

Notes For
Turing & Burroughs
Book #33, Novel #20
by Rudy Rucker

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Notes word count 83,162

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Started the notes and the novel on July 19, 2010,

(The novel was, however, built on a pair of stories written in 2006 and 2008.)

Finished first draft on July 11, 2011. Finished final draft August 16, 2012.

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To Do

In this section, I track fixes that I might eventually put in. While thinking about the book, I'll add any new To Do items to this list if I don't have the time to take care of them right away. I put an asterisk in front of any item after I eventually take care of it (either by implementing it or by rejecting it). And then I move the asterisked item to the bottom of the other already-asterisked items at the start of the list. So the finished list shows the fixes listed in the approximate order in which I disposed of them.

- * So far as I can gather, it would take at least a week to cruise from Madeira to Miami. Originally I'd been planning a stop in Havana on the way, but that would clutter the narrative more than I want.
- * I need to maintain some ongoing conversation, at least emotive, between Alan and his inner skug on the ship.
- * Alan should be working on some technical idea during the cruise.
- * Alan should glimpse the hand-shaped fragment of the Pratt skug on the ferry or on the bus to Gibraltar. And he might as well notice from the corner of his eye, the collapse of a guy in an alley (and this is Strunk getting skugged).
- * Have a page of dialog in the Burroughs family kitchen.
- * Have Alan practice shapeshifting aboard the ship, and even take on the shape of a giant slug.
- * Alan's penis briefly pops out during his final shipboard lovemaking session with Vassar.
- * Alan needs to remember to focus on looking like Abby, or like Bill. Perhaps in the mornings his shape is just Alan. Or even a skug.
- * While anxiously pounding on the Burroughs family door, Alan momentarily loses his William Burroughs shape.
- * The skug that eats Pratt should look more like a banana slug than like a jellyfish. We want this to be the default skug shape.
- * Mention that Driss's genes are in the skug as well. So in principle, Alan or Neddy can look like Driss.
- * Alan speculates that the Pratt skugger may have skugged some of the Tangier locals as well as splitting off a last-minute bud to track Alan.
- * Neddy is from a nuke-carrying sub, and is somewhat technical. He was thinking of selling secrets.
- * Both Alan and Neddy can imitate Katje, but they can't do their personalities. Alan can imitate Vassar as well, having been so intimate with him.
- * Change Strunk's name from Neddy to Ned.
- * Later on, when Alan beefs up his radio-wave sensitivity, he can in fact hear the ethereal voices of the Tangier skuggers, and of Burroughs as well.
- * Hopper ought to tell Bill that the hand skugged Ned because of Ned's nuke connection, which the roaming skug can teep in Ned's mind.
- * Ned should have a quirky science interest. Suppose he's into numerology.
- * Drop the notion that the skugs and skuggers can here broadcast radio in their heads.

- * The feds are protecting themselves with an antiskug vaccine. The Captain's wife managed to call the FBI, and they bagged Norvell in Palm Beach, and turned his body into a vaccine.
- * How exactly did the Burroughs skug antenna locate Alan? How do the feds track Alan? The feds have enslaved Landers. They keep him in a glass bottle, like some medieval dwarf. They drip in air and sugar-water via a locking system of valves so Landers can't slither out, and they chauffeur him around in the back of a long, white, 1950s hearse-like ambulance.
- * Figure out a model for what the ghosts *are*.
- * Alan, Susan and Bill should get hold of some winter coats at one of the airports they rob.
- * Regarding the antiskug vaccine, it's hard to make, and is only for the cops and the scientists and the ruling elite, and isn't being mass-distributed to the public.
- * Look up a Neal Cassady car he could drive from SF to Los Alamos in Jan, 1955.
- * Vassar should be into some kind of esoteric Middle Easter stuff, let's say it's the *Thousand And One Nights*.
- * More atmosphere for the Mexico city graveyard. Wild cats; Mausoleums like little houses, with the iron doors rusted through, and the lids of some caskets askew; Cypress trees; Winged hourglass icons. Differentiate or remove the N. O. graveyard.
- * Alan wonders about seeing his boyhood love Christopher Morcom in the afterlife when the cops are trying to kill him in Chapter 1, "But, no, death was a terminal halting state. Not a door into a paradise where he might be forever with Chris."
- * Stress the idea that Bill actually enters the other world for a brief time when he's shot in Mexico City. Momentarily he flies up through the bright hole.
- * In the snowstorm scene, Alan and Susan notice a fenced off area that LANL will be using for launching the V-bomb.
- * Vassar describes the Bandelier cave openings as lit up by ghostly energy, like the apartment windows lit by TVs in an NYC apartment building.
- * The skiers Peter and Polly mention that the road into Bandelier is barricaded.
- * Mention early on, and repeatedly thereafter, that when someone becomes a skugger they feel a definite increase in the frequency of their mental vibrations.
- * Vassar's ghost should appear while Alan and Susan are visiting with Ulam.
- * The real Peter and Polly Pfaff should have left the area rather soon, so we don't have a conflict.
- * Alan sees Chris Morcom's ghost the night before the blast.

- * Susan should keep her tapes after Gormly, and somehow get a new reel to reel player.

Publication Rate

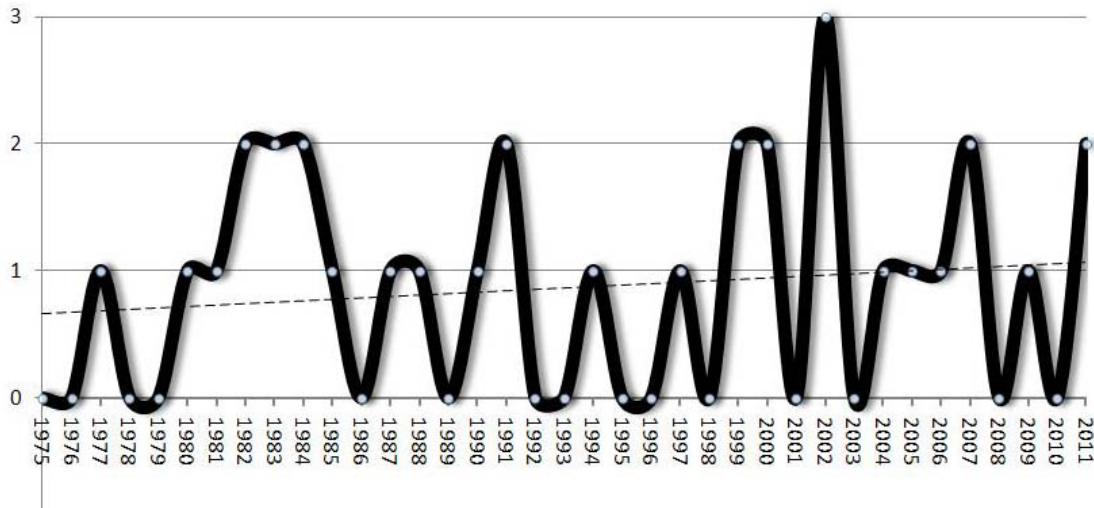


Figure 1. Books Per Year

I adapted this figure from my notes for *Jim and the Flims*. The graph assumes that my memoir *Nested Scrolls* will be published in 2011, and that *Jim and the Flims* will come out in 2011 as well. No book in 2010, other than my four-novel omnibus reprint edition, *The Ware Tetralogy*, which doesn't rate a graph-point, I don't think.

The dark heavy line is just a smoothed off line through the data points. The "linear trend line" (the nearly level dashed line across the lower part of the graph) is slightly slanting up, which is good.

I see a big burst in the early years. Things slid back when I started teaching at SJSU in 1986, and I was in a trough in the mid-nineties. After 1996, I got a second wind, which shows up in the publications starting 1999. And retiring from teaching in 2004 helped me keep up the pace. In the period 1999-2009, I published thirteen books in ten years, comparable to my run of six books in the four years 1982-1986.

Word Count

Here's the recent counts of words per book.

The Hacker And The Ants 92,000, *Freeware* 97,000, *Saucer Wisdom* 85,000, *Realware* 105,000, *Bruegel* 138,000, *Spaceland* 91,000, *Frek and the Elixir* 163,000, *The Lifebox, the Seashell and the Soul* 158,000, *Mathematicians in Love* 110,000, *Mad Professor* 87,000, *Postsingular* 89,100, *Hylozoic* 91,000, *Nested Scrolls* 95,000, *Jim and the Flims* 90,200.

In the table below, the rows generally represent single chapters. Sometimes I'll have two chapters in a single row—this happens when I decide after the fact to split an

overly long chapter in two. Also note that now and then the chapter numbers are out of order—the rows in the table appear in the order in which I wrote the chapters.

I have some spreadsheet-type formulae embedded in the table to compute the words per day and to estimate how many days remain until completion.

