

Eleuthera Three, The Third Week.

Tuesday, March 20 Day Fifteen

Today is a 'day of rest', we decided. Paul leaves tomorrow and he needs to pack and get ready. We'll go out to dinner tonight, as a final celebration. I did offer to stay at home and the two of them go off for a romantic evening, but they huffed and puffed and said that romantic evenings were not a real impetus in an 18-year relationship.

It's a grey day today anyway. I heard it rain last night and it looks as if there will be more rain this morning. I did hear a boat early this morning, so I assume the fishermen went out, and the waves seem more calm today.

Yesterday we went to the Atlantic side, to the Unique Village beach. The beach is a 'pink sand' beach, though pink is not exactly how I would describe it—it's more of a pinkish beige. Unique Village is a pretty little resort, with a swimming pool and some rental units, a nice restaurant, and a beautiful view, being perched high above the bluffs. Again, it seemed deserted. Lynn asked for a brochure about the place, and was told they didn't have one—though they did have a website. It's almost as if they don't care whether they have visitors or not.

We are lunch there after spending a couple of hours on the beach. There were only two other couples dining at 1 in the afternoon—almost deserted.



Figure 1 Paul and Lynn at Unique Village

Lynn has discovered that one little cottage here in Tarpum Bay has just been repossessed by the bank. It's a cute place, almost new, and right on the bay. We'll look into it, I think: both Lynn and I love it here, and she is really friends with the villagers, who love her as well. Matt's mother, Miss Edith, sent us two pies (pineapple and a coconut) which we can bake. The kids at the elementary

school want Lynn to come and teach again: she tells them stories of the far away places she visits with her grandchildren.

What we all know is that we love it here, and want to keep the certainty of coming back as a special place in our hearts.

Wednesday, March 21, the Sixteenth Day

Paul this morning, and to celebrate we three went to Unique Village for dinner last night. Food was good, but the menu was unexciting: ribs, chicken, fish, conch chowder, macaroni and cheese. We looked pretty gussied up, however:



Figure 2 Lynn and Paul at Unique Village

Dr. Seabreeze and his steel drummer were there, and played wonderful music: the drummer is really a jazz musician and I did find his musical ideas quite fascinating:



Figure 3 Dr. Seabreeze and Friend

Lynn took Paul to the airport this morning, and I haven't heard her moving around over there: either she found an adventure, or she went back to bed. From today on for the next two weeks it's just 'us girls'.

Thursday, March 22, Sixteenth Day

Beautiful thunderstorm last night—lightening and palm trees brushing against each other. Today is intermittent showers followed by bright sunlight—it's moving toward hot and muggy. At least the little old man whom we picked up hitchhiking to Palmetto Point will have watermelon soon.

Lynn and I made a little excursion into the real estate community yesterday. The first company, Christie's, is a large franchise. It was staffed by two clerks who gave us an outdated printed glossy book of listings, some pamphlets, and the agents card, and told us the only listing in Tarpum Bay was a 350k lot.

So we stopped to visit Kenneth, a handsome Bahamian with an office in his luxurious Tarpum Bay home, and we were much better satisfied. Kenneth is very smart, well educated, and aware of the local market. He knew about every property in the town, and had his personal eye on a couple of them. He was going out of the Bahamas to visit his son in America, and will get back to us on Monday. We'll see.

Paul has gone home, so Lynn and I had a nice 'girl' day...we get along well, each of us respecting the other and a need for privacy. Both of us have a good sense of humor and a healthy sense of independence. So far, so good!



Friday, March 23

In the afternoon Bahamas sun

I climb the white wall

Hot and obvious, my shadow tucked underneath me

I hurry upwards and across the door opening

Looking for dark fingers of palm trees,

A place to wait, invisible and still.

But you are here, watching

Through your single greedy eye,

Hoping I will pause and look over my shoulder,

A creature the size of your finger

Fearful, immobilized, captured in time.

You want to take me home with you,

Back to Michigan, past guards and hot dog stands,

Flying through air into your living room,

Reinvented on a large flat screen

As an alligator, all scales and grasping toes,

A fragment of an adventure

In a cold Northern night.

Judith Lindenau

3/24/07

Sunday, 3/25

George

Yesterday we stopped for pizza at George Major's place, a non-Bahamian food treat for ourselves. George's pizza parlor and internet café is right next to Godfrey's house, and Godfrey is George's father. George is a big guy—muscular, big-bellied, with slim hips and strong legs. His tee shirt is short and there's an expanse of brown skin that always shows between his shirt and pants.

