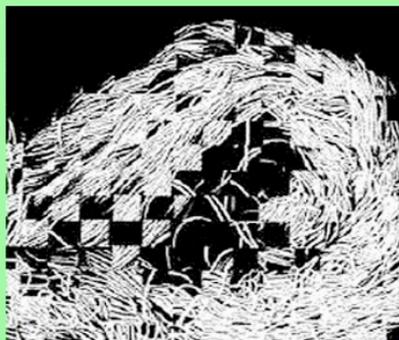


The Many Roads to Japan

A Search for Identity

by

Robert W. Norris



An interactive reader for
ESL students and teachers

THE MANY ROADS TO JAPAN

A Search for Identity

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Some portions of this book are adapted from my novel *Looking for the Summer*.

(to listen to the podcast of the story, click [here](#))

Chapter 1

John Banks, like all the young men of his generation, had to register for the draft when he turned 18. After John's senior year in high school the [draft](#) was carried out through a lottery system based on the individual's birthday. As it later turned out, John's was one of the first numbers picked.

John did not want to be drafted and face the prospect of ending up on the front lines of the Vietnam War. The thought of killing another human being repulsed him. A viable alternative seemed to be in joining the Air Force or Navy. He paid a visit to the local Air Force recruiter, who guaranteed John would never have to carry a weapon. John joined the Air Force in September 1969.

He knew he had made a mistake the day he arrived with a group of other enlistees for six weeks of basic training at Lackland Air Force Base outside of San Antonio, Texas. It was a lonely and arduous time, but somehow he survived the constant screaming of the drill instructors, the hours of marching, the physical conditioning in the desert heat, the training in the use of weapons, the barracks inspections, the scrubbing of toilets and floors, the tasteless food, and the classrooms where the soldiers were inculcated into obedience and conformity. For the first time in his life, John was exposed to young men from all over the nation, each with his own particular prejudices and dialect and mannerisms.

Near the end of basic training he was given his job assignment order. He would be trained as a military policeman. He had to remain at Lackland Air Base for ten more weeks of specialized training. The hand of irony had played a dirty trick. He had joined the Air Force with the idea he would not have to carry a weapon, but now he was to be trained in the art of combat and the use of deadly weapons. He passed through his training without incident, but during this period of time there grew within John an inchoate attitude of rebelliousness.



From Lackland he was transferred to Beale Air Base near Sacramento, California, where he began his job of guarding B-52 bombers that were so huge they seemed



like gigantic prehistoric birds of prey. Thus began his days and nights of walking in lonely circles on the flight line in the heat and rain, thinking, changing, growing, wondering what the purpose of his life was.

John began thinking seriously about Vietnam for the first time. He had a gut feeling that the war was wrong. He began listening to the words instead of just the melodies of popular songs by [Bob Dylan](#) and the many others who were protesting the war. He also began to read the underground newspapers that were finding their way onto the base. These papers were filled with anti-war and anti-government stories about the atrocities committed in Vietnam, the [Kent State shootings](#), the [Presidio Mutiny](#), and the hysteria running rampant on college campuses around the country.

Eventually John's order to go to Southeast Asia came and he was given 30 days of leave before having to report to a base in Texas for a month of intensive war training. From there he would be sent to a base in northern Thailand near the Cambodian border. The war at this time had been escalated (illegally many believed) into Cambodia, where B-52 bombers were dropping tons of [napalm and agent orange](#). When he left Beale Air Base for the start of his 30-day leave, John knew he would never make it to Texas.

For two weeks he did much soul searching. He had only three options: follow his order and go fight in a war he believed was wrong, run away to Canada, or go back to his air base and apply for [conscientious objector](#) status and probably go to prison. He chose the third option.

John returned to Beale Air Base. It amazed John how easy it was to check back onto the base without anyone questioning why he had returned instead of going to Texas. He was told to stay in the transient barracks until he received a work assignment. He had no idea how to apply for [conscientious objector](#) status, so he began just hanging out at the gymnasium, playing basketball, and going to movies at the base theater in the evenings.

One day about three weeks after returning to the base John ran into David Yavitz, another security policeman who asked John what he was doing back on the base. They went for a drive and John, feeling relieved to have someone finally take notice of him, confessed everything. David told John that he too was involved in the underground movement against the war and was writing for an anti-war newspaper being printed secretly off base in Yuba City by a man who had been discharged just two months before.

Over the next few days John found himself involved with a group of five other airmen stationed at the base, each of them in his last few months of military service. All were opposed to the war and were actively spreading anti-war propaganda around the base. They spent many hours together discussing pacifism, [Gandhi](#), [Thoreau](#), and [the duty of civil disobedience](#). They were supportive of John's belief and encouraged him to go to the legal department to find out what his rights were and to set his [conscientious objector](#) application into motion before it was too late. It would not be long before the base clerks discovered he had not followed his order to go to Southeast Asia. John was told he should see a lawyer named Jerry Turnbull, who was said to be sympathetic to the anti-war movement.

Jerry Turnbull was very interested in John's case. Jerry told John that he had spent eight years of school studying to become a lawyer. When he was drafted he considered going to Canada, but decided he could work better from within the system rather than throw away his career and those eight years of schooling. After asking John about the details concerning when John had returned to the base and what he had said to the clerks and other security police, Jerry said he thought John had a chance to successfully receive [conscientious objector](#) status.

They worked very hard together to set into motion John's application for [conscientious objector](#) status. Jerry set up a series of meetings and interviews with a variety of officers and military chaplains who asked John many questions to determine if John's beliefs and feelings were sincere. Before each of these interviews, Jerry counseled John on how to answer the questions.

John's commanding officer found out about what John was doing. The commanding officer wanted to make an example of John to the other soldiers. He did not want any more soldiers to refuse to go to war. He called John into his office. John felt as if he were a captured enemy soldier undergoing interrogation. In front of many witnesses the commanding officer threatened John with a court martial and five years in prison. He demanded John tell why he had changed, who the people were who had influenced him, where they lived, if he was part of some organization, and if he was connected with the filthy communist newspaper spreading propaganda around the base.

John gave only vague answers to all the questions. The commanding officer, frustrated and incensed, gave up his line of questioning and formally gave John the final order to go to war. John's answer to the order was: "I don't feel I'm mentally or physically able to go."

John was charged with the military crime of willful disobedience to a direct lawful order. The maximum punishment for this crime was five years of hard labor in a military prison. It was also possible he would be given a [dishonorable discharge](#). The court martial was scheduled for October 8, 1970.

The court martial took an entire day to complete. Many witnesses were questioned by both the prosecution and defense attorneys. John was called to the stand. There were no questions from the prosecuting attorney. Jerry asked the questions they had rehearsed many times. The words flowed from John's mouth in a mechanical stream, quotations from famous pacifists and resisters to the procession of history's wars. At the end of the questioning, John was given the chance to make a final statement.

He said, "My belief that the war in Vietnam, or any war, is wrong will not change. My conscience will never allow me to participate in any form of war. My feelings are the same as those of [Eugene Debs](#).

"[Eugene Debs](#) said, 'I am accused of having obstructed the war, of being unpatriotic. I object to that accusation. It is not true. I believe in patriotism. I have never uttered a word against the flag. I love the flag as a symbol of freedom. I believe, however, in a wider patriotism.

"[Thomas Paine](#) once said that his country was the world and to do good was his religion. That is the sort of patriotism I believe in. I am an Internationalist. I believe that nations have been pitted against nations long enough in hatred, in strife, in warfare. I believe there ought to be a bond of unity between all these nations. I believe the human race consists of one great family. I love the people of this country, but I don't hate a human being because he happens to be born in some other country. Why should I? Like myself, he is the image of his Creator. I would infinitely rather serve him and love him than to hate him and kill him. Thank you very much."

John rose from the stand feeling dizzy. A wave of emotion and relief swept over him. He had never been as nervous in his entire life. Jerry smiled at him. The court martial was over. The court recessed for the judge to come to a decision. An hour later the judge emerged from a grey and dingy room and called John before him. The judge said John was innocent of the charge of willful disobedience to a direct lawful order, but guilty of the lesser military crime of negligent disobedience to a lawful order. John was sentenced to six months of hard labor in a military prison.

This was John's first exposure to the power of language. The day's proceedings had boiled down to the one sentence he had used in response to his order to go to war. He had not said a direct "no." By saying instead that he felt he was not mentally or physically capable of going, he had been spared a possible four and a half years of prison time. It was staggering for him to think about.

A military policeman placed handcuffs around John's wrists and led him to a patrol car waiting to take him to the base prison. Jerry followed John to the patrol car.

John forced a smile and said, "It could've been worse."

Jerry shook John's hand. "You were very brave today. I was proud of you." John got into the patrol car. The sun was resting on the rim of horizon. A cloud of dust rose behind the car as it headed toward the prison. John looked back and saw Jerry grow smaller through the brown haze until he was a tiny speck in the distance. Then John turned around to face the future.

Review for Chapter 1

I. *Comprehension Questions*

1. What kind of job did John have to do after he finished his Air Force basic training?
2. What were the choices John faced when he was given his order to go to Southeast Asia?
3. What was the military crime John was charged with and what was the sentence he faced if found guilty?
4. How long did John's court martial last? 5. Why was John's punishment shorter than expected?

II. *Put the following events in the correct order:*

- ___ a. John was given a prison sentence.
- ___ b. John became involved with other soldiers in the anti-war movement.
- ___ c. John met a sympathetic military lawyer.
- ___ d. John underwent military training, met young men from many parts of the country, and became a security guard.
- ___ e. John was interviewed by many military officers who questioned him about his beliefs.
- ___ f. John made a speech at his court martial.

___g. John refused to fight in the Vietnam War.

___h. John began to believe that the Vietnam War was not right.

III. Discussion/Essay Questions

1. When John was 18, his generation was faced with the military draft and the Vietnam War. What are some of the important issues that 18-year-olds face in your country? What kinds of important decisions do they have to make?
2. If your country told you to fight in a war you thought was wrong, what would you do? What do you think would be the result of your actions?
3. At this stage of the story, John must go to military prison for six months. What kind of hardships do you think he will face? What do you think his life will be like in prison? What changes do you think he will go through?

