The Bow

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nee, when the snow was packed high in the mountains outside Albuquerque, near San-dia Peak, Steve and Clara Morrison took their children tobogganing. Steve was stationed at nearby Kirtland Air Base where he was the executive officer and number two man at what was called the Naval Air Special Weapons Facility. That meant atomic energy, then still a mysterious subject and one he couldn't discuss at home.

It was the winter of 1955 and Jim Morrison was just a few weeks past his twelfth birthday. In less than a month his sister, Anne, who was turning into a chubby sort of tomboy, would be nine. His brother, Andy, somewhat huskier than Jim, was half his age.

The picture was winter simplicity: in the background the snowy Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico, in the foreground rosy cheeks, dark wavy hair almost hidden by warm-fitting hats—healthy children in heavy coats, clambering onto a wooden toboggan. No snow was falling, there were only the dry, stinging flurries blown by gusts of mountain wind.

[No One Here Gets Out Auve]

At the edge of the slope Jim placed Andy in the front of the sled. Anne got behind Andy, and Jim squeezed in at the rear. Using their mittened hands, they propelled themselves forward and slid away with a whoosh and whoop.

Faster and faster they went. In the distance, approaching rapidly, was a cabin.

The toboggan rushed downhill like a spaceship tearing the chill of outer space. Andy panicked.

"Bail out!" he cried. "Bail out! Bail out!"

Andy's galoshes were stuck under the front of the toboggan where it curled up and back. He tried to push backward to free himself, but Anne, who was behind him, couldn't move. Jim was pushing forward from the rear, holding them helpless.

The cabin approached rapidly.

"Bailout! Bailout!"

The toboggan was less than twenty yards from the side of the cabin on a certain, horrifying collision course. Anne stared dead ahead, the features on her face numbed by terror. Andy was whimpering.

The toboggan swept under a hitching rail and five feet from the cabin was stopped by the children's father. As the children tumbled out of the sled, Anne babbled hysterically about how Jim had pushed them forward and wouldn't let them escape. Andy continued to cry. Steve and Clara Morrison tried to reassure the younger children.

Jim stood nearby looking pleased. "We^ere just havin' a good time," he said.

Jim's mother, Clara Clarke, was one of five children, the slightly kooky, fun-loving daughter of a maverick lawyer from Wisconsin who had once run for public office on the Communist ticket. Her mother died when Clara was in her teens, and in 1941, when she was twenty-one and her father had moved to Alaska to work as a carpenter, Clara went to visit a pregnant sister in Hawaii. At a navy dance she met Jim's father, Steve.

Steve had grown up in a small central Florida town, one of

[The Bow is Drawn]

three children, the only son of a conservative laundry owner. As a child, he was given thyroid shots to stimulate his growth, and in high school he was called (by his cousin and best friend) "a campus cowboy: something of a goody-goody—an energetic Methodist but popular with the girls." Steve graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy four months early, in February 1941, after the course of instruction was accelerated to produce a new class of officers for the coming World War.

Steve and Clara met close to the time the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. They married quickly, in April 1942, shordy before Steve's mine layer was taken out of dry dock and returned to service in the north Pacific.

The following year he was sent to Pensacola, Florida, for flight training, and just eleven months after that, on December 8, 1943, James Douglas Morrison joined the wartime baby boom, in Melbourne, Florida, near what is now Cape Canaveral.

Jim's father left him at age six months to go back to the Pacific to fly Hellcats from an aircraft carrier. For the next three years Clara and her infant son lived with Steve's parents in Clearwater. The house, right on the Gulf of Mexico, was run in a carefully prescribed fashion and its residents were governed by Victorian cliches: Children should be seen and not heard ... Ignore something

unpleasant and it will go away . .. Cleanliness is next to godliness. Jim's paternal grandparents were raised in Georgia. Neither one drank or smoked.

Clara's behavior during her husband's absence was impeccable, but between the stuffiness of her in-laws and the boredom of Clearwater, she was overjoyed to see Steve return fi-om the Pacific, nearly a year after the war ended, in the humid midsummer of 1946.

The mobility and separation that characterized the Morrison family during the war continued throughout Jim's childhood. His father's first postwar assignment was in Washington, D.C., but he remained there only six months before being

[No One Here Gets Out Auve J

sent—for the first of two times—to Albuquerque, where for a year he was an instructor in one of the military's atomic weapons programs. By now, Jim, who was four, had a sister.

It was outside Albuquerque, while traveling with his parents on the highway from Santa Fe, that Jim experienced what he would later dramatically describe as "the most important moment of my life." They came upon an overturned truck, and saw injured and dying Pueblo Indians lying where they had been thrown on the asphalt.

Jim began to cry. Steve stopped the car to see if he could help and dispatched another onlooker to a telephone to call for an ambulance. Jimmy—as his parents called him until he was seven—stared through the car window at the chaotic scene, still crying.