The “Total days writing” number is measured from July 19, 2010, with two exceptions. The exceptions are for Chapters 1 and 3, which I wrote back in 2006 and 2008, for a total of 7,000 words between the two of them. I didn’t have any plan for a novel when writing Chap 1, but with Chap 3 it began seeming like a possibility. I’ll just say I spent ten days each on these chapters, which came pretty fast.

Date I first finish chapter(s)	Chap # and Name	Words by chap end	Total days writing	Final Chap words. Avg: 5020	Avg words / day	Days till 85K words
Oct 10, 2006	1: The Imitation Game	3700	10	3,954	370	No plan
Mar 27, 2008	3: Tangier Routines	7005	20	4,085	350	223
Aug 10, 2010	2: The Skug	10964	49	5,096	224	331
Nov 1, 2010	4: Aboard the <i>Phos</i> 5: Shapeshifter	20336	133	4,406 3,723	153	423
Nov 23, 2010	6: Homecoming	23918	155	3,734	154	397
Dec 5, 2010	7: Hanging with Ned	28654	167	4,646	172	328
Jan 1, 2011	8: Dispatches From Interzone	33375	194	4,369	172	300
Jan 24, 2011	9: Cops and Skuggers	38443	216	4,943	178	262
Feb 22, 2011	10: Four-Way Jam	44767	245	5,261	183	220
Mar 15, 2011	11: On The Road 12: Coyotes	53544	266	5,144 5,270	201	156
Mar 29, 2011	13: The Apocalypse According to Willy Lee	62480	280	7,615	223	101
June 12, 2011	14: Los Alamos	68020	334	5,023	204	83
July 5, 2011	15: Nonlinear Feedback	76819	357	8,291	215	38
July 8, 2011	16: Phase Shift	81346	360	4,762	226	16
July 10, 2011	17: V-bomb	83651	362	1,871	231	06
July 11, 2011	18: The Last Word	85160	363	1,254	235	-01

Table 1: Word Count

December 2, 2010. So I’m almost done with chapter 6, and I’m averaging about 4,500 words per chapter. If I go to 90,000 words, that means 20 chapters.

December 22, 2010. I’m done with chapter 7, up to 4,700 words per chapter. So I could make 90 K in 19 chapters. I still only have plot for 15 chapters, but more will come.

January 11, 2011. I decided to split the 8,000 word chapter 4 about Alan on the *Phos* in two, so it’s now chapters 4 and 5. The chapter average is about 4,200 words per chapter at this point, so if I stick to that average across 20 chapters I’ll make 85,000 words, which is enough. Never mind about shooting for 90K. In the end, who knows where the length will end up, anyway. Normally the revisions add on a few thousand words anyway. It’s better to set an initial goal like 85K that feels attainable. I’m on chapter 8 now, which puts me a little past a third of the way through.

March 17, 2011. I’m at nearly 55,000 words now, with twelve chapters done. I’m presently averaging about 4,500 words per chapter. Looking ahead into the outline, I plan to write an extra long chapter 13, “The Apocalypse According to Willy Lee,” followed by five more chapters, for a chapter count of 18. If chapter 13 is nearly double-

length, then I should effectively get 19 x 4,500 words this way, which is over 85,000. More than likely the count will bulk closer to 90,000 once I flesh things out—without having to add more chapters. Summing up, I think I can do the book in 18 chapters, with the one extra long chapter of nearly double length.

July 5, 2011. Turns out Chap 16, “Nonlinear Feedback,” is extra long as well and it even spawned off a new Chap 17 “Phase Shift.” So it looks like I’ll have 19 chapters, and the closer, “The Last Word,” is free to be rather short as, I think, it should be. I might even hit 90,000 words.

Time Line

Monday, June 7, 1954. In Manchester, England, Turing escapes assassination by faking his suicide. He flees to Tangier.

June-December 1954. Turing experiments with undifferentiated tissue cultures in Tangier.

Tuesday, December 21, 1954. Turing dissolves the secret agent Pratt, Pratt wanders off as a skugger, Turing meets Burroughs, sleeps in an alley.

Wednesday, December 22, 1954. Turing moves in with William Burroughs.

Thursday, December 23, 1954. The Pratt zombie skugger converts a cop called Jonathan Hopper. The Pratt skugger is burned in the street, Burroughs sees this.

Saturday, Dec 25, 1954. Turing merges with Burroughs, copies his appearance, and travels from Tangier to Gibraltar. Before Turing gets out of town, the skugger cop Hopper descends on Burroughs. Hopper sends a portion of his body after Turing, a crawling hand.

Sunday, December 26, 1954. Turing leaves Gibraltar in the afternoon, steaming for Miami. The Hopper hand turns Ned Strunk into a skugger, and he follows Alan onto the ship. Burroughs goes to Embassy High Tea, is recruited to be an agent.

Wednesday, December 28, 1954. Burroughs starts working with the 64 skuggers in the basement of the British Embassy.

Saturday, January 1, 1955. Turing arrives in Miami, and is remotely seen doing this by Burroughs’s skugger-star. Turing goes to Burroughs’s parents Palm Beach. Ned Strunk trails him there.

Sunday, January 2, 1955. Turing has sex with Ned Strunk, and is evicted from the Burroughs house. Burroughs’s skugger-star witnesses this. Turing and Strunk notice the surveillance, they mount a telepathic block. They sleep on the beach. Burroughs quits working for the British Embassy.

Monday, January 3, 1955, Turing and Ned are rousted by the police in West Palm Beach. They’ve let their teep block slip and the cops find them via the skugger-star. They skug the cops and make off with a confiscated Pontiac Catalina. They meet up with Vassar and Susan and start a road trip to California as a foursome. Burroughs sets out for the United States via ferry and plane.

Tuesday, January 4, 1955. The four arrive in New Orleans around dawn. They have sex, and then Ned skugs Susan and Vassar. They sleep a few hours, but then the police spot them. They swap cars with a skugged police informer and drive the Holly Beach. Burroughs gets to West Palm Beach late in the day.

Wednesday, January 5, 1955. In the morning, Alan skugs another police spy. At noon he phones this guy and learns that the cops are on their trail with the Landers skug-

detector and an antiskug vaccine. They drive to Sonoma, TX, renamed Gormly, and spend the night in a cave. Before heading for the cave, Alan phones the Burroughs house, and contacts Bill, telling him he's bound for Los Alamos.

Thursday, January 6, 1955. They have a showdown with the cops in Gormly. Vassar and Ned die. Alan and Susan escape by helicopter to northern New Mexico, a few miles south of Los Alamos. Alan and Susan get lost, wander in the snow, and then find Burroughs in a local Indian family's home. Burroughs had left for Las Alamos in the morning, and was aided after Los Alamos by Vassar's spirit. In the night, Vassar's ghost disappears.

Friday, January 7, 1955. Alan, Susan, Bill, and Naranjo the pilot fly to Mexico City. In the night, Joan Burroughs's ghost shoots Bill.

Sat, January 8, 1955. Bill recovers. Alan, Susan, Bill, and Naranjo fly back to the Los Alamos area. Naranjo drops out. Alan, Susan and Bill find an apartment to rent.

Sun, January 9, 1955. Alan and Susan go for the job interview at a LANL auditorium. Bill starts writing his memoir about the scene with Joan.

Mon, Jan 10, 1955. Alan and Susan start work at LANL. While changing tubes, Alan finds Vassar's ghost inside MANIAC. That night, Vassar talks to Susan. Bill is half-done with his book.

Tue, Jan 11, 1955. In the morning, Bill has written all night. He quarrels with Alan and phones Ginsberg. At work. Susan feeds in some endless loop cards. Ulam goes to the machine room, meets Alan and gets him promoted on the spot to be his assistant. Alan unsuccessfully tries to skug Ulam. They remain friends. Working on graphical images of nonlinear waves. Susan makes acousmatic sounds from their work. That night, Ginsberg and Cassady arrive in '55 Caddy.

Wed, Jan 12, 1955. Alan goes to work with Ulam. Ulam tells him about the V-bomb. It's scheduled to go off on Thursday. When Alan gets home, the Beats are drunk. Neal skugs Tina and fucks her, and Tina's friend Sue Stook freaks out. Out in Neal's car, Susan helps Bill and herself get rid of their skugs while Ginsberg encourages them.

Thu Jan 13, 1955. Sue has dropped a dime. The skug hunters show up at Alan's granny cottage. Susan and Vassar kill Hosty, and the others free the antiskugger. Alan and the Beats take off for the V-bomb test site. Alan converts the V-bomb into a planetary de-skugger. He "dies" and goes into the afterlife.

Pick date, 1996. Burroughs videotapes his final thoughts on the adventure.