Chapter 2

John spent his first week of prison in solitary confinement. He would never forget the sound of the cell door slamming behind him after the guards shoved him into his cell. He had nothing else to do but pace the floor of the eight-foot-long, four-foot-wide concrete cubicle with its solitary bed, single blanket, toilet with no seat, and narrow, barred window looking out upon a desolate landscape.

In a few days he was given a medical checkup to make sure he had no communicable diseases. After that, he was allowed to join the other four prisoners. Their daily routine consisted of getting up at 4:30, cleaning the prison cells, going to breakfast with an armed guard, then returning to the jail to wait for their work assignments of going to various spots around the base, again with an armed guard, to perform such menial chores as scrubbing toilets, digging ditches, and waxing and buffing office floors before returning to the prison in the evenings. After dinner they had two hours of free time. Lights went out at nine o'clock.

One day John received a letter from his father, who had been a World War II hero. The letter said that John's father was ashamed of what John had done, that John would be branded an ex-con and a coward for the rest of his life, that John was throwing his life away, and that he was no longer considered a member of the Banks family. It was a painful letter to read. John cried in realizing he was being renounced by his own family, but he vowed to be strong. In his heart he knew he had done the right thing.

After a month at the Beale Air Base prison, John was sent to another military prison in Denver, Colorado. This was a special prison for non-violent military criminals, who were given a chance to be rehabilitated, serve out their prison terms, and return to the Air Force in a different career field.

The regimen at the 2230th Rehabilitation Group was somewhat similar to basic training. The prisoners were herded into open barracks rather than prison cells. There were 100 men in each building. They had to get up at four o'clock in the morning. They had exactly 15 minutes to shave, shower, have their beds made and living areas spotlessly clean, and be on the parade ground lined up in formation and ready to be marched a mile away to the chow hall for a breakfast of cold toast and runny eggs. They had to be finished eating by 5:30.

When they returned to the barracks, another hour was spent cleaning the entire building. After that, there was the daily morning inspection during which half the prisoners were forced to remake their beds, redust every corner of their tiny living spaces, then stand at attention for two hours waiting for the head guard to reinspect the premises. After the barracks had been inspected, the prisoners were sent around the base to do labor work.

There was always a high tension in the air, but rarely did any violence break out. The prisoners were kept in line because of the threat of being sent to the [Fort Leavenworth prison](#) in Kansas if they caused any trouble. Leavenworth was said to be worse than hell with its brutal guards, tortuous labor, and terrible beatings.

In the afternoons the prisoners had to attend propaganda classes designed to change the prisoners' thinking and behavior. They had to meet over and over again with military psychiatrists, chaplains, psychologists, doctors, and instructors, all of whom had one purpose: to show the prisoners that their way of thinking was wrong and bad and nonconformist. Their job was to pound repeatedly into the prisoners' heads the fact that the prisoners had committed crimes against society and had to change their very selves if they ever wanted to become worthy citizens again, reenter the military and society, and carry on with lives of dignity and worth despite the terrible stigma of shame that was theirs at the moment.

John, however, remained adamant and would not admit to having done anything to harm anyone. Unlike the other 500 prisoners, whose crimes ranged from drug abuse to theft to being absent without leave, John was a prisoner of conscience, a political prisoner. All the therapy classes, private psychiatric sessions, and lectures about morality and duty and obligation and correct thinking had no effect on him. The first step toward successful rehabilitation for any prisoner was to admit he had been wrong in committing his particular crime. John was unwilling to take that first step. He refused to be brainwashed. The authorities began to leave him alone. It took every ounce of strength he possessed to resist the brainwashing attempts, but in the end he succeeded.

He managed to survive his prison sentence without getting into further trouble. The authorities gave up their attempts to rehabilitate John. They finally kicked him out of the military with an "[undesirable](#)" discharge.

John had changed a lot by the time he got out of prison. He was a confused and bitter young man, but determined to find a direction in life and to prove he could survive the scorn of society and his family. He wanted to believe that his father had not meant everything written in the letter, but John's pride would not allow him to make the first apology. He believed time would ultimately heal all the family wounds, but in the meantime he had to make his own life.

At first, he returned to his hometown of Arcata in northern California and found a job at a plywood mill. He had to hitchhike 20 miles every morning to catch the ferry that took the workers across a bay to the plywood mill. The work was boring and repetitious: pulling large sheets of wet plywood as they came rolling down a long conveyor belt and stacking them on wooden carts that were hauled away by forklifts to the dry kiln, where the sheets were dried and stacked and eventually pressed together into different sizes and lengths of plywood. It was harder labor than any he had had to do in prison, but being able to get a salary and pay his own rent helped bring back some purpose and direction to John's life.

One night a few months after starting his new job John was working overtime feeding strips of dried plywood into a machine that sprayed the sides with glue, compressed them, and cut them into wide sheets to be used as middle sections between two outside sheets of clean, high-grade plywood. He was feeding the individual strips into the compressor. One of the barbs sticking up from the links of chain rolling into the compressor caught the rubber glove he was wearing on his right hand. His arm was pulled into the compressor. With his left hand he tried to reach the button that shut the compressor down, but the button was too far away. The chains were grinding into his flesh. He gave a desperate pull against the grinding action of the chains. His arm was suddenly freed. He looked at his arm and saw that everything had been stripped down to the bone. Another worker called for the foreman, who wrapped John's arm and called an ambulance.

John's father was at the hospital when the ambulance arrived. Someone from the plywood mill had called him about the accident. It was the first time John had seen his father since returning from prison. A surgeon unwrapped the bandages.

The moment John's arm was exposed, his father turned his head away. Tears formed at the corners of his eyes. In that moment John felt a new intimacy with him. He could almost feel his father's guilt and remorse. It was as if all John's sufferings were also his father's. The surgeon examined the arm carefully and barked some orders to a nurse. John was taken into surgery.

When John awoke the next morning, there was a cast on his arm. His fingers protruded from the end. His father was seated in a chair next to the hospital bed, dark rims under his eyes.

"How are you feeling, John?" he asked.

"Tired."

John lifted his right arm with his left. He tried to move the fingers and found he could. He looked at his father, who was smiling.

"They had you in the operating room for about six hours. The doctor said it was a difficult operation, but you pulled through like a champ."

"Will I be able to play basketball again?"

"The doctor said if you work hard at rehabilitating the arm when the cast comes off, it should be normal in about four months."

"Dad?"

"Yes."

"Thanks for coming."

For the next two months after John was released from the hospital, he spent two hours every day at a physical therapy center. In order to speed up the rehabilitation process, he also spent hours at a time bouncing, lifting, shooting, and throwing a basketball against a wall and catching it with the injured arm. In the beginning the pain was excruciating. The arm throbbed so much at night he could not sleep. Gradually, the pain subsided and flexibility returned to his arm. Within four months his arm had recovered its full strength. John was ready to make a stab at going to junior college and trying out for the basketball team.

Review for Chapter 2

I. *Comprehension Questions*

1. Why were the prisoners at the 2230th Rehabilitation Group afraid of going to the prison in Kansas?

2. What was the purpose of the propaganda classes the prisoners had to attend?
3. Compared to the other prisoners in Denver, what kind of prisoner was John?
4. What kind of job did John find after he was released from military prison?
5. Where was the first place John met his father after John got out of prison?

II. *Mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).*

1. John's father wrote a letter that said John had done the right thing in refusing to fight in the Vietnam War.
2. Most of the prisoners at the Denver prison had committed violent crimes.
3. The daily routine at the Denver prison was about the same as in basic training.
4. The prison authorities were successful in changing John's thinking.
5. John hitchhiked around the United States soon after he was released from prison.
6. John injured his arm in a car accident.
7. John and his father became friends again.
8. It took about four months for John's injury to heal.

III. *Discussion/Essay Questions*

1. John received a letter from his father that said the family was ashamed of him for refusing to fight in Vietnam and going to prison. Have you ever made a decision that made your family or friends disappointed? If so, what happened? Were you able to resolve the problem?
2. John badly injured his arm in an accident. Have you or any of your friends ever had a bad injury? What happened? How long did the healing process take?

Chapter 3

In the fall John signed up for some general education courses and began training for the basketball season. Tryouts for the team were to be held in October. It was a strange new world he found himself in. Although he was only two years older than the other students, John felt poles apart from them. It was as if his experiences in the military and prison had aged him. The others seemed like children with their bright enthusiasm and optimism, their social cliques and parties. Most of them were fresh out of high school and, like himself two years before, had never been beyond the boundaries of the redwood country of Humboldt County.

He abandoned himself to basketball as he had once done in high school. At the practices he was like a madman racing up and down the court during the different conditioning, dribbling, defense, jumping, and shooting drills. Offensively, he was inconsistent as he had not played with the other players and did not know their moves. His passes often hit them in the head, bounced a step beyond their reach, or soared too high for them to catch. His shots were poorly selected and sometimes forced. Only his defense showed any consistency. John made the team as a second-string guard.



The team had a mediocre season. John had a few good games, but he did not feel a part of things. He was too different from the others. Study also seemed superfluous. He had no academic interests. The classes were easy enough to pass with minimal effort. After two semesters he dropped out of school to go back to work at the plywood mill. He was 21 years old with no education, a bad military record, and no prospects. His future seemed bleak and worthless.

Two months later he was offered a job as a laborer on a construction project on the north side of Lake Tahoe. It provided a chance to escape the vacuum he had fallen into. He packed his belongings, moved to Lake Tahoe, and rented a one-room cabin about 20 minutes from the work site.

John's weekdays were spent on the job carrying tools and boards for the carpenters, digging drainage ditches, nailing off roofs, sweeping up sawdust, and hauling garbage to a nearby dump. He spent most of his time alone, thinking about where his life was headed. He grew a beard and his hair reached down to his shoulders. Near the beginning of winter he had an argument with the job foreman. The foreman told John to cut his hair and shave his beard or he would be fired. John refused and quit the job.

He returned to Arcata again and spent the winter living on his savings and playing in an amateur basketball league. He was

going through changes he did not understand. There remained in him a fundamental sense of not belonging, of no longer being an American. Something burned in his heart and called to him to make a move, a decision that would thrust him out of his lethargy into confronting the outside world again. He had to make a break, but he also knew that whatever he did would change his outlook forever.

