be Hell getting the money. (I'm trying to figure how to remedy the cash aspect... no matter HOW at this juncture... NO matter HOW! Seriously...) - Off to North Channel. HERE WE GO! This day officially begins. (KILL ME! PLEASE JUST KILL ME!) - 8:36am HoBe I'm all a-flutter. I actually RANG Ms. Henika this morning to tell her I'll be at the interview today. *SHE* answered the phone *AND THANKED* me for calling her!!! Said "You'll be fine. You're an adult and responsible...". Courtesy. Respect. Dignity. I actually CRIED! And hugs from @nsignia on the social media this morning. My day is complete... already. CANCEL THE REST QUICKLY NOW! - 6:44pm ON THE Q53 BUS AND... I CAN'T FIND THE FLASH DRIVE AND THE USB WIRE FOR THE PHONE! I DON'T THINK I LEFT THEM AT SIBL LAST NIGHT AND A CALL TO THEIR SECURITY TELLS THAT THEY WEREN'T FOUND OR TURNED-IN. I'M TERRIFIED TO THINK I LEFT THE LITTLE CASE IN MY SWEAT-SHIRT AND IT FELL OUT ON THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE SHELTER OR ON THE SCANNER! HOPEFULLY IT'S IN MY LOCKER. I'LL FIND OUT WHEN I GET BACK TO THE DUNG-HEAP THIS EVENING. - Next FIASCO: The bleating interview. I left the house (work) at 1:01pm, got the Q11 bus to Liberty Avenue A train to Broadway Junction for the J train and arrived at the "interview" at 2:08pm. Ms. White there, was charming and appeared appreciative when I was honest enough to tell her of the variations in my income. THEN SHE COPIED MY 6 PAYSTUBS AND SAID *I DON'T QUALIFY FOR THE PLACE ANYWAY!* NOT 30% OF INCOME! (AND THEN SHE ADDED THAT SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHY Ms. Henika and Ms. Pax EVEN BOTHERED TO SEND BE BECAUSE THEY ALREADY KNEW I WOULDN'T QUALIFY!) MY 30% COMES TO ONLY 611\$/MONTH. (Ms. Greene)! THEIR MINIMUM IS 619\$/MONTH! BUT MY INCOME FOR 55 hours/week DOESN'T QUALIFY ME FOR FRIGGING HPD LOW INCOME HOUSING!? *THIS*

HAS GOT TO GO! Not to mention I've lost ANOTHER day's pay because of the first interview and could have lost ANOTHER (had Mrs. E. not been so kind today)! So, Ms. White, building Manageresse, said they'll keep my file and if my finances change, I can let her know. (I didn't want the damned place anyway so...) - Same travel back to work to arrive at 3:14pm. Not bad. Not good. But not bad. - Carmine was changed (t-shirt) and had eaten his lunch in my absence. Still, we made up for the lull at the last minute when I had to change him on the floor yet again! - 7:20pm 61st Street and Roosevelt Avenue, Queens: OK!OK! SOMEBODY PLEASE CANCEL THIS DAY OR CANCEL ME IMMEDIATELY! I just missed the Q32 bus because I had to call the banque because they put a HOLD on my accounts because somebody removed my "physical address" on the records! I can NOT take ANY MORE OF THIS SHIT TODAY! END! PERIOD! NO MORE! NO MORE! NO MORE! - Obviously I didn't go to the library... Pen or SIBL. I'd no sooner gotten to the bus after work (Q11) when my bowels decided it was "*NOW!*" So I had to go back to the house! *IMMEDIATELY!* Decided to go to RiteAid: cigarettes, toilet paper (for the shelter) and then to storage to lighten my back-pack (but not by enough). Then decided to take the buses back. As I was journalling on the Q53 bus, the banque rang. Then Aziz. I got off the bus and tried to listen to my voice-mail... NOISE! Couldn't hear for Hell-all! Then the bleating call got friggin dropped! - My sinuses are a mess. I'm tired as all old Hell. Entering notes on this damned phone is a pain because this sh**phone stylus** makes errors. I'm at THE END!!! NOMORENOMORENOMORENOMORE! - 7:37pm THE DAMNED PHONE CHANGED PAGES ON ME AND THE ENTRY WENT TO THE WRONG PLACE! YES, I'M SCREAMING THIS SO LOUDLY IN MY MIND THAT I'VE PHYSICALLY GOT HEAD-ACHE AND SORE THROAT! - 7:42pm I've the week-end off and all the necessities to "Check-the-f*** OUT" of this World... FOREVER! Tonight that is my solace. And I shall be planning the week-end round it. To be sure. NO MORE!

Friday 23 September

7:06pm Q60 bus in HELL. That almost covers it. After a restless night of David AND Cruz, lights on, lights off... I got up at 4:03am, no potty, brush teeth, shower, dress, out. A train to storage to put-up linens and assorted items not used regularly. I've got to clear my life of "things". Losing the USB and Flash-drive *eats* at me. - It was still quite dark when the train came up from the tunnel at 80th Street in Queens. And rather dark when I went in to storage. I packed a box (I had a box!) and left. 7.something.o'clock. Took the Q53 bus to work... - THEN... TD! When I got off the

bus I rang to talk with "Customer Service". "Shirley", the poor woman. But WOW! Did she ever come through! SHE got the address back on, had the holds lifted, saved the savings account AND put my "Direct Deposit" into the savings... She and I were on the wire for 58 minutes and 39 seconds! She was a delight! Even when I said "This is not MY fault and I'm not hanging up until it's settled. I'll take it to the Banking Authority AND Twitter!" SHE DID IT! By this afternoon all was back to normal.. including my sh** pay for last week. I'm amazed. - Meanwhile, "Twitter support" was much needed and came. Tammy in particular today. It still amazes: Total strangers are more supportive than "friends" and/or "family". How sad. - I've looked: MetroPCS kiosk, RadioShack, BestBuy, Target for new USB and Flash-drive today. Nothing. Tomorrow I'll need the Flash: I'll have to get another one at SIBL, at 10\$. The USB? Not sure. This nut-bust city opens at 11:00am! Then, tomorrow, PenLib to print "statements". - Meanwhile... it's HOT, MUGGY, RAINY! And I'm exhausted, sweaty and nauseous on this bus at 28th Street and Queens Plaza. - 7:35pm 60th Street at 2nd Avenue Manhattan. I look up at the lights in the windows of the apartments, thinking of the peace and comfort there-in and the sadness in my heart sours my stomach. - Depression.

Saturday 24 September

10:11am at Greeley Square. In a "city that never sleeps" nothing opens before 11:00am! This whole place is one, very large... LIE. - Last night went rather well: I had my PopTarts, put my head on the pillow, ear-plug in and off I went... to sleep... until about 8:00am this morning! (That's almost 9 HOURS of SLEEP! at last, at LONG last!) (I'm still tired though). David had the radio on but very low. Interesting turn after the verbal and quite animated confrontation with Tony. But I cannot complain about the night save Cruz who came into the room well after 10:00pm and got on the phone, rummaged through the locker. It's amazing, the complete absence of respect amongst some. - 10:20am A Black man sits on a chair here. He's clean. Nicely dressed, casual He has a guitar on his back He strikes a conversation with a young Black couple... she is braiding her companion's hair. The guitar-man is pleasant, makes light talk, compliments the young couple. The young male responds: "Do I know you?" He repeats this several times then, "I don't know you." Guitar-man pleasantly says "I'm just complimenting you." The male responds "You don't know me; you don't have to compliment me." Welcome to NYC. What a conglomerate of multi-faceted low-life and other useless dregs and rot. I'm rather glad my Mum's not here to see what her "Home" has become. This is not the NYC I grew up in. Just

useless trash-rot these days. - This morning I shat'n'showered, "organised" the locker. It's still a mess and there's some laundry to be done. (And I NEED a hair-cut!). I was alone in the room with David who slept until almost 9:00am. He didn't speak, I'm happy to report. - I dressed... left. Strolled to here. - This phone is a MetroPieCeofSh**. The screen calibration is off and won't recalibrate. Many typos are corrected. Annoying. - 10:33am Table Hockey/Soccer/Football/BS just set up here in the little park. Competitive. This can lead to no good. - SIBL opens at 11.00am. I'll get a new Flash-drive there, some computer time, then to... the PENINSULA! (I'd like a coffee just now.) - A small break in the clouds, light breeze, high humidity, just warm enough this morning. - 12:04pm at SIBL. It kills me, but I just got the replacement for the Flash-drive. THERE'S SO MUCH TO RE-CAPTURE! It takes SO LONG!! And to think that it wasn't all that long ago I stood at 34th Street and Madison Avenue, so relived that I'd actually backed-up ALL the journals and ALL the history! Only to sit here at the very beginning... AGAIN! There is NO love in Creation. Just hate. And to that hate I add my own this morning: May s/he who has my Flash-Drive and USB cable watch and feel their children ROT, slowly and for Eternity... in their loins! (I wish the same for my siblings, by the way). - 15 minute extension on the computer time but I have to get to PenLib. And this computer won't get me to the MCU log-in! You know? There's always something to screw a day. - 5:48pm Q53 bus. 161st 161 Avenue on Cross Bay Blvd. I've travelled much to accomplish little. A quick stop in an "electronics" store on 33rd for the USB. He didn't have. Suggested "RadioShack" at the old "Gimble's" which is, today, an "indoor shopping mall". - SIBL, Flash, some "D.A.Journal". - Staples (Gimble's 34th Street) where they have the USB at 20\$ (6ft. long!). I didn't buy. - The D train to W. 4th Street for the A train to Rock Blvd. to the Q53 bus to PenLib. - MCU NOT functioning! No bleating statement. I've begun my own on the new "Kingston drive". Once done, I'll just "manipulate" and be done. But for now... I'm going to Staples/Metropolitan Avenue, (hope the copy machine is working for a change) to copy my pay-stub. Must have "paypuhz" for tomorrow. - After the library, "meal" at Tribute Park: 2 packaged cold-cuts turkey on 1 roll, 2 Greek yoghurts, 1 small tin of sliced peaches, 1 tinned coffee, some "PopCorners" crisps. I'm stuffed... for now. It was SO PEACEful on the bay. SO comfortable. And today, again, so painful to leave Rockaway. Alas. - Now, 6:01pm Woodhaven and Atlantic Avenues, I'm exhausted. Chronic exhaustion. Hmpf

Sunday 25 September

11:36am MMLib. Had to print the statement and had to buy a "Print Card" card for 2\$ to get it

printed. - Meanwhile, last night as I waited for the M15 bus at 60th Street on the return trip, I hear “On no.” It was Tony(El). He’d just come from the Q32 bus that my Q60 bus had followed in! So we took the bus together and had some time to chat about “things” in general. How fun! - Both of us got in and signed-in right away and I walked into the room to find... a *NOTICE* of “*Mandatory*” meeting on *MONDAY* at 11:00am! laying on the bed! WTF? I went into a total drop! I really can’t take any more of this *sh*** from DHS and I can’t take any more time from work let alone ANOTHER “last minute” call-out! Well, I’ve packed a bunch of things to take to storage. The locker is emptying out nicely. As of last night I figured, if they *FORCE* me to attend this meeting, I’ll be *fired*, meaning I’ll have *NOTHING* to do here any longer. So, I’ll just go... GO! Get a ticket to Burlington Vermont and *JUMP*! As I said to Tony: They can’t do anything more to me and I don’t really care any longer. I *CAN’T* care any longer. I just simply *CAN’T*. - I packed, took my shower and went right on to “Twitter”. This time on Twitter, I went directly to Governor Cuomo and Mayor Bloomberg. (Tony is sitting at the computer directly in front of me as I type this directly on-to this digital journal! How odd! Life!) I posted on-line, to the social media until almost mid-night, hitting EVERY-one I could think of. (Tony just left... no hello, no goodbye. Some people from the shelter are funny that way.) Just kept posting and posting. This morning? No replies. Not even an “acknowledgement”. I wonder. But now I’m even MORE *BITTER* about all those so-called “We Help The Homeless” groups and people out there. They do jack-all! And we have to eat it. TO BLEATING HELL WITH ALL OF THEM! The end. I’ve always known that if I’m to get along I have to do *ALL... ON MY OWN*! But this is just SICK! Especially when it comes to having to save a damned job... one I don’t particularly like but keep. - Now, I have laundry that needs to be done. For some reason my socks are terrible. You’d never know I bathe twice daily. And I’ve got t-shirts that will probably never come clean again. I’d go back to the shelter right now, to get the wash done but I don’t dare. According to Ms. Henika, somebody might come by with a copy of the “*Mandate*” and want me to sign it, as proof of receipt. As long as I don’t sign, there’s really no proof that I received the notice. Besides, Ms. Henika spoke with another case worker who agreed: *Just don’t go!* That was this morning... and this morning I was there at 8:30am or so. 3 names on the list! WOW! So few! (It’s nice weather though...) When I told Ms. Henika about the “mandate” she was *pissed*! She even showed me where she’d posted that I work and that I provide income statements and that I shouldn’t have to attend the damned P.A. (Public Assistance) meeting! Again, the DHS shows that it doesn’t have a clue about what’s going on in the world. Butt-holes and morons! Anyway, it was left at that I don’t *have* to attend and that work is more important. “I understand...” she said. *Yes, she does.* But the idiots in power certainly don’t. I

expect trouble from this... - So... the night went well enough and I woke at about 5:45am this morning with the alarm. Did my morning duties and grabbed the M34 bus, walked up to MMLib. Stopped for coffee en route (1\$/small!). Had my "Popcorners" with coffee in front of the Old Library where I bumped into the Jamaican guy from the dorm next door. We chatted a while and I came here. - Time's running out and I have to get back to the shelter to bring Ms. Henika the statement and then to get that bag of stuff to storage. - If all goes the way I believe it will, I'll be at a train station or bus station on Wednesday morning... heading for the BIG JUMP to BURLINGTON VERMONT! - 5:17pm Q53 bus at B94th Street just leaving The Rock... painfully. It's a calm, quiet evening here, the kind I loved so from even before I moved here, thinking I'd have a peaceful "Life" here. I don't deserve to have to go back to the noise and filth of Manhattan. And I'm so tired that I know every joint and bone in my body. Eyes hurt too. - Well, I got Ms. Henika's statement printed and was back at her desk by shortly before 1:00pm. She was at lunch, another case worker told me to leave the statement on her desk. I did, under her computer keyboard. Went up to the room to get the bag I packed last night, a gulp of water and a package of PopTarts (I was HUNGRY!). Oh, I told Ms. Henika about the altercation involving David. She was too pre-occupied with my "*Mandatory*" calamity. *AND* she'd gave "E11" (a 2-bed dorm) to some nut-case! (Oh well... there goes that notion. I snoozed; I loozed.) As I was walking into the dorm, David was resting... in bed. As I stood by my bed, he'd gotten up and TRIED to bump into me at the door. I dodged, said nothing. Averted his attempt at starting trouble. Packed bag out of the locker, a quick pee (David was in the loo), and back out the door! - M15 bus to 63rd Street. I should have gotten off at 57th Street though. I walked round until I got to the Q60 bus to Woodhaven and the Q11 bus to Liberty Avenue. Storage. I repacked stuff into a "Trader Joe's" market bag and left. But at one point, I felt as though I just couldn't make it! Drained of all energy. I sat on the step-ladder a rather long while. - Out of storage and across the streets to RiteAid for cigarettes. Immediate Q53 bus! To The Rock, Waldbaums for 3 knishes, 1 yoghurt, 1 small tin of apricots, tin of coffee, today's "meal" in peace at Tribute Park. - Done. The day and I are DONE. - Oh... and dessert? Pecan cookies with white chocolate. DEE-LISH!

Monday 26 September

6:04am M16 bus. Feelings of "Foreboding" this morning. - Woke at 4:25am. Last night's laundry is still wet (because the bleating door was shut, no ventilation, DAMNIT). - My fresh, clean towel, used once, smells sour again already! Is it my body? If so, why? - And why am I so late? - What

about the “mandatory” meeting today? Will Ms. Henika take care of this situation or will I be with case workers all night tonight? Transferred? Relocated? - Knots. Frigging day. - 12:31 HoBe and not in the mind-set to communicate with anybody today. I think I’m just burnt. Toasted. Charcoal. Ash. - Can’t get my mind off of what I should expect when I get back to the Dung-heap this evening. They’re a spiteful, nasty, filthy apathetic bunch, “Department of Homeless Services”. Capable of just about any nasty moves to make life miserable. And having been told I have no right to be in the shelter, and having excellent cause to believe Eunice Reid, Directrice, is quite racist, along with so many of the “staff”, I trust them only to shove obstacles in my path. And I KNOW David is capable of pulling unimaginable sh**... *and* getting away with it. He smokes, cigarettes and crack IN THE ROOM, drinks in the room, plays the radio all night (radios being prohibited to other “residents”). I anticipate destruction of my bed or something. It’s all just too, *TOO* much now. - I looked at Burlington rents last night. My savings doesn’t help. - I work so long and often that I have no time to accomplish anything at all. And the pay-cheque makes nothing worth the while. - This morning I woke just past 4:00am to get here at 7:15am. Even the commute is getting to me! - I don’t know if Ms. Henika got the statement I left on her desk yesterday. - And... I just want to... need to sleep, sleep. - My laundry is pretty much dry. - Carmine isn’t eating. Mrs. fed him breakfast this morning. - I’m in a foul mood. - 12:51pm I nodded only a moment at the end of that entry and woke to panic thinking I’d rested the stylus on “back” and wiped it all out! - To keep me awake, I had oatmeal/1 egg this morning. - I just need some time for me...7:53pm Q53 bus at the South Channel and I DON’T WANT TO LEAVE again tonight. (It’s dark already too.) First, because I want “*Home*”. Second, because I’ve a miserable feeling about what’s waiting for me at the Dung-heap: A note to “see caseworker”, and just going in there, David’s BS. I’m *TIRED*. My head is throbbing. I’m rather hungry. I’m burnt. - Carmine was in better spirits as I left this evening. Mrs. suggested I go to Public Assistance tomorrow. She’s concerned about my Food Stamps. (She’s “concerned”... oh THAT’S RICH!) Yes, I’d like to have them back but not via the shelter. Rockaway will probably change my office to Manhattan! NO NO NO! I NEED as much connection to Rockaway as possible, now more than ever. Besides, I’m hoping to hair-cut tomorrow. - Other-wise, the hour at PenLib after work was productive AND the USB for the phone works! Photos on Flash again. I have to re-build my CV though ESPECIALLY since PJ tells me there are MANY Health-Care jobs and free “LNA” courses in Burlington! I’m on m’way! But I MIGHT HAVE to go “shelter” at the beginning. Y’know? As I think, there are many in the Dung-heap who travel around the country by staying in shelters. Why the HELL shouldn’t I? REALLY! A notion to sleep on. A “HOPE” I haven’t had in a VERY

LONG while. (7:43pm at 157th Avenue) I'll ponder... - I got the images for "statements" back too! I can work those at SIBL now. Little by little I'll re-re-build, though SO much that can't be "re-built" is now gone, never to return. - Lately, I keep thinking: The *HATE* of/for/about the sibs is still so strong. *THEY* got the chance to save, housing, furniture, financial help, college... I got 140\$. Each one of them, when it came their time to "leave the nest" left "home" and directly into a nice, fully-furnished apartment, with rent and security paid, utilities all set, food in cup-boards and fridge... they had NOTHING to want for! When *I* left, on the advice that if I didn't, my own "father" would kill me, I had to travel over 100 miles away, find a new job, a place to "reside", then drive over 100 miles back to BEG, literally, for a 140\$ to cover only my first month's rent. I moved with only a pillow, sleeping bag and a clock radio. I was generously given my old bed, a folding card table with 2 chairs shortly after. THEN, years later, *THEY*, the "gifted" children, tossed my *EVERYTHING* when I was stupid enough to trust them! *HATE BURNS BRIGHTLY INSIDE!* I wish not one second of good for them. And, no doubt, Sarah and Michael, my niece and nephew whom I truly do love much, have been poisoned against me by both of their parents. Screw-all and to Hell at that! - Well... all will be what it will be. - (7:51pm at Atlantic Avenue on the route of return to the present Hell.) Decision time: Q60 bus or Q32 bus? Q60 bus I think. - For now... music. I may as well "enjoy these moments". My only REAL REST. - I AM BURNT! - 10:00pm Showered and... Left PenLib for the 7:26pm Q53 bus to the Q60 bus to the M15 bus and came in at 9:20pm! WOW! The guard at the x-ray/front door security was on a "You got a nail clipper in there?" thing. But the guard after that one recognises me. "Go 'head Doc." (It's the scrubs... they almost always see me in scrubs.) (10:03pm Cruz just walked in and the phone-thing begins.) (David still has the radio going.) So I was relieved. I think she (at x-ray) was just trying to piss us off by stalling the queue. They do that some-times. It's their "entertainment", knowing that we have curfew and a time limitation. Some-times I think they do it so that some of us actually miss the sign-in curfew, which means losing a bed and "resident rotation". But... sign-in is 8:30pm-10:00pm (or, so it's claimed... but we know better... the hours, like "policies" can change with-out notice, at any moment). BED-CHECK! is supposed to be at 10:00pm. We've some who get haha's by stalling the queue and watching some of the retards go insane with worry about missing sign-in. Just another bit of the Sadism. - So I walked up to the floor to be told sign-in's on the 5th floor this evening. Back down. No problem. No "notations" on the roster this evening. Then up to see IF there was a "memo" on the bed. Nothing. So, in my own silence, I made off to the shower. I'm choosing to not speak to/with anyone of late. Nothing to say, really. - That trash-rot that Ms. Henika put into bed E11 down the hall, is turning into the disturbance I

figured on. It waltzes into the room, “Loosies! (single-sell cigarettes) Heh heh heh.” and now (10:14pm) yammering in the hall. (In addition to the BLARING RADIO!) - OH! A note: I’m to understand that “Security” has come into the room and un-plugged David’s radio. It’s prohibited, as I thought. But, as usual, he plugs it right back in and that’s the end of the matter. What I wouldn’t give to know particulars (and his Parole Officer). - When I leave here it’s going to be ANOTHER period of re-adjustment. My nerves are SO SHOT that the slightest “tick” or “click” in here sends shocks through my body. Bad enough I have 2 completely different personas: 1.Out-side, considerate, respectful. 2.IN-side here, crude, protected and selfishly apathetic. I remember the last time took almost a year to “settle”. This time might be longer... but tonight I’ll ponder VT. Diversion/Distracton. - Santiago just came in. Bed-check done... and the radio volume went down! Not A LOT BUT... WOW! A decrease in radio volume. Another little “wonder” of the shelter. - (10:33pm PS: IF you’ve come here in response to my tirade of last night, I hope you enjoy reading. The kindness, courtesy or consideration of a Twitter reply would have been nice. But all things considered? No reply/response was expected. After all, I’m just some worthless piece of Homeless sh**. Right? I work so the government snatches taxes from me. As is the “American way”... pay for abuse.