Late January or early February, 1955. A (fictional) mini-H-bomb-test in Nevada, perhaps similar to the Teapot series of 1955, but using an enhanced design invented by Turing. Turing is there, he leads all the surviving skugs into the blast.

I don't think I'll make it to Friday, October 7, 1955. Allen Ginsberg's Gallery Six reading of "Howl" in San Francisco.

I used a no-bullshit [online calendar](http://www.timeanddate.com), www.timeanddate.com to get the image below, with days of the week and phases of the Moon. For some dumb reason, I have 1954 in UK format with Monday listed first, but the 1955 is in US format with Sunday first, so be careful of that. [In the past I've also used [another online calendar](http://calendardaze.com), at calendardaze.com.]

Calendar for year 1954

							June						
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							September						
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							December						
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Calendar for year 1955

January						
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February						
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March						
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April						
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May						
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June						
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
5:○	13:○	20:○	26:○			

for his homosexuality. *The Turing Chronicles* proposes that Turing's supposed death was a cover-up, and that the man himself escaped to the open city of Tangier.

In Tangier, Turing meets the Beat writer William Burroughs and they become lovers. Turing invents a parasitic biocomputational organism called a skug. Both he and Burroughs welcome skugs into their bodies, thereby becoming skuggers. Skuggers enjoy both telepathy and shapeshifting, that is, a protean ability change their bodies' forms.

Turing and Burroughs set out spreading the skugger infestation to the people around them, and the novel takes on aspects of a Fifties invasion story such as *The Invasion of the Bodysnatchers*. The difference is that the novel is told from the point of view of the mutants themselves, and the alienated mutants are a positive force. Society at large becomes consumed by a hysterical hatred of the skuggers, and the authorities seek to exterminate them.

The subtextual kicker is that this mirrors what happened culturally as the 1950s segued into the 1960s. Outcasts such as Beats, artists, radicals and homosexuals began to gain more control, sparking reactionary efforts to suppress them.

In the middle part of *The Turing Chronicles*, Turing and Burroughs are in a cat-and-mouse game with the authorities. Turing takes a wild road trip across America with bohemian friends, culminating in a disastrous ambush by the police. Turing escapes and makes a side-trip to Mexico City with Burroughs, who makes peace with the ghost of his wife Joan—whom he'd notoriously shot in 1951.

Of course no Fifties-style SF novel is complete without a nuclear weapon. At the climax of *The Turing Chronicles*, Turing and Burroughs are in Los Alamos, New Mexico, working to block the detonation of a V-bomb, which will emit rays to annihilate the skuggers wholesale.

Sacrificing his own life, Turing crawls *inside* the weapon before ignition. Upon the V-bomb's detonation, he uses his higher powers to alter its radiation—preserving the lives of his fellow skuggers while removing their parasitic skugs. And in an afterword, Burroughs explains what happened.

"Turing died that we may live."

Note that *The Turing Chronicles* treats a timely theme, as 2012 is the centennial of the man's birth, with a number of conferences and events planned for that year.

Outline

[I'll put sharps in front of the titles of the chapters that are from the point of view of William Burroughs. The # chapters take the form of two sets of purported letters, a previously unpublished autobiographical short story, and the supposed transcript of a videotape by Burroughs.]

Chapter 1. The Imitation Game

Alan Turing meets his Greek boyfriend Zeno at the Manchester train station. They go to a hotel, and in the morning the maid brings some tea that's laced with cyanide—she's done this at the behest of the British secret police, who consider Turing to be too much of a security risk. Turing's friend Zeno dies on the spot, but Turing doesn't drink the tea.

He lugs Zeno home to his house and—using some new biocomputational techniques he's developed—grows copies of his and the dead Zeno's faces. Turing

pastes his face on to Zeno's corpse, and pastes Zeno's face onto himself. He sneaks out of town, leaving the Turing-visaged Zeno corpse to throw the cops off his trail.

Chapter 2. The Skug

In Tangier, Turing settles into a cheap room, carrying out some epochal chemical experiments, using materials extracted from local plants and from commercial products. His Zeno face is dying, and he wants to revitalize it. He's culturing a slug of undifferentiated tissue based on a few cells from his cheek and from the cheek of his young Aram boyfriend, Driss, who dubs the semi-sentient creature a *skug*.

A police agent named Pratt arrives at Turing's door—they've uncovered his deception in Manchester and have tracked him to Tangier. Driss throws the skug into the agent's face and, somewhat surprisingly, the skug eats the agent. The man's whole body collapses into something like a slug or a jellyfish. Turing saves a little piece of the big skug. The main part slimes off the balcony, takes on the form of a man again, and staggers away.

Chapter 3. Tangier Routines #

In a series of letters to Allan Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs describes the arrival of Alan Turing in his Tangier apartment. Turing brings with him a bit of skug that engulfs first Turing and then Burroughs, merging them and converting them into what Burroughs calls *skuggers*. Although he doesn't quite grasp this, Burroughs recently saw the Pratt-skugger being burned in the street. When Alan and Bill separate from their merge, Turing looks just like Burroughs. Burroughs sends Turing on his way with a letter of introduction to his father Mortimer Burroughs, proposing that Turing find a job doing research for the Burroughs company.

Chapter 4. Aboard the Phos

Disguised as Burroughs, Alan makes his way to Gibraltar and boards a freighter that will carry him a few other passengers to Miami. Alan befriends a man named Vassar Lafia, who in fact knew Burroughs from Tangier.

Chapter 5. Shapeshifter

Alan learns to take on the shape of a woman who sat at his dinner table on the ship—he gets a bit of genetic code from her skin and can emulate her entire shape. As a woman, Alan calls himself Abby. As Abby, he begins having an affair with Vassar Lafia, who doesn't realize that Alan and Abby are the same person. Alan/Abby is uneasy about another American named Ned Strunk on the ship who seems to want something from him. On the last night of the cruise, Strunk reveals that he knows Alan's identity. Alan, who's in a state of autointoxication, strangles Strunk and throws him overboard.

Chapter 6. Homecoming

As the debark the next day, Alan, back to form of Burroughs, tells Vassar maybe he can meet Abby again in Palm Beach in two days. Alan gets a taxi to Palm Beach. The Burroughs parents Mote and Laura take him for their son, and Alan meets Burroughs's seven-year-old son, Billy, who lives with his grandparents. There's some discussion of Burroughs having killed his wife Joan. Alan apologizes to Billy on Burroughs's behalf. In the morning, Ned Strunk—who turns out to be a skugger as well—crawls into Alan's

room and merges with him in an act akin to slug intercourse. They're twisted together and dangling from a rope of slime attached to the ceiling. Grandmother Laura Burroughs walks in on them. Outraged, she banishes Alan from the house.

Chapter 7. Hanging With Ned

As Alan says goodbye to Billy, he tells him he'll see if he can find some way to bring Joan back to life. Outside the house, Alan takes on his Abby form. He meets up with Ned outside the Burroughs house. They walk to the beach and have breakfast. Ned tells his story. The Navy trained him to tend the nuclear reactor on the new nuclear-powered sub, the *Nautilus*. The *Nautilus* was on a secret test-run from the US to Gibraltar when Alan passed through there. Ned had gone AWOL from his ship, and he was converted into a skugger, or "skugged," by a small, hand-shaped skug that had followed Alan from Tangier. He heard a skug voice within him that told him to merge with Alan to get a "wetware upgrade." Ned takes on the shape of a black youth. Alan and Ned go to West Palm Beach and listen to music at a jazz club. Alan has a vision of a starfish of fused skuggers hating him, and feels paranoid. Alan and Ned bury themselves in the sand with breathing tubes sticking up and sleep. The police awaken them at dawn.

Chapter 8. Dispatches from Interzone #

More letters written by William Burroughs from Tangier.

An agent from the British Embassy named Hopper turns up at Burroughs's apartment on the evening of Christmas, shortly after Alan leaves. Hopper is a skugger. Hopper was converted by the zombie skugger that Bill saw being burned. Hopper's boss sees the military and espionage opportunities of having skuggers in the Queen's employ. Hopper himself wants the skugs to win, as does Burroughs.

Hopper sheds a piece of himself, a hand, to run along after Turing, to recruit a proper guard to tail him—he's not willing to stop Turing's escape. And now Hopper and Burroughs assembled a cadre of sixty-four skuggers in a basement in Tangier.

Burroughs controls them with his force of personality and with generous feasts of sweets, and some mumbo-jumbo about orgone energy. They don't get the skugger-star working until Alan's already in Palm Beach. The skugger-star "sees" the Alan and Palm Beach via a global psychic network. Bill gets mad at Alan for alienating his parents, and for talking about resurrecting Joan, which freaks him out. He has the Embassy call the US cops but they get there too late, Alan and Ned have left the house. They track them again, and nearly catch them, but now they have a telepathy block up.