One day while browsing through a bookstore John found a book titled *Europe on Five Dollars a Day*. The book explained how it was possible to experience the world on a small amount of money and a lot of faith in one's fellow man. All a person needed was a passport, a backpack, and an adventurous spirit. The idea hit him with the force of a hammer. The search for his self, for a direction in life, had to take on a physical manifestation.

John set about making preparations. He still had about \$1,000 in savings left. He went to a travel agent and bought a round-trip ticket for a flight out of New York to Europe for \$200. The return ticket was good for a year. He applied for and got a passport. For another \$100 he bought a three-month railpass good for all the rail lines in western Europe. He was ready to hit the road.

Three weeks later the amateur basketball season ended. The following morning John was out on the highway, hitchhiking and waiting for his first ride.

John was filled with excitement. The lure of the unknown was out there in the vastness. He was anxious to confront it, to jump into and wallow about in the experiences that awaited him. A new life lay ahead. With him were his life belongings contained in a small, leather backpack: three changes of clothes, a down-filled sleeping bag, a nylon poncho, \$500, and a bota bag for drink.

Three quick rides carried him beyond the redwood country to Highway 20, which cut across California to Lake Tahoe. An old rancher in a cattle truck picked him up and took him as far as Sacramento. He waited three hours before a Mexican in a beat-up Chevrolet pulled over. The Mexican chattered nonstop as they caught up with the Mexican's friend, who was hauling a forklift on a flatbed truck to Reno. They plodded behind the truck at 15 miles per hour. The sky was clear with many stars. They inched their way up the mountains. A full moon illuminated the snow blanketing the Sierra pines. Early in the morning they arrived in Reno and parked the car to get a couple hours of sleep. Just after dawn John caught another ride that took him into the desert and let him out when it turned off the main highway.

The Nevada desert stretched out in all directions, a mixture of auburn wasteland, rolling tumbleweeds, and splotches of unmelted snow. In the far distance were the Rockies, their snow-topped peaks barely discernable on the horizon. They looked like a jagged spine. A VW van with a woman and two children on their way to Denver, Colorado stopped.

For the rest of the day they continued through the Nevada wasteland. By nightfall they were partway into the Utah Salt Flats. They pulled to the side of the road on the outskirts of Salt Lake City to sleep.

Morning was a peaceful calm: grey clouds breaking up with traces of sunlight shimmering through them. They proceeded through the Wasatch Mountains, the road slick with snow and ice, across the Continental Divide, and on to the plateaus of Wyoming. A carpet of snow covered the land. The road seemed to continue forever. Occasionally a jackrabbit bounded across the road. Here and there a distant elk would lift its head to scan their movement. At Cheyenne the woman and her two children turned south. It had been a good ride covering two days and three states.

Sticking to hitchhiking as his main mode of travel but once in a while riding a bus when he was stuck too long in one place, John passed across the Great Plains of Nebraska, out of the snow now and through farming towns with red-brick buildings and dirty main-street sidewalks where old folks sat languorously on benches watching the movement of the world. He stopped in Omaha, where he spent two days reading in a public library and walking the streets. He slept in a cheap room one night and the bus depot the next to save a few dollars.

On and on now, another 600 miles to Peoria, Illinois. A rainy night. A three-dollar motel room with plaster walls and a rattling steam heater. A saggy mattress. A six-pack of cheap beer. A newspaper with stories about returning prisoners of war and [Watergate](#). Morning and a bus ticket to Gary, Indiana, where he took a skid-row room for one night. Across the expanse of Indiana, where squares of long, furrowed fields, ready for seed, stretched in all directions. Another ride to Cleveland.

Thoughts of the [Kent State shootings](#) filled John's head as he passed through Ohio into Pennsylvania and on toward Buffalo, New York. He spent one night sleeping in a wooded field off the shore of Lake Erie. Early the next morning he walked along the beach, then stopped to watch the whitecaps form. The lake was an immense ocean that disappeared beyond the horizon. Grey clouds covered the sky. The sun struggled to break through. He continued another three miles through pollution, dilapidated ghetto buildings, broken glass, and abandoned cars to downtown Buffalo. He found the bus station and bought a ticket to New York City.

At last there he was: bounding through the door of the Port Authority Bus Terminal. His first impression of New York was an endless forest of skyscrapers that seemed to make the redwoods pale in comparison. He stood transfixed, overwhelmed by the sound of car horns and construction machinery, by the smell of exhaust fumes and Armenian bakeries. The scene was alive with

movement. Slowly, he began to walk the sidewalks, mouth agape and mind empty. He found the William Sloane House YMCA on 34th Street and took a room.

For the next week John explored the streets: Greenwich Village, Yankee Stadium, the Empire State Building, the United Nations, Rockefeller Center, Madison Square Garden. He watched double features in afternoon movie theaters for a dollar, then ate at ethnic delicatessens. The entire world seemed to pass him by as he paced the streets--the midget paraplegics, the hipster pimps, the hollow-eyed beggars, the decrepit winos, the Central Park artists, the sophisticated men and women in their business attire.

Finally, he was on Icelandic Air Lines flight 181 on his way to Luxembourg. He was leaving behind the country of his birth, the country he no longer felt a part of, venturing forth with no itinerary, just the hand of fate to guide him. It was as if some divine source were dragging him toward an unknown destination. It was blind obedience to a gut feeling, not unlike his refusal to fight in the Vietnam War.

Review for Chapter 3

I. Comprehension Questions

1. Why did John feel different from the other students at the junior college he attended?
2. Why did John quit his job in Lake Tahoe?
3. What things did John take with him on his journey?
4. What was John's main method of travelling across the United States?
5. How long did John stay in New York City?

II. Use the Internet or go to a library to check a larger map than the one below. Find the cities that John passed through. Make a copy or draw your own map, then draw a line on it tracing John's journey across the United States.



III. Discussion/Essay Questions

1. John had difficulty fitting in with others at school and on the job. Can you relate to his feelings? Do you sometimes feel different from others? If so, in what way?
2. John hitchhiked across the United States. Have you ever seen or picked up a hitchhiker? Is it now or has it ever been a common way to travel in your country?

Chapter 4

The flight took 14 hours, stopping once in Iceland to refuel. At last the plane touched down in Luxembourg. John was on foreign soil for the first time in his life. After passing through customs, he walked around the fortress city. The medieval architecture and

narrow, cobble streets were pleasing to his eyes, as were the wooded hills and green landscape that surrounded the city.

He was anxious, however, to be moving, to begin the adventure, so he boarded a train to Brussels, Belgium. He found a compartment to himself where he could be alone and think. In Brussels he took a midnight train bound for Paris. The night was long with scattered periods of sleep. Early in the morning the train arrived at the Gare du Nord. A heavy mist covered the city. John searched for three hours before finding a cheap room on the Left Bank. Fatigued from jet lag and walking, he passed out on his bed and slept for nearly 18 hours.

For the next two days he walked the streets of Paris and watched the frenzied movement of tourists and natives alike. High cirrus streamlined an azure sky. Flowers were blooming. The trees in the parks were dressing themselves in green. The fragrance of spring was everywhere. Lovers walked arm in arm. Children bounded to and fro, ignoring their parents' admonitions. He was surrounded by activity and scores of people. For some reason Paris intimidated John. He was not comfortable and felt the need to retreat from all the confusion to a quiet place where he could reflect on why he was in Europe, what he should do, and where he should go. He decided to head toward Switzerland, to the Alps, where he could camp out and allow the changes he was undergoing to occur uninterrupted.



He journeyed first to the foot of the Matterhorn in the Swiss Alps. For three days he dwelled in solitude. Not since his childhood in the redwoods had he felt so close to nature, to the trees and mountains and earth surrounding him, to the inestimable sadness of life and its transience. On the third day, as he sat staring at the Matterhorn, a shadow of loneliness fell upon him. The inner journey, the search for a faith, for a belief in life, manifested itself once again in physical movement. He hiked down the mountain road to the village of Visp and boarded a train to Italy.

He found himself in Florence wandering through the city, barely conscious of the history surrounding him. He passed through the [Uffizi](#) and was attracted to [Botticelli's](#) paintings. John had the feeling that surely [Botticelli's](#) had been a mystic soul possessed by the demon of intellect and condemned to a restless existence. He wondered if his own life would continue in the same restless manner, if he would always feel he should be someplace other than where he was.

At the [Michelangelo](#) Academy he discovered in the *David* an answer to the problem that has tortured mankind throughout the ages: the inevitability of death. In the *David* John found preserved for eternity a moment of poignant thought, of tender expression, of profound emotion. What men these [Botticellis](#), these [Da Vincis](#), these [Dantes](#) had been! What purpose of mind they had possessed. Perhaps art was the road to salvation, John thought. Perhaps art could liberate the soul from the pain of living.

John left Florence and lived for two days on the trains, getting off only to buy bread and wine. One night he stopped in Naples and found an abandoned construction site in which to sleep. Several times during the night he awoke to the sound of rats scurrying around him. He boarded a southbound train early the next morning. The compartments were crowded, so he had to try to sleep on the floor of the narrow corridors. He rode the train ferry that crossed the strait between the mainland and Sicily. Only a few peasants rode the train from Messina. About half the distance across the northern coast of Sicily the train stopped at the fishing village of Cefalu. On an impulse John got off.



The sun was high in a cloudless sky. It was very warm. The village lay at the base of a large headland. The buildings were all old and made of adobe. The smell of salt and fish and sea filled the air. Long lines of laundry on many rooftops flapped in the breeze. Copper-skinned children ran laughing and shouting through the narrow, meandering streets. Many small skiffs were docked in the harbor, where weather-beaten men patiently mended their nets. A castle rested on a hill overlooking the village. Nearby was an old cathedral.

John walked along the long stretch of beach outside the village for about a mile until he found a comfortable, isolated spot to set up camp. The white sand shimmered under the hot sun. He washed his clothes and hung them to dry on a tree. For most of the next two days he lay on the beach and watched the fishermen in dinghies gather in their nets. It was a peaceful time and the United States seemed far away.

On the third day John packed his things and walked back into the village. He boarded the first train back to Messina, settled in an empty compartment, not knowing where to go next, and contemplated his future as the poverty-stricken countryside flashed by the window.