Steve returned to the car and they left, but Jimmy wasn't calmed. He became more and more upset, sobbing hysterical-

ly-

"I want to help, I want to help ..."

While Clara held him in her arms, Steve consoled the boy. "It's all right, Jimmy, it is."

"They're dying! They're dying!"

Finally his father said, "It was a dream, Jimmy, it didn't really happen, it was a dream."

Jim continued to sob.

Years later Jim told his friends that as his father's car pulled away from the intersection, an Indian died and his soul passed into Jim's body.

In February 1948 Steve was sent to sea, a "special weapons officer" aboard another carrier. Now the Morrisons lived in Los Altos in northern California, Jim's fifth home in his four years. It was here that Jim started public school and here that his brother Andy was bom.

At age seven, Jim was uprooted again when Steve's career took him once more to Washington. A year later, in 1952, Steve was sent to Korea to coordinate carrier-based air attacks

[The Bow is Drawn]

and the rest of the Morrisons returned to California, settling this time in Claremont, near Los Angeles.

Some say that the negative aspects of rootlessness have been greatly overstated, that what a child whose family moves frequently loses in traditional roots he makes up for in variety of experiences. No matter how valid these and other arguments, the special problems remain.

First, a military family knows it will not remain anywhere permanently, and it seldom has much choice about where or when

it will make its next move. A navy family knows that even in peacetime there will be long periods when the father is aboard ship and, unlike land-based military people, he cannot take his dependents along. The family members learn to travel light, usually acquiring only essential items, such as furniture, silver, china, and linen. Jim and his brother and sister had toys and books, but not in abundance.

Many families are not so eager to make new friends, knowing the relationship can only last a year or two. Others try extra hard to make friends and either exhaust themselves emotionally or push so hard that they offend the established order.

Of course, the familiarity of military bases and the camaraderie they breed help to offset the strangeness of a new community. An officer's family is always welcome at the officers' country club, for example, where it may mix with others in this highly mobile society. This is especially true in the navy, whose officers constitute a fairly small and intimate group. Over the years many of Steve and Clara's closest friends were other navy officers and their wives whose paths they crossed and recrossed. Children, on the other hand, generally find their friends at school, and navy children must find new ones more frequently.

Psychologists who have studied the highly mobile society of the navy have found a variety of emotional disorders, from alcoholism and marital discord to anomie and a sense of "un-connectedness." Probably the most significant factor is the periodic absence of the father. The mother's role repeatedly

changes, depending on whether or not the father is home, and the children often suffer a confusion about and resentment of authority.

When Jim was httle Clara and Steve agreed never to raise a hand in anger at their children, to practice some other sort of discipline, to reason with their children, to make it crystal clear when they had erred. Sometimes this discipline took the form of a verbal dressing down, other times a silent freeze.

"What it came down to," says Andy today, "was they tried to make us cry. They'd tell us we were wrong, they'd tell us why we were wrong, and they'd tell us why it was wrong to be wrong. I always held out as long as I could, but they could really put it to you. Jim eventually learned not to cry, but I never did."

By the time Steve reached Korea, in early 1953, Jim was a handsome if slightly chubby boy whose intelligence, natural charm, and good manners made him a favorite of teachers and president of his fifth grade class. But he could startle his elders with braggadocio and shocking language. He rode his bicycle no-hands fashion and got kicked out of the Cub Scouts for sassing the den mother. He persecuted his brother.

Jim shared a room with Andy in the Claremont house, and if there was one thing he hated, it was the sound of heavy breathing, especially when he was reading or watching television or trying to sleep. Andy suffered from chronic tonsillitis, which made it difficult for him to breathe al*night.

Sometimes Andy would come awake gasping, desperately trying to catch his breath, to discover his mouth sealed shut with cellophane tape. In the next bed Jim would be feigning sleep or shaking silently with laughter.

After the Morrisons returned to Albuquerque Clara took a part-time secretarial job. Jim was enrolled in Albuquerque's public school system for his seventh and eighth grade years, 1955 to 1957. It is a family member's observation that this was

when the three children grew close as a "defense action to moving around so much," but it was also in New Mexico that his parents noticed Jim's withdrawal. It was here that he lost interest in his music lessons, refused to participate in family functions, began his voracious reading, and experienced that dangerous toboggan ride.

In September 1957, after two years in the crisp mountain air of New Mexico, the Morrisons moved again, this time to Alameda in northern California. Alameda is a small island in San Francisco Bay noted for its naval air station, which is the largest industrial complex in the Bay area and the largest U.S. Navy air station anywhere in the world. This was Jim's ninth home town and it was here that he spent his first year and a half of high school.