Hopper says to leave Turing alone, but Burroughs is on the warpath. Finally his skugger-star spots Ned and Alan as skuggers buried in the sand. They sic the cops on them. But Bill gets fired by the Embassy. And his friend Hopper says he's being foolish to turn Alan in. Bill gets Brit passports of a pair of dead twins. He helps the captive skuggers escape from the Embassy. He's going to take Driss to America with him, the two of them disguised as Stanley and Daniel Jackson.

Chapter 9. Cops and Skuggers

Alan and Ned skug some of the cops and get away with an impounded car, a 1955 Pontiac Catalina. A *Terminator*-like sequence with the boys taking over the cop station. The Tangier skugger-star is defunct so there's no really good tracking information on them for the moment. They go to meet Vassar at the Burroughs family's store,

Cobblestone Gardens. They talk to Laura Burroughs. Ned doesn't want to have sex with Alan any more, *per se*, although he's willing to conjugate to pick up on Alan's skug tweaks. Vassar's wife Susan and Ned start flirting with each other. Susan is playing her "acousmatic" compositions on her tape machine. Vassar and Susan want to leave town, as Vassar has screwed up a deal to sell the hashish he smuggled back, and both the feds and some dealers are after him. Their pick-up truck can't go far, so they're happy to join Alan and Ned. They leave Susan Green's 1936 Ford pickup with Laura Burroughs for Bill to use. They all get in the Pontiac and head west.

Chapter 10. Four-Way Jam

The four develop some camaraderie, traveling as a team. Alan and Ned use their teep contact with each other. Susan plays her tapes and flirts with Ned. Vassar smokes hash and bickers with Ned.

In New Orleans, Alan (as Abby) and Vassar have sex, and Susan does it with Ned as well—which Vassar doesn't like. He starts a fight with Ned. Exasperated, Ned goes ahead and skugs Vassar and then Susan. Due to the teep and a conjugation session, Vassar and Susan now understand what's going on.

Alan pig-headedly goes back to looking like himself, and never mind security. He'd like for Vassar to love him like a man. But Vassar doesn't want to do that. At this point Alan begins distancing himself from Vassar. His romantic thoughts return to Bill Burroughs.

Chapter 11. On the Road

In New Orleans, an FBI informer spots them. They skug the informer and three of his companions, and they send the informers crew north towards Memphis in their Pontiac as a decoy. They take the informer's car, a beat-up Hudson, and head for Holly Beach, where they spend the night. In the morning, Alan skugs an FBI agent who's tailed them this far, and sends the agent back to New Orleans to provide inside information.

They skug the Holly Beach motel owner and take his car, driving on past Austin and into west central Texas.

Chapter 12. Coyotes

In the middle of Texas they have dinner in a town I call Gormly, and Alan phones the New Orleans FBI agent that he skugged. The guy tells him that the feds have developed a vaccine that makes them unskuggable. And they're using Landers as a skugger-tracker. And they're driving across Texas in pursuit, carrying Landers in an ambulance.

Alan phones the Burroughs home and talks to Bill. Asks him to come to Los Alamos.

Alan and his friends spend the night in a cave near Gormly, figuring the depth will shield them from Landers's snooping. But in the morning the cops ambush them in Gormly. The phone was tapped and Alan's friend has been killed. The cops incinerate Vassar and Ned with a flamethrower. But these two don't exactly *die*. They become visible ghosts—polyhedral patterns of light.

Alan and Susan escape. The way it happens is that Alan stretches his arm very long to skug a hovering helicopter pilot called Naranjo. The copter picks them up. From

the air, Alan machine-guns the Landers thing in its ambulance. The pilot Naranjo, who is part Pueblo Indian, takes them towards the mesas of New Mexico, and drops them off near Los Alamos in a snowstorm. He drops them beside the house of his cousin, where he hides the copter under a tarp. Alan and Susan slink off into the blizzard, transforming themselves into a pack of six coyotes. Immediately they get lost in the storm.

Chapter 13. The Apocalypse According to Willy Lee #

[This double-length chapter is the text of *Mutant*, an unpublished autobiographical memoir by William Burroughs, written early in 1955.]

Bill becomes a skugger. He travels from Tanger to Palm Beach. Alan phones him at home at his parents' house. He flies to Los Alamos. On arriving, he picks up no teep of Alan at the airport. But he encounters a spirit in the form of a polyhedron of glowing lines. It says it's Vassar Lafia, a guy Bill vaguely knew in Tanger. The ghost guides Bill to an Indian man who drives Bill to his home outside of town. Bill finds a half-Indian called Naranjo at the house.

A pack of six coyotes enters the simple home's door, led by the ghost of Vassar. The coyotes merge together to form Alan and Susan. Alan and Bill embrace. They're in love. But now that Bill has seen the ghost of Vassar, he's more aware of his psychic sensitivity. In the night he's tormented by Joan's ghost, berating him and swooping at him.

Susan suggests they travel down to Mexico City together to lay Joan's soul to rest. Alan approves of the idea, as just now the search for them is so hot. The not-all-that-friendly Naranjo flies them down there, in a stolen small plane. Bill dreams of resurrecting Joan. Alan is interested in the project as it will shed light on the nature of ghosts. And they want to muddy their trail before attempting to go to Los Alamos yet.

Alan, Bill, and Susan go to the Panteón Americano in Mexico City and take one of Joan's bones from her crypt the DNA. In a rented room—which is in fact the room where Bill shot Joan in 1952—they use a skug to make a copy of her body, and then they work on getting her mind and personality from Bill's memories. The embodied Joan's ghost re-enacts the famous William Tell scene. Burroughs stands as target with a glass on his head. Joan shoots, the bullet hits Bill in the temple. He slumps to ground. Joan's ghost ascends, finally satisfied.

But Burroughs manages to restore his brain and recover from the wound. Meanwhile Naranjo has scored some kilos of heroin, and they all fly back north in the plane together. Bill wants to take some of the heroin but his inner skug won't let him.

Chapter 14. Los Alamos

Bill, Alan, and Susan slip into Los Alamos. Scanning the paper for rentals and listening to a TV in a restaurant, they learn there's a national uproar about the skugs. The story's broken wide open. The newscasters and politicians are jabbering about witchcraft, satanic cults, communist cells and anarchy. And Alan's and Susan's faces are on TV in endless replay, as shown in a film shot at the ambush in Texas, a film where you can see Alan deforming his body in a skuggy way, reaching up for the helicopter.

So Alan and Susan decide to change their look. Bill, however, will stay more or less the same, perhaps only making himself a bit younger.

Susan takes on the look of a contemporary electronic woman composer who's a friend of hers, Bebe Barron.

Alan, in a mixture of nostalgia and a desire to agitate Bill, takes on the remembered form of his boyhood flame Christopher Morcom. Chris died of TB at nineteen, and Alan ages the image just a bit, looking about twenty-three.

The waitress Tina pries about their ménage, and Alan and Bill just flat out say that they're queers and Susan is a widow. They also say they're in Los Alamos looking for work, which is more or less true. Tina takes a liking to them, as she herself is bi, and she steers them to the rental of a granny cottage behind the house of her girlfriend, a leathery-faced blonde, Sue Stook, whom she lives with. Sue is a veterinarian.

Bill is writing his "The Apocalypse According to Willy Lee" memoir. He's developing a mad, bony preacher routine from having seen beyond the grave. And he's turning against the skugs—he's embittered because they won't let him shoot up. Also, at a more altruistic level, he's concerned that the skugs are, in effect, dehumanizing mind parasites.

Alan's skug wants him to broadcast a skugging ray powered by some sophisticated nuclear technology, but the details aren't clear. The skugs want to get it done before the vaccinated cops wipe out the skugs and skuggers.

By the way, the vaccine is not at this point being distributed to the public, Alan learns this fact from waitress Tina, who's very plugged-in regarding security gossip.

A crash project involving the skugs is in fact underway. The Los Alamos National Labs are hiring some low-level technical assistants to be punch-card operators and electricians on the [MANIAC](#) computer. Alan and Susan apply.

Dick Hosty, who led the ambush at Gormly, is at LANL with Alan's former ally Roland Gill as an antiskugger to prevent skuggers from applying. Before going there, Alan and Susan copy the identities of a couple of ski bums whom they hitch a brief ride with. They stick tendrils in their necks, memorize their lives, Peter and Polly, and copy their paper IDs as well. They then let them go on their way. And thus they skeeve past Hosty and Gill.

Susan gets a job as a "programmer," that is, a glorified typist. Alan gets work maintaining the physical machine, basically changing vacuum tubes. In a way he's proud—in the past he's been considered too physically clumsy for this type of work, but his skug has smoothed him out.