John headed up the western coast of Italy. In Paola he boarded a train inland to the mountains. The train chugged up a steep incline until the ocean was far below. The sun was a dazzling brilliance on the water as the train rounded the final bend to wind its course toward the heel of the boot of Italy. The country was green and fresh with many beech and pine trees. In the village of Cosenza he waited a few hours before catching another train.

The next evening he was in Brindisi, a southern Italian port town, boarding a ferry to the Greek island of Corfu off the coast of Albania. The following morning the ferry approached the island. The sun was just above the calm sea. The town of Corfu was bleached in the morning light. Low mountains rose jaggedly in the distance. Once on land, John exchanged some money, then set out to explore the streets of the town before hopping a bus into the countryside.

He joined a group of travellers at a camping site a few miles north of the town. It was a peaceful place across the road from a stretch of white beach. There was plenty of shade provided by a grove of olive trees. Most of the other campers were young people: Germans, Scandinavians, Canadians, French, Dutch.

The days on the island were tranquil days of lounging around and lying nude on a ledge of rock by the sea. The outside world ceased to exist. In the evenings small groups gathered at a nearby cantina for suppers of souflaki, cucumber salad, and potatoes cooked in olive oil. Everyone drank ouzo, the potent Greek wine. The local patrons, warm and friendly people who had lived their entire lives on the island, danced to the music of a juke box. There was much laughter, handshaking, and toasting of drinks.

Afterward the travellers returned to the camping site to gather around a fire, pass bottles of ouzo, and watch the stars. The conversation was animated. It covered many topics in many languages--voyages to other lands, politics, music, art, literature, philosophy. John had never seen such a gathering before. Poets, musicians, painters, political dissidents, refugees, everyone seemed involved in something important and meaningful. Their lives seemed fulfilled and exciting. John had suddenly found himself in the midst of an international underground group with its own grapevine of information, its own life style that enabled all to travel in an inexpensive manner to many countries exchanging cultures, knowledge, and love. He envied the zest and capacity for life these people had.

When it came his turn to speak, John told of his experiences as a [conscientious objector](#) and his life in military prison. He was baffled by the response of the others. There was an admiration for what he had done, for the courage of his convictions. The others listened respectfully and offered encouragement and advice. He was flooded with names and addresses in many countries, offers to stay should he happen to visit. He was given books to read. He no longer felt the outcast, the pariah, the fugitive. He bathed luxuriously in this much-needed boost to his ego.

A woman entered his life. Her name was Kreta, a lovely Norwegian with soft, blue eyes, a radiant smile, and long, flowing blond hair. She was an artist who had just come to Corfu from Spain. Her lust for life was infectious. Her uninhibited approach to life made a great impression on John. The image she created of the world as she had experienced it was rich with romance, vibrant with life, alluring in its potential for adventure. She excited him most when she talked about Spain.

"You must visit Spain by all means if you are travelling in Europe. Your education will not be complete, my American lover, without the experience. It is so different from, yet so representative of, Europe. If you wish to understand life, then you must see Spain," she said.

"Spain is the true melting pot of culture, not your America with its machines of destruction and arrogant populace so much like spoiled children. And Spain's artists! Her [Picassos](#), her [Dalis](#), her [Goyas](#), her [Velazquezes](#), her one and only [El Greco](#), who was really a Cretan but found refuge and a source of inspiration among the people of Spain. You, too, may find inspiration there to explore the confusion in your heart. You have an artistic soul. Perhaps there is a writer or painter hidden away in you somewhere. I implore you to go to Spain."

John spent the next week with Kreta, swimming and laughing, sunbathing and drinking, learning about the world of art. It was a time of broadening his perspectives, of dreaming and thinking and reading. But soon the wanderlust was upon him again.

He left Corfu early one morning after having spent three weeks on the island. The sky was filled with grey clouds, strands of dawn-light sifting down through them. Far away on the water a freighter moved along peacefully. Seated on the edge of the road next to the beach, a Greek boy watched the freighter's steady movement. John kissed Kreta goodbye, hoisted his backpack, hitched a ride into town, and bought a bus ticket to Athens.

Review for Chapter 4

I. *Comprehension Questions*

1. Why did John decide to go to Switzerland?
2. What did John learn from seeing the works of famous artists in Florence?
3. What did the group of young travellers on Corfu talk about?
4. What did John talk about when it came his turn to speak?
5. What did Kreta say about Spain compared to the United States?

II. *Mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).*

- 1. John spent more than a week in Paris, France.
- 2. John went to Switzerland because he needed a quiet, peaceful place to think about the changes taking place in his life.
- 3. The historical and artistic atmosphere of Florence, Italy made a big impression on John.
- 4. John stayed in a large, bustling city on the island of Sicily.
- 5. John met a group of young, vagabonding Europeans who made him feel accepted and a part of things.
- 6. John found a lover who filled him with excitement about life and art.
- 7. The local people on the island of Corfu did not care for the young travellers.
- 8. John wanted to stay on Corfu for a long time.

II. *Discussion/Essay Questions*

1. John spent three peaceful days in the Swiss Alps thinking about his future. Do you have a favorite or special place to go where you can be alone and think? If so, describe the place. When do you go there and what do you think about?
2. Kreta, the Norwegian woman, was passionate about the Spanish painters. Are you interested in painting? Have you ever visited a museum? What kind of paintings do you like? Who are your favorite painters? Who are some of your country's famous painters?

Chapter 5

John spent three more months bumming around Europe. From Athens he hitchhiked his way through the pastoral Yugoslavian countryside, the Alpine meadows, forests, and mountain peaks of Austria, and the deep green of southern France before heading to Spain as Kreta had recommended.

He travelled about Spain for three weeks on anachronistic trains. From the train windows he could see everything with a casual air: dusty red plains, dark mountains in the distance, olive trees and chestnut woods on high hills, green country with slow-moving rivers, empty spaces, and crumbling villages.

He took up residence for a week in a room in Seville. From there it was on to Madrid to see the [Prado Museum](#). He spent an entire day there studying the paintings of [El Greco](#), [Velazquez](#), and [Goya](#). [Bosch's](#) *Garden of Earthly Delights* held him in complete awe. He felt a kinship with [Bosch's](#) madness, with his distorted perception of the world, his hallucinogenic portrayal of life and its absurdity. In John's ignorance of the world of art, he had not dreamed the insanity of man could be portrayed with such power of sinister hallucination. He resolved that if he could ever learn to express himself in some medium, the picture of man he eventually portrayed would contain many parallels to the grotesque perception of [Bosch](#).

His money was nearly spent. He boarded a train to Paris, where he confirmed his reservations on a Luxembourg Airlines plane back to New York. He hitchhiked to Luxembourg and spent his last night sleeping in a wooded field an hour from the airport. A day later the plane descended upon the runway of John F. Kennedy Airport. The European experiences and revelations and the entire dream-ambience of that portion of his life were gone. It was as if he had awakened from a long, undisturbed sleep to find himself groping with reality again.

After passing through customs, he took a bus from the airport to downtown Manhattan. It was the middle of summer, hot and muggy, and sweat poured off him. The harsh sounds of jackhammers, hydraulic equipment, and car horns blasted his ears. The smells of soot, garbage, and pollution burned his nose. He bought another bus ticket to New Jersey to escape the congestion. It was near sundown when he got off the bus. He found a place to camp on the outskirts of some town. Early the next morning he packed and ate a breakfast of oranges and cheese. He checked his wallet. He had \$22 left. Then he walked to an onramp leading to Highway 80, the great road west.

Two rides took him into Pennsylvania. Then he hit the jackpot. A Navy man being transferred from the East Coast to the West Coast swooped him off the long stretch of highway. They breezed through the thick green of Pennsylvania. Then it was on into Ohio. Halfway across the state they stopped for a night's rest. With an early start the next morning they plowed straight through Ohio and Indiana into Illinois and Iowa, then across the Mississippi River westward to Nebraska, through dusty corn and wheat fields, then into the plains of Wyoming as far as Cheyenne. It was a long day, the summer sun spilling waves of heat on the road. A steady haze lay constantly before them until nightfall. They pulled over by a truck stop to sleep.

In the morning it was out of Wyoming into the Wasatch Mountains of Utah. In Salt Lake City they parted company, the Navy man heading south and John west. A Mormon student gave John a ride 50 miles into the desert before his car developed a radiator leak and the engine overheated. The driver disappeared to the other side of the road to hitch back to Salt Lake City. John began to walk. Soon he was in the middle of a straight stretch where he could be seen from a long way off. He set his backpack down and waited.

A white sea of salt surrounded him. The road ran straight as far as he could see until it narrowed into a cloud of heat rising into the distance. The afternoon sun beat down on his shoulders. A strong wind sent tumbleweeds rolling at great speeds. Particles of sand lashed at his body and penetrated his eyes. He stood for what seemed an eternity with only an occasional freight truck rumbling by. Finally, a family in a pickup truck stopped and gave him a ride as far as Wendover on the Utah-Nevada state line. Shortly after sunset a station wagon on its way to San Francisco stopped. John slept in the back, waking to the sight of the Oakland Bay Bridge.

By late afternoon three more rides had taken him to Arcata. He was back where he had started. He believed he had set a hitchhiking record: from the East Coast to the West Coast in four days. He had only about \$15 left, but he knew he would find a job soon and make it through the initial tough month or so it would take to get his feet back on the ground.

The journey had provided the answer to what he had sought. It had all started at his court martial when the single sentence he had uttered in response to his order to fight in the Vietnam War had saved four and a half years of his life and instilled in him an awareness of the power of language. His experiences in Europe had reinforced that awareness and stimulated a need to express himself. He now had a purpose. He would become a writer. He would begin his studies and learn the craft. Through the writing he would get rid of all the confusion and derangement the world had caused in him. In return, he would give back to the world something good and meaningful, the story of a symbolic life.

John found a job as a janitor in an elementary school in Orick, a town of 800 people on the California coast about 50 miles north of Arcata. He rented a small room near the school and started training to be a writer. He was practically illiterate. He had no idea what the fundamentals of grammar were or what comprised good literature.