The only real friend he made was a tall but overweight classmate with a sleepy voice. Fud Ford introduced Jim to the social nuances of Alameda High, telling him it wasn't cool to ride a bicycle (Jim began to walk the mile and a half to school) and that it wasn't acceptable to wear clean Levi's to class.

"My mother washes them every week," Jim said. "Sometimes twice a week."

Fud shrugged hopelessly.

Jim brightened. "I got an idea. I'll leave a second pair next door under Rich Slaymaker's porch. I can change into them after I leave the house."

It was an obvious move to gain acceptance. So, too, were his efforts to draw attention to himself. Once he tied the end of a piece of string around one ear, placed the other end in his mouth, and whenever anyone commented, said he had a tiny bucket hanging down his throat to collect saliva for medical tests. He read Mad magazines avidly and adopted several of the catch phrases as his own. He said he was "crackers to slip the rozzer the dropsy in snide."

In an early show of resentment toward authority, something that would become a pattern in his life, when local po-

[No One Hem Gets Out Auvb]

licemen threw him out of the Alameda Theater one Friday night for being among the noisy rowdies who sat in the front row, he snapped, "Whip out some identification."

He worked out elaborate ways to answer the telephone, reflecting the sick side of Mod's humor or the taint of ethnic slur: "Morrison's Mortuary . . . you stab 'em, we slab 'em" and "Hello, Mo'son's rez-dence, this here's Thelma."

Sometimes Jim was subtler, and more bizarre. When he was caught going up a stairway marked for downward movement only, he was taken before the student "border patrol" and asked, "Do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," Jim said solemnly, "for, you see, I have no legs."

Jim and Fud were inseparable. They took their first drinks together, sneaking gin from the Commander's botde and replacing it with water. They faked fights at the officers' club pool that looked and sounded homicidal, then giggled all the way home.

They also shared the pain of sexual awakening. Jim encouraged Fud to join him at Joy Allen's house on the estuary, where they secredy watched Joy and her mother change into their bathing suits. Nearby, where there were houses on fingers of land built into the bay, they peeled off their bathing suits and flashed out of the water on one side, sprinting naked to the other side and back. Jim told Fud he was banging two girls right in his own room when his mother went shopping. Fud shook his head in envy, and told a lie to match.

Many of Jim's afternoons were spent at Fud's, writing dozens of wildly scatalogical and sexually explicit radio commercials about the problems of "butt-picking and masturbation."

Masturbation usually occurs between the ages of twelve and eighteen, although some continue past the age of ninety-three. You may not realize the dangers of masturbation. Often a severe rash will develop around the outer skin of the penis delpisto which in

[The Bow is Drawn]

extreme cases might call for amputation. Also, stri-dopsis of the papuntasistula gland may develop, or in lay terms, you might find yourself with a big red prick. No one wants this to happen. But it will occur unless immediate help is obtained. We (at the Society for the Prevention of Masturbation) are equipped with special water-tested machines and our staff of trained nurses are always ready to pitch in and lend a willing hand when needed.

Jim created an elaborate pencil drawing of a man contorting and vomiting: "Neglected kidneys caused this." Another showed a man with a Coca-Cola bottle for a penis, a mean-looking can opener for testicles, one hand held out and dripping with slime, more of the slime hanging from his anus. A third showed a man with an erect penis the size of a baseball bat, a small boy kneeling in front and holding on, licking his pointed teeth in anticipation.

Jim made hundreds of these drawings. When his mood vas lighter, he and Fud cut out cartoon characters from the)unday funnies and rearranged them on strips of paper, giving hem new dialogue or captions. Again the themes were sexual,)r scatological, but they were imbued with sophistication and lubtle humor unusual for someone just fourteen.

Jim sat in his room in the evening, alone. He closed the >ook that had held him captive for four hours, releasing a deep breath. The next morning he began to read the book igain. This time he copied

paragraphs he liked into a spiral lotebook that he'd started to carry around with him.

The book was Jack Kerouac's novel about the beat gener-ition, On the Road, published the same month the Morrisons irrived in Alameda, September 1957. Jim discovered the book Jiat winter, about the same time a newspaper columnist in San Francisco gave the world a new pejorative: beatnik.

World headquarters for the beatniks was North Beach, a San Francisco neighborhood that was only forty-five minutes

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by bus from Alameda. On Saturdays Jim and Fud walked up and down Broadway tirelessly, stopping to browse in the City Lights Book Shop, where a sign in the window read "Banned Books." Once Jim saw one of the owners of the shop, the poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Jim nervously said hello, and when Fer-linghetti said hello back to him, Jim fled.

Ferlinghetti was one of Jim's favorites, along with Kenneth Rexroth and Allen Ginsberg. Ginsberg made the greatest impact, for he was the real-life Carlo Marx (one of Kerouac's characters in On the Road), *'the sorrowful poetic con-man with the dark mind." It was an image that stuck to Jim hke paste.