Chapter 15. Nonlinear Feedback

[Plan: This chapter is double length. I'll let the point of view drift among: Susan, Bill, and Alan. I'll arrange it in temporal order.]

Monday

Susan and Alan working 1-9 at LANL. Susan in the punch-card room for MANIAC. She befriends, Tilda, the rawboned woman she met in the lobby. Tilda plays fiddle.

Alan is in the next building running around changing tubes. He sees the ghost of Vassar again. Vassar is living in MANIAC, wants to find Susan.

After work, the find Bill writing his memoir in the granny cottage with a typewriter, feeling good about it. He plans to write all night.

Susan is excited about Vassar, she has insomnia, with Bill writing all the while in the kitchen. She sees Vassar he flits in. Vassar has found a way to hang around in the circuits of the MANIAC and the phone systems of LANL, and the wires of Los Alamos. His ghost is haunting the machine.

In the days while he was of sight he was hanging with the ghosts of the cliff-dwellers in the Bandelier National Monument. The LANL gang are building some kind of bomb-test site in Frijoles Canyon.

Tuesday Daytime

Bill has written all night, completing the first draft of his memoir. He's worried it's not as good as it should be. He worries the skug inside him is hanging him up. He's seeing blurs in his perception, smears when he turns his head. Susan says its like dragging a sound tape past a read-head. Alan wonders aloud if Bill should call his parents and son, and Bill, suddenly hostile, says, "Fuck that sound."

Alan and Bill quarrel. Bill phones Allen Ginsberg in San Francisco, and tells him that he's imprisoned by a religious fanatic—he says this in front of Alan just to bug him. "Ginzy" takes this with a grain of salt, but says he'll come out. Bill tells him to fly. He'll pay for the ticket. Sure he can bring Neal. Yeah, they can rent a car, the best car they can find in Santa Fe. He's loaded with kale.

At work in the afternoon, Susan sneaks some gotcha cards of Alan's devising into a deck of punch cards, and it sends MANIAC into an endless loop. Ulam leaves his office and goes to the machine room, where Alan meets him. Ulam takes Alan off the job and says Susan should be fired. Quickly Alan impresses Ulam, and is taken into Ulam's confidence. Alan re-uses his ski-bum-Peter's ID to get past any potential complications about a security clearance, and Ulam smoothes the way.

As soon as they're alone in Ulam's office, Alan tries to skug Ulam, but he can't. Ulam has been vaccinated against skugs! He's that important a figure. It turns out Ulam actually doesn't care that Alan's a skugger, in fact he's intrigued, he's been wanting to meet one. He wants his input. And once he realizes he's dealing with no less a mathematician than Alan Turing, he's delighted. Turing, after all, has a very strong record in merging mathematics and practical technology.

Alan gets Ulam to bring Susan to his office as well, to protect her. The three of them have a pleasant afternoon together, remotely running graphical cellular automata emulations of exotic nonlinear wave equations on the MANIAC, and watching them on Ulam's terminal. These equations were used in creating hydrogen bombs, and now Ulam has made them stranger. Obviously for the V-bomb, but, Ulam won't tell the details yet.

Susan tapes of of the nonlinear wave sounds for use in her acousmatics.

Tuesday Evening

Tuesday evening, Ginsberg shows up in a 1955 Cadillac DeVille classic car driven by Neal Cassady, pale turquoise blue with a white roof, used for weddings. Ginzy and Neal flew together, and Cassady rented a car from a car agent at the Santa Fe airport. The trip only took about ten hours. Ginzy is cheerful, happy to have had so much time alone with Neal, whom he loves, and even though he's anti-war, he's intrigued when Alan says a bomb will probably be going off soon. Ginzy says he'd like to see a bomb-test—the bomb as door to the astral plane.

Bill is a little jealous to see Neal with Ginzy, as Bill loves Ginzy too. Ginzy asks Bill about his problem about being imprisoned by religious fanatics, says Turing doesn't seem like one, but then, like an actual fanatic, Turing wants to skug he new arrivals, to get them on the team. With Bill's counsel, Ginzy declines getting skugged, saying it's mind control. Neal gets skugged by Turing and loves it. Like Vassar did, Neal views skugification as a new way to get high.

Ginzy and Neal are exhausted, ready to crash, they go to sleep. Neal talks his way into sharing Susan's bed, and Ginzy gets in bed with Alan and Bill—they split the mattress.

Chapter 16. Phase Shift

Wednesday Daytime

In the morning, Neal and Ginzy are awake and lively, with Bill having fun too. They figure they'll wait and "see the fireworks." They're drinking whiskey and smoking pot. Neal plays with changing his body, running through wild changes—like a strongman body and a body with two jabbering heads. Bill does a few shapeshifting riffs of his own—he becomes a centipede and a jellyfish.

Alan goes to Ulam's office in mid-morning, and Susan stays home. She's had sex with Cassidy.

At LANL, Ulam spills the whole story to Alan. His real motivation: "Perhaps we'll fail. Perhaps your side will win. And in that case, you can look out for my family and me." Another motivation: the LANL administrators, in consultation with the bellicose Edward Teller, plan to detonate a bomb to broadcast a narrowly tuned lethal radiation across the continent, a new kind of ray called a V-ray. It has some connection with vanadium.

The treatment supposedly kills skugs and skuggers by amplifying the resonant vibrations of their proteins so that their genetic material shakes itself to pieces. It's supposed to be set off tomorrow, Thursday, in Frijoles Canyon in the Bandelier National Monument. The administrators felt this was such a crisis that they don't have time to go set up at a distant test site like White Sands.

Ulam is committed to implementing the government plan, even though it is, in some very real sense genocidal. He wants Alan to spread the word among all skuggers, to tell them to "lay down their arms" while they can—that is, to somehow expel their skugs. "How," asks Alan. "That's for you to figure out," says Ulam. Alan realizes this is impractical in any case, as the skugs wouldn't let people share skug-removal instructions.

Alan pretends to go along with Ulam, even though his inner skug is determined to carry out the skugs' program of universal skugging, if Alan can figure it out. Alan helps Ulam check his computations and he slyly argues that there is an error—it's not even a real error, but Alan wants to see how Ulam gets at the V-bomb for tweaking.

It's snowing, it's hard for Ulam to get in and out, and he uses a military snow-cat, leaving Alan behind. None of the LANL scientists but Ulam really understands the V-bomb, so they security let Ulam have access to the V-bomb as he likes.

Dick Hosty once again gives Alan a ride home in the snow. He's very suspicious by now, asking pointed questions. He truly believes that Alan isn't a skugger, we have some conversation with the captive skugsniffer Roland Gill to this effect. But Hosty is suspicious that Alan may be a collaborator. And he insists on driving to where Alan lives—he has nosed around town and learned that Alan is renting with a third person.

So Hosty drives toward Sue Stook's, and Alan is frozen in fear, and Roland Gill the skugsniffer says, "There's skuggers up ahead. A nest of them, a woman and two men." And before Hosty can pull out his pistol or do anything else, Alan wraps an arm around his throat and chokes him to death. Hosty thinks Roland Gill betrayed him, and with his dying spasms vengefully electrocutes the body in the skugsniffer tank. Alan

pulls the ambulance with dead Hosty and Gill into the empty garage or barn behind the granny cottage.

Wednesday Night

A heavy snow is falling. It's night. Alan sits for a time in Neal's Cadillac. Under the influence of his skug, he's is thinking of a way to tweak the V-bomb so as to generate a skug-ray that converts all humans to skuggers, by adding a vibration to human vibes that amps them into skuggers. He is determined to get to the bomb before it's set off tomorrow. His inner skug is barking orders in his mind, it's disturbing.

Inside the house, Ginzy and Bill are slow-dancing and making out on the couch. With death impending, Alan doesn't care that much. Neal and Susan are in the bedroom. Ginsberg says they've grown penises and vaginas all over themselves, and they're stuck together like puzzle pieces in the bedroom.

But now Susan notices Alan's return via teep. Susan knows that Alan has killed Hosty, and she comes out to thank him and ushers him inside.

Via teep, Susan, Bill, and Neal know everything that Alan knows about the V-bomb and the skugs, and they realizes it would be good to expel their skugs. Neal doesn't care that much, he gets busy cooking himself some steaks and smoking pot. And Susan, Bill and Alan can't really talk about expelling skugs due to the skugs gagging this kind of talk.

As a way to break the jam, Susan starts blasting her acousmatics from her reel to reel. Vassar appears, he's celebrating Hosty's death with Susan. Vassar spied on Ulam's trip to the Project Utopia site to tweak the V-bomb and he tell Alan about how to get inside the bomb and tweak it. Everyone is interested. Alan says he's going there tomorrow.