If you’re here because of #WorkingHomeless this is one account.)

Tuesday 27 September

5:18pm Q41 bus Lindenwood, on the route-run to The Hell-Hole. HAIR-CUT! At the job... again. But... HAIR-CUT none-the-less. And generally, a great day. Carmine was in a good mood. His legs were stronger today. Appetite, good. Me? I had oatmeal for breakfast, Italian beans and rice (with an egg beaten into it) for lunch. Hot food! - I fixed the umbrella this morning. My sad’n’sorry “life” is all “on the job”. - I had to transfer from savings to chequing today. The phone bill comes due again. September is almost gone. I wish I was. - Now to SIBL. - 9:20pm at the suite 6W107 where the lights are out, radio on (of course). - Left Carmine in a very good mood, nicely clean. Mrs. says “Dietary” coming tomorrow. I shall play the role of “Stoopit”, say nothing, offer nothing, just let “Dietary” figure it all out and screw-them-to-all-Hell. Let THEM WORK for their much higher salary. - Q41 bus to the A train to the F train to SIBL by about 6:25pm. - A couple of “iTunes” and more “DeadArtist” copied onto the Flash-drive. (I forgot to pay the phone today... OK tomorrow.) - E-mail from PJ. Information on Social Services in Burlington. Truth? I don’t want that there. Shelter? Maybe. For BRIEFLY! But nothing else. Still, the “LNA” (Licensed

Nursing Assistant) sounds good and he mentioned VNS and some other places. If I must... I do NOT want to continue working in health care! And most certainly NOT in a position like the one I have. - Back into the Dung-heap by 8:20pm. Same guards as last night on the entrance. The guy from last night says "What's up, Doc?" You know? I appreciate that... not being treated like a dreg, and a bit of humour. Nice. I don't know *why* he's nice. But I'll not ask. - Walked up the stairs. I'd *bought* water tonight... in case. So of course... tonight there's water in the cooler. Oh well. The water cost me a buck. - El and 2 were in. I flipped the light, El gets up and leaves. I went about my business. Washed a t-shirt, extra scrubs pants. Signed... no "memo". I'm still waiting. Showered. - (9:33pm and Cruz's telephone starts ringing. Mr. Chatty over there.) - When I came back from shower the lights were off... Thankfully, I'd locked my locker... TO HELL WITH THEM. I put the light on, locker open, light off. Here me be. - A really nice night: There's a little "snap" in the breeze, low, low clouds, you can see them moving through the lower fog. Humid (which is why I did so little wash) but the chill makes it delightful. Interesting how many leaves are down in Rockaway and how lush this bleating island Hell-hole is. Ah... soon... NO MORE! NO NO NO NO MORE! - Only 2 PopTarts tonight. I could use 6. I'M HUNGRY!

Wednesday 28 September

9:11 (a New Yorker's kind of time) 6W107. A note to begin: To the young Indian fellow and his lady-friend whom I met out-side the shelter this evening and who were intrigued SO b the shelter, the Homeless: It was a delight talking with you this evening. I hope you both find much success in your endeavours and I hope you have a better understanding of the Homeless and the Working Homeless. Do remember: "Residents" not "inmates". But most important... ANY person can find him/herself in this system. Homelessness does not discriminate. One pay-cheque or two... it's that quick, that easy. Good luck searching on the building. Its history is quite rich... the building is undeserving of what has been done to it and the disrespect it receives these days. Housing the Homeless is rather honourable but housing some of what is in here and what destruction has taken place is sad. That mankind is capable of such disrespect and destruction is even sadder. - If I may, I suggest you give this a try, for a night or two (no more however). Come. Experience the system first-hand. It's open to all (by law). You're always free to leave when you wish and to stay for as long as you're able to take it. You'll never get a better education: Sociology, Psychology, Psychiatry, Xenophobia, Racism, and so much more. Meanwhile, feel free to contact

me via my e-mail or on Twitter. And know that I thank you for listening and I sincerely wish you both, all the best.

Last night I got a bit of wash done (but it didn't dry completely today at work and I HAD to bleach the t-shirt because of little rust spots from the locker). - I was out of here early and thanks to MTA, NYC "rapid" (rabid) Transit, arrived at 8:08am to work. May they rot. Carmine was sitting at the edge of the bed, ready to GO when I arrived... So this morning he got a good shower (may there be more). He was brilliant to-day for the Dietician and "Charge Nurse". And WOW! Do I ever get support from my Charge Nurse! Trust too! (To my face, that is.) It's a pleasure talking with her and she does NOT want me off this case! Comforting? - The day went quickly somehow and I was off to SIBL. - The Q11 bus skipped a bus. The one that was SUPPOSED to arrive didn't. That made me late to the A train, L train, and Nr.6 train. I got to SIBL at 6:45pm. Immediate computer appointment. PHONE PAID! Hurray! E-mail from PJ... (9:39pm) Job leads! But I tried to down-load the "PDF" application to the Flash? Typical NYPL... couldn't! I could save to "desktop" BUT CAN'T ACCESS IT! Must wait for tomorrow... Queens Public Library system has much better computers.... YAY THEM! Not much more accomplished there tonight. Out by 8:00pm. - Coming into the Dung-heap, the 2 folks I addressed with my little "Opening Open Memo" here were standing out-side the front gate. She looked rather "struck" by the place and mentioned something about it looking "frightening". (9:44pm and David's got the radio blaring, is mucking with his ring-tones. Cruz gets up, cuts the light, closes the dorm door, he's mucking about in his locker. And the room stinks... Tony and I bathe daily; the other 2? I've yet to see David even *carry* soap, and Cruz? Maybe weekly. Disrespectful. Inconsiderate. Discourteous. Just low... low... low.) We, the 2 youngsters and I, talked a bit. She asked if the place hired CNAs (Certified Nurse Assistant). He wanted to photograph, the place, the people. They were a delight. Truly. And they got a lesson in "Homelessness" and "Working Homelessness". I told them my story, and when he asked to photograph, I explained that it isn't in the best interest of some of us because, well, as I explained to him about me: SOME might lose a job if it became known that they're in here. He was quite understanding. And, as I say, it was a pleasure to talk with them. - So, getting in this evening... no problem. I walked up to the 6th floor again. Came into the room. Put the light on. Left to sign-in. Showered. My towel has that odour! And this is a different towel. I don't get it. Everything in this room reeks! Even when it's clean! - I've eaten SIX PopTarts! Not good. Though I should "move" the bowels quite freely in the morning. - 9:51pm... radio, dark, foul odour... another night. - Happyfriggin New Year. (Rosh Hashannah) And the 1st of the month is coming... David and crack-o time a-comin! (Some idiot's trying the soda machine in the

hall... the banging will come... BINGO! I no sooner get the words out of my thoughts and... SLAM BANG BAM...! -10:41pm WFAN BLARING on David's radio! People coming and going. David smoking, playing ring-tones. Cruz on the phone, banging the locker. The place stinks of filthy feet. Just un-real. Santiago just brought a bag of food to Cruz... plastic bag rattling now... with a Yankees game on the radio. I need to get OUT of here! N.E.E.D.!

Thursday 29 September

5:50am M15 bus from 33rd Street, 2nd Avenue. A very difficult morning this. It was almost impossible to lift my head from the pillow. Quite difficult to get to the carsie (loo, toilet). And even showering was an effort. Dressing required concentration. - 6:57am Make it to the Q21 bus In 56 years... I've never even once, for the briefest moment, had a reason to "live". Always being consciously aware: Every passing second bringing me one second closer to Death. Neither fearing nor welcoming it. Rather... looking forward to it. Today, I'm just tired... I can feel it... in my marrow... literally. - 7:25am HoBe... Howard Beach... back at work. By age 2, I had the responsibility of another... brother. Age 5, I could change a diaper... not my own, feed an infant. Age 7, smoking cigarettes... inhaling, belting shots of rye. Age 10, total infant care... save breast feeding. Age 13, almost total responsibility for house-hold. Age 17, told leaving home was imperative ("One of these days he'll kill you..."), 100.2 miles from "home", no job, no money, no furniture, total care of a cancerous child. Age 33, bury my 55 year old Mum. Age 56, nothing is left... nothing at all. I am NOT "complaining". I am NOT "whining". I AM just jotting plain, simple, facts. - 9:35pm at 6W107 CBS.FM tonight. (Arses in the hall giving banshee screeches at each-other. Yes indeed, "House the Homeless". Like I'd want THAT living ANY-where even remotely near to where I'd be paying to live or reside. HELL! They're not even animals! More "refuse". I have to say that, last night, as soon as I put the phone away and laid down, David turned the volume down on his radio. At brief moments I could almost think he has SOME capacity for sensibility. But those moments are brief, fleeting. Then he returns to "David". Of course, Saturday is the 1st day of the month... we're in for 3 days of crack'n'smoke. - MEANWHILE... This morning I left earlier than usual, walked up to 33rd Street for the M15SBS ("Select Bus Service")... to get to an L train to an A train to a Q53 bus... quick stop at the market for PopTarts, yoghurt. And in to work by 7:20am! In this city, there's no "winning". - The day went well and QUICKLY! At one point, Melanie rang... to confirm my presence yesterday. I gave the call to Carmine! Too funny. He doesn't know my name, thinks I'm just a guy who comes to be

with him during the day. Then told her I'd got there at 9:30am! She was pissed with me. I, however, was most amused. When I rang her back I gave Marilyn's number to call for confirmation of my presence. She (Melanie) never called. I told her I'm sending a time sheet (which I sent out at the Farley post office this evening at about 8:25pm or so). "You did the follow-up..." Well yes I did... bitch. DAMNIT! - So the day went along... almost non-frigging-stop! Cook. Clean. Clean. Change. Cook. Just constant, save a 20-minute "nod". - After work, a dash to PenLib! Immediate computer AND I HAVE THE "VNA" (Visiting Nurse Association... Vermont) APPLICATION!!! PRINT AND FLASH!!! QUEENS LIBRARIES RULE! AND copied the time sheet there! - Somehow I lost time though. Took the shuttle train to the A train to 34th Street and the post office there, and came into the Dung-heap at 9:00pm! I'd left PenLib at about 7:00pm! - ANYway... It's 10:pm13. David's looking at his mobile. Ring-tones again tonight? Crack-at-Home(less) shopping? - Tony got a call from an agency in Brooklyn. HHA (Home Health Aide) training. I hope it goes well for him. Me? I'm looking at 2011.21.10 (21st October) to get OUT OF HERE! Today's e-mail from PJ has given me new Hope! (Sylvia "Pillow Talk" is playing on the radio. She died today. More of my past, the "good times"... gone.) 10:10pm Quick to Twitter then... lights out. No "BED-CHECK!!!" tonight. Hmmm... BUT THE ONLY GOOD SHOWER ON THE FLOOR IS OUT OF SERVICE! Possible leak in the wall but...

Friday 30 September

10:00am HoBe . Work. Job. THIS is a morning worth the entry. (Please, that I stay awake!) - Last night again, the radio volume went down when I laid down to sleep (Sleep? Well...) at about 10:45pm. I don't know why David's trying to be considerate but I don't know what's to come the week-end. - This morning was another difficult one. It was almost painful getting out of bed. I WANTED to sleep! But at 4:20am I actually BOLTED! No time to take even a brief "dump", I pee'd, brushed my teeth, grabbed a very quick shower, dressed, threw my sleep-scrubs and laundry soap into a bag, locked the locker, turned the mattress and... OUT! Was at 33rd Street and 2nd Avenue 5:15am to JUST MISS the local M15 bus! But an M15"SBS" came shortly. I was *running*. A 10-bleating-minute wait for the L train to Broadway Junction for another 10-bleating-minute wait for an A train to Rock Blvd. for a packed Q53 bus to Rock Park! (10:22am Carmine's on the move. I've no time to to use a toilet!!) To the post office in Rock Park where, AT LONG LAST, the pay-advice, post-marked 22 Sept. arrived! Out... to arrive at the bus (Q53) just to watch *THIS* one pull from the curb! I waited for the next one. By now I was feeling the *major* fatigue.

My eyes began feeling puffed and heavy, and I was aware of missing Potty-Time this morning. But, on-ward! *KADIMA!* And across the bay we went. - At the house, an open door, a bad sign, and yes, it was. Carmine was awake. Mrs. cooking bleating breakfast! It was only about 7:35am! I clocked-in, put my back-pack down and... RIGHT TO WASHING CARMINE... BED-BATH. And Carmine was in no mood to help. (As I'd said before coming in: Oh just SCREW me to a bleating stump... NOW and have done with it.) BUT, BUT, BUT I DID IT! Wash, dry, dress, to table, as Mrs. was putting food on. Seeing all was accomplished, she left. That's when I went into my own action for the day: MY scrubs into a bucket to soak. Strip the bed. Check delivery status of the Direct Deposit notice posted "Certified" to the agency on 13.September. Delivered on 15.September (I STILL haven't received the Return Receipt!!! DAMN the post office.) -11:03am I'll be destroyed momentarily at this rate. - ANYway... I spoke with "Marcia" at Partners In Care (agency). The Direct Deposit *SHOULD* be corrected by now... AGAIN! - ALL THAT, non-stop, accomplished before 10:00am! And I *DO* mean "*non-stop*". JEEEEEEZ US! - And now? The scrubs are on the chair by the fan. Carmine has been on the move and antsy. Mrs. dropped by with groceries. I had a brief moment in the loo. And I'm fed-up with this day already. - SHOOT ME... NOW! - 5:26pm Waiting for the A train AWAY from Howard Beach! My anxiety level is... on *EXPLODE!* Tomorrow is the 1st of the month: David will have his crack this week-end. The room will be full of it and his suppliers. Lights on and off all night. Locker-banging all through. A bleating-Hellish ball game too. RADIO BLARING! Tonight I'll pack a "subway kit". I'll be riding the rails all night to get rest. There'll be no rest in that room... so I'll do what the Homeless do... take to the rails. It'll be more peaceful on a train. - I just missed the bleating bus this evening. It buzzed by JUST before I got to the stop. Why? Because clock-out takes so long! It's a recording, computer, slow. - I left the house with-out a word. Daniella, the grand-daughter is there to watch Carmine who decided to get moving and frisky at 4:40pm! And with sh** in his trousers! *Major* effort to get him "presentable" at the very last moment. - The iPod UN-charged whilst plugged into the wall so now I HAVE to hear friggin trash as we roll along: Spanish, save for every 3rd word: "Muthufukkuh". - Journalling on this phone is a bleating pain. - And now? OH JOY! Some bitch brings her crumb-snatchers.. on the train at rush hour! - SPICS MAKE ME SICK! Calling people "maricon" like we don't understand. DEPORTATION! Or burn them! SOMETHING! - I just paid the phone through October though. Tomorrow is storage bill. - I work so F***ING hard for sh** and there's somebody with their hand in my banque account before the ball-point ink dries on the book. - I'm right ON the edge today. - 5:25pm Where the HELL is the damned train? There hasn't even been one through to Rockaway since I got here! TO HELL WITH THIS CITY!

TRULY... TRULY! - 5:08pm Madison Avenue and 34th Street (*According to MTA.INFO there should be a Q32 bus in 20 minutes. Right.*) Well, to end September, I made it to MMLib and got an immediate computer... OK. 20 minute wait, but... as I waited I copied my pay-advice. One week-end item done. THEN, on the computer, I got the statement done... with-out a glitch! BOTH week-end items... DONE! Hit the bus schedules, AND PRINTED IT ALL! I walked out of there at least one day ahead of my-self on two accounts. And early enough to casually get back to the Dung-heap. Something went terribly awry because something went terribly right. (I'll pay dearly for it, no doubt. Nothing goes right for free.) - Back at the Dung-heap, a sail-through entrance into the building, a walk up the stairs to a reasonable volume on the radio, and no smoke in the room. (5:19pm M16 bus just passed right by... non-stop. Note.) (And there's a rat, the little furry kind, trying to cross 34th Street through the traffic.) Tony was chatty about his interview in Brooklyn today. Seems he's found a good agency. Free training, good opening salary, nice perks, not 1199 Union (the interview was for the HHA position). If I planned on staying in NYC *I'd* look into it. Hmmm... - No PopTarts tonight. Got right into getting ready for trying for some (SOME) sleep (sleep?). By 10:00pm the lights were out... the radio was on, reasonable volume, NO DAVID in the room however. And my anxiety level was up: about getting *ANY* rest tonight, David coming and going in a crack-rage, those sorts of things. - I don't know exactly when it was, but shortly after 10:00pm I dozed off.



19. October 2011

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The days are numbered in the relatively few and I am looking forward to escape. Every day I pray that this will go well. Will it be better than how it is now? I don't know. Perhaps not. But in any case, it will be different. This is another opportunity that I will not let pass. There are new people... people... PEOPLE to meet. There is a new environment in which I might be able to LIVE instead of EXIST. And if I fail to take this chance, I'll never know what might have been. If I succeed, all the better. And if I fail? There is no "fail", there is only experience and learning. Mistakes are made only when we fail to learn from experience. When we learn, the mistakes become education. I am going to be educated. (I have tried to leave this world so many times. I have not failed at that, I have learned that the World is not worth the anxiety.)
(An un-dated entry from the original digital journal.)