Jim was also fascinated by Dean Moriarty, the "side-burned hero of the snowy west" whose energy gave Kerouac's novel a rush like amphetamine. He was one of Kerouac's "mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but bum, bum, bum like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue center-light pop and everybody goes *Awww!' "

Jim began to copy Moriarty, right down to his "hee-hee-hee-hee" laugh.

Time passed slowly in Alameda. Jim took "accidental** falls from the swimming pool at the navy base, listened to his Oscar Brand and Tom Lehrer records over and over, and got into hassles with his mother.

Clara was a "screamer," and when she didn't get her way, she threatened to hold back allowances. Jim laughed at her and once when she came at him in anger he grabbed her and started wrestling her to the floor, pulling out a ball-point pen and scribbling on her arm.

"You don't fight fair," she hollered. "You don't fight fair!"

Jim was laughing. "Hee-hee-hee-hee, ah-hee-hee-hee-hee-hee ..."

[The Bow is Drawn]

Jim came to Alexandria, Virginia, from California in December 1958, ahead of the rest of the family, to stay with navy friends of his parents who had a son his age. Jeff Morehouse was the slight, bespectacled class "brain" and he introduced fim to Tandy Martin. Tandy lived only a hundred yards from the spacious home the Morrisons leased in January, when Steve returned to the Pentagon.

The brick-and-stone house was in a hilly, wooded section called Beverly Hills, an upper-middle-class neighborhood whose population included diplomats, high-ranking military officers, cabinet members, doctors, lawyers, and senators. There was a thick floral carpet in a living room filled with functional antiques (one of Clara's brothers was an antique dealer), overstuffed chairs, and a big television set. Bicycles leaned against the outside porch.

Jim and Tandy had lockers near each other at school and usually they walked to and from George Washington High School together.

Jim liked to shock Tandy. "Ah think ah'm gonna go over there and piss on that fire plug," he announced one day, reaching dramatically for the zipper of his chino pants.

"No," cried Tandy, horrified.

In a more laborious plot Jim invited Tandy to watch him play tennis with a cousin who was deaf. For nearly an hour Jim "talked" to his cousin with his hands, translating for Tandy, who stood sympathetically nearby. Suddenly the conversation flared into an argument. Jim's fingers and those of his cousin flew like knitting needles and finally the cousin stalked off.

Jim shrugged and told Tandy he'd walk her home. "What was that all about?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing," Jim said. "He asked if he could come with us when I walked you home and I said no."

Tandy told Jim he was cruel and she burst into tears. "Oh, Jim, how could you ..."

"Oh, for Christ's sake," said Jim to that, "he's not really deaf"

[No One Here Gets Out Auve]

Tandy stopped crying and started screaming with rage. She was Jim's only girlfriend for two and a half years in Alexandria and she suffered most. Jim tested her constantly.

One Saturday they went by bus to the Corcoran Art Gallery in nearby Washington. As they rumbled across the Potomac, Jim dropped to his knees on the floor, grabbing for Tandy's feet.

"Jim!" Tandy said in a mortified hush. "What in the world are you doing? Stop it, now, stop it."

Swifly, Jim removed one of her saddle shoes and began tugging on a white sock.

"Jim, please." Tandy folded her hands in the lap of her pleated skirt, gripping until her knuckles were white. A deep blush colored her cheeks and ran back around her neck under her ponytail.

"All ah want to dooooo is kiss yore presh-ussss feet," Jim said in that "dumb," syrupy voice he put on to annoy her. It was a voice purposely developed so no one would know whether or not he was kidding. Jim raised the naked foot in his hands, give it a peck, then started his snuffing hee-hee laugh.

The bus hissed to a stop a short walk from the gallery half an hour before it opened, so Jim and Tandy went to a nearby park. They came to a large statue of a nude woman, bending from the waist.

Jim whispered in Tandy's ear, "Betcha chicken to kiss that statue's ass."

"Jim . .."

"Go on, betcha chicken." i

"No."

"Are you tellin' me you're 'fraid to approach the buttocks of a simple marble edifice?" he asked, showing off" his vocabulary as usual.

"Come on now, Jim." Tandy looked nervously around i her. Some tourists were taking pictures of the statue.

"Go on, Tandy, put your orbicular muscle to work. Kiss the gluteus maximus!"

[The Bow is Drawn]

Tandy lost control. *7 will not kiss that statue's whatever you all it no matter what you say!"

Her wail was followed by silence. Tandy looked around, iveryone was staring at her. Jim was seated several yards away, ooking off as if he didn't know who she was, barely able to :ontain himself from exploding into laughter.