Vassar says he's going on to heaven soon. He's doing some chants he learned from the ancient Indians. Everyone but Ginzy can see Vassar, although Ginzy really can't although, sensitive poet that he is, he can sense them. He's blending in his Hindu chant. Alan sets up rapid-fire CA patterns accompanied by acousmatic music playing on the granny cottage's TV which he has tweaked with superhuman skugger speed.

Burroughs starts to sing, stops, and teeps Alan something.

Alan sees the ghost of Christopher Morcom and falls asleep.

Chapter 17. V-Bomb

Thursday

In the morning its snowing a bit less. They plowed the roads. Alan wants the others to leave leave in case the V-bomb kills everyone. Neal takes off in the Caddy car with Susan, Bill, and Ginsberg, heading for NYC. Susan is taking her tapes back to Manhattan and try and get something going there.

Ginzy says that people need to be able to find their own paths towards the Light, and the skugs are too corporate. Bill gives Alan a hint about decrypting last night's teep, then gives Alan a goodbye kiss. Then he's yelling angrily at Neal for his perceived recklessness in driving.

Alan disguises himself as Hosty; he puts on his clothes and drives his ambulance down to the canyon and uses his ID to get in. The skugs see this mission as being about making the V-bomb into a skugging ray, so they're helping. Alan is managing to hide his true hopes for Burroughs's message.

"One last adjustment," he tells the people with the V-bomb. "We can't trust

Ulam anymore.”

Alan climbs into the casing of the V-bomb, he’s tinkering with it, and he’s still in there when it goes off.

Alan’s desire to see Chris is a factor in his willingness to sacrifice himself within a nuclear blast. He can hear Chris’s ghost in his head, telling him to do the right thing.

Alan himself “dies” in the blast, that is, he becomes a ghost and proceeds to the high heaven to be with Chris Morcom.

We’ll follow him a short distance in, soaking up some heavenly visions.

Chapter 18. The Last Word #

A transcription of a videotape of Burroughs talking in 1996. He recorded this himself as a kind of last testament. He gives a blow-by-blow report.

Bill moved on. He wishes he’d been a better father to Billy. He failed everyone in his family. But he made himself a literary career.

“Although I didn’t dare say or even think it consciously, I was obliquely searching for a way to make the ambient mélange of sounds into a skug-vibe cancelling rhythm. A deskugging song. And when I began singing in my rather poor voice, I found I’d added the final tweak that the storm of sound needed. I felt the moorings of my skug loosen within me. And, having felt that, I drew back—drew back so quickly that my skug wasn’t quite aware what I had done, didn’t realize that William Burroughs now knew a deskugging method. I suppose I could have tried to deskug all of us four at once—Neal, Alan, Susan and me. But I was vain about my appearance. Allen Ginsberg liked me younger, and I didn’t want to give that up. Even if it meant losing the war against the skugs. But I wanted to partly do the right thing. I encrypted the song with the word ‘Xanadu,’ and teeped the pattern to Alan Turing.”

The V-bomb imploded rather than exploding.

Rather than using the V-bomb to kill all skugs and skuggers as LANL wanted, nor to turn everyone into a skugger as the skugs wanted—Alan freed all skuggers of their inner skugs, and killed all the skugs.

On his way out, Alan pulled after him all human memories of the events narrated in *The Turing Chronicles*. Well, not quite all memories. Alan left Burroughs’s memories intact. Bill ruminates over what the adventure with Turing meant. He has an increasing sense of contact with Turing’s ghost. “We never needed any special scientific mumbo-jumbo. We can learn just as much from the crooning of a drunken shaman in a rayon sport shirt. Science was never anything more than an insipid style of sorcery.”

Title

The Turing Chronicles is strong and clear, albeit a bit pedestrian. It’s in the standard commercial “The <Proper Noun> <Noun>” format—which is good. “Chronicles” suggests a true-story element, which is useful, and it has a slight suggestion of time-travel, which is probably irrelevant.

If I develop the Beat characters more, I might possibly use a title that makes more of that. *Beatnik SF. Turing and the Beats. Beatnik Shapeshifters*. But this could come across as too parodistic, and I don’t mean for the book to seem like a silly joke.

I also thought of *Contagious Mutation*, referring to the spread of skugness. That’s a portentous ‘50s kind of title.

Turing and the Skugs would be the clearest, and it echoes *Jim and the Flims*. Probably I don't want to echo such a recent title format, or people might suppose that I'm senile and stuck in a rut.

On August 14, 2012, I decided to change the title to *Turing and Burroughs* or, better, *Turing & Burroughs*. This sparkles more, also it's a more accurate description of what's in the book, also it taps into the Wm. Burroughs aftermarket.

Characters

In principle, it would have been nice to work on this section before starting the book. But in practice that's not realistic. I first worked on this section in November, 2010, during the "Hanging with Ned" chapter when I was about a third done the novel. And I returned to it in January, 2011, when approaching the book's halfway point.

Alan Turing

He's somewhat unworldly. Likes to think about patterns. Wants love. Feels like a loner. Is bitter and resentful about the assassination attempt upon him. Feels lost and wants to achieve something really great. Is proud of his intelligence, and a bit impatient of lesser minds.

Likes nature, and insects in particular. Likes making chemical compounds out of naturally occurring substances. Is tired of big "mainframe" digital computers. Likes biocomputation.

Is an atheist, but yearns for a spiritual life or a connection with some higher level of reality.

Feels like an alien.

Driss

Grew up poor. Wants money to afford a wife. Likes to party and relax. Is sensitive of rebuffs and social status. Likes motorbikes. Likes pot and hash. Has some resentments, but prefers peace.

William Burroughs

Guilty about killing his wife and abandoning his son. Utter contempt for conventional attitudes. Would like to find love. Feels isolated by his intelligence. Feels like an alien.

Vassar Lafia

I was going to call him Vassar Fogarty like an off-stage character in my unfinished novel *Twinks*. But then I started thinking he ought to be ethnically distinct from Ned Strunk, who is quite white. So I picked the name Lafia, I once met a hipster called Mark Lafia in grad school at Rutgers.

Looking on the web, Lafia seems to be a Spanish Jewish name, Sephardic, which is kind of cool. I think I'll keep the odd-ball first name Vassar, though, it was, say, an oddball idea of his mother, a relatively uneducated woman who wanted to lay some class on her son, and picked the name of a ritzy private school that, at the time, she didn't even realize was for women only.

I see Lafia as a bit like Gregory Corso.

Vassar is from Jersey City, New Jersey. He's 35. He went to Jersey City State

for a year, but dropped out. He likes to drink, and discovered pot in early on. He hangs out in bars playing pool.

He worked on the docks in Jersey City, then latched onto a youngish Sephardic widow, formerly wife of a murdered Jewish gangster, a guy like Myer Lansky. Vassar escorted her down to Miami, then had a falling out with her where she threatened to have him rubbed out.

Vassar took up with a college teacher near Miami, a composer, married her, and then had a falling out with her. On an impulse he hitched a ride on a freighter to North Africa to explore the ancient world. He loves art, ancient cultures, music, dancing, women, getting high, rushing around, Moorish things, esoteric philosophy. He's not a practicing Jew, indeed passes himself off as non-Jewish, especially for the purposes of being in Arab countries. His "god" is the Dark Furrow, his symbol of womanliness, and he speaks of "plowing the dark furrow."

Alan is sexually attracted to Vassar, and he likes how raffish and rebellious he is.

Vassar is a relentless optimist, kind of a pinhead, with a short attention span and a big mouth. Manic.

His voice: I was thinking of "Izzy Tuskman" and Gregory Corso. Also of Jeff Goldblum playing Brundle in *The Fly*: "You missed some good moments." But none of these voices is really distinct enough in my mind. Izzy's roommate "Chuckie Golem" could work, I can hear that voice pretty well, but Chuckie isn't the wild-ass that I've made Vassar out to be. I could always fall back on the voice of Sta-Hi, I can still hear that one pretty well. But could Alan really have a crush on Sta-Hi?

Ned Strunk

Ned Strunk is from the suburbs of Louisville, Kentucky. He went to high-school and the University of Louisville. He studied something that leads to being a nuclear engineer. He had some ROTC money and had to go into the Navy. He's a petty officer and an electrician; the Navy gave him technical training and a security clearance for working with nuclear reactors.

He was a sailor on the first cruise of the Nautilus, the nuclear-powered submarine.

Ned likes cards and is an excellent poker player. He won a big pot on the sub. He got mad at his chief officer for riding him about his attitude. Ned went AWOL, stole a cheap suit and was planning to bum around Europe. He had a half-assed plan to sell some nuke secrets to spies. He resents the Navy for making him join.

His voice: I think of my character Hank Larsen from *The Secret of Life*. A bit sarcastic and self-deprecating.

Ned somewhat pessimistic (like Larsen was), to differentiate him from the more optimistic Vassar.