The job required that he work only five hours a day, five days a week. He often took strolls along the isolated stretch of beach south of Orick, along the riverbank of the Mad River, and on the logging roads that led into the redwood forest that skirted the town's eastern flank. Most of his free time, however, was spent reading all the books he could, copying down sentences and descriptions that appealed to him, and recording in a notebook his journey across the U.S. and Europe. It was a lonely time. Near the beginning of December when the winter rains started, he decided to quit his job, return to Arcata, and go back to school.

He found another job at a small redwood lath mill in Arcata. In March he was accepted into Humboldt State University and entered the journalism department. His boss at the lath mill agreed to let John work parttime in the mornings to accommodate his schedule of afternoon classes. He also began playing amateur basketball again.

The next two years were like a return to innocence. All that existed for John was basketball and study. There was even a return to normalcy in his family relationship. His father was retired and occupied with building a new house. He had converted to the [Seventh Day Adventist](#) faith and with it came a greater acceptance of John's refusal to fight in Vietnam. He even offered to give some financial help for John's schooling.

John bypassed all the required general education courses to concentrate on writing and literature classes. Two of his classes required the students to do actual field work and turn in stories to the local newspaper every week. When five of his stories were accepted and printed with his own by-line, John felt that particular joy every writer craves: seeing his name in print.

After nearly two years of study John felt it was time to get serious about writing fiction. It was time for him to once again make a break from Humboldt County and find his way in the world. He had gotten as much as he could out of his studies at the university. He packed his belongings--a few changes of clothes and two boxes of books--into his car and moved to Los Angeles. He found a small apartment and a job working as a bookkeeper in the main office of a shipping company.

In the evenings and on weekends he began spending hours at the typewriter, working on short stories that became increasingly longer as he looked ahead to being able to write a novel. He was like a marathon runner in training, starting out with short sprints and working gradually into longer and longer endurance runs. Sometimes he worked on character sketches, sometimes on place descriptions. At other times he practiced stylistic devices such as alliterative writing, stream-of-consciousness narrative, understatement in the [Hemingway](#) tradition, or metaphorical comparisons.

The truth was he had no style of his own. He was in a stage of imitating every writer he fell in love with, only to abandon him or her shortly and copy the style of the next writer who struck his fancy. Of all the writers John was frantically trying to study, [Henry Miller](#) appealed to him the most. [Miller's](#) intoxication with language, his free spirit, his exaltation of life as seen from the gutter, his unbounded ego, his faith and sense of humor and love of the cranks and artists who inhabited his world all stirred in John deep emotions concerning the life he had chosen to pursue. [Miller](#) instilled in John a belief in the divine guidance of the

artist. [Miller](#) made John want to be a writer, to plunge into the depths of human experience.

Nearly a year passed. He began making preparations for returning to Europe. Still under the influence of [Henry Miller](#), he had decided it would be impossible to write in the U.S. He believed if he was to experience the true artist's life, he had to live and work where the artist and his work were appreciated and encouraged, not in a country like the U.S., where the artist was repressed into a life of conformity and commercialism at best. John would return to Paris to play the role of the starving young artist, to recapture the past, in particular the events of that journey he had taken four years earlier in search of an identity and a direction in life. He was finally ready to begin his novel, to become a writer. On January 11, 1977 John boarded a plane to Paris, not knowing what his future held, but filled with confidence and a faith that there was meaning in everything he had experienced, in everything that would come.

Review for Chapter 5

I. *Comprehension Questions*

1. Which painter at the Prado Museum impressed John the most?
2. How long did it take John to hitchhike across the United States after he returned from Europe?
3. What did John decide to become after he returned to the United States?
4. What did John study after he returned to university?
5. What did John plan to write his first novel about?

II. *Put the following events in the correct order.*

- ___ a. John left the United States again.
- ___ b. John camped out in a field near the Luxembourg airport.
- ___ c. John was stranded in the desert for a while.
- ___ d. John had his first newspaper story published.
- ___ e. John visited a famous Spanish museum and was impressed by the paintings he saw there.
- ___ f. John decided to become a writer.
- ___ g. John was picked up by a Navy man and given a long ride for 2 1/2 days.
- ___ h. John returned to university.

III. *Discussion/Essay Questions*

1. John had no plan or itinerary for his journey across the United States and around Europe. Which kind of travel do you prefer--one with a detailed schedule or one with just a simple destination to head for? Explain the advantages of your choice and the disadvantages of the other choice.
2. John's discoveries and experiences during his journey helped give him a direction for the future. What people or experiences have influenced your life? In what ways?
3. Chapter 5 of *The Many Roads to Japan* ends with John setting off to Paris to write his first novel. What kinds of experiences and adventures do you think he will have? Based on what you know about John's character and experiences up to now, explain your predictions.

Chapter 6

John had been in Paris for about two months when one day he returned to his hotel to find two Asiatics at the front desk trying desperately to communicate a message in English to the clerk, who spoke only French. John had learned a little French by then and was able to give a crude interpretation to the clerk. The Asiatics were very happy and invited John to have a cup of tea with them at a cafe across the street.

Introductions were made. One of the men was an Iranian businessman named Hamid. The other was an Afghan motel owner named Abdul. Both were in Paris on business trying to sell carpets. They were disgusted with Paris because the people seemed

cold and indifferent to them. John was the first person who had helped them. They were so impressed with the friendliness John had shown that they invited him to return with them to their countries. Hamid said that life in Iran was not expensive and it was easy to find an English teaching job. Despite his affection for Paris, John's money was dwindling rapidly and the chance for adventure in a country he knew little about appealed to him. He accepted the invitation.

Hamid and Abdul first had to visit a friend in Germany. John joined them two weeks later. Hamid bought a new BMW car, which he would later sell in Iran to cover the cost of their journey. Abdul would take a train after John and Hamid departed.

Hamid and John spent a day passing through the Swiss Alps. In the beginning Hamid's driving frightened John. Hamid was a madman behind the wheel, flying along the mountain roads as if in a grand prix road race, taking chances passing other cars at high speeds on blind corners. He laughed at John's fear and told tall tales of his adventures as a driver in the Iranian military.

Late that night they arrived in Milan, Italy and took a room. The next day the journey continued east through a thick fog to Trieste. They entered Yugoslavia. Hamid drove the BMW as if jet propelled. John took notes on the passing scenery: distant blue hills, scattered farms, stone-and-brick houses, peasants pacing the sides of the road with hoes slung over their shoulders.

They continued into the night toward Bulgaria, the BMW rushing past Soviet military trucks on a winding, rocky road. They arrived at the Yugoslav-Bulgarian border early in the morning. A Bulgarian military guard detained them for two hours before granting their visas at dawn.

They entered Sofia. Military transport trucks moved slowly along cobble streets. There were no smiles on the faces of the men and women shoveling dirt on the sides of the road, nor on the faces of the ubiquitous police. They headed into the country, all the time approaching the East over dirt roads and cobble roads and through peasant villages and industrial towns. Everywhere they passed they saw old peasant women with slouched backs, bundled in woolen scarves, socks, and sweaters, packing hoes over their shoulders, pacing slowly in groups of three and four to the fields.

They entered Istanbul, Turkey, where John got a visa for his entry into Iran. They spent a day exploring the activity of the streets, visiting [Mohammedan mosques](#) with high-reaching minarets, and haggling with vendors and merchants of all types. The streets were full of older American cars, horse carts, all kinds of carts competing for limited, dirty space. They saw thin, dark, hungry children playing everywhere.

They headed east toward Ankara. The road from Istanbul to Izmit was a solid stream of trucks and buses carrying great amounts of supplies and goods from all parts of the West to Iran. An army of vehicles carried gas, food, construction equipment, pipes and girders, tires, wood, people, other cars and trucks, everything imaginable. On this road Hamid proved his ability as the self-proclaimed best driver in the East. He swerved to the left and right to pass trucks in front of them, paved new lanes in the dust, narrowly missed oncoming traffic, squeezed between huge trucks where there seemed no space, and passed to the extreme left of trucks passing other trucks. All the time he weaved and honked, braked and shifted gears furiously, and screamed at the other drivers.

Finally, they arrived in Ankara and spent the night. From Ankara to the Turkish-Iranian border was roughly 1,500 kilometers. Hamid told John that the next section of road was the most dangerous part. Kurdish bandits were said to be in the mountains and would stop cars travelling alone. It was best to drive during the day and in groups of three or four cars.

They left Ankara on a sunny morning. Ahead were sun-baked hills with stone-and-mud houses scattered throughout. In the distance lay looming, white mountains. They climbed higher into the hills. Strong winds were howling. They passed sparse, wind-sculpted brush, thin patches of snow, and an occasional mountain village where the soil had been worked by hand.

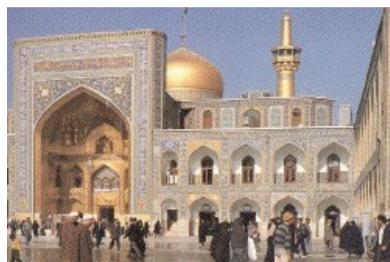
They headed into the high eastern mountains, the road rising to summits where wind flurries were a blinding white, then dipping to lower elevations where boulders of slush and white mud crashed against the sides and frame of the car. At one point they passed a mountain village of about 25 rock huts covered with snow. John wondered how these mountain people could survive the winters.

It took Hamid and John two more days to reach the Iranian border. In that time they once encountered Kurdish bandits on horseback, passed a wreck involving a bus and a truck near Erzurum, and saw several trucks forced off the side of the road. A blizzard forced them to stop for several hours before they could start moving again. They covered themselves with their sleeping bags and waited for the storm to subside. When they were able to start again the road became worse, filled with large potholes. Trucks approaching from the opposite side splattered the BMW with slush and thick, brown mud. One truck sprayed them with small stones and the windshield cracked.

Finally, they dropped out of the last elevation to the lower ground. They were out of the snow. The road was muddy, but getting better. They passed two more villages of mud hovels where wild dogs roamed the streets. When they reached the border, hundreds of cars and trucks were backed up. They waited an entire day before being allowed into Iran.

Three days later they were in Hamid's home in the holy city of Mashad. Hamid was welcomed home as if he were a conquering

hero returning from distant lands. His mother, father, three brothers, and two sisters treated John with much warmth and hospitality. In the beginning there was much for John to become accustomed to: the squat toilets, sitting cross-legged on the floor for long periods of time, the sound of the Farsi language, not being able to see the faces of the women, who were required to wear the chador in the presence of a non-Muslim.