"I asked him why he played games all the time," Tandy says today. "He said, 'You'd never stay interested in me if I didn't.' "

Tandy wasn't the only one subjected to Jim's tests. His eachers suffered, too—especially a naive and conservative biology teacher well past the retirement age. Jim cheated openly n her class, and once during an exam, he leaped onto one of he lab tables, swinging his arms wildly, causing everyone to ook at him.

"Mr. Morrison!" came the teacher's angry voice. "What ire you doing!"

"Ahh wuz jus' chasin' a beeeee," Jim said, still standing)n the table. The others in the classroom began to laugh.

"The bee has every right to be left alone, Mr. Morrison, 'lease return to your seat."

Jim dropped to the floor and strode to his chair trium-jhantly. The classroom settled into silence. Then Jim leaped)ver the lab table and chased the "bee" up the aisle and out of :he room.

When he came to class late, Jim told elaborate stories ibout being held up by bandits or kidnapped by gypsies, and .vhen he suddenly walked out of a classroom and the teacher iished after him, he explained that he was to be operated on for a brain tumor that afternoon. Clara was stunned when the principal called the next day to inquire about the operation's jutcome.

He approached pretty girls, bowed, recited ten or so lines from a sonnet or eighteenth-century novel that he'd memorized, bowed again, and strolled away. After school he accom-

panied friends to the golf course (although he didn't play) and walked along the two-inch railing bordering the greens, precariously balanced thirty feet above the rushing Potomac River. In the hallways at school he shouted at pals, "Hey, motherfuckerrr."

Sometimes the stunts rang with bitterness and cruelty. Coming back from Washington on the bus he once caught an older woman staring at him. "What do you think of elephants?" Jim asked her.

She looked away quickly.

"Well," said Jim, "what do you think of elephants?"

When the woman didn't respond, Jim bellowed, "What's the matter with elephants?"

By the time the bus reached Alexandria, the woman was whimpering and several adults were telling Jim to leave her alone.

"I was jjust asking about elephants," he said.

Another time when he and Tandy encountered a paraplegic in a wheelchair, Jim began to twitch and whirl and salivate in mockery.

As unpleasant as Jim sometimes was, he had no difficulty attracting companions. In fact, most of those around him in Alexandria were from the GW elite, including several prominent jocks, the editor of the school magazine (voted "most intelligent" in the class), and the student body president. They all competed for his attention—unconsciously mimicking the way he talked while adopting his favorite expressions: "That's a hot one!" and "Unnnnhhh . . . you got

me, right in the gonads!"; urging him to double-date with them (he always refused); trading what came to be called, even then, "Jim Morrison stories." Jim's magnetism was becoming obvious, if not clearly definable.

"We were so goddamned straight," one of his friends and classmates recalls, "that when someone actually did these nervy things, things we wanted to do, we felt gratified in a

sense, and we gravitated toward Morrison. He was a center for as."

Tandy Martin offers another view. "When you're in high school and you're different . . . Hke, I wanted to join a sorority Ijecause I wanted to be 'in,' but I knew it was bullshit, so I couldn't do it. I got bid to the top sorority and I went home md cried all night because I knew I'd have to say no. And I kvas emotionally damaged. When you think that you're right and everybody else is doing something else and you're only fifteen years old, well, what happens is: your heart breaks. And a scar forms. Everybody wants to belong when they're fifteen, [im was asked to join AVO— the fraternity—and he said no."

Throughout his years at GW Jim maintained an 88.32 a^ade average with only minimal effort, twice being named to the honor roll. His IQ^was 149. In his college boards he scored ibove the national average in mathematics (528, contrasted m\h the national 502) and much higher in the verbals (630, compared to the average 478). But statistics tell so little. The books Jim read reveal more.

He devoured Friedrich Nietzsche, the poetic German philosopher whose views on aesthetics, morality, and the Apollo-nian-Dionysian duality would appear again and again in Jim's conversation, poetry, songs, and life. He read Plutarch's Lives if the Noble Greeks, becoming enamored of Alexander the Great, admiring his intellectual and physical accomplishments, while adopting some of

the look: "... the incHnation of his head a little on one side towards his left shoulder. ..." He read the great French Symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud, whose style would influence the form of Jim's short prose poems. He read everything Kerouac, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, Kenneth Pat-ehen, Michael McClure, Gregory Corso, and all the other beat writers published. Norman O. Brown's Life Against Death sat on his bookshelf next to James T. Farrell's Stiuis Lonigan, which abutted Colin Wilson's The Outsider, and next to it: Ulysses (his English teacher in senior year felt that Jim was the only one in

the class who'd read it and understood it). Balzac, Cocteau, and Moliere were familiars, along with most of the French existentialist philosophers. Jim seemed to understand intuitively what these challenging minds offered.