Saturday 1 October 2011

3:38pm Leaving B116th Street on a Q53 bus. I'm wondering how long the ride back into The City will be. This morning, I left the shelter at 4:50am and didn't clock in until 7:23am! The goddamned 5:28am Q32 bus never showed! So I walked from 34th Street, up to Grand Central at 42nd Street for the Flushing (Nr.7) train to Woodside to get the Q53 bus. If nothing else, it strengthens my resolve to get out of here. When I arrived, EXHAUSTED, Carmine was awake and Mrs. was there... I HAD TO JUMP RIGHT INTO WORK! Shower and all. At one point, I went to grab my yoghurt and Mrs. found something ELSE for me to do. I dropped the yoghurt into the sink. Disgusted. She RUSHED Carmine into the shower, RUSHED him through breakfast,

RUSHED him through lunch. I mean... SH**! - All day I've been in that horrible exhaustion mode. - After work, I was off to PenLib. Not as much accomplished as I'd hoped but pretty good. I just need sleep. - 7:11pm 6w107 Re-entry to the Dung-heap: (I left this morning at 4:50am) From 3:38pm-6:10pm today, I was on 3 buses for 3 hours! (I'm eating more PopTarts. These will make it 8 for the day. I'm hungry and they don't do much to stop the hunger.) And, to think I woke at 4:10am... 15 hours ago. A 15-hour day on about 4 hours of sleep. BURN-OUT! - (7:36pm I did it again! Dropped off into a deep "doze", touched "Back" on the phone where I'm putting all this down and noting and... SCREWED AN ENTRY!) - At PenLib I managed To print some "inventory" pages for the "DA Journal". (To think someone may be reading it already in my "lost" Flash-Drive. Oh well. I hope who-ever took that is suffering for the pain they're causing me now and will cause me LONG after this.). - I have to say that a 59\$ fare to Burlington VT on the 24th is looking good! CHECK-OUT of NYC! YEAH! I should have about 2,000\$ by then. Not great but... as of this moment right here and now, SANITY LIES TO THE NORTH! - After I'd done at the library, I got a Q53 bus to RiteAid on B108th Street on Rockaway Beach Blvd. for 2pks of cigarettes. I've smoked almost a whole pack since this morning! - Walked to B116th Street via the Freeway. ("Rockawayites" do that... under the elevated A train tracks. I've often thought that it would make the perfect pedestrian walk-way... wide enough for walking and bicycling. And in Summer it's protected from the hot sun and rain, in Winter, from the snow.) Stopped at MetroPCS on B16th Street to enquire about getting a VT phone number but was told it couldn't be done here. "Customer Service" *MIGHT* be able to but the little flunkies in this store, out on this peninsula simply can't (or won't be bothered)... and phone service in Burlington is sketchy. I might have to go ATT. ("GrandCentral" which is now "GoogleVoice" is out of the question. If I have a phone with a NYC area code and get a "GoogleVoice" number in Vermont, and somebody calls the Vermont number, it won't ring-through to the NYC number.) - Across the street to get next week's carfare and onto a Q53 bus to Woodside. - I followed "Occupy Wall Street" en route via "Twitter". The tension and the numbers are rising. They "took" the Brooklyn Bridge! Had a march across it. The numbers of people was rather impressive. I just hope this movement REALLY takes hold ALL over. (I saw it coming WAY long ago.) The economy and people are bunk-all of late. THIS is the "wake-up" call. I must recall Ms. L.C. (Her Royal Majesty... in more ways than one indeed) when I told her, SO MANY YEARS AGO that "true Marxism" works only in comics and NOT in reality. She disagreed. She actually argued that indeed, I CAN work, and that she supports it, whole-heartedly. Right then. These days prove me right. I'm rather excited about it. It's well past due for an over-throw of government here. (Time for a cigarette break.) -

7:57pm On the matter of "Occupy Wall Street", I have to admit that I'm ambiguous about what it might do to NYC. As much as I've come to actually H.A.T.E. this place, it is, after all, my "Home-Town". But SO VERY much has changed and been destroyed here. It's just another tedious and over-populated ghetto these days. Business is gone. As someone recently put it: "It's nothing more than a tourist attraction thriving on nothing more than hype and reputation." Dead. Gone. And well worth leaving. But if "Occupy Wall Street" brings it down, all the better. Destroyed by REVOLUTION! Me? I want to do a t/sweat shirt in solidarity. Then leave it behind...for somebody in the shelter who needs a shirt. - Back to today's trip... I got the M34 bus to 1st Avenue just in time for the rain. But nothing terrible. Coming into the building, it was a breeze-through down-stairs to find David asleep... imagine that. HIS PHONE CHARGER WAS PLUGGED INTO THE OUTLET BEHIND MY BED AND THE OTHER END (no phone) WAS TUCKED UNDER MY FOLDED MATTRESS! OK! I quietly returned the charger to him, asked if he had his phone. He did. And he mumbled/grumbled a "Thank you". SCREW THE LITTLE NIGGER-BASTARD SCREWING ABOUT ROUND MY BED! It makes me wonder what ELSE he did round or on or to the bed! Makes me sick just pondering the very notion. Well, ANOTHER reason to GET OUT of ALL of this! SOON! - I'm so damned tired. But I put on jeans and polo shirt. I'm fatigued and feeling the cold tonight. - Oh. Bumped into Victor on the stairs. He began cute chat... then asked for 50 cents. Mooching Frigger! Oh well. Never mind. I've learned to say "NO." nicely. I NEED MY MONEY NOW MORE THAN EVER! NOT SHARING. - And so it's 8:12pm already! Soon time to sign for the bed that gives no comfort and allows no sleep. Tomorrow I'll enquire into a single or double room... see about re-locating for the next couple of weeks. - I'm apprehensive about tonight...it's the first of the month which means... "Crack Night" along with radio night. Tomorrow will be another early start. I NEED REST! AND I MUST REMEMBER: Ms. HENIKA AT 3:00pm!!! I've been forgetting, making other plans for the evening. - Next week-end... LAUNDER THE WINTER JACKETS!

Sunday 2 October * THE TICKET IS PUCHASED *

Sunday. I woke at 4:02am this morning in a coughing fit, - Last night I took 2 aspirins at about 9:45pm. At 10:30pm last night, I HAD to put in 2 ear-plugs... instead of the usual one. This morning I woke with only one in. The other one I found in the indentation at the centre of the bed... a reminder of the cheapness of the mattress I (try to) sleep on. I rolled over, turned the alarm off. It was time to get up, get ready, get out... again. Back to work... Work... what I do to pay the taxes that pay the

salaries of the people who get paid to do nothing at all for people like me who come to them for help in my time of need. To pay the salaries of the security guards who are supposed to keep the peace that never exists in here... peace so that I, and others like me, can get to work and get ourselves back on our feet and out of here... but they never do, so that people like me can run ourselves instead, into a slow and painful death... worked... to death, so that we can die, get out of here and be replaced, immediately, with someone who wouldn't work if a job, tailor-made for them, was handed to them. - I've come to know the differences: tired, weary, fatigued and exhausted. I live now, exhausted... depleted. - Morning room-temperature instant coffee from a plastic bottle, across the hall to one large room for a toilet, to another room to a shower that is of doubtful (beyond "questionable") cleanliness. Back into a dark room where 3 others are sleeping deeply and soundly, to dress and go.. to work, to pay taxes that pay the salaries of those who... - Off to the buses and the trains. I was out and running. Sunday. - Today, I'll go to the library, and from a computer that is not mine, I'll book my first step toward... BETTER... or at least the opportunity to find, make, be BETTER. My reasons? A short list...

6:41am Woodside, Queens having come off the Nr.7 train and now to wait for a Q53 bus:
 .Early mornings screwed by buses and trains that seldom run properly, conveniently, as scheduled.

.Guts forever twisted in anxiety.

.Almost never being able to depend on information given when asked for.

.Being trapped in tunnels bored through solid bedrock, 40, 50, 60 feet down.
.Rats running through stagnant water in public transport tunnels.
.People trying to keep warm, dry, sitting on benches in parks, tunnels, subways.
.Police being required to remove Homeless persons.
.Homeless persons.
.The stench of “food”, garbage, body odour, bad breath, decaying flesh in public transport.
.Unidentifiable liquids on bus and subway seats and floors and sidewalks
.Staggering, swaying, swerving directionless and confused pedestrians.
.Dodging, weaving to avoid being slammed by other people.
.Being pushed, shoved, struck with hand-bags, shopping bags, back-packs.
.Having to tolerate having feet stepped on.
.Spanish.
.Being late because of the MTA: no-show buses, alleged construction.
.Blatant bias in free fares given, extra stops made on MTA buses for “particular” races.
.People screaming and yelling yet standing not a metre apart.
.Radio, mobile phone, amplified sound especially where prohibited.
.”Sorrrry. No English.”
.No Natural absolute darkness... EVER!
.Constant fatigue.
.Constantly moving.
.No benches or places to simply sit to catch a breath.
.Not wanting to take a breath because of stench or debris in the air.
.Everyone being referred to as “Bitch” or “Motherfucker”, Nigger or “M’nigger”.
.Disregard, disrespect, discourtesy.
.Concrete barricades of some sort all over the city.
.Security and police in buildings, parks, stores, churches, synagogues.
.Working EVERY waking moment.
.No time to make a small wash/laundry.
.Expectations of giving *more* for *less*.
.”You got a cigarette or something?” FIRST THING IN THE MORNING!
.Racial bias, “reverse discrimination”, PANDERING.
.Traffic.
.Not ONE spot of QUIET ANYWHERE.

.Inconsideration of person.

.Taxation with-out evidence of where it's used.

.FILTHY PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

No time to sh**. Just move...

10:55am Ho(ward)Be(ach) I can't keep my eyes open! I got here at about 7:30am or so. No sooner did Maria (Mrs. E.) say "Make your coffee." she was down the hall and into the bed-room to wake Carmine! And he was COMBATIVE as all HELL this morning! Right now, he's dressed and dishevelled, in the recliner now. BUT I PULLED SOMETHING, RIGHT GROIN! F*** ME AND FML! I'm exhausted AND in PAIN! But... there's a job that needs to be done and money that NEEDS to come. I keep my mouth shut about it. - At 9:56am Gary, from PIC rang to ask if I clocked-in on my mobile! More BS? NO! I clocked in-the way I usually clock-in. WHAT in HELL'S name are they pulling? Or is it that now they're going to call the house to make certain that I'm here? I've no tolerance for this BS! And ESPECIALLY NOT FROM THE LIKES OF THEM! - Today is "meet'n'greet" with Ms. Henika. I'd like to go to "Occupy Wall Street" if I can muster the energy. They're all in Zucotti Park these days. Although the name of the park was changed to "Liberty Park" after "9/11". Let's talk "total sh**", shall we? Changing names of streets and parks and buildings and the likes so that the feeble-minded idiots who've taken-over this city that WE used to call "home" can feel better about themselves. THAT'S a HUGE part of WHY the "Occupy Wall Street" movement is necessary: because the retarded in-breeds from suburbia and the farms and under rocks, and in lab-test tubes are coming in like locusts and destroying OUR New York City! But... It's happening and the "New Yorkers" area leaving (including me) to let them live in their self-made rot. - THIS WEEK IS "CV WEEK"! Re-cap. Re-do. Up-date the old résumé and SEND IT OFF TO VNA Burlington VT. I'm OUT! of here! I MUST, MUST, MUST! take a chance. Take a leap. Take the jump. - And not knowing what the trains will be like today adds to the misery that is "today". - I NEED to see Ms. Henika today too. Especially since I got all the paper-work done ahead... BFD on that point. - I'm sick of having no time for me. And I'm sick from getting no rest. - 11:05am PS: Autumn is here. I'm sitting here with sweat-shirt on and I'm still chilly... at long last... I'm not sitting here drenched in sweat. - WELL! The morning was Hell-ABSOLUTE. Carmine's not feeling well and shows it by being nasty and combative, then sleeping. I managed, but not up to snuff. Not my usual "care", but between the PAIN and the EXHAUSTION... He IS well-cared-for though. - At 13.00 I was ready to bolt, looking forward to leaving. - The Q11 ran late. The connection to the A train was immediate. The L train was delayed. The M15 bus ran late and hit EVERY red light on the avenue. I RAN up to the 5th floor to

see Ms. Henika. During our appointment I told her of the 24th of this month. She said, with a quite and genuinely caring tone: "I don't blame you." and "I understand." And I believe she does. She told me how, working with people who WILL NOT do ANYTHING with their time, their lives, is getting to her. She *does* understand. And she's going on vacation. She'll return when I'm gone. I can honestly say I'll miss her. She's actually compassionate. She said that she was going to give me a meal ticket that would be due on her return. "I don't want you to have to deal with anybody else." But, after I'd told her about leaving on the 24th, she said "I'm going to make it for when I get back anyway. That way, if anything happens, if your plans change, I'll see you then." I don't know how to express this properly, but today, I truly hope that there is some truth to all the rumours that we have some-one, some-thing, some where who hears the prayers of our hearts because my heart is praying in gratitude for much contentment for this kind and wonderful woman. Her closing advice to me today was: "Tell NO ONE about your plans because they can make it difficult for you. Tell NO ONE!" (She and I share the same "trust" in this system and the "people" who work for it here... we "trust" that they're counter-productive when it comes to the success of the residents. How horribly sad that is. But how encouraging it is to meet somebody else who "knows" the system... and supports my distrust. I'm not merely being "paranoid", and that's rather comforting to me... in a way.) - SO! Another quick meeting was done and she was on to the next and I was out the door and up to my locker to change... NEW SHIRT and jeans and the only foot-wear I have left and available now... work sneakers. I was off to "Occupy Wall Street" at last! - One quick "tweet" on "Twitter" saying where I was going led to several responses of so much support! I charged out the door of that shelter with a conviction and confidence I haven't experienced in YEARS! Across 30th Street to Lexington Avenue where a bus to City Hall came almost immediately! The trip was pretty amazing. The Bowery. Chinatown. Neighbourhoods I haven't seen in for-ever. It was exciting. It was a bit sad... to think I'm feeling so "shoved out" of the city that's been "home" and by a petty little tyrant who's NOT a NY'er yet managed to turn the place over to the rudest idiots (Mayor Michael Bloomberg, to be precise). But that's not the point any longer. It's simply time to leave before this place sucks me any deeper down and into complete despair. - Well, the bus trip gave a bit of a boost to the need to get out and away from this city... A police stop! Where the bus passes under some building, the driver had to stop at a police kiosk! On the under and then again as we left from under the building! Even city buses! As if we 5 passengers (and that's all that we were... 5) were terrorists. -



When I got out of the bus I was pretty taken by the view of what's now called the "Freedom Tower" at what USED to be the "Twin Towers" of the "World Trade Centre". So I stopped to grab a photo. It's not the towers and it'll never replace the really great photos I HAD of the WTC before and DURING it's destruction. (And once again... f*** you Cyndi Littlewhorebitch Psycho for seeing to it that ALL of THAT recorded history AND part of my past is now GONE.) And even though I don't appreciate it, at all, for many reasons but... a photo of this thing is "touristy", and something to send along to Twitter. - ON TO ZUCOTTI (LIBERTY) PARK! The crowd wasn't as large as I'd expected but just knowing what it represented over-took me. Wow! I wanted to yell, I wanted to cry, I wanted to hug just about everybody! To think I was actually part of something that about 2 years ago I said should and would happen was almost over-whelming! I grabbed a few photos of the park and people and went to send them along to Twitter... NO STYLUS! THIS time it was G.O.N.E.! I traced my steps... all through the "Wall Street area" back toward the bus stop where I'd disembarked, looking at the side-walks, as if I actually should expect to find it. Of course... it's GONE! So I dropped into every little store that seemed they might have another. I recalled having seen them, 3 in a package, for relatively cheap, but I couldn't recall WHERE! As it ended, I had to get some "special" thing, made for a "tablet"... at a cost of almost 13\$! For a POINTER! MORE money pissed away, in a city where even basic trash is so highly over-priced that it becomes prohibitive! AND... "Made In China", like just about everything else around. "Occupy Wall Street"? Let's begin with THIS: BAN CHINESE IMPORTS! GIVE THE MANUFACTURING JOBS BACK TO THOSE WHO'VE BEEN SOLD OUT! And to those of us who are BURNED-OUT, working ourselves to absolute DEATH for... nothing... or, in

my own case (which is like SO MANY MORE AND OTHERS)... daily torture. - 20.25 After a while of walking about and talking with various folks at “Occupy Wall Street”, and being “seen” and photographed with my “canvass”, here I am, at the Woodside Nr.7 train station. Life is happening so quickly all of a sudden! I’m booked out of here! having made my “escape reservation” at PenLib. Of all the places. Of ALL places... on the peninsula in the little town I came to love and actually feel “at home” in. But it’s done... “One Way”. - Whilst at the library, I received an e-mail from PJ in Vermont: He’s offered to meet me at the airport in Burlington. Kindness! Every bit is so deeply appreciated these days. - Oh! And I just spoke with “hardlynorml”/Mark Horvath, from “Twitter”, and we’re to meet tomorrow evening. We’ve been corresponding for so long on the “Twitter” that I almost feel as though we’ve known each-other for that long. He was Homeless for quite the longest while and it now travelling about interviewing and making videos of Homeless people all over the place! Imagine! I’m just looking very forward to meeting him... in person. And how interesting it is, to “meet” someone like him... on “social media”... over the internet. Times have certainly changed! - I’m in a state of dumfounded numbness ... maybe shock. - The planes into LGA/LaGuardia airport are so close here as they come in, and in the distance I can actually see them land. The train pulls in. I don’t know if I’ll miss this but... the fact is: I MUST GET AWAY! - And... we continue... KADIMA! Push and thrust forward... It’s the only thing I can do anymore.)

Monday 3 October

6:48am Q53 bus And this morning I am *unbelievably exhausted*! Yesterday, Sunday, came the final decision: Ready or other-wise, on the 24th of THIS month, I will be on a flight to Burlington... Vermont, a town I’ve never seen, in a state I’ve only briefly visited. I am, sadly admittedly, no longer able, by any means, to handle or cope with any more of this horrid existence. NOW it MUST STOP, and staying here, in NYC is nothing but stagnation. There are no opportunities for “Life” or “Living”. I’m *tired*... of *so* much and *so* many things. One thing in particular: As I strolled through the RockPark Waldbaums parking lot on Saturday morning I noticed that the “Atropa” is back in season. “Atropa”. Death. I could pick fresh Atropa, add it to the cocktail I’ve been brewing for about a year (and that I have available to me at ALL times now) and ingest even more. Death. Mine. Death. Peace. It’s all I look forward to any more. Why? Because I’m tired. Every morning I wake, increasingly tired, in a Homeless shelter, to go to work on a job that pays only enough to keep me in a shelter where I wait for Death to come to take me. I am miserable. And only *I* can

change that. So, with no options here, with no potential for change, no visible opportunities to find even the smallest bit of something better, it is time to walk away and not look back. It is time to go. "This is obviously not the place I'm supposed to be", as Ms. Macy Grey sings (*The Letter*). - This is where things really began spinning. It was a work-day and what can be said about that? Not a particularly easy day, of course. I *do* recall because I was looking forward to meeting "hardlynormal" (Mark) from Twitter. I wanted to be "presentable". I wanted too much... as usual. Carmine was in "*mood-combative*". But, (rather, I should say "so") I did *only the essentials* to care. Still, I ended-up worked-out, run-down and burnt-out. At 5.00pm, Maria took her time coming back which made me anxious. I say: *HONESTLY! I've arrived early every morning, off the clock, considering HER comfort and, as usual, reciprocity is not forthcoming.* But... shortly after 5:00pm I was en route to The City. - Thanks to the technology of today (Twitter) I could "follow" Mark's trip in from NJ and know that my anxious rushing wasn't too necessary. My surprise came when he said he's from Binghamton NY! DAMN! Imagine? When I think of it, just my familial ties to this State... covering so much territory! In my child-hood, I had relatives in Binghamton! (Best that I'm leaving it.) So I took the buses into town and arrived at the hotel where he'll be staying, with time to spare. - Funny: I sat diagonally across the street (from the Roger Smith) to wait, on the steps of the building there, something I've rarely done in life, never giving my-self the opportunity to sit... just sit. Scanning the area between "twitters" I noticed a guy in front of the hotel looking at a mobile and entering something. Instinctively I knew it was Mark, posting to Twitter. And, indeed it was. (Peter always said I never give enough credit to my instincts.) He went into the hotel, apparently checked-in and returned to the street. I strolled, casually, across the street and ducked round the corner so as not to be seen. Came the message: "Where are you?" and my reply "Put the phone down." I just stood, waiting for him to look up from his phone. It's rather odd these days: There's no need to ask "Dr. Livingston?" We know who the other person is via intuition or photos, but in any event... technology here and now. All it took was a look and a grin. Quick "formal" introduction... off and on the move. We strolled a bit, hurried because it was already about 7:00pm, he had things to attend, and was, more than likely, quite tired from his long journey today, and I, of course, had my curfew. He wanted to find an "affordable" place to grab a bite. "Affordable"? "Reasonable"? In this hell-hole of un-reality? We went to "Pershing Square", a place I've often pondered but never got to, under the Park Avenue ramp in front of Grand Central... and because of time restrictions, didn't *really* get to enjoy our quick bite and meeting. Still, Mark is fascinating, travelled, knowledgeable and an absolute delight. Even in our rushed conversation I enjoyed every running second. (He had a bowl of chili,

I had a salad... GREENS! Something I actually craved when I saw them on the menu. Considering my “diet” these past many months it's no wonder. Coke. Coffee. The bill came to... 40\$! This city is *mad*! This *country* is mad! He paid the bill. And I will be forever grateful. We discussed Homelessness, Canada, several topics. And as we/I waited for the bus at 42nd Street and 2nd Avenue he asked if I'd like to be interviewed on camera, tell my feelings on “Bloomberg”. I was honoured, but being pressed for time and... I don't think anybody could use the footage in public if I was to be candid and *honest* on the topic. I respectfully declined. - The bus came. We parted. I was quite taken by the experience: Meeting someone from Twitter, someone who KNOWS my “DHS”, knows the shelter system, is travelled, and respected in his field of documentary. Wow! Best of luck to you, Mr. Horvath. And thank you for bringing “our” “lives” to the eyes of so many who would other-wise never know. (Now... if only they'd care enough to put it “right”... But... back to reality.) - Back at the Dung-heap, all was usual. It's not so oppressive though, since David is gone. Though Ariel isn't to be completely trusted. He's playing Tony for the fool; claiming he's been in the shelter a short while, doesn't know anything, old man, aches and such. I simply suggested to Tony, beware. That's all. – Shower. To bed. Day done.