There was much visiting to be done. Hamid had many cousins, aunts, uncles, nephews, and nieces, all of whom lived in various parts of Mashad. Hamid often took John to visit friends in the bazaar. From there they went for walks around the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza and the mosque where the tomb of the prophet was laid. John was impressed by the generosity, kindness, and gentleness of everyone he met.

The time soon came when John could no longer stay with Hamid's family. It was uncomfortable for them, particularly the women, to have to share their home too long with a non-Muslim. The schools would not open for a few more weeks, so Hamid introduced John to some carpet sellers in the bazaar. John could obtain a small commission for luring foreign tourists to their shops. This job was known as "street hawking." Another street hawk by the name of Ali offered to share his room with John.

Ali had come to Mashad as a boy after living his first few years in a family of shepherd nomads. He had picked up portions of five languages from making his living on the streets. His room was located on the bottom floor of a two-storey, brick-and-mortar structure near the bazaar.

John began to spend his days with Ali walking the streets near the mosque and the bazaar. Ali was known in all the shops. He was the quintessential guide. He knew where to get the best prices, both on the black market and in the shops, as well as find the best and cheapest hotels, entertainment spots, jewelry, carpets, and transportation.

Mashad was a clean city undergoing great changes. Old buildings were being torn down and modern buildings were replacing them on nearly every street. There was activity everywhere. Women in chador strolled by sensuously, swarthy men in turbans lined the streets, peddlers pushing carts of fresh fruit and nuts hawked their goods, children laughed and played, cars and horse-drawn carts paced to and fro, and men squatting on their haunches spread out their knives, bracelets, tools, pipes, samovars, and rings of precious stones before them for tourists to see. Sounds from the various bread shops, grain shops, copperware shops, and carpet shops filled the air. John walked about in a daze, soaking in the atmosphere of the ancient, holy city.

In the evenings Ali's friends often stopped by the room. They spoke of falling in love with European women they had met on the streets. They implored John to write love letters in English for them. There was an unspoken paranoia about them. When they spoke about their dreams, they did so in a low whisper as if an enemy might be listening. Many expressed a desire to marry a European woman. It was the only way they could obtain a passport to leave the country. They had a strong fear of the obligatory military service and the punishment given those who refused to serve. When John pressed them for reasons to explain this, they said it was forbidden to discuss politics or religion with a foreigner.



Meeting Ali's friends, hearing their stories, and seeing the fear they felt about resisting the government's authority caused John to reflect deeply about his own anti-war and prison experiences. He had suffered psychologically after his release from prison and for a long time had succumbed to believing that he really had been a coward and an "undesirable." He had sought to escape the country of his birth and find another life abroad. He could empathize with these young Iranians and their paranoia and dreams of escape. He wanted to explain to them how he had found solace, therapy, and a means of venting some of the insanity of his thoughts through the medium of writing. He wanted to give them some of the hope and optimism he had discovered on the road, but the realization that he was powerless to do so hit him hard. He was again a man without a home.

The days dragged by. An inexplicable emptiness came upon him. The excitement of being in a different and strange land was replaced by boredom and restlessness. He began to think obsessively about death. The idea of walking the streets anymore became repulsive. For days he spoke to no one but Ali, who left early in the mornings and returned late at night. In the gloom of the room John felt like a prisoner alone in a cell. The folly of his past filled his thoughts. Nightmares full of death visions began to plague him.

One morning, while bathing his face in cold water, John looked at his reflection in the mirror and saw a stranger staring back. He knew that sometime soon he would have to move on again.

Review for Chapter 6

I. Comprehension Questions

1. Why did Hamid and Abdul invite John to go to Iran and Afghanistan?

2. Where did Hamid show John that he really was an experienced driver?
3. What kind of family was Ali from?
4. What did Ali's friends ask John to do for them?
5. What made John remember his earlier days in military prison?

II. *Mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).*

1. Hamid and Abdul did not like Paris.
2. In the beginning of the journey John was impressed by Hamid's driving.
3. In Istanbul John was given a visa for entering Iran.
4. The road from Istanbul to Izmit was very crowded with many vehicles.
5. Hamid and John had no problems passing through the eastern mountains of Turkey.
6. John started working as a teacher.
7. John talked a lot about his refusal to fight in the Vietnam War and his subsequent prison experiences.
8. John thought he could live for a long time in Iran.

III. *Discussion/Essay Questions*

1. John had many new things to become accustomed to in Iran. Have you ever moved to a new place and started a new life? If so, what things were difficult to get used to? What things were easy?
2. Iran is an Islamic country. If you are not from an Islamic country, what things do you imagine are different from your country? What things do you think are similar? List five of each and compare with your classmates.

Chapter 7

A few days later John went to the Afghan consulate and got a 30-day visa. He called Hamid to thank him for all his help and his family's kindness, then said goodbye to Ali. The next morning he boarded a bus to Herat, anxious to see what further adventures awaited him.

He crossed the Iranian-Afghan border and proceeded to Herat, a city of low, brown adobe huts clustered tightly together and enclosed by mud walls and towers. The first thing he noticed when crossing into Afghanistan was the conspicuous absence of Western influence. It was like stepping into the pages of the Old Testament. Time had changed nothing. The people of Herat in the narrow bazaar streets had a distinct peace and dignity. They moved about their work as if it did not matter, as if it could be done either the next day or the day after. The coppersmiths, the cobblers, the saddlemakers, all the various shopkeepers worked as they had for centuries. There were some shopkeepers who, in the intense heat of the afternoon, dozed in their stalls.



The Afghans were a virile people. The attitude of the crowds in the bazaar was of a mild disdain. John saw few beggars. The men were proud of bearing, savage and distinguished in appearance, and they met every man's eyes on the level with a straightforward glance. Their faces carried an expression that showed no fear. Their bodies were strong and supple. The few women seen in public were shrouded in full-length chadors with embroidered masks.

John spent two days in Herat and left the following morning on a bus. The sunrise cast varied tints from golden brown to violet on the low, distant mountains. The bus entered the open desert. John was the lone foreigner on a bus loaded with Afghan men. A sea of bobbing turbans atop dark, proud faces filled the bus. Across the glaring distance there was nothing but an empty stretch of desert.

They came to Kandahar, Afghanistan's leading commercial center. The people had a freer air about them than those in the villages the bus had passed. The city had much less the atmosphere of a remote fortress than Herat. They stopped for tea in a cafe that was full of smoke, full of men, full of rich, masculine smells.

The bus continued toward Kabul, stopping three times during the day for the Afghans to roll out their prayer carpets and, facing Mecca, pray. At Ghazni they witnessed a sunset that bathed the eastern mountains in a fiery red and deep violet. It lasted but a few minutes before the night grew dark and solemn.

Two hours later they arrived in Kabul, the capital city. Two of the Afghan passengers helped John get a taxi to Abdul's motel. Abdul was surprised and pleased to see John. He introduced John to his partner and brothers, then showed John to a room. He brought some tea and the two visited for an hour.

The city of Kabul was located in a large, fertile plain surrounded by high hills rising into the Hindu Kush mountains. The whole of the city seemed a mass of mud huts, although the newer part of the city bore signs of modernization: apartment buildings, a hospital, and a university. There were many wide streets lined on either side with poplar and mulberry trees. There were also many gloomy, narrow lanes that even in daylight were so dark one had to walk slowly and take care not to fall into a ditch.

John spent most of his time relaxing, reading, and walking the streets around the central bazaar area. In most places the streets were full of primitive wooden structures on which were laid mats of hemp. There were rows and rows of stalls on which the traders squatted cross-legged. Those who could not afford to buy a stall sat on the street corners and sold their goods. It was always crowded. In the midst of all the activity passed donkeys laden with wood, brick, and straw. Camel caravans passed slowly. Riders on horses pushed their way through in a domineering manner.



Abdul's motel was a run-down place with a kitchen and about 20 rooms filled with tattered carpets and beds of rope called charpoy. The people who frequented the motel were a strange sort. They were mostly of the younger, vagabonding set, Europeans who had come east to the lure of cheap living and an easy access to drugs. They were reminiscent of the drifting bohemians John had met on his journey through Europe four years earlier. Those people had instilled in him an excitement with their talk of literature, philosophy, and revolution. The people he now found himself surrounded by, although much the same in appearance, were a more decadent type. They had faded into a vegetable existence. They talked only of drugs. They smoked hashish all day, stared into space, and made friends only for a meal or a bus ticket.

Abdul was busy much of the time, but he managed to get a few days off and invited John to spend some time with his family in the desert outside Ghazni. When they arrived by jeep, they saw sheep and goats grazing in the plain while a few powerful mastiffs kept watch over the village. The men were plowing the sparse fields and threshing corn. The women sat in front of the tent-like huts knitting and playing with the children.

Abdul introduced John to his mother and father. John and Abdul spent four restful days in the village before returning to Kabul. John was treated like royalty. Great meals of rice, lamb, bread, tea, and fruit were served. One of the lambs had been butchered upon their arrival. In the evenings they sat around a fire, shared a nargile of hashish, watched the stars, and listened to the somber sigh of the earth.

The time came for John to continue east. His 30-day visa would soon expire. He and Abdul embraced with a genuine fondness, knowing they would never see each other again, but glad to have been able to share a portion of their lives together.

John took a bus into Pakistan as far as Rawalpindi, where he bought a train ticket. The ride through the dusty Indus Valley was long, hot, and uncomfortable. There were many stops where soldiers either boarded or got off the train.

He spent the night in a cheap motel in Rawalpindi and the next day took a crowded train to Lahore. In the brilliant sunshine the train swept past rice fields and stagnant pools full of white lotuses and standing herons, past people slapping pie-shaped, cow-dung patties onto the sides of mud huts to dry, past men with bullocks and submerged plows preparing rice fields for planting. In the different train stations were fruit venders and their carts and janitors in white uniforms sweeping the platforms with palm fronds. Each town had its shantytown by the railroad tracks, smaller towns of grass huts, cardboard shelters, pup tents, hovels of paper and twigs and cloth. Everyone in these shantytowns was in motion.