It's now twenty years later and Jim's senior-year EngHsh teacher still talks about Jim's reading habits: "Jim read as much and probably more than any student in class. But everything he read was so offbeat I had another teacher who was going to the Library of Congress check to see if the books Jim was reporting on actually existed. I suspected he was making them up, as they were English books on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century demonology. I'd never heard of them. But they existed, and I'm convinced from the paper he wrote that he read them, and the Library of Congress would've been the only source."

Jim was becoming a writer. He had begun to keep journals, spiral notebooks that he would fill with his daily observations and thoughts; lines from magazine advertisements; scraps of dialogue; ideas and paragraphs from books; and as he entered his senior year, more and more poetry. The romantic notion of poetry was taking hold: the "Rimbaud legend," the predestined tragedy, were impressed on his consciousness; the homosexuality of Ginsberg and Whitman and Rimbaud himself; the alcoholism of Baudelaire, Dylan Thomas, Brendan Behan; the madness and addiction oi so

many more in whom the pain married with the visions. The pages became a mirror in which Jim saw his reflection.

To be a poet entailed more than writing poems. It demanded a commitment to live, and die, with great style and even greater sadness; to wake each morning with the fever raging and know it would never be extinguished except by death, yet to be convinced that this suffering carried a unique reward. "The poet is the priest of the invisible," Wallace Stevens said. "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world," wrote Shelley, ". . . the hierophants of an unapprehended in-

spiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present."

Rimbaud himself, in a letter to Paul Demeny, put it best: "A poet makes himself a visionary through a long, boundless, and systematized disorganization of all the senses. All forms of love, of suffering, of madness; he searches himself, he exhausts within himself all poisons and preserves their quintessences. Unspeakable torment, where he will need the greatest faith, a superhuman strength, where he becomes among all men the great invalid, the great accursed—and the Supreme Scientist! For he attains the unknown! So what if he is destroyed in his ecstatic flight through things unheard of, un-nameable...." The poet as a thief of fire.

Jim had once written what he described as a "ballad type poem" called "The Pony Express," but now he was firing off shorter bursts, filling notebooks that would provide much of the material or inspiration for many of the Doors' first songs. One poem that survived was "Horse Latitudes." Jim wrote it after seeing a lurid paperback cover showing horses being jettisoned from a Spanish galleon that was becalmed in the Sargasso Sea:

When the still sea conspires an armour And her sullen and aborted Currents breed tiny monsters, True sailing is dead

Awkward instant

And the first animal is jettisoned.

Legs furiously pumping

Their stiff green gallop,

And heads bob up

Poise

Dehcate

Pause

[No One Here Gets Out Alive]

Consent

In mute nostril agony Carefully refined And sealed over

Many of Jim's poems, now and later, were about water and death. Although he was a superb swimmer, his closest friends maintained that Jim greatly feared the water.

Jim was a junior when Tandy Martin transferred from GW to the St. Agnes School for Girls, in the same neighborhood. Jim often saw her as she walked past his house on her way home and many times he followed her, to share hours of revealing confidences.

"What's your earliest memory?" Tandy asked.

"I'm in a room and there are four or five grown-ups around me and they're all saying, 'Come to me, Jimmy, come to me .. .' I'm just

learning to walk and they're all saying, 'Come to me .. .' "

"How do you know that isn't something your mother told you?" said Tandy.

"It's far too trivial. She wouldn't tell a story like that."

"Oh well, Freud says that ..."

Perhaps Jim did think it trivial, but in the years to come he would tell of similar memories. Most of these were presented as dreams, and all of them featured a number of adults who held out their arms to Jim as a small child.

Tandy and Jim talked about what scared them and what they shared and hoped to be. He said he wanted to be a writer, to experience everything. Once or twice he said he wanted to be a painter and he gave her two of his small oils. One was a portrait of Tandy in the form of a sun; the second was a self-J portrait, showing Jim as a king.

Jim's painting, like his poetry, was nearly a secret activity. His allowance was small, so he stole paints and brushes, and after his paintings were finished, they disappeared as mysteri-

ously as the supplies had arrived. The erotic ones, of course, were hidden, destroyed, or given away. Copies of de Kooning nudes were painted over and the drawings of giant, snakeHke penises and fellatio cartoons were slipped into his classmates* textbooks, where Jim knew they'd be seen by the teachers. As usual, Jim noted all reactions, learning what would appall, fascinate, and madden.

Jim's brother once asked him why he painted. "You can't read all the time," he told Andy. "Your eyes get tired."

Andy worshipped his older brother, even when Jim was at his meanest. He remembers two or three occasions when they walked through a field and Jim picked up a rock and said, "I'll give you to ten . . ."

Andy looked in mute terror at Jim, and then at the rock and back at Jim.

Jim said, "One ..."

"No," Andy cried, "no, no . . ."

"Two ..."

"Come on, Jim, please, Jim, please ..."