Tuesday 4 October

There's a skip in here again. None of the “finer details” of the day. Not that I can say anything “star-struck” could possibly be missing. I had to go BACK to that pit of misery (work) today, with the usual anxiety, running, pressing on, pressing forward and all the the “usual” lack of sleep and rest. And, as always, preceded and followed by incredibly insane stressful running and rolling along in tunnels, on trains, on crowded streets in packed buses. And, as always, ending with the return... to the “psychiatric hospital” that provides only shelter, and a small but just-sufficient place to lay down at day's end, and from where to pray... for death... Death...

Wednesday 5 October

Other than getting to work EXTREMELY tired, I don't recall much of the day. Fatigue is doing that lately... wiping-out days. Truthfully, I'm finding my-self on buses, correct bus, correct direction, but not remembering WHICH bus I'm on and sometimes forgetting WHERE I'm heading. The fatigue is godawful! I'm constantly amazed that I've actually got a goal right now... that I'm leaving the shelter... leaving New York City! I'm amazed that it's all come to this point...

and I'm anxious, looking "forward" with both excitement and trepidation. But the over-ruling "condition" is fundamentally and essentially: BURN-OUT! Honestly, sincerely, and I shouldn't doubt that there's "organic", tangible evidence that I am, indeed and in fact... literally "BURNT"! I brain is barely capable of producing thoughts, let alone retaining any. My re-call is "spattered and scattered" at best. At no time during any part of any day am I not in pain of some kind. And it's no longer just "discomfort" nor "a little something". It's "PAIN"... some-where, here, there... EVERY-WHERE! PAIN... non-stop. And such debilitating fatigue! Given a moment, any moment to sit, with nothing to keep moving with and INSTANTLY, my eyes close, head drops and body shuts down. I've even learnt: I can sit, close my eyes and remain aware, feel my entire body drift into a "sleep state" of feeling nothing, not even my bodily contact with a seat (usually on a bus or subway train) and as with "natural sleep", in can literally "shut-down" gently, hit a "deep sleep" even for the briefest moment and bring myself back, with a refreshing breath, to "awake". And when I've done that, I actually DO feel as though I've "napped", refreshingly, for quite the while! (The most frightening fact: I've done just that... STANDING on the subway, the bus... the street.) But, along with this, my "heart"... my emotions are burnt to ashes and blown away. For the very first time in my life I find that, for the most part, I have only two "states": Apathy... numb, dead, empty... or Anger, which is a momentary "flash", deep, raging, miserable, horrific anger... that lasts for, as I say, a "flash"... and then it's gone... back into Apathy. "I", for all intent and purpose, am... quite literally... DEAD! - And so, an empty spot in the recording and recollection of this day, time skipped over... and, like EVERY BIT OF MY PAST... gone.

Thursday 6 October

Of course it was another work day and the usual. I'm no longer enjoying it... NONE of it! The stress of the commute to get there early, and not having even the minutes to make coffee, read the paper. And Carmine's been awake and nasty when I arrive, and with excellent reason. Nobody changes his wet things from 5:00pm when I leave so, the next morning, I come in to a MESS! Maria complains about *all* sorts of things lately: She drops mentions of my not answering my telephone (although it's been only one time!), how wonderful *OTHER* people from *OTHER* agencies have been (in spite of the fact that NONE of THEM are here these days... and if she treated THEM as she treats me, I can understand why that is), and the likes. I was letting it all roll off my back (well, that's not true... I've been keeping all of the annoyance, aggravation, anger and hurt to myself, in relative silence) until today when, finally, I told her that she'd have somebody

new to come in very shortly. Yes, I told her that I'm leaving... leaving her, the agency, NYC and NYS. Her reaction? "God bless you. You have to do what you have to do." F*** me then. *NOTHING* is ever appreciated and this, today, was the absolute final kick in my face. - And so, this evening, when I left that house, I headed off to the PenLib there-in to print a nice CV for VNA, to research the LNA requirements and training in Vermont AND TO TYPE AND PRINT MY FORMAL NOTICE OF RESIGNATION. Yup... folks round here are making the departure *MUCH* easier! And I suppose I'm thankful for that. Meanwhile... they should all... you'll pardon the expression... go right the f*** to jolly Hell! - Tomorrow is a "Mandatory In-Service" at the agency office. The timing couldn't be more perfect... for my "Dear Sir/Madame: F-off. Cordially, etc."

Friday 7 October

(OKeeDokee! I've been trying to fill-in and such and this is catching up rather well. PenLib and I'm on my 3rd session! Leaving here is going to be so tough!)(Actually, leaving Rockaway isn't easy. For some unknown reason, I've developed an attachment to this place... stupid, ignorant and nasty as it can be. But I digress...) Today was "In-Service" and **Hand-In-Resignation Day**. I have to admit something strange: In my head I kept planning my commute to the office from Rockaway today, yet, from the shelter, I'm actually only several blocks away! Isn't it strange how the brain will manifest what it wants at times? I had all the travel anxieties associated with travel from Rockaway and yet, all the while, I was aware of the fact that I was only a brief walk away! OK. This is going for serious burn-out. - Well, the In-Service this morning went rather well... or well enough. After a morning of being rather pissed about the whole ordeal, a Manager came in to talk with us... that ended my "silent pissed-off!" I opened up when one of the girls mentioned being bumped off her case and *that was that!* I told MY saga, mentioned names, pulled out my calendar book, gave dates! What did it get me? A condescending: "I'm going to bring this to the District Manager." from Madame "Manager". Right-Oh! As if that's going to do anything for me. I WANT THAT MONEY FOR THE DAY I WAS SCHEDULED FOR, BACK WHEN THE SENT "PATRICK" AND TOLD *ME* TO LEAVE! Now I need the money even more! - That done, I dropped by to see Ramdai, the one "Supervisor" at "Visiting Nurse Services of New York, Partners In Care" who treated me with respect, courtesy, professional dignity. When I handed her the resignation, calmly and with-out a word, she just went silent for a bit and then looked at me: "I don't believe this! I had a feeling this was coming but... I don't believe this!" She was visibly

upset. She told me how she enjoyed working with me and when we were done she told me that I should use her direct telephone number as a reference. Wow! Better than a letter! (Of course, I wonder what kind of references I'll be getting from the Restemos, Maria, Joe and Marilyn. Morons and pig-wash trash that they've been. We'll see, I'm sure.) Today, I left the office feeling relieved and yet a little apprehensive. It'll be tough leaving Ramdai. She's been more than fair with me. She's been a great supervisor. But I MUST MUST MUST get the HELL OUT of this city! - From my calendar book (which is where I've been scratching brief notes about these days) I see that I got my weekly "statement" done for Sunday-coming. - Well... back at the MMLib now, where I've copied a few things and printed the statement. Ms. Henika must have her papers for the crazies who collect them and other such nonsense! I don't want anybody giving *her* a hard time on my account! - And so, it was time to return to the Dung-heap for the night.

Saturday 8 October YOM KIPPUR

This is not going to be easy. SO MUCH HAS BEEN HAPPENING SINCE I MADE THAT RESERVATION AND DECIDED TO GET THE FRIGG OUT OF NYC! There's just been no time to breathe and it doesn't look as if there will be any time coming as long as I'm here. Even now, on Yom Kippur, I'm sitting in SIBL, 4:55pm, typing away. Got the "DeadArtist" blog backed up (AGAIN) and there are some more that need that. Got my papers together for Ms. Henika tomorrow. I even have a "packet" ready to go Express Mail to VNA in Vermont! References and "Letter of Interest" and all such. - This morning, I was awake rather late. I decided not to set the alarm for this morning and take it as it came. I was up on time to get running anyway and so I did (of course)... A BEAUTIFUL BEACH DAY WASTED... The trains are all screwed again this weekend (making the departure from this general mad-house that much easier) so it was buses all the way. The M15 to the Q60 to the Q53 to Liberty Avenue where, at storage, I got the jackets out of storage and grabbed the Q21 bus to the laundry on Cross Bay Blvd. The place is lovely and the machines use CARDS not cash! I wish I'd found the place earlier! Very nice indeed! I brought my linens and some under-things to wash along with the jackets. The linens got 2 "Oxy-thingies" and the jackets? Well, I forgot to remove some hand-warmers from one and so, it all got tossed in the machine. Luckily it did no damage. - I honestly don't know how, but laundry is pretty much all I got accomplished today. - Oh yes, there was a trip to Staples to get copies of my letters and certifications for the application to VNA, VT. But that was about it! Done! By the time I returned to the Dung-heap, I'd spent 8 hours for nothing really, but laundry! And the weather was perfect for the beach... though a bit too hot! Well, so much for Yom Kippur. - As a "PS" Today was Yom

Kippur... I did NOT fast and I did NOT feel ANY guilt at all. My existence is “atonement”. And as I’ve known real hunger more than I’ve known eating well (if at all), I will not fast!

Sunday 9 October

Ms. Henika in the morning today. She gave me a new meal ticket through the 25th of the month when she’ll be back from holiday. We both know that I won’t be there for that meeting, and we got to say our “Fare Well”. I’ll miss her terribly. She’s been very fair, most kind, compassionate, supportive, helpful and gracious. I wish there was some way to thank her but... maybe one day I’ll ring her. (I’m getting “dozey”. I need something to eat! 33 minutes left on the computer! WOW!) - Believe it or not, I haven’t the slightest idea at the moment, what I did with the rest of the day! At some point recently, I posted the application to VNA... got pissed because the “Express Mail” envelope cost me over 20\$ to post! and it wouldn’t be delivered until TUESDAY coming! Incompetent U.S. Postal Service! But I don’t recall which day I posted it! THIS is what I’ve come to. No memory. I’m burning out... *FAST!* - BUT... It was an un-expected DAY OFF!

Monday 10 October

6:40am on a Q60 bus rolling onto Queens Blvd... Riding into the sun-rise. Dead, *dead* tired! I haven’t been eating proper food for about a week, coping with the “Big Jump *2 weeks from today*. David(E2) disappeared on Friday-last. An “Ariel Berlin”, 74 year old Israeli came in, promptly, of course, to fill the vacancy. - 6.53 Q53 Queens Plaza and I’m the only “White” on the bus. And most likely the only one who can speak English. - I left the shelter in darkness. It’s day-light. - I’ve been trying to find affordable/local housing in Burlington and have gotten some nice leads. This morning I must transfer funds to chequing to cover the cost of 7 days in a hostel when I arrive there. Then 3 more pay-cheques will come along. - Right now, I want to sleep. *Painfully* tired again this morning. - For now, notes on last night: Ariel, out nee E2, picking-up where David left-of... clunking about and eating crisps along with Cruz(E3) clunking about as well. Tony was rather un-settled. - This morning I woke at 4:48am... I didn’t hear ANY of the 6 alarms I’d set for myself! - (Just passing Nr.90-60 on “the Turnpike” here and thinking to myself: How stupid I was to under-charge for all that time of “Private Duty”. How hurtful to be turned-out on the morning I returned to the shelter. How stupid I was. - There’s quite a bit to catch-up on here. And so much more reeling in my head. Packing is the major concern... when and what. My thoughts really to spin, shatter, scatter and spatter... more-so lately than ever before in my life-time.) - Meanwhile

back here... My limbs ache from fatigue. And the band plays on... - WELL WELL WELL!!! DAY'S END! And... Yes indeed, I WENT TO THE BEACH TODAY! AFTER I BUSTED MY DAMNED BACK AND ARSE TO GET TO THE BUS THIS MORNING TO GET TO FRIGGING WORK ON TIME! The M15 bus to the Q60 bus to the Q53 bus to get to the bleating house by about 7:00am! The newspaper was there, at the front door. The door wasn't open as usual. I read their paper for about 45 minutes and then... I tried to get into the house and... *the door was locked!* I rang the bell. Maria answered: "My husb is inna de hosp." HE WENT IN YESTERDAY AT 1.00pm! NOBODY LET ME KNOW! SCREWED SCREWED SCREWED! HOLIDAY PAY! I NEED THIS INCOME SO BADLY NOW AND HERE THIS SH** HAPPENS! When I rang Melanie from the house phone, she simply said "Nobody told US." Melanie? Go to Hell! I don't want to hear your song/dance/lies and BS. I phoned ONLY to make YOU aware... NOT, mind, that I believe you ever WERE aware, nor are you now... NOR will you EVER be! You're a proven liar dear and there's no more to be said on that matter. PROVEN liar. - So, at her invitation, I had a coffee with Mrs. and left. As for the rest of the "staff and crew" on this case: they can pretty much go to Hell as well. I've been abused to the very end at this point. My "caring" days are SO DONE! - On to the Q53 bus... Went to storage, got my beach things, changed in the loo at storage and headed out the door! Quick stop at Compare Market on Liberty Avenue for some food and *right to the beach!* It was TOO HOT though! Figures. But I managed to get in an hour of calm, sun-shine, sea air, and out of that hour, about 45 minutes of *SLEEP!* *THAT'S* what I went there for in the first place! I was *SO DAMNED TIRED* that I was physically sick and ached in every joint in my body. This is how I've been lately though. - After the sun? The only regret is that I didn't have a drink before and during... and then after. But it was well worth the trip there today yoobetcha! Then it struck me: These are the last 2 weeks I'll be taking this stroll. It'll be a *LONG* trip to get here after the 24th. **Bitter-sweet**, just as it's been ever since I came to Rockaway. **Bitter-sweet.** - After, I went directly to storage to return the beach things and change. *FINALLY!* MY FIRST DAY *AT THE BEACH!* - Nothing to say about the Dung-heap. The trip back was too quick though. And this evening I thought:

Odd how the street signs are situated so (45th/Mad) they're difficult to see when riding the bus. - I've many days to recount here and not much memory of them. Seems from the moment I clicked to purchase the ticket, Life, Time, all began whirling like dried Autumn leaves in a pre-Winter wind storm. One might say "Life began to happen." One "might" but one won't. - This is being done on the bus, the phone. I might repeat entries. Alas, my humanity, old age, the confusion of too much in too little time. I continue...

Tuesday 11 October

ANOTHER BLOODY DAY OFF! NO PAY! I'M SO DAMNED PISSED RIGHT NOW I COULD BASH SOMEBODY. – But certainly not a wasted day. - BklynCenLib 11:04am I've just come from "Occupy Wall Street" where I dropped a bag full of those huge, heavy-weight plastic bags from the shelter. (I found a "stash" and decided to be a little "Marxist" about it. HEY! WTF? Why not? For all the time I was there, I didn't take their food, had maybe 6 changes of linens which I washed myself, didn't cause trouble, never asked for anything AND made it to work every day to be taxed so far up my arse that it caused me physical pain, literally, so that MY labour paid THEIR salaries and expenses... so I TOOK some plastic bags... to be used by those who are doing something to make this country better. I call that "fair".) They make excellent ponchos and are excellent for storing clothing and even as sleeping bags when filled with any sort of blanket or the likes... Water-proof too! Cruz gives me extras almost daily and I know that the people in Zucotti Park can use them. I wish, I SO WISH that I could hit a lottery. There's so much more I'd like to do for these brave souls. But that is my life... it was my Mum's life too: Wishing to be able to do more. Well... We do what we can with what we have. - Now? There is much to catch-up on and never enough time. So... I continue. - In my heart I carry the encouragement of all those kind people on "Twitter". Strangers who do more for me than *ANY* of the so-called "family" I know are out there, alive, living their lives oblivious to me. I cannot, in my heart, wish any of *them* well. But I certainly am *more* than Thankful to the kind people I've met on "Twitter". They are all the Spirits of my Mother. When we ask God for help, it's not His voice we hear but His voice and His support in the People He sends with His message: "*I am here.*"

PenLib (EXHAUSTED AND NEEDED THE POTTY!) Well then! That noted and a couple of things done on the Journals and some music for the iPod at BklynCenLib, I was off to the B41 bus to The Junction and a browse in Target. I'd decided that I'd do a banner of some kind for "Occupy Wall Street" this evening. I found nothing of use in Target but... Loewe's! Home Depot! Canvass tarp! Back on the bus and a Q35 ride to Loewe's for a 4x5ft. canvass tarp and a wide Sharpie marker! - Got here to get an hour on the computer and when that was done, I asked if I could use a table to make the banner. I got it! I got the "*Working Homeless*" banner done! At the Peninsula Library! I was ready! - Q53 bus to the J train and away we went! AND... met 2 young girls on the J train who are part of "Occupy Wall Street Art and Culture"! - This evening, at "Occupy Wall Street" I met a guy who resides in the Shelter (4th floor)! He paints signs there. Imagine that: at least TWO HOMELESS people in attendance (and at least TWO from the very same shelter). Also... Got my "canvass" photographed a few times and was *filmed* talking with

some college girls who are worried there'll be nothing for them when they finish studies. (They say they see us, the "Occupiers", and now the HOMELESS, and they're worried that they're spending entirely too much for an education that will amount to nothing in the long-run. Well... THAT'S the "American" way these days, dearies. Live. Learn. WAKE UP!) There was a camera guy filming the talk! I'm becoming "something" or another! - Well, THAT was an *interesting* night brought to a crashing halt by... CURFEW! I actually had to do a bit of "panic rush" to get back to the shelter this evening. But, from what I see in Zucotti Park... if anything happens to the shelter... I can always go there. Apparently there are quite the many who get up every morning and go to work... and at day's end... come back to eat and sleep in the park. At the rate I'm going of late... it's become another "option"... HELL! I'd probably sleep better in the park... in the rain... in a couple of large heavy-weight trash bags... Right back were I started from... under the trees.

Wednesday 12 October

ANOTHER day off... NO PAY! But ACCOMPLISHED! Headed out this morning to the buses and, of course... to... ROCKAWAY! There was NOTHING at the post office. Doesn't THAT figure? Oh well... Off to...the library and, to my amazement, I got a computer immediately and when my hour was up I asked for another and got TWO! The "Funstonbunkerwolf" AND "Dunessojourner" blogs are on the Flash-drive (again)! 3 blogs down and, well, a lot more to go and I've got only but 11 days to get it all completed. Anyway. It was on the Q53 bus to Waldbaums: FOOD! 2 rolls (paid 1... so what?), the usual pre-packaged corned beef cold-cuts, 1 Greek yoghurt, a tin of peaches, a bottle of coffee. The Q35 bus to Tilden to lunch at the concrete table across from building T102... where my post office box used to be. The day was over-cast, windy, and a bit chilly but I didn't care. It was peaceful, calm and I *SO* needed that. I need *more* of that. As I sat there, alone, I glanced about. Soon this will be only a memory. I'll leave it and won't be able to simply hop on a bus to lunch here, or stroll here any more. Soon... - "Meal" done... through the gate and out of the Fort that was, for a while, my "home" and to the Q35 bus to head back... to the "shelter" that is now, for the time remaining, my "residence", my "Hell". - Mum said she didn't believe that there's a "Heaven" or "Hell" after this: "This, right here, is Hell. After this, there's only peace." In OH SO MANY ways, I do, with all of my heart, soul and being, believe her... after this... there's only peace... one way or another.

Thursday 13 October

(10:48am and FINALLY back at work! Screwed out of holiday pay and bitter about it but...)

There's no difference here... everything is as it always was. Well... in another 11 days, they can have it ALL to themselves and run things the way THEY want them. May there be mercy in some Heaven, some-where, for poor Carmine.

Friday 14 October

I'm just too damned tired, fed-up, burnt out to even bother. Just honestly, to the marrow of my bones and the centre of my soul... too damned tired. Every other day covers it all.

