

I imagine myself to be a simple enough man. I am not given to epiphany with great regularity, nor am I given to cypher. I am probably plain to a fault, and tend to expose too much of my inner world. I do not often have dreams which move me. I had one last night, and it is still resting heavy in my chest.

I will, no I must, try to record what I dreamed in order to lighten this weight. I am on an airplane right now, flying somewhere over Canada on my way home from a month in London. I went to try to find myself, and in some ways I have. I have a better sense of who I am right now than I long have. I once again feel a level of confidence which I once carried like a shield but which has been missing for too long now. But this dream.

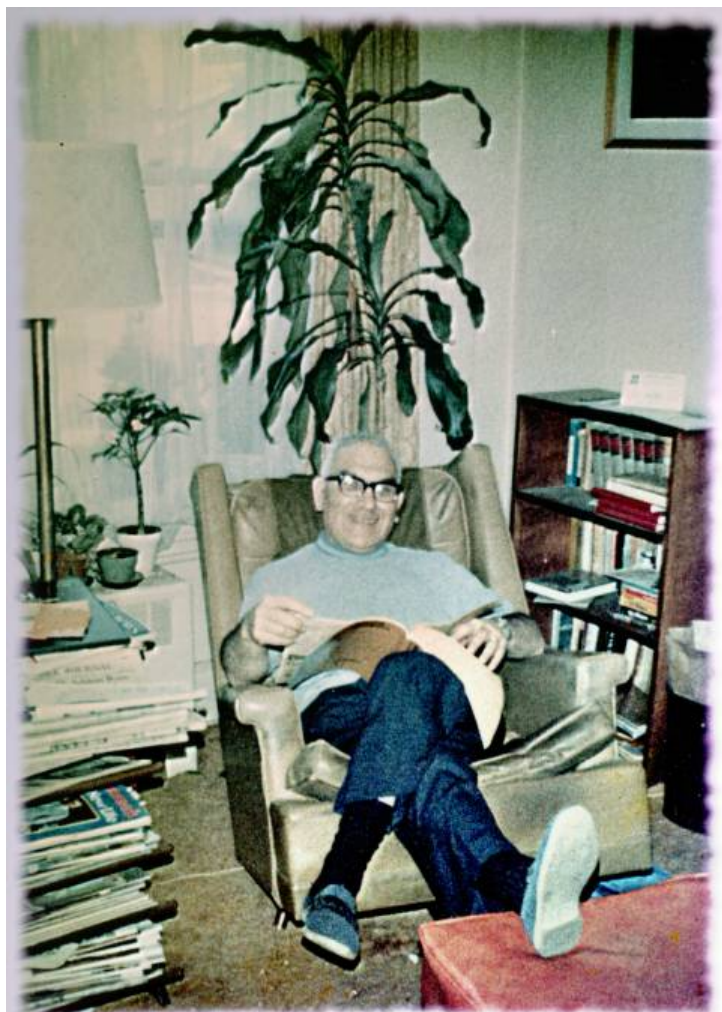
Before I left on my trip I wrote my ex-wife a letter about an essay I had read. No, not really about the essay, but about how my own experiences have left me in a different place than that author. That essay was by a woman who had lost her father when she herself was already an adult. In her map of the universe there were places which she associated with her father, places from which she had stayed away, as though they were off limits to her. There was his Brooklyn, and there was hers. Only after he passed had she allowed herself to venture too far into his Brooklyn.

I wrote that I had a very different map than she. In my map of the universe my father occupies times and not places. I do not think of a place and say "That's my fathers" (fill in the blank). I think of times, "When my father was alive we..." I can no more venture into those times than could H. G. Wells without his time machine. I could not understand, I couldn't relate to what this woman wrote, but she wrote it beautifully and it did make me think to recount in writing an event of which I had never written before – my father's death in my 13th year. This I did in painful detail, and I cried while I wrote it. I suspect she cried when she read it. Later, when I cleaned up the letter and [put it on my website](#), I suspect that other people cried when they read it. I did not intend to make people cry, I just had to get that account out of my system, and I had.

This was all in prelude to my month-long trip to London, and it served as a sort of cathartic warm up. In London I [took a day to go and try to find my father's London](#), and ended up finding how much the world changes in 60 years. Instead I found myself, or part of myself, and had a new catharsis. That prelude piece had ended in my admission that in a way I had always blamed my mother and her pack-rat tendencies for his death. I don't know how aware I have ever been of this, but it must have been there and it came out full force as I wrote that memoir. I shudder to think of my siblings reading that and what they may now think of me. But my dream really startled me, for in my dream I found myself confronting those demons directly in way I have never imagined one could in a dream. Here then is that dream, make of it what you will.

I am 45 years old now, middle aged. My marriage of 12 years failed, though there were many good years and much happiness, there was an unhappy period which came over me and by annex my marriage, commencing a few years ago, roughly coinciding with my mother's final illness and ultimate death. After her illness, death and the administering of her estate I never really get back to enjoying my life as it was. Too much has changed. I cannot even see what is different or what is wrong, I am just sublimely unhappy.

But now I am a teenager again, I am in my mother's living room and the room is clean, something it had not been since my father passed away. This in part is how I place my own age, as I cannot see myself. I am in a clean living room so I must be a teenager. The doorbell rings and someone answers. My father is at the door. He has been dead for five years now, and has come to talk about that. My mother comes out from the kitchen and they have the same little kiss on the lips with which they would greet each other every time he came home. My mother wore an apron and tea was soon served. We sat and chatted; my father, a neighbor, some other people. I was there, but I cannot recall any of my four siblings being in the room.



Dad asks for a glass of water. Oh my god, I cannot explain, but his voice is just the same, that thin reedy voice with the palest of English accents, the almost singsong lilt. My heart jumps as I offer to go get him one.

The kitchen is a mess, it is not clean like when dad was alive, it is a horrid, unlivable mess as I remember it from visits to mom 10 or so years after dad's death. I am caught in a Sisyphean struggle to find a clean cup, or a cup I can clean, or something to clean a cup with, or ...

My mother comes into the kitchen. She is still wearing her apron but is now as she was in the era of the kitchen looking like this, she is as she was at 60, not the 47 she was when dad died. I look at her with contempt and frustration. Dad is out there, in the other room, and if only she could keep house I would be there with him instead of trapped in this kitchen trying in vain to get him a cup of water. How long have I got, will he still be there when I get back? She is old now, will he be gone? Is the dream over? The dream, the dream

Yes, the dream. It slips away as I realize that I have been dreaming. I try to fetch it back, but I will never go back into the living room with a glass of water. I have failed. All I have done is find contempt for my mother, who certainly didn't deserve it.

That is how I awoke at 4:00 this morning. I never really did get back to sleep properly, and a couple hours later was getting up to go to the airport and fly home. We will land shortly, so I must power down and stow my computer. Much to think about I guess.

Maybe I'll sleep on it.