By "three," Andy was running as Jim shouted, "fourfive-sixseveneightnineten," then aimed and hit him.

Jim was sixteen when he did that, seventeen when he approached Andy malevolently, dog shit held in his hand in a towel. He chased a screaming Andy all over the house. Finally he caught him and rubbed the turd in his face. It was made of rubber. Andy sobbed with relief

"I don't know how many times I'd be watching TV and he'd come sit on my face and fart," Andy says. "Or after drinking chocolate milk or orange juice, which makes your saliva real gooey, he'd put his knees on my shoulders so I couldn't move and hang a goober over my face, just let that spit roll out of his mouth and down, down, down, until it hung just over my nose . . . and then he'd suck it back up."

When they walked through the neighborhood together and encountered someone older and bigger than Andy, Jim would say, "Hey . . . my brother wants to fight you . . . mah

bruther wonts to faht chewwwwww. What-a ya gonna doooooo about it?"

At the zoo in Washington Jim dared Andy to walk the narrow ledge along the deep gorge that separated the animals from the spectators. Another time he goaded Andy into walking a similar ledge that dropped fifty feet to a freeway below.

"If I didn't do it," Andy says, "he'd call me 'pussy' because he wasn't asking me to do anything he wouldn't do."

Jim took many such walks, and as with the toboggan ride, he didn't fall or crash. Jim once said, "Well, you either have faith, man, or you fall."

Jim saw htde of his sister and parents in Alexandria, often leaving the house in the morning without breakfast, without a word. His sister, Anne, was merely another object of his incessant teasing. His father was what he'd always been: mentally preoccupied or physically absent—visiting Cape Canaveral for the Vanguard space shots, playing golf at the Army-Navy Country Club, flying to keep his wings, and working mathematical puzzles at home rather than paying as much attention to Jim as Jim would have liked.

By now, Jim's mother was the dominant parent. Even when Steve was home, Clara handled the family finances. She was the exemplary navy wife, doing everything well, from polishing the silver to hosting bridge parties. She was what one relative called "the life of the party, the one who'd keep going at one a.m., whereas Steve would've gone to bed by nine." Jim thought his mother was an overprotective nag. She got on his nerves, always harping about the length of his hair or the state of his shirt.

Jim would wear the same shirt for weeks, until it was in very bad condition. At one point a teacher asked him if he needed financial assistance. Once Clara gave Jim five dollars to buy a new shirt and he bought one for twenty-five cents at a Salvation Army store and

spent the rest on books. Finally she tried to get Tandy Martin's mother to ask Tandy to speak to Jim. Of course Tandy refused.

[The Bow is Drawn]

One afternoon Tandy was with Jim in his house when they heard his parents returning. Jim suddenly carried Tandy upstairs into his parents' bedroom and threw her onto the bed, mussing the bedcovers. Tandy protested. She got to her feet and made for the door, with Jim behind her. The timing was perfect. Tandy, her blouse pulled out of her skirt from the activity, and Jim tumbled downstairs just as the Morrisons entered the living room.

"Hi, Mom, hi. Dad." Jim grinned.

Clara worried about Jim's "queemess," feared he'd inherited some.of the eccentricity that she believed characterized her brothers. She didn't know what to make of it when Jim turned on her and said, "You don't really care about my grades, you only want me to get good grades so you can brag to your bridge club." Another time he shocked everyone when he petulantly dropped his silverware onto his dinner plate and told her, "You sound like a pig when you eat."

Others wondered about Jim's odd manner as well. When he slopped around Alexandria in his Clarke desert boots, chinos, and Banlon shirts, needing a haircut, he seemed cordially distant, idiosyncratic at worst. Other times he was downright mysterious. Seldom permitted the use of the family car, he often had friends take him into downtown Washington, where he struck off on foot, giving no explanation.

Where was he going? What was he doing? Some believe he was seeing a friend he'd met at one of those odd little bookstores he frequented. Others say he was sneaking off to the sleazy bars on old Route 1, near Fort Belvoir, to Hsten to black blues singers. The latter seems most likely.-The music he liked, and played most often in his basement room, were blues and spirituals recorded by the

Library of Congress. (At that time he said he hated rock and roll.) He also liked to wander the decaying Alexandria waterfront, talking to the black men fishing from the piers. Sometimes Jim took Tandy there at night to meet these "friends."

Stranger were his moonlight visits to Tandy's house,

[No One Here Gets Out Auvb]

where Jim stood in the Martin yard, silently staring at her second-floor bedroom window. Tandy claims she always woke up, but by the time she got downstairs, Jim was gone. When she accused Jim of waking her, he said he hadn't left his bed.