Saturday 15 October

WELL! WHOA! DAMN! At round-about noon today, some "RN" who never gave her name came to the house to perform some kind of "Evaluation" today AFTER the usual morning calamities that are a "normal" and "typical" day around here. And WOW! Was she ever down-right NASTY AND RUDE! JUST A SIMPLE BITCH! ARGUMENTATIVE! She got right into telling ME what's "good" for Carmine, diet, exercise and such things as she's completely NOT even slightly familiar with. She doesn't even KNOW what goes on in this house, let alone, my own back-ground here and before I even came to "Partners In Care"! Well, today, she got her own attitude right back when I asked her "How dare you?" She literally SCREAMED at me "How dare *I*? How dare *YOU* speak to *ME* that way!" Well, since she asked, I told her how dare *I*. *I* pointed-out the obvious first: that she comes waltzing into the house with-out so much courtesy as an introduction nor identification of herself, and *THEN* proceeds to pounce on me with her personal and *un-educated* opinions of *me* and my work and efforts here. *THAT* is how dare *I*. "I should put you off this case right now!" screamed the banshee. (Me? I figured... go right ahead... and when "Mr. Carmine" decided to take his usual "bowel cleansing" number at about 3:00pm, DARLING? YOU CAN finally work for your damned salary and clean it up! ALONE! OH MY and WELL-WELL! *SHE* snatched her little bags, papers and notes, and clip-boards and went *STORMING* out the door, *SLAMMING* it as she left. And as she stormed, she yelled at me "*I've even gotten complaints from the family!*" and when I asked "From whom?" she tightened her lips against her teeth and yelled "*THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!*" She spent the longest while out-side with Maria and, ohsh**, Marilyn-the-nasty-lying-unrealistic-never-happy-hypocritical-back-stabbing daughter!

When *Maria*, the like-wise wife, came back into the house she denied having said anything negative about me and that if there was *any* trouble, I should tell Partners In Care to contact *HER* directly! - Y'know? I *KNEW* this was going to end up in a pile of nasty sh** and so... I just add this BS to my list of "Why I Truly NEED To Put This Place Behind Me... FAR FAR Behind Me... NOW!" -

"Jewel"... INDEED! Oh yeah... she most certainly is... the "CURSED and CURSING" jewel! Nasty "thing". Just goes to prove that ANYTHING can get a job as a "Nurse" these days... another "profession" gone straight down the "sh**ter". - Ah well then. What-ever "pow-wow conference" took place on the streets (even MORE "professionalism"... discussing a patient ON THE STREET), it was done and work went back to the way it was... and this evening.. I was OUT THE DOOR AT 5:00pm! No doubt there HELL careening down the super highway, focused in on me anyway... No sense worrying about it until it comes round the bend. - On the way back to the shelter this evening, I stopped off in Brooklyn... Jackie's store in Brighton, and got a grey, hooded sweat-shirt AND got back with enough time to print, on the back of it: "OCCUPY WALL STREET" and down one sleeve, my "HA" Homeless registration number! After which, I had enough time to join the "OWS" crowd who'd gathered up at Times Square this evening where I had 3 truly wonderful conversations with strangers, got photographed several times (again) with my "canvass" and shirt. Ladies and Gentlemen: The "Radical Homeless" are on the streets! Thank you very much. - I left the Times Square crowd at about 8:50pm and walked back down to the Dung-Heap. - When I got to the entrance I noticed: I had NO MEAL TICKET to get in! BUT... I had no problems... familiar security at the door. I was through the metal detector, in the building, up the stairs, signed-in for the night and... that closed this day. (Hey! I'm "known" in this place. For good or for bad... I'm "known". It makes me glad though, to think that I'm "known" in a good way... or so it would seem. Any more, I can't be certain though... especially with all the "on the job" experiences.)

Sunday 16 October

08:50am The days are numbered in the relatively few and I am looking forward to escape. Every day I pray that this will go well. Will it be better than how it is now? I don't know. Perhaps not. But in any case, it will be different. This is another opportunity that I will not let pass. There are new people... people... PEOPLE to meet. There is a new environment in which I might be able to LIVE instead of EXIST. And if I fail to take this chance, I'll never know what might have been. If I succeed, all the better. And if I fail? There is no "fail", there is only experience and learn. Mistakes

are made only when we fail to learn from experience. When we learn, the mistakes become education. I am going to be educated. (I have tried to leave this world so many times. I have not failed at that, I have learned that the World is not worth the anxiety.)

I've nothing more to say today... nothing.

Monday 17 October

Howard Beach: I just got to work at about 8:00am. I wasn't in any rush. Why bother? I knew already then that I'd be pulled off this case. But nothing happened and no calls came until 4:39pm when *Melanie* rang to tell me "Don't go to work tomorrow. You have to come into the office!" rather crudely and rudely. I didn't bother to ask why. I knew. I went next door to tell Maria that I'm being pulled. She *appeared* terribly upset. Well, she is: Now she has to *watch* somebody new, she has to make sure that nothing she does and fails to do gets reported (like leaving Carmine naked at the table, or in the bed all night in piss-wet sheets, etc.), which will be too much for her to think about. I wish I could say that I'm sorry for her... I'm not. She told me again that I shouldn't answer any questions and just tell Partners In Care to ring her directly. HOWEVER! MARILYN was ANYTHING *BUT* sorry to know that I'd be pulled and she did nothing to hide it. She simply said "Good luck with what-ever you do from here." as if she *knew* she'd gotten me *fired*! which, essentially, she did... End f day, end of case, I left, went to PenLib for an hour and then back to the Dung-heap. I'm too pre-occupied right now with my own life to be concerned with somebody else's. – ***** NEWS NEWS NEWS The Hostel kept contacting me about closing at the end of the month. PJ sent a reference to a place called the *North Star*. It's a motel, not too far from Burlington-proper and on the Nr.6 bus (as I learned from my research). Well, I rang them. The nightly rates were a bit more than the Hostel (but they weren't about to close as is the hostel). I asked about weekly rates and THERE! NOT BAD! 250\$! I RESERVED FOR THE 25TH FOR A WEEK AND I CAN RENEW AS I GO ALONG! I HAVE HOUSING IN VT! I JUST ABOUT SHAT MY DRAWERS! (Now the only thing left is the job!) HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY ME! I CAN'T WAIT! I Feel so much better now, knowing that I'm not going up there to absolutely nothing. Will it work out for the very long term? I have no way of knowing. But the fact is, I'm going. I'M GOING TO VT! And the security of knowing that there's someplace to go TO is more relief that I can tell. OK. So the place might not be perfect. No doubt they'll give me some horrid little hole that stinks to all Hell and back. But give me a window, enough warmth and a bit of peace and quiet, a place to keep clean and a place to eat... sitting... not rushing... in

silence? I'll clean the rest! It's a start and that's exactly what I need right now... a start in some place I've never been in, no history, no drama, no BS! I FEEL SO MUCH BETTER NOW! ***** - Tonight I stopped at OWS to "donate" 4 more plastic bags. The guy was thrilled when I told him "They're big enough to sleep in. I know. I've done it." And then came the panic of getting back to the Dung-heap in time to sign-in. But I did... In spite of the sh** at the front door with the x-ray STILL not working! Now we have no x-ray and only ONE SHOWER ON THE FLOOR FOR SOME 35-PLUS MEN TO VIE FOR! LIFE AT THE DUNG-HEAP! Soon ending... soon ending.

Tuesday 18 October

12.49pm and back on a Q32 bus to Queens and... *INDEED!* Ms. "Jewel RN" lodged *quite* the complaint against me! But Jay Conelly, in "Human Resources" was remarkably and *shockingly* kind, I must say! Although, the "allegations" against me were never discussed. I felt no particular reason to get into them at the moment, considering I was already under "Resignation". AND... Ms. Melanie and Ms. Shawn were there as well. It all began as a bit of a "chat", more like and "investigation into allegations". There was absolutely NO mention of nor even an insinuation or implication of "termination of employment" through-out the entire chat. Although, I could see from the facial expressions and the general demeanour of Ms. Melanie and Shawn that that's what they were there for. Clueless little bitches that they've been all through the term of my employment. After Mr. Conelly finished having spoken about the situation as he was to understand it, I, figuring that I'd lead the meeting into the direction where-by SOMETHING firm would have to be said, I smiled and said "This is almost rather funny, considering I've already tendered my formal resignation and would have been out of here in about 3 days." WELL! He said "Really? When?" "Friday." I answered, continuing to smile. And THEN as he asked me where I was going, I actually happened to notice his file cabinet behind him and there, on a drawer was a "UVM" sticker! University of Vermont! So I pointed to the sticker and said "THERE!" He turned to look at the sticker and then back at me and asked "VERMONT?" I said "Isn't that strange? I would have never expected to see that in NYC!" "You obviously hadn't noticed.." he said, as pointed out SEVERAL green VT caps and, well, his office is LOADED with VT! He lived in Burlington! Told me when, what brought him to Burlington, discussed having attended "Town Meetings" and that he was a participant in the proposal to extend city bus service to 24-hours (which was unsuccessful). Then, he assured me that the complaint would not be revealed in ANY reference requests. He then said, as if we'd been buddies for years: "We'll accept

your resignation effective today.” When I said I’m angry over lost income he asked “What are we talking about here? What’s it worth?” I said, calmly, kindly and yet firmly: “Lawyer & Labour Board.” Outcome of that?... I’m being paid through Friday. He even gave me his business card with direct phone number and told me “If you run into any trouble in Burlington, call me.” And the “meeting” was dismissed at that. Mr. Conelly seemed rather relieved. Ms. Melanie and Shawn appeared non-too-happy about the out-come. OBVIOUSLY THEY were out for blood... and soul! Oh well... - On my way out of the office, I stopped by to say an sincere “Fare well” to Ramdai and to thank her for being so wonderful and kind. She arranged for me to get a letter stating that my “RESIGNATION” is effective today and when I got it she said, quietly: “Save that. It shows that you resigned and weren’t fired.” Leave it to Ramdai. Thank you my Darling! You’re quite an amazingly wonderful human being. - It was difficult leaving her, but NOT that environment, that office, nor that miserable “agency”. I merely shut myself down and walked, with my dignity and composure intact, out the door, down the lift and out to the streets where.... I went to Jack’s 9-cent store for something to EAT! (2 cheese pastries and a vanilla Coke). And off to catch a Q32 bus with intentions of going to the post office and PenLib. - WELL! I FELL ASLEEP TO ALMOST THE END OF THE LINE! It’s either over, or the stress has peaked but I woke up at 81st Street and Northern Blvd.! I actually had NO idea where I was! I haven’t done that in YEARS! One stop before the end of the line. Thankfully, not far from the Q53 bus though. OK. Back on track. I just found my way back to the bus and back to the Q53 bus. - At 2:11pm I was on the Q53 bus to Rockaway. Late. But I thought I’d salvage something. Current concern is filling these days now. I’ve packing, sorting, moving from shelter locker to storage. A bit on laundry (jeans, 2 pair). The oddest feeling is that I’m being paid. True, it’s the *very least* they could do. I’ve lost vacation/sick pay due. But, this is rather a god-send. - Now to get on with the day. - By the time I got to the PO is was too late to cram anything much into the day so I got right back on the Q53 bus to the Q32 bus back to where I’d started and here I am, at SIBL, recording this directly. A day wasted. But... a day I’m being paid for. - 6:38pm at SIBL Somebody screwed this damned computer up royally and this is all I’m going to get out of a 63minute session! 18 friggin minutes left! BS! Let me try to catch-up with what-ever I can at this point. - I can’t remember what happened on the days I missed journalling. These days of late have been so hectic. - 9:49pm 6W107 Oddly, it’ll be tough leaving these guys here. I told Tony tonight that I’ll be leaving. Poor guy. All I can sincerely hope for is that this bung-hole of sepsis puts somebody decent in my bed... for his sake. He’s ambitious, caring, respectful, respectable. I hope he gets somebody like himself in here. - I looked at the calendar just now. Hard to fathom: Sunday I’ll spend my last day

here in NYC. Will I miss any of it? I can honestly say: I seriously doubt it. But WOW are the days just slipping by! - Well, it's late, a good chat with Cruz, this phone is pissing me off & I'm ever so hungry. Time for sleep.

Wednesday 19 October

8:19am M15 bus to "Occupy Wall Street". Rain. - After a difficult, restless night and no time to have a bowel movement this morning my back is teetering on painful. *Stress*. Trying to figure how to pack and what to pack. Then get laundry done. Today is linens. I wanted to get another blanket (for OWS). Well, I've 3 big bags. Not much, but maybe they'll help keep 3 people dry today. - We just passed St. Marks Place. I never did get to look for an ear-ring... to replace my "Pegasus" that my "sister" heartlessly threw away with my entire life. - Leaving here is necessary, leaving all of the BS behind... and hopefully the memories as well. (Though I doubt that THAT will EVER happen.) - The rain has finally subsided... until I'm off the bus, no doubt. - 10:30am at the Dunkin Donuts at Liberty Avenue and Woodhaven Blvd. (where, over the MANY months, I've snuck in in the morning, in a panic, to use their loo!). AND IT'S POURING WITH RAIN! I'm having 3 donuts, 1 coffee: 5\$! Unreasonable! Unrealistic! Unsatisfactory. But necessary. - I can't believe it's still morning! I've been moving all along. - I got off the M15 bus at Wall and Water Streets in The City and walked up Wall Street. I actually wanted to weep. The businesses are gone. The banques are gone. Brokers are gone. GONE! Hotels and condos now. Part of Wall Street is barricaded, security kiosks, small pillars of red light. Foreboding. Horrid. *Defeated*. No "suits" on the almost empty streets. *Defeated*. No "finance". *Defeated*. Depressing. Just depressing. When I got to the "Comfort" station at OWS it felt good. "Good". Here, people who know that it *WAS* better and *CAN BE* better again were congregated, under tarps, in ponchos, in the rain. A guy I'd spoken with one night on the week-end recognised me! "Are you still going to Burlington?" He remembered! The world should know: These are not stupid people here. Rather, these are the BRILLIANT people, the ones who know that things are terribly wrong and MUST be made right... NOW, today. Not later. Not after recess. - I left the 3 bags. They were appreciated. - The A train station is moved somehow, in the midst of all the "new construction" in the area. I ducked into the R train station. - Standing on the bright, new Cortlandt station platform, one of the worst-hit years ago I hear ("9/11" 2001) "Occupy Wall Street". A fellow with the words on a white wrist-band. From Boston. Now Northern NH. He came to "Occupy" and see NYC. Headed for the Museum of Natural History, C train, saw my sweat-shirt and needing

directions, figured it safe to ask me. We rode together to 34th Street and I put him on his way. He took an up-town C train. I took a downtown F train to W.4th Street for a down-town A train. The rain had stopped and I was on my way to storage... and ... PACKING! - This evening, being in no particular rush about much of anything, I decided it might be a god idea to try a run on the "AirTrain" to get to the plane on the 24th... just to be certain about the timing. And so...5:11pm at the Howard Beach/JFK station I am just back from my trial run to "Terminal5". And, absolutely sick! The AirTrain stops a *forever* away from the terminal. Walks and moving walk-ways away! Rules. Regulations. Restrictions. Security. Military. Shoe and clothing removal. Degrading Dehumanising. (5:16pm A train. And I never thought I'd say but, it's nice to be on a subway!) Isolation of terminals. Plexiglass. Scanners. Cameras. I say it now as I've said all along: The U.S. LOST on 11 Sept. 2001. This nation lies *DEFEATED*! - 7:2pm3 SIBL and 9 minutes left on the computer. I've just added a little note written on 15 Aug. 08 to the "DA" Journal. Interesting how I shouldn't be here this evening, typing this. Why the HELL I'm still around is anybody's guess. But I am. And I'm heading into a dream, or what was a dream a while ago. - Got to storage and tried to pack. TRIED! I just can't seem to get my head around this! And not being sure how much I'll need right away and how much I CAN bring with me and how much I'll be able to get onto the plane. There's just too many variables involved. I don't have all that much. If I could get a van, just a regular van, I could bring the entire lot with me in one trip. But... that's not an option right now. - Got my hour and some at PenLib today. Printed more info for Burlington. When I get there, by the time I get there, I'll have the whole damned thing memorised! Not bad. I just hope this *North Star* is nice. I almost dread getting into a room that reeks of cigarettes. But there's only one way to find out and if it's that bad, well, I've put up with the shelter for so long. I'll clean! Period. (Just let me get work right away!) - I digress. I do that a lot lately. I can't keep my brain focused on one thing for very long. Too much happening in too little time. - I still can't get over the fact that Marilyn essentially got me *FIRE*D! Had I not put in my resignation when I did, I'd be "Fired" right now. Frigg her! (A F*** is too good for the likes of THAT!) After all I did for her father. Well, it's her guilt over not doing for him her-self. Not to mention, the shame she should feel. Take it out on me. Why not? - Oh... The security at JFK made me sick and now I'm even more-so thinking I'll have to put up with that at the shelter for a few more nights! It's degrading! - But in 5 more days... actually... 6 more days when I get to the *North Star* (I like the way that sounds), I'll be free... again!

Thursday 20 October

8:55am. Q32 bus. Going to drop more at storage this morning then to (hopefully) find one piece of (affordable) luggage for "checked-bag" on Monday. I need to bring both warm and cold weather items. The baggage I have just won't accommodate. - Last night, Tony was quite conversational. 11:30pm was lights out. A bit of a shame that the room goes good as I'm leaving. I could have certainly used a few more weeks of income before this move. But, as with all Life: It is what it is. No more. No less. - I wonder about my resignation. Had I not, had the move not been imminent, would all be any different. - This morning, round 5:30am, Ortiz form security and someone from the courts came in, with flash-light (kind of them to use flash-lights and not put the ceiling lights on, but Ortiz is kind), checking for "E2E2E2". Tony pointed. They looked. They left. Ariel feigned not knowing why they'd come. I don't like that old man. He's asked Tony and Cruz if I'd give him a shave, asked me if Tony and I would witness his Will, plays stupid, innocent and naive... plays. - (9:10am Some idiot comes up to me to lecture me about wearing a kippa on a holiday! I shouldn't draw attention to myself. If I'm not Jewish I shouldn't wear the kippa because it's disrespectful! I told him that, as a Jew I understand NEVER to judge anyone because we don't know their circumstances. Pompous fake piety!) - So Ariel plays the role of not knowing the routine, whines that the room is too cold... On and on. And now the courts are checking for him at 5:30am in the morning. - HAH! THIS, (and the JEW-ON-THE-BUS) Dear Reader, is why most of the world hates Jews. FYI. And why I'm glad to be leaving, moving on and out. - I could use a loo. Another morning of no time to sh**. And here I am, 59th Street and Lexington Avenue at 9:19am. - 4:33pm "I-Hop". 10,87\$ CinnaFrench toast, 2 eggs, hashbrowns, coffee. 13.87\$ with tip. I'm full. - Argument with the turd in unit 4274 at storage today... AGAIN! The ran to tell whom-ever at the desk. The wife claimed I started it. The desk said the woman's daft anyway. Friggin foreigners! - OK. What next? SIBL I suppose... on the holiday where I should schul-hop all night. Oh... screw me. Really. (Kippa is off.) - NEW LUGGAGE. ON SALE. PENNY's QUEENS PLAZA. 40% OFF! *EVERYTHING WILL FIT!* - Storage looks a bit emptier. I have nothing left in this life. -10:32pm 6W-107 OK. No sh**. The door is closed. In the dark, Cruz is clearing his congestion. Rumbling congestion. And AS - as in WHILST - he's clearing/rumbling I hear a young (maybe 35-40 y/o) male voice, from somewhere in the vicinity of the end of his locker say "Sounds good." with a touch of sarcasm in the tone. I was on Twitter here. I looked up in the direction of the voice and as I did so, the door to the room opened enough for someone to walk out into the hall. Now, Cruz, 60 year old, PuertoRican, slight accent. Berlin, 74 year old, stereo-typical "Jewish" accent. Smith, 56 year old, Queens accent. - This IS THE ORIGINAL Bellevue Hospital. -

I leave this entry at that.