George has beautiful brown eyes and a quiet, watchful face, and big hands with short, stubby fingers. The pizza restaurant is large and very clean, almost sterile. It has a bar, which consists of several bottles of liquor placed on the refrigerator in the area behind the counter, and several serviceable tables and chairs. There are a couple of ancient computers (the internet café part), and two rather nice paintings hung high up on the wall near the ceiling, Eleuthera landscapes painted by one of George's friends.

While we are waiting for our pizza, I wander over to a large bulletin board filled with what I discover are printouts of computer pages. I read these, and discover that George has a degree in electrical engineering from a US school, and that he is a writer. I file this latter bit of revelation away for future use, making note of the self-publishing website where his work is available.



Figure 4 George's Pizza and Internet Cafe

While the pizza bakes, George and Lynn discuss some business matters relative to the island, principally regarding real estate. Lynn asks questions about proceeding with the purchase of some land in Tarpum Bay and George's advice

is: “Trust no one.” Simple words, but George explains how a former friend of his took his \$75,000 and refused to complete the job of adding a second story on George’s pizza building. The matter is in court, he says, and repeats his advice: “Trust no one.”

The pizza is delicious: we eat it on the front porch in the middle of the afternoon, long past wondering which meal is which. Then I go inside and download two books of George’s poems. “A New Beginning”, and “This Journey’s Too Sweet to Miss”.

They are dramatically different collections of poems. “A New Beginning” is very personal—tortured, even. George sees himself as “An overqualified albatross with a head of gold/ I am a treasure for another life and time.” He longs for a lover, and a family—he is “A childless father” who loves his island, his heritage, and—I suspect—his own pain.

“This Journey’s Too Sweet” is a much less personal cry—it speaks of politics, economic destiny, and island history. It’s partly poetry and in large part, prose vignettes—some island myths, and some history, particularly of the Major family and their settlement in Eleuthera when George senior, a seaman from the Bahamian island of Long Island, marries a Tarpum Bay girl. Also fascinating are the essays about the island’s more recent past, the time in the 1940’s when farmers worked pockets of land, producing tomatoes and oranges, and Tarpum Bay was filled with tarpon. Small boys play on the piers, and fish for bonefish which the residents consider a sport but not a desirable edible delicacy.

And so I spent Saturday, March 24, with George Major. I ate his pizza, listened to his advice, and met him again later in the long night where I read his stories and absorbed his private pain.

(Continued on March 28)



Figure 5 George Major

George Major has become a project of mine, and Lynn’s. I also downloaded his self-published novelette, titled “Meeting Mona Lisa”, a narrative of his island affair with a California woman. It’s also a travelogue about Eleuthera—George takes Mona on a tour of the island, eating at restaurants where we’ve been, and visiting

beaches we've walked. It's a fantasy story, an idyll—but I am glad. “Lynn,” I announce in the morning after reading the book, “George has a girlfriend!”

Then yesterday, we stopped in the afternoon at George's pizza place, to ask him some questions, and tell him how much we enjoyed his writing. Instantaneously, George became a different man: alive, engaged, looking directly at us, smiling. We told him we'd read his poems, both books, and his stories of Eleuthera life and history. “Please,” he said, “stay and talk poetry to me.”

The next twenty minutes were an insight deep into George Major, because for him, poetry is so intensely personal. He told us of his years in New York state, his estrangement from his father and his restrictive childhood, and his sense of the isolation and frantic hurry of the world outside Eleuthera. He returned to the island he loved, built a place next to his father's home, and committed to island life.

“And do you still write?”, I asked. “No,” he said. “I seem to have gotten away from it. Perhaps I should get up in the morning and write until I open the shop.” “You should,” I say. “Writing is a discipline, and you need to practice it!”

Of course, Lynn has introduced me as a former creative writing teacher, so I figure I have to be ‘teacherly’...but imagine: sluggish me giving such advice!

For me, what George has to share is the progress of his adaptation to island living and the island life style. I think it must have been difficult, to reconcile his lifestyle, values, and childhood pain to his current situation—how does one mature, and forgive, and become at peace with a world which was once a cage? This, I think, is George's story...and I tell him so. But I also have the feeling that this is a painful place which he does not want to visit any longer.