Susan Green

Susan Green is a musician who got a job conducting the band at a college near Miami. She's a New Yorker whose parents often go to Miami. She met Vassar at a jazz club and they married. She is okay about sharing Vassar with Abby...because she thinks Ned is hot. Susan is making music out of tape recordings.

She's not all that beautiful, but she's sexy. She's a bit heavy with somewhat thick features. I think of Ben Brie's ex-wife. Very sure of herself, yet prone to abrupt shifts in her opinions. Very smart about certain things, like art and music. Not so well informed

about day-to-day things like laws and politics.

Background Research

Computational Morphogenesis

Turing's last paper, "[The Chemical Basis of Morphogenesis](#)," is the seed for most of my ideas in the Turing stories. Turing finished the first draft in November 1951. I wrote about this paper in *The Lifebox, the Seashell and the Soul*, in section 3.2, "The Morphogenesis of a Brindle Cow." Here's an extended quote of some of the passages.

The birth of activator-inhibitor simulations notion goes back to 1952, when Alan Turing (he of the Turing machines) published his groundbreaking paper, "A Chemical Basis for Morphogenesis." His idea was to suppose that cell behaviors are affected by several special morphogens — where we'll take "morphogen" to mean any biochemical that affects cell behavior.

In the simplest interesting case the cells are affected by two morphogens, called the activator and the inhibitor, as mentioned above. The activator morphogen might stimulate, say, branching behavior; that is, an area where the cells have a lot of activator morphogen might stiffen, bulge out, and begin a branch. Or, in a different model, the activator might stimulate pigment production; that is, an area with a high concentration of activator might correspond to a dark spot in an animal's fur. Or, yet again, an activator's concentration might make the difference between some cells turning into either muscle cells or into bone cells, and a bone might arise, say, along a line of high-activator cells.

The inhibitor morphogen's role is to reduce the concentration of the activator by hastening its decay or blocking its creation. The inhibitor, if you will, fights against the activator. The shifting battle-lines between activator and inhibitor lay out regions of morphological differentiation...

In his 1951 paper, Turing specified a few rules for an activator-inhibitor system and did a cellular-automaton-style simulation of its change over time. He divided a sheet of paper into a low-resolution grid, put in some random start values, and, aided by a primitive electronic computer, calculated the successive concentrations of the morphogens. After several hours of number-crunching, he'd produced an image resembling the spots on the side of brindle cow....

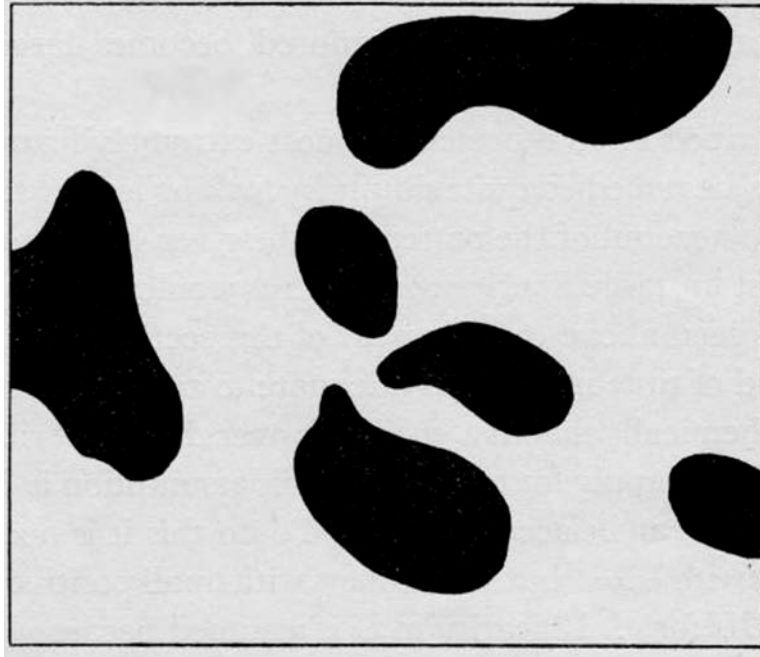


Figure 3. Turing's Cow Spots.

This image from Turing's manuscript is Copyright © University of Southampton and King's College Cambridge 2003, and is used with permission. This picture can be found in the online [Turing archives](#). More links and information about Turing's work on morphogenesis can be found on a page at Jonathan Swinton's [website](#).

Activator-Inhibitor Systems in Psychology and Society

Now for a few more quotes from my *Lifebox* tome, still in that same section 3.2.

Turing's simulations of activator inhibitor systems are, again, what computer scientists call continuous-valued cellular automata. Of course living cells aren't squares in a grid, but the rectilinear geometry is pretty well washed away by the fact that we're averaging together continuous numbers. Cellular automata let us get an idea of Nature's options by experimenting with simulations...

DNA isn't a blueprint, it's a set of tweak parameters....

Let's think of the spread of activation as the creation of new thought associations, and let's think of the spread of inhibition as the closing-down of thoughts.

- * If you inhibit new thoughts too strongly, you're left with a few highly stimulated patches: obsessions and fixed ideas.

- * If you manage to create new thought associations at about the same rate you inhibit them, you develop creative complexity.

- * Too high a rate of thought activation leads to unproductive mania.

That seems reasonable. Now let's try it on society. As I mentioned, I'll try letting my two morphogens be good news and bad news, but certainly one might try using some other opposing pairs of social forces.

- * If bad news is more widely disseminated than good news, society breaks into disparate clans and cliques, each focused on a particular set of beliefs.

- * If good and bad news flow at equal rates, society is dynamic, criss-crossed with waves of fads and opinions.

- * If there's very little discouraging news at all, society can move towards an anarchic distribution of beliefs, where very few people agree.

Thermonuclear Weapons

Unfortunately, the first U.S. H-bomb comes too early for me to fit Turing into its invention—unless I want to cheat on the dates. According to the Wikipedia article, "[Hydrogen Bomb](#)," Teller formed the preliminary idea as early as 1941, and Ulam helped him make it workable by the early 1950s. Details"

The "George" shot of Operation Greenhouse in 1951 tested the basic concept for the first time on a very small scale, raising expectations to a near certainty that the concept would work.

On November 1, 1952, the Teller–Ulam configuration was tested at full scale in the "Ivy Mike" shot at an island in the Eniwetok Atoll, with a yield of 10.4 megatons (over 450 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Nagasaki during World War II). The device, dubbed the Sausage, used an extra-large fission bomb as a "trigger" and liquid deuterium—kept in its liquid state by 20 short tons (18 metric tons) of cryogenic equipment—as its fusion fuel, and weighed around 80 short tons (70 metric tons) altogether.

The liquid deuterium fuel of Ivy Mike was impractical for a deployable weapon, and the next advance was to use a solid lithium deuteride fusion fuel instead. In 1954 this was tested at the Bikini Atoll in the "Castle Bravo" shot (the device was code-named the Shrimp), which had a yield of 15 megatons (2.5 times higher than expected) and is the largest U.S. bomb ever tested.

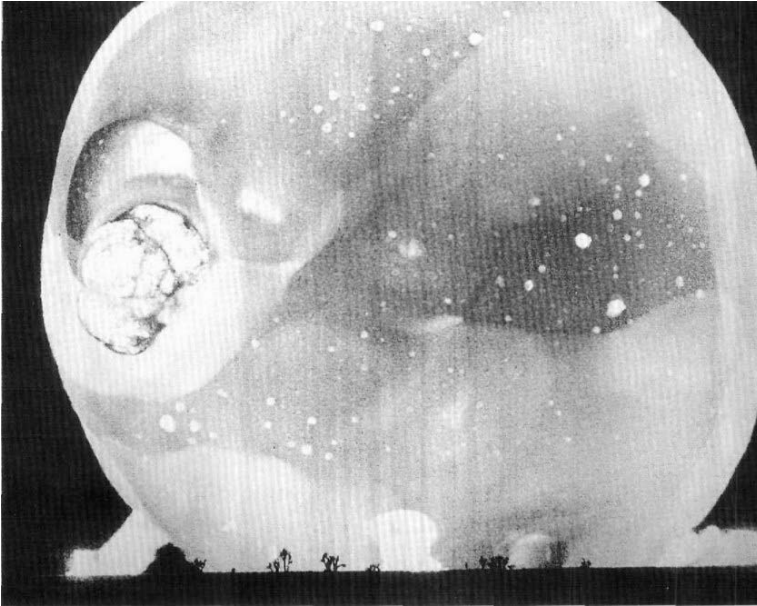


Figure 4: Fireball

Awesome photo of a nuclear fireball (A-bomb), from a photo-rich [Russian site](#). Note Joshua trees about to be consumed.