Friday 21 October

2:05pm Q53 bus to the Q32 bus to SIBL. I was out this morning at about 6:30am. on an M34 bus to the F train to the A train to storage. I AM PACKED! - AND... I RECEIVED A CALL FROM "VERMONT RESPITE! JOB OFFER! *HOSPICE!* BUT I NEED A VERMONT LNA (Licensed Nursing Assistant). OK. But, a JOB already! - When I'd done with the packing I stopped for PopTarts and a bottled coffee at Compare Market. Then... on my way on a Q53 bus to PenLib for 2 sessions. *Much* look-up on maps of Burlington and an e-mail to VBON (Vermont Board of Nurses) with regard to the LNA test there. Confirmation of radio interview for Thursday after I arrive. There's a woman with whom I've been "tweeting" who has a radio show out of Burlington. She wants PJ and I to be "the show"! Imagine that! New me, new town, new life... ON THE RADIO! WHAT NEXT! I have to wonder: Does this bode WELL? I'll find out... when I get there. - Joel, a librarian at Peninsula Library said he's sorry I'm leaving. "Goodbyes". They're beginning... Some of them hurt deeply. Others are, in all honesty, a relief. - Out of the library, on to a Q21 bus to RiteAid for cigarettes and a Coke.- Q22 bus to B116th Street and the post office for PAYSTUBS! Current and "Bonus"! (The frigging "bonus" of 500\$ was TAXED! I got about 450\$ out of it! Seriously! The BS we put up with... even to the very VERY END! No matter HOW HARD we WORK our arses off, trying to simply make do, get by in the most humble fashion, there's always SOMEBODY with their hand at the "GRAB"! Life... it makes me completely SICK!) - Q53 bus and crossing Broad Channel at 2:15pm. Noel Road. Trees. The North Channel Bridge. Good-bye. Jamaica Bay will soon be... "lac Champlain". Soon... REAL SOON! - The clock runs faster than I. - 9:19pm and back at the asylum and Aziz just came in to wish me good luck on the move "up-state". I told only Ms. Henika and Tony about the leaving. Hmmm... How, I wonder, did the news get to the 2nd floor? Hmmm... Now my anxieties mount. 2 more days. What BS will somebody pull to thwart or stall this? Well, no matter what, the move WILL HAPPEN! EVEN IF I HAVE TO SERIOUSLY HURT SOMEBODY TO MAKE IT! I'M IN NO F***ING MOOD FOR THIS SH**! NO MOOD AT ALL! Still, Aziz is one of the PRECIOUS FEW people whom I seriously will, with my heart, miss... terribly. - No hot water tonight. I'm off to a cold "ante-bed" shower. - BUT... Scrubs washed. Socks washed. Socks and scrub bottoms hanging in the window to dry. I've set-up a bit of a "line" across the window for that now that the guys in the room can be trusted (as much as they can be). And for me? It's time to WRAP THIS DAY UP and see if I'll be

able to get any sleep tonight. Things have been a bit better of late, since David has been gone. It's turning into a "great room"... I hope it stays that way when I'm gone... Please? These guys, especially Tony and Cruz deserve a "good" room.

Saturday 22 October

6:08am and an M15 bus, 42nd Street and 1st Avenue. To wake in the morning in the shelter, shower in a communal stall, then ride past the U.N. is sickening. To think of all those "diplomats" and their "ilk", having all that "power" and money, and prestige and such, mere streets away from a "shelter" for people who have no place to call "house", let alone "home". And people like me, WORKING and STILL not being able to swing a simple flat anywhere! Government! It needs to be done-away with, revamped, re-structured. As Mum used to say: bulldoze and start all over. - 6:18am/ Q60 bus pulling out at 60th Street. This morning my connections are amazing! - There is *so* much I'd like to catch-up on. But the horrid *fatigue* that grips during the day is little short of an out-right atrocity. I don't think it's all physical. There isn't a moment when my mind isn't *reeling* with trying to plan for the days to come. Financially, I'm certainly *not* well-prepared... not comfortably anyway. And what should have been 10 days of shelter at least, in Burlington, has been cut down to a mere 7 because the hostel, which I was hoping to stay in for at least 2 weeks is closing and they can give me only a week. In only 7 days I must find a place in which to reside in a town completely unknown, in the midst of people... unknown. No guaranteed job. Qualified for many things but assured of nothing. I don't know how to pack my few belongings for the flight. So many new rules and regulations now. To think, once, a long, long time ago, I used to fly as easily as walking from room-to-room in my own home. Today the very notion cramps my gut. Things are nothing even *like* "the same". It sometimes becomes over-whelming. It sometimes becomes murderous. But blindly, I just keep moving along. I don't know how and I try not to think about it. I *can't*... - And at this point, I can't change my mind about this... well, I suppose I could... change my mind and stay if needed. But I've resigned from work here and already told of my departure. Surely, Ms. Henika would understand, but as surely, the "system" will not. I doubt I'd be able to rescind the resignation. And I doubt I'd be able to cope with much more time in the shelter. AND... I'm certainly NOT in a position to find housing in NYC at this moment. TRAPPED! But like a rat in some lab cage, I adapt, closing my mind against my trepidations, ever moving forward... like a lemming... to the sea. 6:36am. 60thSt at the Queensborough Bridge and we are riding into the sun-rise. This morning, so far, the timing, is great. But I am disgustingly

early. And there's no place to pass time at this hour. No place to sit comfortably and wait. *I've out-run myself*. - Queens. The most diverse place on earth. Languages. Cultures. Nations. Even right here, on this bus, I'm hearing at least 4 different languages.. simultaneously: Haitian Creole, Spanish, Portuguese, and shockingly... English. It's amazing. It's rather stimulating. It's fascinating. But when I think how hard I work, a native-born, to reside in a shelter... it's maddening at times when I think of all of the "hand-outs" that SO many "immigrants" receive... BECAUSE I'M WORKING TO PAY TAXES THAT CREATE AND MAINTAIN THOSE HAND-OUTS! ME... AND SO MANY OTHERS! ITS REPULSIVE! - 6:49am Waiting for... at Woodhaven. This is the *last Saturday*! The last Saturday morning I'll stand here, on a corner I've become familiar and comfortable with. In a place that was, until only about 4 short years ago, strange territory but has since become "Home". Queens. Imagine. "Home". I no longer have any emotional ties to The Bronx. Once was a time ioyyuuuooioipoipipipiiiiipiiikuhhh (6:55am Q11bus... that string was entered in my pocket. I'll leave it in.) when I couldn't possibly imagine being anywhere else on Earth. The Bronx is my history, my ancestry, my heritage. The Bronx was my "Home". It was "Beautiful". Today? "My" Bronck's is gone, much like *EVERY* bit of *EVERY* thing that *WAS* "me". Today, "*I*" am different. "*I*" am changed. "*I*" am *new*. And "*I*" am still changing. I am oft'times amazed at how changed "*I*" am (and yet still some-what so "same"). I am truly awe-struck at how I've adapted to so much, survived so much. And today, how I manage to take yet another assault in stride... alone... so *totally ALONE*. Alone. Alone. It truly is "awesome". - 7:06am Day-light. Day-light. Myrtle Avenue and Woodhaven Blvd. "Woodhaven". I used to hear the name on the radio and dream of being on Woodhaven Blvd. Today I'm here. Jamaica Ave. Today, I'm here. I'm here and the days are disappearing. But today, I'm here...

Sunday 23 October

10:05am "Suite" Number: 6W107 Cruz is still in bed. Tony went to breakfast. (He invited me but I thought I had too much to do.) Ariel is... out. AND I CAN'T FOCUS ON ANY ONE THOUGHT LONG ENOUGH TO COMPLETE IT! It's down to the last little things and they're the most difficult. Hair-cut. Laundry. The fact that I have to WEAR clothes to DO laundry. Planning Monday's departure time. "Occupy Wall Street" to drop blankets (I am NOT leaving them here and not taking them with.) What I can take, what I can't take. How much. How little. The bleating curfew. TIME! NO TIME! And yammering in the hall. It's breaking. AND AZIZ KNOWING ABOUT ME! KNOWING I'M LEAVING! SCREWS AROUND WITH MY HEAD. EXPECTING

SOME KIND OF BS. - Anticipatory Anxieties. That's all it really is.
There's been a sticker on my locker since I arrived:

Our government is the potent, omnipresent teacher. Crime is contagious. If the government becomes a law-breaker, it breeds contempt for the law; it invites every man to become a law unto himself, it invites anarchy.

Louis D. Brandeis

1856-1941

Associate Supreme Court Justice

I don't know why it's there, nor who put it there, and I've often wondered if it was there so that "I" would come along and see it. But I now have it here, in this journal, and one day, maybe, I'll come back to this journal and read it again... and wonder... again... - 1:58pm 6W107 Ariel is back but WOW! All is so *quiet*! And I? I have a fresh hair-cut and beard-trim. Nose and eyebrows as well. Today I noticed THREE SUPER-LONG eye-brow hairs! Amazing! I've let my-self go so much to Hell of late. - But, the locker is cleared and a bag ready to go to storage. - This day is gone. But the hair-cut was necessary as was the beard trim. Now? A shower, out to storage, and hopefully find time to eat something substantial. 8 PopTarts all day yesterday. Not good. No wonder I'm feeling cold (in 22.5°C in here... SUN BLARING IN! DELIGHTFUL!) - 3:24pm on an M34 bus with... Hair cut. Beard trimmed. Jammyscrubs hanging to dry back at the "suite". And I am en route to storage at last! AND SO BLEATING HUNGRY! - 5:37pm "I HOP" (yes... again) I need to stop this but... FOOD! - Carrying Monday's clothes back to the shelter. - I'm on a verge. - I've the feeling the room will miss me. But I keep thinking of how George (D15) left 1st, then Rey, leaving me with that trash that came into 5W-101 when I was "D18". THAT won't happen again. And so, Ariel was a bit chatty. All is so "cozy" in that room now. I sometimes wonder... If I stayed one month longer it would be much better, *financially*. Yet, knowing DHS and, as Ms. Emaly calls it, "de seestem", the longer I remain, the better my chances of being screwed some-how. Better to leave now. - Cool shower. Strip bed. As I got to the stairs, the guard (haggy thing, hair a-skew) grabbed for her log book. I'm suspicious: Only Ms. Henika and Tony were told of my leaving. Now, Cruz and Aziz know. How did word get about and what am I to expect? My nerves are up until I'm out of the building tomorrow morning. - 4:18pm MMLib This is the sort of day that reminds me of how and why it is so important to get out of and away from NYC. 2 hours to get from Rockaway to Mid-town. Had to stand on the Q32 bus most of the way (that, after the driver

closed me in the door then wouldn't open the back door to let people out!). There are several computers open but my "appointment" is for 5:30pm at only 15mins! And the WiFi is so slow that the battery on the iPod is running out and I've accomplished NOTHING! Somebody at this table stinks of mutton. It's disgusting all round. Oh and now funky-Homeless. Nice reminders: GET THE bleating HELL OUT! (Tomorrow morning... should've been THIS morning.) - 4:32pm True to NYC form, no WiFi on the 5th floor of a LIBRARY! There's an outlet to charge or plug in one's lap-top but no WiFi. Everything in this city has gone half-assed. Time to leave. *THIS* is no longer the city I spent most of my life in and used to love. *THIS* is an inexcusable farce and I'm very much out of it. - 10:29pm Room 6W-107 Bed nr.E4... Tonight I close NYC8539266. I do so, sadly. My dorm-mates are a delight, over-all. Tonight Tony was intrigued by the Hebrew language and we talked much on the topic. *He* talked about *his* 6-months of living out-side of Burlington and attending a Town Hall meeting.. extending the hours of public buses. The notion and motion... were killed. - Ariel joined the conversation on Hebrew. Cruz is more concerned about my well-being in the new place. -

Tonight we signed-in on the 5th floor. The halls here are familiar. The noise, echoed yelling, the odours, it's all familiar. - This is a tough night... a tough night. - I've taken a small half Xanax. It's all.. so very **bitter-sweet**. May the guys get a respectable and respectful replacement. (I feel as if I'm leaving Family.)



Good night... Bellevue.



POST SCRIPT

The editing of this journal has been almost incredible. It has been a delight to re-live moments on the beach, being with great and kind people, travelling around a place that could be so pleasant at one moment and then, with-in a second, so contrary. And it has been deeply painful because, as I've read, amazingly, the visuals of so many entries run in my mind and soul, with the clarity of actually being present in the moment. The sounds of voices, the cacophony in the halls as yelling, hollering, shouting... and yes, sometimes, even laughter echoed as each utterance bounced about, went silent and was replaced by yet, another. Clear... crystal clear. Even the odours of the ancient halls returned... the smells of years of "hospital", abandonment, sweat, blood, and all such. It was in my mind. It was in my nostrils. I don't suppose any of this will ever go away. And, I don't much know that I'd want it to.

It has been quite some many years since these events were my "existence" and yet, today, as it has been with all the days since I left the Shelter, I still feel some-what "removed" from a general society, still feel rather out-cast, expendable. There is a great part of me that *sobs* when I see a Homeless person, or speak with one. And there remains an attachment to those who are living in a public shelter and those who have experienced living in a public shelter. There is a definite difference in the way one views the world after Shelter Life. For rather vast stretches of time, I actually yearn to communicate *only* with the Homeless, because *only* the Homeless are able to understand, sympathize and empathize. I vehemently resent the condescension and patronization of those who cry "We must help the Homeless!" and "Nobody should be Homeless!" and the very worst "We must join together to cure Homelessness!" "CURE"? Firstly, Homelessness is not a "disease" of either body nor mind. However, if "cure" is a term that you feel most comfortable with, then I would put it to you: Homelessness will exist for as long as there are people on this planet. It will exist for as long as the cost of existing exceeds the wages paid for labour. But most important... Homelessness is not a disease of the person, it is a "fault" of society and of government.

Am I “bitter”? Perhaps. But I doubt that any person who has actually been Homeless isn't, to some degree. To actually realise, each and every moment of each and every day that there were those who wouldn't offer any assistance “up” and out of such a situation... and to know, forever, that there were those who actually were instrumental in the occurrence and not be bitter? Particularly when those who contributed to the pain were “relatives” (certainly not “family”) and self-proclaimed “friends” makes the pain all the deeper, the wound all the more raw. And this is a wound that will, obviously, never heal. It is, even as these words become print, very open, very raw, after so much time.

But there were those, who have been mentioned and who are to be mentioned, who, even in the slightest of gestures, gave more than they imagined then, and more than they could ever imagine. Because of them, this manuscript has been given this “life”... and my Promise to the guys at the Shelter has been fulfilled. With-out those kindnesses, this story would never be told, the Promise, never kept.

It has been MONTHS of re-compilation for this work. Months of each and every day, most often beginning at 6:00am and, most often, ending for mere “naps” at 1:00 or even 3:00am. It has been constant... and for the most part, it has been brutal. But... as I finish this evening I just want to say:

To those guys on the 5th and 6th floors... You're STILL in my heart, and soul, and will be there as long as both exist. Here's YOUR story! WE did it!

May “Life” make amends for what you'd been dealt, may those amends be your blessings and true contentment... forever.

Thank you all... I suppose... I guess... well... I love you!

ROCKAWAY



NEW YORK

The View Out Of The Window Of The Plane As I Left...
Rockaway, Rock Park, Tilden, The Fort, The Bakfort...
Home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Not merely personal notes, but an integral part of what this book is:

Aside from a personal sense of obligation to acknowledge these people, I put this list in as a way of letting the World know just what kind of people made what kind of a difference to me, to tell the World how magnificently supportive these kind people were, and maybe to teach the rest of the World that it doesn't take all that much to put a bit of joy into someone else's life and that if you have the opportunity to do so, you truly are under an immense obligation to do so. If you fail at this, at lightening the burden of another person, even for the briefest moment, with as little as a kind word or a moment of listening, I can tell you: there are few greater shames you'll carry with you through the rest of your life.

From The Bronx:

Ginette Soto, my “niece” from The Bronx Central to Sedgewick who be-friended me in such a very important way: she gave shelter from the elements to a complete stranger, she talked WITH me, shared her own life-stories and let me into a wonderful part of her life. But so very much more important, she actually listened to me, never judged me for anything other than the person I am, and gave me her “Friendship”. I'd have given up LONG before ever getting this book done with-out you G.

From “The Rock”:

Tommy B (a.k.a. ekrubymmot): I don't even know where to begin, honestly. But by now I'm sure Penelope's already told you all you need to know (and a whole lot more). When I was out there,

under the tree, you had that wisdom to know how it might be. “Take the bus”. I never did, but you were the only one who offered me a place to go to, out of the rain, wind, night dew. You were THE only one... True, that. There can't be a bigger heart or a brighter soul than yours... and you opened a part of them to me! There's no way I could ever thank you to balance that out.

Penelope: At the time I didn't see it, but truth is, you gave absolutely everything you actually could give. So many layers to your life, so much in your heart, mind and soul, and all of it is nothing short of what the word really means: awesome. When we first met, that wonderful Winter, sitting out there at “the other end” of the world, talking, you told me I had the opportunity to re-write my entire life... Well Penelope, it might not be a “re”-write, but look at this! It's a “write”. And had you not been there in The Fort... it would have been, at best, one square inch in the local tabloids, somewhere at the bottom of the obits. See what you've done? (PS: I still keep your age in my heart... they can't get at it there.) Where-ever you are, I know you're turning stone into magnificence, as you always did, and aer filling this old world down here with inspiration. And with heart and soul I hope that you're at Peace.. creating art and dancing to the music with your husband and sons. Lucky them to have you back... poor us to have had to lose you.

Sully: Believe it or not, not only is it my honour to have met you, but in many ways, this book got written because of our talks and explorations and the curiosity you inspired in me. The parts of The Fort that few (if any, other than you and I) have ever seen in recent decades that you and I discussed and, at different times, explored, helped me survive the early days. And being able to talk about them with you gave me the courage to just walk out there, that first night, unafraid.

Kristen and Mat: (I have to put you two together because, well, that's how you always were.) Kristen, something as seemingly unimportant as those scrubs truly did turn my life around. They weren't the ones that ultimately got me back into the work-force, but they certainly did their bit to keep my head above the crowds that probably would have other-wise pulled me into a deeper and darker Hell. And Mat? I wonder if you still remember the night on the dunes and the day after, dead-ass exhausted, gathering beach plums. (I know that doesn't sound ANYTHING like what it truly was, but it'll give people reason to ask you. Maybe one of these days the “right” one will ask... the “right” question and the World will get to see more of your wonderful smile.)

Debra: Just seeing you on the bus or the street always made me feel so much better. And luckily it never came to that point, but there you were, offering a little piece of the limited space you had in your home... which is one HELL of a lot MORE than anybody else ever did. The entire World can learn a very important lesson from you... Compassion. But right now, there's one person who'll never forget you and will always be grateful to you.

From “The Castle Bellevue”, The place we called “Home... less”

Aziz: HEY! Check this out! It ain't that “Reality TV Show” we talked about, (I still don't think the World's ready to accept having to watch the Homeless... especially not on their TV... IN THEIR HOUSES? TOO close for comfort! We might stain the rug or something. You know?) but DAAAAMN! It's a BOOK!

Dennis B: Brother? I will NEVER live long enough to forget that evening at the Nr.6 train, seeing you off in the middle of the night when you were on the way to Forbell! As I sit here now, I can still see the look on your face and believe it or not, still feel the panic that going into the “unknown” filled my gut with that night. I don't know where you are now, but where-ever it is, I hope the people you find yourself with are giving you that respect you worked so damned hard to get and so well deserve. I haven't seen that you won that lottery, but I'll always hope that you do, whether it be money or just seeing your dreams become realities... all of them.

Rey: Truth... every time I find myself on a road I've never traveled before, your name comes to my mind and I can't help but wonder “Was Rey ever on this one?” I was so lucky to have you for a dorm-mate at a time when I was just right at the edge of throwing everything into the “sh**ter”. Believe it or not, I got most of my strength and courage from watching you. Where-ever you are today, I hope you're happy, comfortable and just as entertained by the World as you seemed to be when we'd have those talks about all the land you've covered. And Rey? Thanks... just for being.

George: By now I hope “Georgi” is a distant stranger and I sincerely hope that your world took a quick turn on a sharp bend and you've found yourself in a place that surrounds you with the finest things in life. And if not? I hope there's somebody to take your shoes when they should be taken.

Kendall: Kendall, Kendall, Kendall! When you left, the plot stopped thickening and just went all to sh**. With all my heart I hope you finally got to the “Reservations” clerk and got the holiday package you wanted... and so deserve! Kriste! Even all these years later I still find myself calling out: “KENDALL! Just what the fuk happened here?” and telling people “Ah... and the plot thickens...” You gave us all the most wonderful gift anybody could possibly give to anybody else: laughter... in a place that other-wise could have been nothing but a seething cesspool of Hell's septic. There was all that talk about turning the Shelter into some swank hotel... I hope they do! And I'll be waiting at the lobby desk for you! We'll get that “holiday” you booked!

Rich: We all wondered why you never came back to “visit” after you left but once WE left, I'm pretty sure we all understood. I know I understand now. Once out, it's not the kind of place you go back to on a sunny day for a cozy picnic. But just imagine, every day I'd go to work, in your old stomping grounds, and just about every day, while I was waiting for a bus or walking to the train, I'd almost expect to find you on your way to or from someplace in the neighbourhood... until, of course, they closed the OTB.

Rick: Wise Old Sage... I think I'd have to say that you were, without a doubt, my Mentor. Truth is, most of what I learned on the 5th floor was from watching and listening to you. To me, anyway, you were the one who kept the order, brought the class to attention, and, considering where we were (an old hospital for the insane), you were the one who maintained the sanity in a group that very well could have gone amok. I remember, even today, the day I left the 5th floor and how you calmly said “You're not coming back.” I have to admit to you: THAT really did shock me... that you knew, you could tell. And all these years later, in a way, it still haunts me. I always wanted to go back, to say “Goodbye” to you the proper way and to say “Thank you” to you for all that you were and all that you did, especially for me (even if you didn't know how much you actually did). And I don't know why I didn't. When I did go back and Margaret told me that you'd shipped out to someplace better, I was sad to think you weren't there, but happier than you can imagine that you weren't still there. Where-ever you are, I know it's clean, orderly and one of the

best places a person can imagine. But most of all, I hope you're happy. You deserve to be happy. (PS: If you ever get to read this, my little altercation with "Security" about the mop and bucket? That really was about you. Maybe YOU weren't in the building in person, but you sure as Hell were in spirit.)