The train arrived in Lahore. Processions of rickshaws, pony carts, hawkers, and veiled women filled the narrow lanes. The larger streets were congested with swarms of jostling people. Recently there had been an uprising against the [Bhutto regime](#) for allegedly rigging the elections. There was now a curfew with the military patrolling the streets at night. Late that night, as he went to sleep in another cheap motel room, John heard muffled sounds of gunfire coming from the streets.

He crossed the border into India the next day. There was a long wait at the border as the customs officials took their time examining every passenger's baggage. The train arrived in Amritsar in the early evening. There was no train to Delhi until the next morning. John slept that night on a bench in the station waiting room.

The next day John arrived at the station in the old section of Delhi. A seething swarm of people surrounded the passengers as they got off the train. Everywhere skinny, brown rickshaw drivers and hawkers of cheap goods were clamoring for attention. John allowed himself to be swooped up by one driver, who took John's dufflebag, hooked it on his bicycle rickshaw, and pedaled John to a section in a bazaar area where John could find a cheap room.

They rode past entire communities living on the streets. Women in tattered rags with cracked feet and rings in their noses stood

cooking pots of vegetables over smoky fires. Children ran here and there. The narrow, winding streets and wide bazaars were littered with debris and thick with intimate odors. Cripples walked the streets alongside half-naked natives. Thousands of people with rickets, leprosy, skin diseases, and bloated bellies lined the filthy streets. Vehicles of many types competed for limited space.

John found a room in an old, ramshackle motel. A single window overlooked a narrow street in the bazaar. The heat in the room was suffocating. It was impossible to sleep soundly.

For the next week John walked the streets. Everywhere he saw poverty, hunger, disease, violence, and nightmare misery. He walked through the refuge quarter of the city. He went there every day to stare at the chained-off society, as if it were a perverse circus side show. He was lured by its air of unreality. The people lived in houses built of tin and boxes, hideous things, hotbeds of epidemic.

The strange thing was how the older people had grown reconciled and seemed almost glad of their misery. They were scattered all about in every pose of contorted collapse, like in a picture of a massacre. There were people with catalepsy, with tuberculosis, with syphilis, with worms of all sorts, with eye diseases, with many saddening things. Some lay prostrate about the chained-off streets, their faces gaunt and colorless. When they closed their eyes, they looked as if they were dead.

John was struck by the extraordinary stoicism with which these people bore their sufferings. He felt humble and meek, filled with self-disparagement, abasement, and a despair that would not go away. As he returned each night from these visits to the purgatorial streets, he inevitably stopped at the same stall in the bazaar. Exhausted from destroyed emotions and the heat, he bought fruit or liquid refreshment. The shopkeeper was an old, wrinkled man who had seen many generations of suffering and still held his head high, composed like a Buddha. The man's impassive repose was like a display of great dignity.

John was overwhelmed by the abstracted silence of this man. One night, in a moment of excruciating self-pity, John seized the old man's hand and wrung it with all the force of his gratitude. The shopkeeper simply smiled and passed his hand gently over John's head.

Dysentery overtook John. He lay for days in a sweating fever on the charpoy, the sole piece of furniture in his room. He became like the prostrate death-forms of the streets. He was so weak he could not lift his body and lay in the sticky warmth of his involuntary excretions. He prayed for death, for deliverance from the agony of existence. At times he was barely conscious of voices murmuring around him and of someone pouring water over his head. Finally, the fever broke. In his weakened condition it was all he could do to drag himself into the streets to the shopkeeper's stall. The old man gave John tea, fruit, and yogurt in silence. John's strength gradually returned.

Review for Chapter 7

I. *Comprehension Questions*

1. What did John notice in Herat that was different from Mashad?
2. How many foreigners were on the bus from Herat to Kabul?
3. In what way were the foreigners John saw in Kabul different from those he had met in Europe four years before?
4. Where did John stay in Delhi?
5. Who became John's friend in Delhi?

II. *Put the following events in the correct order.*

- ___ a. John heard gunshots while staying in a motel.
- ___ b. John visited the bazaar area in Kabul.
- ___ c. John bought something to eat or drink several times at the same bazaar stall.
- ___ d. The bus to Kabul stopped in the desert so the passengers could pray.
- ___ e. John became very sick.
- ___ f. John walked the streets staring at cripples and diseased people.
- ___ g. John and Abdul went into the desert to see Abdul's family.
- ___ h. John slept at a train station.

III. Discussion/Essay Questions

1. Afghanistan is a land that few people can now enter. What kind of life do you think Afghans lead? What kind of people are they? What kind of difficulties do you think they have in the desert and mountains? What kind of natural beauties do you think exist there?
2. John was shocked and dismayed by what he saw and experienced in Delhi. Are you easily shocked? What are some of the things that have shocked or surprised you in your life?

Chapter 8

John had about \$300 remaining. He bought a bus ticket to Calcutta, where he hoped to find work aboard a freighter headed to the U.S. He left Delhi early in the morning. The journey lasted two full days. One vista shifted into another, a dizzying displacement of hill and air, of haze and all the shades of green and brown. All along the road were animals and people. Bandy-legged men in the bus spit betel juice from their red lips through the windows, as if in derisive comment on the abject condition of life.

Calcutta was a mass of tenements, hovels, temples, mosques, shrines, warehouses, shops, and factories. It was worse than Delhi. The smoke of tens of thousands of cow-dung fires used by the inhabitants of the streets for cooking hung over the city. Everywhere in the overflowing streets lay the squalor of diseased life and morbid death. John saw one man leap in front of a train pulling into a station. After the train passed, the man, his legs amputated at the waist and bleeding profusely, lay on his back with his hands extended upward. His shrieks were wild and sounded like a madman's laughter. He finally collapsed, blood flowing fast from his mouth, his eyes open and staring at the sky.

John passed through a leper colony that was on the other side of a railway bridge. Not far away was a vast garbage dump. Some of the lepers lay on beds inside mud huts with their limbs bandaged. One boy sat against an outside wall, his arms and legs smeared with a blue ointment. Next to him was another child whose finger stumps were raw and bleeding. There was a woman using the grey stump of her hand like a wooden spoon to stir a pot of steaming liquid. A few nuns from [Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, the Nirmal Hriday](#), came that day bringing bandages, food, and cats to keep at bay the garbage dump rats that sometimes crossed over to the colony to chew on leprous limbs.

John followed the nuns back to the [Nirmal Hriday](#). A small but clean building was crammed with rows and rows of stretcher beds with dying patients. The patients lay very still, blinking and sometimes reaching for food. The nuns moved continuously down the rows of beds, dishing out food to those able to eat, shaving the heads of those with lice, dressing the sores of the rancid ones, and cleaning up the ones who soiled themselves involuntarily.

There was one man with a gangrenous leg wrapped in rags who was taken outside because of his terrible stench to have his leg rinsed. The water caused the blood to flow over the green flesh. Bits of bone and muscle dropped off the leg. A crow flew down and picked up a piece of bone that had fallen from the leg. John vomited and left.

He walked along the Hooghly River. It was silted badly from the ashes of cremated bodies. Garbage lined the streets. More than once John saw, resting in the piles of garbage, a dead baby whose skin was parched and cracked. He bought a bottle of wine from a black market dealer, got drunk, and passed out on the streets.

He awoke the next morning with a pounding headache. The morning heat was already piercing and insufferable. He bought fruit and bottled water from a street vender and watched the wretched masses. A new desolation crept over his soul, a wild, aching loneliness. He felt weak and hollow within.

He found a park with some trees that provided shade to sit under. He stared incomprehensibly at the sky. What had he learned from this journey? What had he gained? A deeper awareness of the suffering of mankind? He knew only that his own personal suffering was nothing compared to the swarms of creatures he had seen in Delhi and Calcutta. He could no longer feel even pity. There was no room for pity, not where all required it.

He thought again of the sight of one man he had seen lying on the hot pavement with a wide, open wound across an exposed leg in which hordes of maggots were feasting on the green insides. The man had been completely composed, as if the leg were a separate entity and not attached to him. It came to John that what he had seen was not the decay of a single man, but the symbolic decay of a whole lifetime of hopes and beliefs built up during John's years of wandering and now, in the swift passing of thoughts, utterly destroyed.

John sighed heavily, got up, and trudged toward the docks. It was time to go forward, to leave the baggage of Asia behind, to find a new life.

By the time John arrived back in the United States from his journey around the world, he was a physical and emotional mess. The reverse culture shock he experienced could not have been too different from that of the Vietnam War veterans who had

fought in the jungles of Southeast Asia and returned to an America indifferent to the revelatory changes they had undergone. He felt alienated, as if he had had a secret experience, had discovered an extraordinary land from which he could never fully return to give his knowledge to his fellow countrymen. There were times in the ensuing months when John, now 26, felt as if he had died and found himself reborn in an altogether alien country. Where once there might have been a semblance of political, philosophical, and religious ideas and convictions to hold on to for guidance, there were now giant question marks attached to everything he thought, everything he saw, everything he experienced. There was only one truth for him: the period of time from which he had just departed.

John now began a five-year period of rambling around the United States. He spent a winter in Seattle working as a stevedore and a mailman, then picked up the cooking trade working in restaurants up and down the West Coast before heading to Louisiana and Florida. Everywhere he went he was pursued by the memory of his Asian experiences. A misanthropy grew within him as he dwelled too much on the disparities between Asia and the United States. He came to believe the United States was nothing more than an adolescent nation in need of waking to the realities of his Asian death visions.

He eventually landed in Texas and was hired as a steward for two separate oil production rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. He would rotate between Corpus Christi and Galveston, where helicopters transported him offshore, and work a two-week shift on each rig with a week off in between. He saw many wonders in the Gulf. The colors of the sea and sky changed hourly like a vast, wonderful kaleidoscope. There were days when the sea and sky blended together in a warm satin blue and changed progressively to sapphire and indigo. At sunset the coast became a purple line and the few clouds rust-colored as the crimson sun sank slowly below the horizon. There were other days when the clouds were leaden, the sky black, the sunsets a long line of burning vermilion like a forest fire in the distance between a black sea and sky. There were often nights when a huge depth of blackness hung over the rigs and strong winds swept at them from out of a vast obscurity. He would spend these nights reading in his bunk, feeling the pulse of the generators on the deck below like the beat of the rig's heart, the gale winds howling and scuffling about gigantically in the darkness.