Throughout his senior year his parents pressured Jim to apply to colleges, just as they had badgered him into having his photograph taken for the high school yearbook. When Jim showed no interest, the Morrisons enrolled him at St. Petersburg Junior College in Florida and decided he'd live with his grandparents in nearby Clearwater while he was attending college. Jim submitted with a shrug and then announced he had no intention of showing up at his high school graduation ceremonies. Jim's father was furious, but Jim remained unmoved. So the diploma was mailed, after Jim's name was called and no one stepped forward to pick it up.

Jim's final date with Tandy was Friday night, when they parked by the Potomac River with Tandy's friend Mary Wilson and her date. Jim had a six-pack of beer, and when they went to Mary's house later, he produced a notebook of his poetry. As Tandy read the book, Jim began clowning, bragging that he'd consumed half a bottle of his father's whiskey at the beginning of the evening.

Tandy was annoyed and showed it. "Oh Jim, why must you wear a mask? Do you have to wear it all the time?"

Jim suddenly burst into tears and fell gnto Tandy's lap, sobbing hysterically.

"Don't you know," he said finally, "I did it all for you?"

Tandy remembered the Wilsons, asleep upstairs, and she suggested to Jim that he go home.

"Oh," he said, "you're afraid I'll wake the Wilsons, I'm making you nervous, right? You wouldn't know what to do if they found me crying, would you?"

Tandy choked and said, "No."

Jim moved to the door, said good night, and stepped outside, closing the door behind him. Tandy sighed. Then the

[The Bow is Drawn]

door flew open and Jim announced loudly, "I've changed my mind!" Then he confessed, "I love you!" Tandy sniffed haughtily, "Sure you do."

"Oh, you're so smug," Jim said, taunting her, using the word that always set Tandy off. She bristled. Jim grabbed her arm and twisted it behind her back painfully. She choked back a cry and listened in horror as Jim told her he thought what he ought to do was to take a sharp knife and cut her face, leaving a nasty scar, "so no one else will look at you but me."

Tandy never related this incident to her mother, but Mrs. Martin was not blind to Jim's changing personality. Nor was Tandy herself. She had thought him innocent and happy when she'd met him in the middle of their sophomore year. Now, just two and a half years later, he seemed bitter, cynical, obsessive, perverse, and she didn't understand the reasons for the change. His tongue was more vicious too, and the knife threat apparently was only one of several even more frightening incidents that happened in quick succession. Mrs. Martin told Tandy he seemed "unclean, like a leper," and urged her not to spend any time with him. An alarmed appraisal, perhaps, but

it caused Tandy and her mother to recall an incident of two years earlier, when Jim was hew to Alexandria.

He had a problem he couldn't discuss with his parents, Jim said, and Tandy (wishing he would discuss it with her) suggested he talk with the young assistant minister at the Westminster Presbyterian Church who was the head of her youth fellowship and was "cool" with kids. Jim agreed and an appointment was made.

"I don't think I'll go after all," Jim said the day Tandy's mother picked him up at GW.

"Oh yes you will," Tandy said, standing nearby with one of her girlfriends. Together they pushed him into the back seat of the car.

What Jim's problem was and what he told the young pastor are unknown. Apparently Jim never confided in anyone else and the assistant minister recalls nothing of the visit. Now,

[No One Here Gets Out Auve]

as Jim's graduation approached, Tandy wondered if the problem of two years earlier was relevant to the "personaliti^ change" she and her mother had been witnessing.

The next night Jim called to apologize for the knife incir dent and asked to see Tandy again. She wanted to see Jim, buf months earlier she'd promised someone else she'd go to a formal dance and she didn't think it fair to break the date so late.

"But I'm moving to Florida," he said. "Tomorrow I'm gonna be gone for good."

Tandy was stunned. It was the first she'd heard of the move. Angry and hurt, she said it was too bad he hadn't told her earlier, and just before starting to cry, she hung up the telephone.

Jim ran to her house in a fury, stood under one of the big leafy trees in the Martin yard, and screamed, "At last I'll be free of you! I'll be free! I'm leaving and I'll never write you . . . I won't even think of you!"

Jim then demanded that Tandy return the journals she'd borrowed. Immediately. Tandy appeared, her mouth and eyes slits as she gave him the notebooks of poetry.

Sunday night Tandy woke up late and knew he was standing in the back garden. She went downstairs and heard the familiar steps fading away. She went to a window and watched the dark figure get into the Morrison car.

The car moved into the night toward Florida.

[26]

Chapter

J

im stood on the hot Florida curb, peeling off his black suit coat, ripping open the tab collar of his clean white shirt, tearing away the red stripe tie: the uniform of St. Petersburg JC, The "upcounty bus" that took him home threw open its doors.

Jim slumped into a seat about midway back and began whistling, then produced two or three long low belches, a noisy, self-conscious prelude to one of the rambling, sorry jokes and tall tales that he liked to tell.