Tony Muscle: Of all the people in all the Shelters in the world... believe it or not, I carried that sad-eyed little puppy you brought in that night, with me, for many years after I left the shelter, until I was damned foolish enough to trust somebody who certainly didn't deserve any of my trust, and she simply let it slip away. You know, they should have paid us for the entertainment we gave them all. I don't remember who said it, but somebody told me: Of all the people in this place, you two are the most unlikely pair... I never did quite figure out just what that meant or was supposed to mean, but in the long run, it doesn't matter. What does matter is that you made a really big impression on me (which is something nobody should take the "wrong" way), and I have to say "Thank you". Over the years, when-ever I look at that sad-eyed little puppy I always have to wonder: You were always either in a great mood or seriously heading for some business affair... but because you actually noticed other people and often cared about them, who is that little puppy... and why did you give it to me?

Keith "Pops": Ah... "Pops", the quiet Monarch. I don't mind telling you that the day you left, that's when things started to go pretty bleak. You and I never really did get to talk much, but I watched and saw what kind of difference you made on Rey, and when you weren't there any more... nothing was the "same" ever again. I don't know how, and I don't know why because you were there when I'd arrived. But you had some kinda impact on pretty much everybody, and in the best way. But today I hope that where-ever you are, your comfortable, in a place where you're really happy and Life is the way you want it... what-ever that may be.

Mark: I know I pissed you off, but you took it in the wrong direction, as I saw. But I've always hoped, as I do now, that you realise your potential and bring it to yourself and to the world.

Charles, Craig, Cyrus, Do-Rag, Jackson, Kalib (Shalom, habibi!), **Ripley:** I don't think there'll ever be a group that could bring more "fun" into a miserable situation. 30th Street was damned lucky to have you guys there. And even if they don't see it that way, I did, do and always will. Obviously... you're not forgotten.

Charley: If they asked me today, I'd say the same thing; Respect, to you and from you. The World can be a bitter shaft in the wrong place and people can truly be miserable, nasty and judgmental... and so damn harsh against the people they don't know and never take the time to know. Truth is, where you're concerned, it's their loss, not yours. The day you told me, quietly, to my face, that you're not a likeable person, it really pissed me off. You really are a likeable person... for so many reasons and in so many ways. I'll never claim to "know" you but I will say that the part of you that I talked with... well, that's the Charley I'll keep with me and I'll be forever grateful for our brief time together. You just keep being who you are. The World won't appreciate it, but I will.

From "Revisited"

Steve: BEER! (It HAD to begin with that word some-how!) Every morning you got up, in the dark, got yourself together and headed out... to work...to a job. If anybody at all truly understands this book, I know YOU do. That Shelter really put the screws to you every time you went round a corner or down a hall. No matter what the "Truth" might be, I'll always believe that some-where in their souls, you scared them. And if you didn't, you damn-well should have. You survived YEARS on the rails, under the streets of NYC, survived YEARS of pain and suffering, especially in your legs! And in spite of all the sh** the World tried to bury you under, you still smiled, joked and brought smiles to others. You "managed" that same World that did everything it could to put you out of it! Well sir, where-ever you are on this nasty place we call "Earth", I hope you're in some place where you can put your feet up, actually enjoy your beer when-ever you damn-well please. I hope you have good people around you who appreciate where you've been and what you've been through. I hope you're comfortable, safe and in a place where you have some peace.

Guillermo "Viejo": Sometimes you drove me to the brink of insanity. But you know? Bottom-line, it tore a little piece of me every time you'd say "I'm gonna miss you." And today I can tell you... yup, I said the same thing to myself about you... and truth is... I do, I do miss you.

Anthony "Tony": Around the world and around the city... we didn't get much time to talk or to get to know each-other very well, but I think you should know that it was difficult leaving that dorm the morning I walked out. Of all the people in the Shelter, some-how I've always felt a little

guilty, because I kept wondering “what” they put into my spot in that room. The best part though was that, at least David was finally gone. But as we say: You know the Hell you have, but if that goes, you never know *what* the Hell will come to take its place. Well, what-ever it was that filled my little corner, I do hope it was good and I hope he was respectful and respectable. But most of all, I hope that what-ever time you spent in that place after I left, it was short and that today you're out and in a place safe and comfortable.

From The Beginning And Still In The Heart:

I have to use the names I know for these people, but in no way do I mean any disrespect...

Peace Ochiaga: Can you possibly believe that even as I type this, I can still clearly see the first evening you and I sat in that office and talked? I most seriously doubt that I'll ever be able to erase any of that from my mind. You were the first one to actually talk to “me” as a “human being” and the very first one to actually ask “me” how “I” was feeling at a time when I didn't have any reason or cause to believe that any of “me” still existed. You once told me, I remember very well: “I can't save everybody, but if I can make only one person's life better in a day, I'm satisfied.” That might not be the exact words, but it's so very close.

Lydia Khenkina: I honestly don't know, can't seem to find the “right” words... but if there truly is something that people call “Divine Intervention”, if there really is some benevolent “force” or Being that has the ability to bestow some kind of “blessing” on us, well then, I would have to say that you are that “blessing”. What an absolutely astonishing experience over the course of my life-time it has been to have met you, albeit for a brief moment in all of time. And how truly amazing that you, of all people, are the one I spoke with last, at a time when I couldn't have been much lower, in my self-esteem. To think that you were the last person I can recall, the very last person in that “system” with whom I sat and talked, and you alone actually turned the bitterness that is my “Journal” completely round and today, I have to tell the World that there is, (or, if you've moved on and away from it all, there was) ONE true “Human” heart beating, ONE truly compassionate soul, ONE honest and trust-worthy individual in what might very-well be compared to a pit of voracious pythons and burnt-out, apathetic people who no longer have the ability to see the vulnerability of those whom they originally came to help. When I try to think of

sufficient ways, proper words to express my deepest and most sincere thanks to you, my head just reels! Honestly, I was in shock when you spoke with me, as one Human-being to another. And I'd have to admit that even today, I'm still in shock that I, of all people, had the great fortune and "blessing" to have been able to meet you. SO many times I've spoken about you to SO many others, and every time, with-out fail, I've said: If ALL of the people in ALL of the service organisations that claim to exist to "HELP" the Homeless were you, everything even remotely associated with Homelessness and Homeless people would be nothing but "Success". The chaos, mayhem and utter Bedlam that is the "system" today would simply cease to exist. You, single-handedly inspire self-esteem, a sense of great self-worth, assurance, and an actual desire to move forward, move on and move into a productive and respectable place in society, to continue to reach for goals and aspirations. That's something that the "system" in general fails miserably at imparting to those of us who sit at those desks, feeling like nothing more than some 7-digit number on a cardboard file, a bit of wasted flesh, a disposable playing piece in some Machiavellian game of darkness and despair. For all it may be worth, I can tell you honestly and with all my heart and soul: If by saving one, you save the world, this world is saved, there's no more to be done. I am so humbled because there is no way and there are no words that can express my gratitude to you and for having met you. And if there is any justice any-where in this time we call "Life", where-ever you go, you certainly are due true Contentment.

Debbie Crawford: I will never be able to forget your kindness toward me, especially that one day on 116th Street when you took me, personally, to the side to ask me how "I" felt when we went to investigate potential housing, and how you actually said to me "I don't see you in a place like this. There's better out there and we'll find it." You are among the truly rare "People" in a system that seems to pride itself on apathy. And I know that, from the "Clients" side of your desk, there are probably only about 3... maybe 5 who understand what you actually do FOR those who come to you for help, branching-out into not just one but as many different directions as you can find to find that "better place" for them. The Homeless are very fortunate if their little blue folder finds its way to your desk. I'll never know how mine found you, or you found it, but WOW! I was one of "The Most Fortunate" and I am one of the eternally grateful.

Renée Simmons: In many ways I owe you an apology. And if I put that here, I can only hope that you'll accept it because it is sincere. But let me just say to you: As time went by and I got know you for as much as the circumstances would allow, there is one thing I used to actually enjoy

telling the other “clients” when they'd say disparaging things about you: “She's doing what it is she has to do. There's somebody over her who makes the rules and regulations, who dictates the protocol and there isn't a damned thing she can do about it. To me, she's fair. I work 'with' her and not 'against' her, and I believe that if you'd at least try to do the same, you too would see that she's pretty much OK.” I said it then, I say it now, and I will always say it. At the beginning I couldn't see any of that. But I'm sure you knew what my mind was going through at the time and when, one day, when I said to you “I don't know how you manage to put up with all of the verbal attacks you get from these men.” you calmly said “I don't take any of it personally.” I didn't know then and I don't think I ever will know, really, how you couldn't take much of it to heart, but I hope you didn't take anything I may have said (or written) to heart because, in the long-run, I think you and I worked together rather well... and I appreciated then, and I appreciate now, all that you managed to do to help me. I understand you left 30th Street and I hope that where-ever you are, what-ever you're doing, your finally getting the respect you so deserve.

Ms. Singleton: I have to admit, we didn't have much contact, and even the contact we had was brief, but if there's one thing that made all the difference in the World to me, it would be that, even when you were being slammed with work, even when you were in the midst of some of the most disrespectful onslaughts I can think of, surrounded by yelling, screaming, hollering and vulgar personal attacks... you always, some-how, shot a smile in my direction and gave me that much-needed kick to keep going. I knew then, as I know now, that you didn't “have” to make any effort at all to do anything at all for me. But you did... and believe me when I tell you: It made ALL the difference in the World to me. I'll thank you forever.

Uloma Enyi: There were those who actually dreaded you, and admittedly, at first, I was amongst them. But at the very foundation of all that I will always remember, the one thing that has never been dulled in my memory is the day I came to see you after having a rather curt and some-what mutually insulting episode early on in my “Shelter days” and you, very calmly and respectfully said to me “We got off on a bad start. Let's put that aside and see if we can't move on to something better from here.” I appreciated that so very much, you set what became my precedence for looking at all the others with whom I'd come in contact along that path of being in and getting out of the Shelter. I thank you for that. You took what could have become an extremely distasteful future for me and all the others with whom I'd come in contact, and turned it around... to something very much more “civil”... for me... and for them.

(Mr. Alexander and Ms. Berman): In my memory of all the time I'd spent at 30th Street, I will NEVER forget the late night I sat with both of you, in your "office" on the 6th floor, watching helplessly as my world came collapsing in on itself, wondering how in Hell I was going to survive an 8-hour commute to maintain a job and remain "compliant" when the news of my "transfer" came! I'll never forget how you actually listened to me when I spoke. I'll always remember the words of "Alexander": 'We can't do this. You can't commute all that time.' And the words of "Berman": 'You'll lose your job and we're not in the business of making people lose their job.' I don't know if you, "Alexander", recall the out-come of that night, but I certainly do, vividly: You came into the dorm about 5 minutes after I'd left your office, and in the dark you called my bed number, handed me my "assignment" sheet and said "You're staying here." (It still brings tears to my eyes even as I type this today.) And all I could say at that moment was "God Bless You!" But your response was what makes the memory indelible: "In all my years in this business, this is the FIRST time ANYBODY has blessed me." Well, it still holds as far as I'm concerned and I hope it wasn't the LAST time SOMEBODY wished you the same.

The Kind Woman in Operations (night shift): When, on my earliest days at 30th Street, I was assigned a room where the previous fellow refused to leave, and I was in a state of complete and utter confusion and chaos, you calmly and softly said to me: "It's all been taken care of and we'll see to it that he gets a good room to go to. Now you go up-stairs and get some sleep tonight." and then, some days later, we met in the hall on the 2nd floor and you addressed me, BY NAME and said "Good-morning." I was then, and remain utterly dumbfounded. When, at long last, I had the opportunity to thank you for your kindness, in person, I will never forget how you simply replied "That's what we're here for." WELL! Once again, I am at a complete loss for ways to express my deepest and truly sincere gratitude. Indeed, you work with stern resolve and always demanding respect. But if the World were a fair place, respect would simply come to you, because you are so much more than deserving of it... always.

The female Guard who's name I never got: I said it to you then, I say it to you now... you were the first one, the first "Security Guard" who ever gave me the gift of "Humanity"... You were the first to address me with any kind of respect and dignity. And in all my days at 30th Street, that never changed. It's my loss that I never got your name so that I could address you properly. But I do remember that your husband also worked in Security and I do remember having had one or two opportunities to tell him just how very blessed and how wonderful it is that he should have

you in his life. And the truth is: the “residents” of 30th Street are equally blessed by your presence. May you always be treated with the respect you give because that's truly remarkable and so very much deserved.

Mr. (Officer) Ortiz: When I came back for that short “revisit” to 30th Street and saw that you'd been promoted, I was very glad to see that you were still there, and a bit saddened by the knowledge that you were still in a position where most of the “residents” or “clients” wouldn't treat you with any kind of disrespect. In my first weeks in the Shelter, you were, in all likelihood, the very first person who reached out a Human and compassionate hand to me at a time when I was so completely alone and empty. In the total confusion and chaos, you were the one voice of Reason and genuine concern. I had absolutely no idea where to turn, what to do, what to say or to whom I could turn for any kind of assurance or help. I'd been assigned a bed in a room where the fellow who was supposed to have vacated remained. I had no idea what I was expected to do! And when I brought it to the attention of “Operations” I was told to go up to the room, tell him he had to leave and to move in. But you told me to stay where I was, relax and take it easy and you immediately put the whole situation “right”. Every time after that, and even when I came back to the Shelter for that brief while, you always, with-out fail, addressed me in the most courteous and respectful manner. When, at the end of my most harrowing days on the job, I came into the building wanting nothing other than to sit quietly for a moment and take a deep breath, I'd see you at the entrance, all the anxieties of the day were left out-side the front door and I knew, some-how, I wasn't just another nameless, worthless bit of stuff dragging through the doors of Bedlam (or, in this case... Bellevue). I recall one evening when you came, on rounds, to the 4-bed dorm I was in on the 5th floor, you politely stood at the door and said “It smells good in here! Thank you.” (I understood then, and I still understand now, why that made a difference.) But the MOST important point is that you treated everybody in the same manner, no matter what the circumstances, no matter how nasty someone might approach or address you! I'll never know and probably never understand how you do it, but I can and do want you to know that the difference you made, to and for me, is something that has lasted all through these years and I will always be truly grateful.

Vivian: I will always remember our little “chats” about Greece, Europe, the U.S., politics, the state of global affairs and how kind and compassionate you always were. And how you always did your best to help anybody who came to you looking for direction or help of any kind. And yet, you

always demanded respect and courtesy... You didn't always receive it, and that's truly a deep insult to those who abused your kindness. I was always aware of your position, purpose and duty at 30th Street and I always respected that... mostly because you gave me respect and that still means more to me than you will probably ever know. The best I can say to you is: "Efxaristo" ... Thank you.

Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty

Jackie: When I came to you, I have to say again, I was completely devoid of Hope in any manner of speaking. That morning I actually knew and felt complete "emptiness". But what you did, the words you spoke, and the absolute Trust you put in me, truly, there is absolutely nothing anywhere in all of Creation that can compare to the re-birth you created. From emptiness and despair you gave me my "Humanity"... my "Humanness", my faith, all of which were, all too simply, gone. When I asked how I could return your kindness you simply told me to "pass it on" to those whom I could help. I have spent every moment of my breathing existence trying to live up to that request. In my life-time, when someone thanks me for some act of kindness, I have always said, quite simply: Don't thank me, thank my Mother, because it was she who raised me with the belief, "If you see something that needs to be done and you can do it, do it and move on... don't wait for thanks, don't look for thanks... just do it because that's the way the World should be." Since that day you helped me, you "did it because you could" and moved on to help others, I now "do it because I can", not only with respect for my Mother, but for you as well. And I waste no time to keep that going... for as long as I am able. Your kindness will live on as will my gratitude to you.

Town and Village Synagogue - Tifereth Israel - NYC

"What can we do for you?" These were the very first words spoken to me by **Rabbi Laurence Sebert** when I told him that I came to "T and V" each day... from a Homeless Shelter. And, with every bit of humility, honesty and sincerity in my being, I told him the truth: You and this congregation have done more than any of you could ever know for me. For weeks I'd gone to that synagogue, attended services, talked with many, prayed, chanted, laughed with people, cried

in my own silence, I sang my sadness and my joys with them, I prayed, I felt at “Home” with them. Every Saturday morning I was greeted, acknowledged, welcomed. Every time, with-out exception, that I walked up to and through the doors to that magnificent synagogue, I actually felt “embraced”, warmly, in the most comforting sense of belonging, of being welcomed, of being such an integral part of some wonderful “Family”... “Mishpucha” (in Yiddish), “Mishpacha” (in Hebrew). No “sales pitch”, no “interrogations”, just a warmth that gave me so much inner Peace, such feelings of being appreciated, just because I was “there”. To try and do justice to my gratitude to ALL the people who congregate in that synagogue could easily take VOLUMES of massively thick TOMES of written words. It could make the Megillah look like a “Take One” pamphlet. But I hope that everyone there, and everyone who reads these words knows, that from the very core of my Soul, with all of the Love that I have to give, and with every bit of Sincerity and Humility, I say: Todah raba!!! Thank you ever so very, very much! In your synagogue, in your “Home”, a soul came back to Life! And with it, a body and mind, a Hope, many other-wise abandoned dreams, and the long-lost Courage I needed to continue moving forward. It was because of “Town and Village” that “KADIMA!” became my motto... and still, to this day, continues to be so. May each one, and every one of you all be so very and exceptionally blessed!

JCCRP:

Jewish Community Council of the Rockaway Peninsula

Leetha: For your warmest welcomes, for your compassion...

Jacque: For becoming what I can truly call a “friend”...

Srully: For actually taking an interest, taking the time to make an effort...

For instilling hope where there seemed to be none left, I will never be able to thank you enough. I'd come to you expecting more of the apathy that I'd experienced prior. But in SO many ways you you extended your “selves” and your hearts in ways I never would have imagined. With as many demands and such truly limited resources, you extended not only a helping hand, but the kindness of Human Compassion. For this, I will remember you always, and always, I will be grateful.

PHC:

Peninsula Hospital Center

Jocelyn: Where and how do I begin? Where and how will my eternal Thanks ever be enough? What a truly magnificent and glorious Heart and Soul! You are, beyond any doubt, the epitome of what “Compassion” truly is, in every sense of the word. So “Giving” and “Caring”! There are precious few real “Gifts” in life, and for what-ever reason, I am extremely Blessed to have received that Gift that is you. I remember reading the words:

When you were alone and at what you thought was the end of all hope, you turned and prayed to God for an answer, for help, for something to help lighten your burden, to give you Hope again and you waited for an answer, for a reply. And there were people, many of them strangers, who came into your life and brought information, kind words, kind deeds, support and encouragement. And today, here you are, and what was once over-whelming is now a thing of the past and is gone. You've come through your anguish and have survived... Well, those people were the words of God, the reply you were looking for. You see, God does speak to us, but not so much in the “words” we wait to hear... God sends us “people” and they are his answer, his reply to our prayers.

You, Jocelyn, were the loudest of God's answers to my prayers.

Brian: In my daily Journal I made reference to wondering how and why you and I happened to meet, especially when we did, and today I can say that I understand. With Heart and Soul I have and always will pray that you are well, safe, and in the best possible health, given the best possible care, because you deserve nothing less than the “perfect best”.

Evon (Steamfish): It was a honour to have met you. It is an equal honour to be able to write these words to you. And it is a privilege to say “Thank you” just for being. May you be at peace with yourself and with the World... today and always.

Marianne: “Un-pack your pencils, you have a place to stay for a while.” When somebody says “Over and above the call of duty” I think of you. If each and every “Social Worker” had your sense of Compassion and interest in Human beings, all the World would be a MUCH better place. I will never forget you or your amazing kindness to me... never. And forever, I will be so very thankful to and for you.

Rachel: "We'll make a Rabbi out of you yet." Oddly enough, for the longest while when I was in the Shelter, that is what I was known as amongst my Homeless peers... "Rabbi". I suppose I can say, in all honesty... MAZEL TOV! YOU DID IT! - "Put your kippa back on. I'll bet it changes your luck." Well, the kippa DID go back on... and from that day, it has remained on. And you know? I do believe that again I would have to say, most honestly, I do believe you were absolutely correct. After all, I actually survived not one but TWO episodes in a place where even one of my fellow "residents" candidly said to me: "I don't know if I respect you more or fear you. Look around you. You stand-out here like nobody else. Tall, White and JEWISH! And you don't hide the fact that you're Jewish. I'm not sure if you're just that strong or just that crazy. But my brother, I respect you for it." Rachel, I owe that all to you and with that, a deepest gratitude... forever. Todah, todah raba!