Gradually, his misanthropy left him. He came to view his fellow workers as noble men. Sometimes after supper they would retire to the top of the rig, 150 feet in the air, and watch the shifting moods and colors of the sea. The sound and rush and wonder of nature before them served to create an atmosphere of trust and brotherhood, a bonding of working individuals in a special environment. Many of the men were Vietnam War veterans. On the top of the rig, with the splendor of a star-filled sky above and the sound of the sea below, these men's confessions of things seen and done in the war were uttered and carried off by the rushing wind.

A newborn faith and optimism began to grow in his heart. He was ready to write another book. The two books he had written previously were failures, but he saw them now as a necessary part of his apprenticeship. He had saved up some money and could afford to take some time off to concentrate on writing again.

A letter came from a writer friend living in Maui, Hawaii. John was invited to come stay as long as he wanted. He quit his job, packed up his belongings, and bought a plane ticket to Hawaii.

John spent a relaxing few months in Maui. There were the lazy afternoons swimming in the ocean and driving in the high hills of Haleakala, the volcanic crater that rose above the island. There were the spectacular views from up high of the sparkling Pacific and the thick foliage of the lower valleys. There was the colorful array of flowers speckling the gardens of the residential areas. There were the bright beaches, the towering palms, the vast stretches of sugar cane bristling in the trade winds, and the blue-green fields of neatly furrowed rows of pineapple. A distortion of time permeated John's existence.

The writing did not progress well. John grew fat and lazy. Another change was called for. He felt the need to be jolted into a different reality. When his friend was called back to the mainland to promote a new book, there was no need for John to stay on the island. The friend suggested John go to Japan, where he could probably find work as an English teacher. The friend gave John some names and addresses of places John could stay until getting settled.

For a long time John had dreamed of living, working, and studying in a foreign country. During all his journeys abroad he had respected and envied those who spoke more than one language. He had vowed one day to learn to speak a foreign language himself. Now it seemed there might be a chance for him. On a January day, two weeks after his friend had returned to the mainland, John was on a plane to Osaka. He had only \$100 remaining, but there would be some income tax money returned to him in the spring. He had been in tighter situations before. He was ready for one more adventure. He had faith in himself. He knew he would ultimately survive.

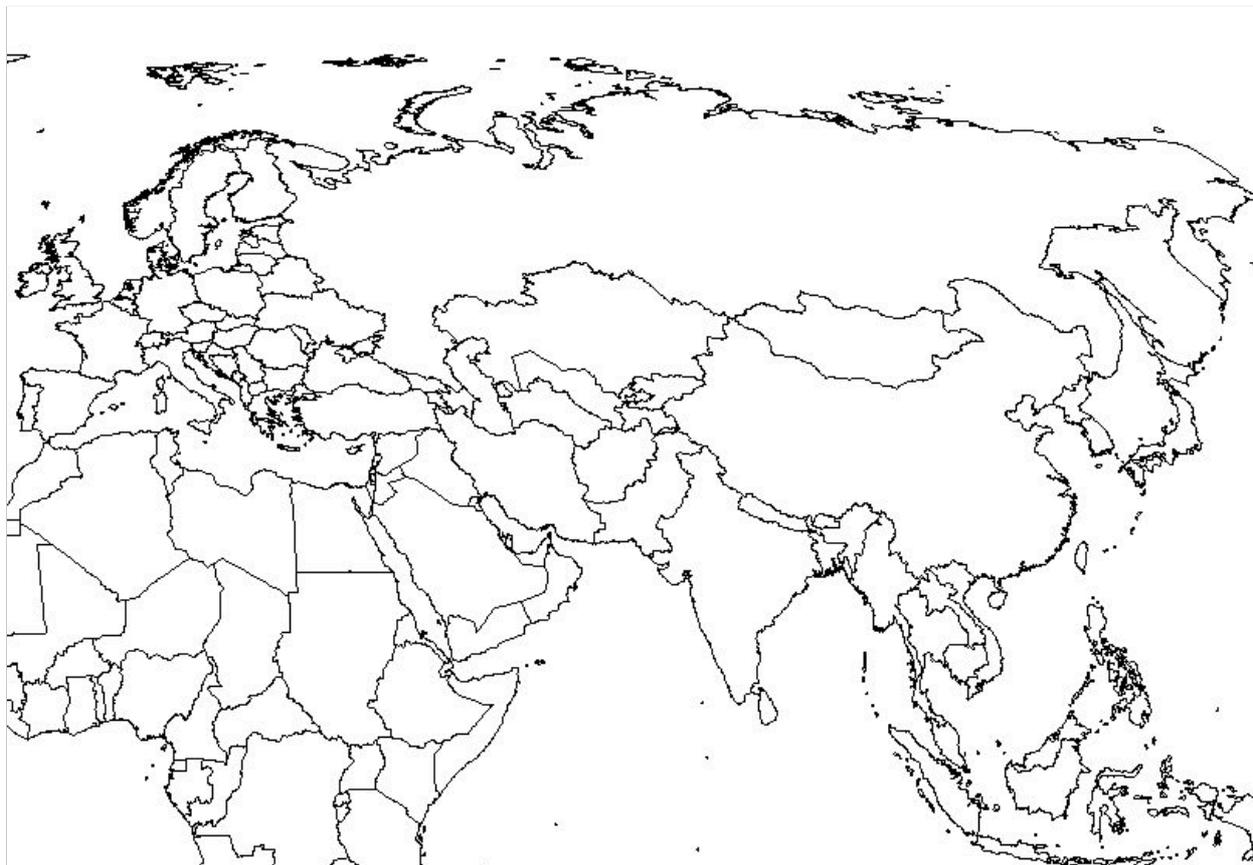
Review for Chapter 8

I. Comprehension Questions

1. Who worked at the Nirmal Hriday and what kind of work did they do?

2. What were some of the terrible things John witnessed in Calcutta? List at least four things.
3. Why did John feel alienated when he returned to the United States again?
4. What kind of job did John find in Texas?
5. Why did John decide to leave Maui and go to Japan?

II. Go to a library or use the Internet to find where the countries and cities that John passed through are. Then find those places on the unmarked map below and mark where the following events of John's journey took place (chapters 6 through 8).



- a. John met Hamid and Abdul.
- b. John got a visa for entering Iran.
- c. John and Hamid passed a bad wreck in the mountains.
- d. John spent some time living with Ali.
- e. John met Abdul again.
- f. John heard gunfire in the streets at night.
- g. John walked the streets and saw terrible poverty, hunger, and disease. He also suffered from dysentery.
- h. John saw the worst imaginable scenes of lepers and dead babies in the streets. He decided to leave Asia.

III. Mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).

- () 1. Calcutta was more beautiful than Delhi.
- () 2. John came to believe his own sufferings were nothing compared to other people's.

- () 3. John had no problems readjusting to life back in the United States.
- () 4. After returning from Asia, John lived and worked in many places in the United States.
- () 5. John quit writing altogether.
- () 6. John went to Japan in order to learn about Japanese cooking.

IV. Discussion/Essay Questions

1. John experienced mainly the poverty and bad side of India. If you are not from India, what do you think are the attractive things of that part of the world? How do you imagine the culture is similar to or different from your country?
 2. John travelled through many countries on his journey around the world. What countries that he passed through would you like to visit? Why?
 3. When John worked on the offshore oil rigs, he saw many wonders of nature. What is the most beautiful place you have ever seen? Describe it. In what way did it impress you?
-

Afterword

John's first few months in Japan brought with them a dizzying development of events. Within a week of his landing in the Osaka-Kobe area he had found a job through the English newspaper classified ads. He began teaching at a conversation school, where he met a Canadian woman whose Japanese roommate helped him find a cheap, two-room apartment. The apartment had no bath, so he went to the local public bath every night.

John also began studying Japanese on his own. Within a few months he had made many friends in his neighborhood and had joined a softball team. Spending time with the members of the team, as well as going to the public bath regularly, allowed him to gain much speaking and listening practice. His study of Japanese helped him gain a better understanding of the problems his students faced in studying English.

A sense of stability entered John's life. For many years he had dreamed of being able to live, work, and study in a foreign country. That dream was now coming true in Japan. He had a job he enjoyed, the blessing of many friends, and the challenge of adapting to life in a foreign land.

Two years passed. He would eventually have to change the type of visa he had if he wanted to continue living in Japan. He began seriously contemplating his future. He had reached the point where a fundamental decision had to be made. If he committed himself to a life in Japan, he would have to make some serious efforts toward a career. It was obvious he would never make a living as a writer. He had failed to sell a single book. He liked his job at the conversation school, but he had reached his peak in salary and position. He had no academic qualifications to rise above his current situation.

He decided to get a degree in the teaching of English as a foreign language. He found an American university that had a branch school in Tokyo and offered correspondence courses for obtaining bachelor's and master's degrees. He applied for and was accepted into the program.

Over the next few years John continued to work and study hard. He eventually fell in love with and married a Japanese woman. He went on to get his master's degree, a permanent resident visa, and a full-time teaching position at a Japanese university. Throughout his years in Japan he has had many trials and tribulations, but today he is relaxed and comfortable with the life, language, and people of Japan. He is a happy man with a sense of purpose, direction, and fulfillment. After travelling many roads and spending many years of searching, he finally found his niche in life.

In his spare time John continues to write novels. His wife works as a teacher and translator. His greatest reward in life is seeing students discover the joys of studying a foreign language and communicating in it. He believes that dreams can come true if one works hard enough and has a lot of patience. His own life is proof of that.

Review for Afterword

I. Discussion/Essay Questions

1. It took many years of constant effort, but John's dream of living, working, and studying in a foreign country came true. What dreams do you have for the future? Do you think it is possible to make them come true? How important is it to set goals for yourself in order to achieve your dreams? What part does luck play in making dreams into reality? What part does hard work play?

2. From the time John refused to fight in Vietnam to the time he went to Japan, language and communication played a large role in his life. How important is the study of a foreign language to you? Are you willing to spend many years of study in order to communicate with people from other countries? What special techniques work well for you in helping to study English or another foreign language?

Note: Teachers who would like to obtain a copy of the answer sheet for all end-of-chapter questions can contact the author via e-mail at:
rwnorris AT gmail.com

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