Sasha: "My friend." You always, even right from the start, addressed me that way. You were the only one. And whether or not it's just your manner, I thank you because it meant more to me than words could ever express!

Cyndi and Phelicia: You were, indeed, exceptional and everything that Nurses could possibly be and should be. You obviously made an intense difference in my life and you will never be forgotten and always in my memory and heart... with my un-dying gratitude.

From the Jobs:

I owe a particular gratitude to those "Clients" who allowed me into their homes and for a while, because unwittingly, they truly helped me through the experience of being in a public Shelter for Homeless Men. They opened their doors and for the while I was in their homes, I was no longer exactly "Homeless". For those hours, I was "human" again. (I'll always wonder though: Had they known that I'd come to them from a Shelter each day... would they have let me in the door?) Some families were indescribably kind, and those are the people I will always hold dearest in my memories and heart. As for the others: Karma.

The Coalition For The Homeless - NYC

There are those who will say that you do nothing to help the Homeless. There are those who have praised you for having helped them. For me, directly, I never had the need, thankfully, nor the opportunity to meet any of you. But I have heard of the many wonderful things you have done for others, and I have heard about and seen the magnificent accomplishments you have reached to make the fate of the Homeless either an easier burden to bear or, have made it disappear completely. To those who say you do nothing to help the Homeless, I have always said: "You cannot imagine what it would be like if The Coalition didn't exist." Even something as routine as a "Callahan" (inspection of the Shelters) is a service you provide to help, to make the existence of each and every Homeless person better, safer, and more "Human". In the place of those who will not thank you, those who have not thanked you, and those who, for what-ever reason cannot thank you... I will take it upon myself to say: THANK YOU ALL... EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU! May you always receive the support you need to continue, may you always be proud of the Help you give to those who need you, and may you always find Peace in knowing that even your smallest of efforts lead to some-how lightening the often over-whelming burden of Homelessness to those who come to you directly... and even to those who don't. Thank you!

From me:

My God! This has been a painful sojourn, again, as always, alone. But tonight I must think of this not as a parting from good people and wonderful "Friends" but that I am now placing them in the homes, hands and hearts of others who will, I most certainly hope, care for and about, and cherish you all as I have over the years and will continue to do so... forever. It has been a rather long while since we first met and since we last saw each-other. I don't know where you all are these days, but I hope and pray that you are all... ALL... very safe, in best health and surrounded by others who appreciate the "Gifts" that you truly are.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Coalition for the Homeless "Currently 48,700 Homeless men, women, and children bed down each night in the NYC municipal shelter system.": www.coalitionforthehomeless.org

235 SHELTERS: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/bronx/number-people-city-Homeless-shelters-nears-48-000-article-1.1247023>

The Bronx is home to 78 of the city's 235 shelters and has also seen an increase in the number of DHS-approved cluster-sites, where individual apartments are used as temporary Homeless residences.

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dhs/downloads/pdf/dailyreport.pdf>

Daily Reports and Statistics on Homeless residents in New York City shelters, as reported by the NYC DHS (Department of Homeless Services)

The New York Public Libraries of The Bronx and Manhattan

The Brooklyn Libraries

The Queens Libraries

With-out which, this would have NEVER been recorded.

THE CALLAHAN CONSENT DECREE

NEW YORK CITY 1981

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

COUNTY OF NEW YORK

ROBERT CALLAHAN, CLAYTON W. FOX, THOMAS DAMIAN ROIG, JAMES HAYES, JAMES SPELLMAN and PAULE E. TOOLE, on their own behalves and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs, Index No.42582/79-against-

FINAL HUGH L. CAREY, as Governor of the State JUDGMENT of New York, BABARA BLUM, as Commissioner BY CONSENT of the New York State Department of Social Service, EDWARD I. KOCH, as Mayor of the City of New York, JAMES A. KRAUSKOPF, as Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources Administration, and CALVIN REID, as Director of the Shelter Care Center for Men,

Defendants.

Plaintiffs Robert Callahan, Clayton Fox and Thomas Roig, having brought this action on October 2, 1979 challenging the sufficiency and quality of shelter for Homeless men in New York City, and plaintiffs Callahan, Fox, Roig, James Hayes, James Spellman and Paul Toole, having filed their Amended Complaint on March 31, 1980, and defendants Hugh L. Carey, as Governor of the State of New York, and Barbara Blum, as Commissioner of the State of New York Department of 89 Chambers Street New York NY 10007 www.coalitionforthehomeless.org 212.964.5900 fax 212.964.1303

Social Services (the "State defendants"), having filed their Amended Answer on January 19, 1981 therein denying the material allegations of the Amended Complaint, and defendants Edward Koch, as Mayor of the City of New York, Stanley Brezenoff, as Administrator of the New York City Human Resources Administration, and Calvin Reid, as director of the Shelter Care Center for Men (the "Men's Shelter") (the "City defendants"), having filed their Amended Answer on

January 19, 1981 therein denying the material allegations of the Amended Complaint, and Plaintiffs and defendants by their respective attorneys, having consented to the entry of this Final Judgement without any final adjudication of any issue of fact or law herein and without this Final Judgement constituting any evidence or admission by any party hereto with respect to any such issue:

NOW, therefore, without final adjudication of any issue of fact or law herein and without this Final Judgement constituting any evidence or admission by any party hereto with respect to any issue, and upon consent of all parties, it is hereby

ORDERED, ADJUDGED and DECREED as follows:

Provision of Shelter

1. The City defendants shall provide shelter and board to each Homeless man who applies for it provided that (a) the man meets themed standard to qualify for the home relief program established inner York State; or (b) the man by reason to physical, mental or social dysfunction is in need of temporary shelter.

Shelter Standards

2. The City defendants shall provide shelter at facilities operated in accordance with the standards set forth in this paragraph as soon as practicable and not later than September 1, 1981. The term "shelter facility" refers to the Keener Building, Camp LaGuardia, theme's Shelter and any other facility used by the City defendants to shelter Homeless men. This paragraph does not apply to the Bowery lodging houses (Palace, Kenton, Union, Sunshine, Delevan and Stevenson) presently used by the City defendants to shelter Homeless men (the "hotels"); if the City defendants choose to shelter Homeless men in any additional Bowery lodging house, they will advise counsellor the plaintiffs and a good faith effort shall be made by plaintiffs and the City defendants to agree to operating standards for such facilities.

(a) Each resident shall receive a bed of a minimum of 30 inches in width, substantially constructed, in good repair an equipped with clean springs.

(b) Each bed shall be equipped with both a clean, comfortable, well-constructed mattress standard in size for the bed and a clean, comfortable pillow of average size.

(c) Each resident shall receive two clean sheets, a clean blanket, a clean pillow case, a clean towel, soap and toilet tissue. A complete change of bed linens and towels will be made for each new resident and at least once a week and more often as needed on an individual basis.

(d) Each resident shall receive a lockable storage unit.

(e) Laundry services shall be available to each resident not less than twice a week.

(f) A staff attendant to resident ratio of at least 2 per cent shall be maintained in each shelter facility at all times.

(g) A staff attendant trained in first aid shall be on duty in each shelter facility at all times.

(h) A minimum of ten hours per week of group recreation shall be available for each resident at each shelter facility.

(i) Residents shall be permitted to leave and to return to shelter facilities at reasonable hours and without hindrance.

(j) Residents of shelter facilities shall be provided transportation (public or private) to enable them to return to the site where they applied for shelter.

(k) Residents of shelter facilities shall be permitted to leave the facility by 7:00 a.m. if they so desire.

(l) Residents shall be permitted to receive and send mail and other correspondence without interception or interference.

(m) The City defendants shall make a good faith effort to provide pay telephones for use by the residents at each shelter facility. The City defendants shall bear any reasonable cost for the installation and maintenance of such telephones.

3. The capacity of shelter facilities shall be determined as follows:

(a) The capacity of newly constructed shelter facilities shall comply with the standards set forth in Appendix A, except in cases of emergency need as defined in Appendix B.

(b) The City defendants shall disclose to plaintiffs' counsel any plan to convert an existing structure to a shelter facility and the intended capacity for the facility at least 30 days in advance of the implementation or execution of any such conversion plan. Reasonable capacity for each such facility shall be established. The standards set forth in Appendix A shall be used as guidelines in determining whether the planned capacity of the City defendants is reasonable.

(c) Effective December 31, 1981, the capacity of the Keener Building shall not exceed _____ except in cases of emergency need as defined in Appendix B, in which case the maximum number of men who may be sheltered in the Keener Building is _____. Between the date of entry of this judgement and December 31, 1981, the capacity of the Keener Building shall not exceed_____.

(d) The capacity of Camp LaGuardia shall comply — by construction of new dormitory buildings — with the standards set forth in Appendix A, except in cases of emergency need as defined in Appendix B, as soon as practicable and not later than December 31,1982, except that the individual rooms in the “Main Building” maybe used as sleeping rooms for one person each. The

construction start of such new dormitory buildings shall occur no later than March 1, 1982.

Bowery Lodging Houses

4. Hotels presently used by the City defendants shall meet the following standards at the time of entry of this judgement and the City defendants shall maintain such standards thereafter:

(a) Each resident shall receive a bed, a clean mattress, two clean sheets, one clean blanket, one clean pillow and one clean pillowcase. A complete change of bed linens (sheets and pillow case) shall be made for each new resident and at least once a week and more often as needed on an individual basis.

(b) Each resident shall be supplied with a clean towel, soap and toilet issue. A clean towel shall be provided to each new resident and towels shall be changed at least once a week and more often as needed on an individual basis.

(c) There shall be two trained security guards in the Palace Hotel between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. and one trained security guard between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and 4:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. There shall be one trained security guarding the Kenton Hotel between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. These security guards shall file with the City defendants incident reports on any incidents of violence or attempted violence occurring in the hotels.

(d) Showers shall be available at the Men's Shelter beginning at 7 a.m. and signs advising hotel residents of that fact shall be posted at the front desk in each hotel and at the door of each bathroom in each hotel. Persons showering at the Men's Shelter shall be provided adequate supervision (including safeguarding of personal property), a clean towel, soap and, if requested, a delousing agent.

(e) A lockable storage unit of adequate size to store personal property shall be available either at the Men's Shelter or at the hotels for each man sheltered by the City defendants at hotels.

(f) Heat shall be maintained in accordance with New York City guidelines for rental residences.

(g) Cleanliness shall be maintained throughout the hotels at all times.

Intake Centers

The City defendants shall accept applications for shelter at theme's Shelter, 8 East Third Street, New York, New York and at 529 Eighth Av., New York, New York (the "central intake center"). Applications for shelter shall be accepted at all times at the Men's Shelter, and applications for shelter shall be accepted at 529 Eighth Av. between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m., seven days per week. The City defendants shall provide direct transportation to shelter pursuant to paragraph 1, supra. The 529 Eighth Av. intake center, shall be opened as a central

intake center not later than September 1, 1981.

6. The City defendants shall operate additional satellite intake centers on a 24-hour basis Monday through Friday at the following locations:

(a) Harlem Hospital Center, 506 Lenox Av., New York, New York;

(b) King County Hospital Center, 451 Clarkson Av., Brooklyn, New York;

(c) Lincoln Hospital, 234 East 149th Street, Bronx, New York; and

(d) Queens Hospital Center, 82-69 164th Street, Jamaica, New York. Men seeking shelter at the satellite intake centers shall be provided adequate fare for public transportation and clear written directions to either (i) a shelter facility, or (ii) a central intake center —according to the preference of the person seeking shelter. The City defendants shall provide direct transportation from the satellite intake centers to a shelter facility to all men who appear so physically or mentally disabled that they are unable to reach a shelter facility by public transportation. Satellite intake centers shall be opened not later than September 1, 1981. It is understood that the above satellite intake centers shall be operated in conjunction with borough crisis centers. In the event that the borough crisis center program is terminated, the City defendants may, in their discretion, reduce the hours of operation of the satellite intake centers to between 5 p.m. and 1 a.m.

7. The City defendants shall accept applications for shelter at shelter facilities providing that such applicants have applied for and have been found eligible for shelter by the City defendants within six months of the time of application at a shelter facility. Shelter facilities shall also provide shelter for one night to any person who has not previously applied for shelter who seeks shelter at a shelter facility after 8:00 p.m.

8. Each shelter facility, central intake center and satellite intake center, shall utilize the services of available community members to the maximum reasonable extent. These persons are not City employees or volunteers in a City sponsored program within the meaning of section 50(k) of the General Municipal Law and such persons shall execute statements to this effect.

Information

9. The City defendants shall provide applicants for shelter with clear written information concerning other public assistance benefits to which they may be entitled at the time applicants apply for shelter.

Compliance Monitoring

10. Defendant Krauskopf shall appoint qualified employees with no administrative responsibility

for providing shelter to monitor defendants' shelter care program for men with respect to compliance with this decree.. These employees shall visit each shelter facility, central intake center, satellite intake center and hotel at least twice a month and will submit to defendant Krauskopf a written report at least twice a month describing compliance or lack thereof with each provision of the decree. These reports shall be made available to plaintiffs' counsel upon reasonable notice.

11. Plaintiffs' representatives shall have full access to all shelter facilities, central intake centers and satellite intake centers, and plaintiffs' counsel shall be provided access to any records relevant to the enforcement and monitoring of this decree.

12. Defendant Krauskopf shall deliver by hand each day to plaintiffs' counsel a statement listing:

- (a) The number of men who applied for shelter at each central intake center and at each satellite intake center;
- (b) The number of men who were provided shelter at each shelter facility or hotel;
- (c) The number of men who were denied shelter at each shelter facility, central intake center and satellite intake center and the reason for each such denial;
- (d) The number of men who were accepted for shelter at each central intake center and satellite intake center who did not reach a shelter facility; and
- (e) The number of men who were provided direct transportation from each satellite intake center to a shelter facility.

13. It is the intention of defendant Krauskopf to conduct daily inspections of the Palace Hotel and to deliver reports of such inspections each day to plaintiffs. It is also the intention of defendant Krauskopf to conduct inspections of the other hotels used by defendants to shelter Homeless men not less than three times per week and to deliver reports of such inspections not less than three times a week to plaintiffs' counsel. A sample of the inspection report form to be used is attached hereto as Exhibit C.

No Waivers

Nothing in this judgement permits any person, not-for-profit corporation, charitable organization, or governmental entity or subdivision to operate a shelter, as defined in New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Title 18, § 485.2(C), in violation of the requirements of the New York Social Services Law, Title 18, of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, or any other applicable law.

15. Nothing in this judgement should operate or be construed as resjudicata or collateral estoppel so as to foreclose any signatory party from any claim or defense in any subsequent

administrative or judicial proceeding.

16. Nothing in this judgement shall be deemed to authorize or to prevent the operation by the New York City Human Resources Administration of the Keener Building on Wards Island as a shelter or shelter facility after October 15, 1981, except in accord with a valid contract or agreement among the New York State Department of Social Services, the New York State Office of Mental Health and the New York City Human Resources Agency and with an operating certificate issued by the New York State Department of Social Services.

17. The Commissioner of the New York State Department of Social Services agrees to reimburse the New York City Human Resources Agency for the operation of a shelter facility or shelter facilities referred to in this judgement pursuant to New York Social Services Law¹⁵³, except if such shelter facility fails to comply with the requirements for shelters contained in the New York Social Services Law or the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Title 18; provided that nothing in this judgement can or does obligate the Legislature of the State of New York to appropriate funds.

18. Nothing in this judgement shall prevent, limit or otherwise interfere with the authority of the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Social Services to enforce and carry out her duties under the New York Social Services Law, Title 18, of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, or any other applicable law. Continuing Jurisdiction

19. Jurisdiction is retained by this Court for the purpose of enabling any of the parties to this Final Judgement to apply to this Court at any time for such further orders and directions as may be necessary or appropriate for the construction, modification, or termination of this entire judgement or of any applicable provisions thereof, for the enforcement of compliance therewith, and for the punishment of violations thereof.

New York, New York August 1981

Appendix A

Space Requirements for Shelters for Adults

- (1) Every facility shall have space for dining and leisure activities.
- (2) Sleeping areas shall not be considered as dining or leisure areas.
- (3) Space provided for dining shall be:
 - (i) at least 120 square feet in facilities with a certified bed capacity of less than 10 beds;
 - (ii) at least 12 square feet for each additional certified bed.

(4) Space provided for leisure areas shall be:

(i) at least 120 square feet in facilities with a certified bed capacity of less than 10 beds.

(ii) at least 12 square feet per bed in facilities with a certified bed capacity of 10 or more beds

(5) When not in use, dining space may be used, with written approval from the New York State Department of Social Services (“Department”), as leisure space.

(6) An operator may request Department approval of a waiver to reduce the square footage requirements for dining and leisure space. A waiver shall be granted only upon demonstration by the operator that the food service and the program needs of residents can be met.

(7) Baths and Toilet Facilities There shall be a minimum of one toilet and one lavatory for each six residents and a minimum of one tub or shower for each ten residents.

(8) Sleeping Rooms

(i) In single occupancy sleeping rooms, a minimum of 80 square feet per resident shall be provided;

(ii) In sleeping rooms for two or more residents, a minimum of 60 square feet per resident shall be provided;

(iii) A minimum of 3 feet, which is included in the per resident minima, shall be maintained between beds and for aisles;

(iv) Partitions separating sleeping areas from other areas shall be ceiling high and smoke tight;

(v) All bedrooms shall be:

(a) above grade level;

(b) adequately lighted;

(c) adequately ventilated;

(vi) light and ventilation for bedrooms shall be by means of windows in an outside wall;

(vii) bedrooms shall open directly into exit corridors;

(viii) bedrooms may not be used as a passageway, corridor or access to other bedrooms.

(9) Adequate storage space for cleaning supplies and equipment shall be provided.

Appendix B

Short term emergency shelter may be provided to a number of persons in excess of the capacity of the facility provided that all of the following conditions are met:

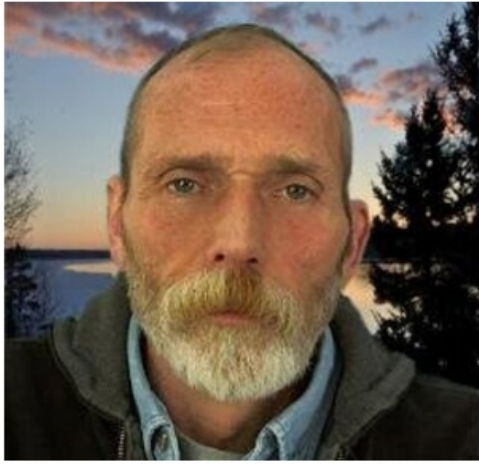
(1) Snow emergencies, excessive cold or other similar circumstances create an emergency need for additional shelter space;

(2) The operator is able to meet the food and shelter needs of all persons in residence;

- (3) The facility remains in compliance with applicable local building, fire protection and health and sanitation codes;
- (4) The operator advises plaintiffs' counsel of the maximum number of persons to be cared for during an emergency situation in any facility as soon as possible after an emergency situation develops;
- (5) The operator provides shelter to additional persons no more than 30 days in any calendar year; and
- (6) The operator maintains records which document adherence to these conditions.







Judah A. Kessler was born in Cornwall, in the Mid-Hudson Valley, in New York State and lived, most of his life, in The Bronx, New York City. He has, as well, resided in the Middle East and Canada. He currently resides in Northern New England, on the Canada border.

Kessler was educated at Dutchess County Community College NY, The New School for Social Research NY in

Psychology and at Elizabeth Seton/Iona College NY in Ethics and Nursing. He was part of the founders of "The New Hudson River School" of art and was an archival water-colourist, producing many works of historical authenticity in conjunction with intensive and extensive research and was amongst the New York City, Zucotti Park "Occupy Wall Street" demonstration. He speaks 9 languages.

Kessler appeared on Anne Barbano's The Next Frontier, 27 October 2011, where he discussed at some length, the concept of "Working Homeless".

In a time of #OccupyWallStreet (Twitter hashtag) Anne found two men who exemplify a condition the nation is experiencing... a working homeless articulate guy from a shelter in NYC... Their stories and voices are compelling.... (41 minutes)"

<http://www.annebarbano.com/audioplay.php?idinterview=21>

This work is the result of months of Homeless residence in New York City and has become the inspiration for Kessler's now life-long ambitions of promoting a global awareness of the plight of the Homeless, and, in particular, those who are Homeless and employed, a faction to which he refers as the "Working Homeless".

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<https://www.facebook.com/Homeless-190649351119171/>