But I do have room for some post-1954 Turing involvement, as there were many more tests. For instance, England only started their H-tests in 1955. From Wikipedia article, "[Nuclear Weapons and the United Kingdom](#)"

"The detonation by both the US and the Soviet Union of thermonuclear devices alarmed the UK government of Winston Churchill and a decision was made on 27 July 1954 [*a month after Turing's staged "suicide" —R.R.*] to begin development of a thermonuclear bomb, making use of the more powerful nuclear fusion reaction rather than nuclear fission. There was little or no dissent in the House of Commons....The first prototype, Short Granite, was detonated on 15 May 1957 in Operation Grapple, with disappointing results at 300 kilotons of TNT (1.3 PJ), when the target requirement was 1 Mt (4.2 PJ). A further test of Purple Granite yielded less at 200 kilotons. Further testing in 1958 got performance up to the requirement, but none were ever deployed, because the 1958 US-UK Mutual Defense Agreement intervened, making fully developed and Service engineered designs available more quickly, and more cheaply."

What I gather from this is that initially the UK was using their own design for H-bombs. I have Turing in the US as of early in 1955, so it could be that he met Ulam and sold Ulam's design to UK agents. Turing would naturally hit it off with Ulam, as they were both interested in continuous-valued cellular automata.

More info at "[Britain's Nuclear Weapons](#)" site.

Test: Grapple 1/Short Granite

Time: 15 May 1957 (19:37 GMT)

Location: Off Malden Island

Test Height and Type: Air drop, 2400 m

Yield: 200-300 kilotons

Here's a [video of a newsreel](#) of the Short Granite blast in the Christmas Islands near Australia. I'm also partial to the Soviet Tsar Bomba of 1961, the biggest ever. But 1957 and 1961 are a little too late. I'd like to have the novel span only about a year and a half, starting in June, 1954, so I'd like a test in late 1955.

Another useful reference for dates is the [Milestone Nuclear Explosions](#) section of the Wikipedia "Nuclear Weapons Testing" entry. In terms of the [Milestone Nuclear Explosions](#) reference, the best is November 22, 1955, a Soviet test of an H-bomb called [RDS-37](#) in Kazakhstan, also known as Soviet Test #19. It was the Soviet Union's first "true" (staged) hydrogen bomb. Turing has brought them the secret of the 1951 [Teller-Ulam design](#) (credited as Sakharov's "Third Idea" by the Soviets). Possibly Turing had sussed out the secret from the von Neumann and Ulam crowd, and he'd planned to give it to Britain, but then got diverted or kidnapped to Russia. The RDS-37 killed three onlookers. Maybe one was Turing. The skug aliens tank up on the blast and leave, maybe taking Turing or his software with them.

Or see the more exhaustive Wikipedia [List of Nuclear Tests](#). Here I'm liking the [Teapot](#) series of some fourteen A-bomb (not H-bomb) tests in Nevada running from Feb to March 1955. These are the ones where the army had soldiers right next to the blast and built a sample town to see it fall down. The first Teapot shot on February 18, 1955, was called "Wasp," and had a yield equal to about a kiloton of TNT. For this shot, ground forces took part in the notorious [Exercise Desert Rock VI](#) which included an armored task force moving to within 900 meters of ground zero, under the still-forming mushroom cloud. I see Alan in this group.

Tesla Transmission

I found a trove of Tesla papers online at a site called [Twenty-First Century Books](#). Here are some excerpts from Nikolai Tesla's 1927 article "World System of Wireless Transmission of Energy," which appeared in *Telephone and Telegraph Age*, written when he was 69. (See also the Wikipedia article on the [Wardenclyffe tower](#) that Tesla built on Long Island around 1902 with the backing, for a time, of J. P. Morgan.)

"...under certain conditions the current was capable of passing across the entire globe and returning from the antipodes to its origin with undiminished strength. It was a result so unbelievable that the revelation at first almost stunned me. ...

The mode of propagation of the currents from my transmitter through the terrestrial globe is most extraordinary considering the spread of the electrification of the surface ...

it must be understood that the current penetrates deep into the earth and the effects produced on the receivers are the same as if the whole flow was confined to the earth's axis joining the transmitter with the antipode. ...

Perhaps the most wonderful feature is that the energy travels

chiefly along an orthodromic line, that is, the shortest distance between two points at the surface of the globe, and reaches the receiver without the slightest dispersion, so that an incomparably greater amount is collected than is possible by radiations. ...

Another distinction is that my system is based entirely on resonance, while in present practice reliance is placed chiefly on amplification by auxiliary devices generally consisting of various forms of vacuum tubes which have been brought to remarkable perfection. ...

I am anxious to resume the introduction of my "World System" with novel transmitters of great effectiveness and receivers of elementary simplicity. In my apparatus the isochronism is so perfect, and the attunement is sharp to such a degree that in the transmission of speech, pictures or similar operations, the frequency or wavelength is varied only through a minute range which need not be more than one hundredth of one per cent. if desired. Statics and all other interferences are completely eliminated and the service is unaffected by weather, seasonal or diurnal changes of any kind."

Shapeshifting

There seem to be a number of shapeshifters in the SF canon.

Some people at a party told me about Odo in the Star Trek Deep Space Nine series. I looked him up on [Wikipedia](#). "Odo was found adrift ... Since Odo had not yet learned how to morph into a humanoid appearance, he appeared in his natural gelatinous form. Scientists, not sure of what Odo actually was, put him in a container and labeled it *unknown sample*. The ... overseers translated this into their own language as *odo'ital*, which literally means *nothing*."

Following the suggestion of a fan's comment on a blog post of mine, I read a little of Iain Bank's first SF novel, *Concerning Phlebas*, which has a shapeshifter or "Changer" as a character. In this novel, the shapeshifting is quite slow; it takes several days, like a process of biological growth. But I'm going to want the shapeshifting to be fast, like for Plasticman. Something that I *can* use from *Concerning Phlebas* is that a shapeshifter needs to focus fairly steadily on their desired form.

"Time Stubs"

Magical realism about memories of a talking slug, or "skug." And of how my father disappeared. The skug returns, wearing a golden crown.

Character could be like me in grad school. That way I could write about having toddlers—I think about that age group a lot these days from seeing my grandchildren.

And then the story segues into something about branching time.

Suppose there really is only one truly existing path through the branching thicket of possible worlds. The others are only juiceless abstractions. Fine.

My gimmick is that I'll suppose that our branch is not quite a pure jagged line. It *does* very commonly grow a stub out a few seconds (or longer?) past a given branch point, then back up and got to the other branch. There's a continuous line of time but it sometimes loops back a bit and then starts forward on a new tack.

Most people don't notice this, as when time backs up, events run backwards and memories get erased. But our hero or heroine *does* learn to notice. (I'll figure out the gimmick later.)

The backups are very common, in fact they're all but ubiquitous.

How to make this into a fresh and true metaphor for some transreal concern of mine? I would like to argue (by example) against the ignorant and defeatist notion that all possible universes exist. The story should hinge on there being only one or a few really existing worlds.

“Starship Launch”

The high-school brass band played a few numbers, including the Norwegian national anthem and *Happy Birthday*—the musician kids all pale-skinned blondes and redheads. An official made a short speech, a woman in a Norwegian folk dress broke a bottle of champagne against the hull, and we joined a stream of locals filing up the gangplank to look around the huge *Stril Challenger*. And then the ship took off for a little cruise across the fjord and back, although Sylvia and I had gotten off by then—I was unsure about how long the cruise might be. Later, after the passengers came back, we watched as the ship cavorted around the fjord, with smaller launches buzzing around it—I think of the word, “lighter,” used to mean a smaller boat that you use to unload a barge. I like that ships use smaller boats as extensions of themselves. Imagine still smaller shuttle pods emerging from the lighters. A fractal regress of ships.

A great mothership ship with smaller ships circling it—the lighters. And one of the lighters darts down to a boy's house, the lighter appears in the room of our young hero, Gunnar, to take him on a trip. As the lighter carries him off, Gunnar cries out for some precious object that he forgot—and a lower-level lighter the size of a basketball goes back to his room to scoop up the pet soft plastic robot that Gunnar calls a “shoon.”

And then an even lower-level lighter zooms back from that little lighter to get a toy that the shoon treasures, perhaps a snail shell.

And the snail shell is the key to peace with the High Epopt of the Granfaloonian race whom they encounter.

Ulam and the MANIAC Computer

From a [paper](#) on simulating the Fermi-Pasta-Ulam rules (that I myself worked on in my CAPOW software): “The Fermi-Pasta-Ulam problem is named after the numerical experiments first performed by Enrico Fermi, John Pasta, and Stanislaw Ulam in 1954–1955 on the Los Alamos MANIAC computer, one of the first electronic computers. They wanted to understand how a crystal evolves toward thermal equilibrium by simulating a chain of particles coupled by springs.”

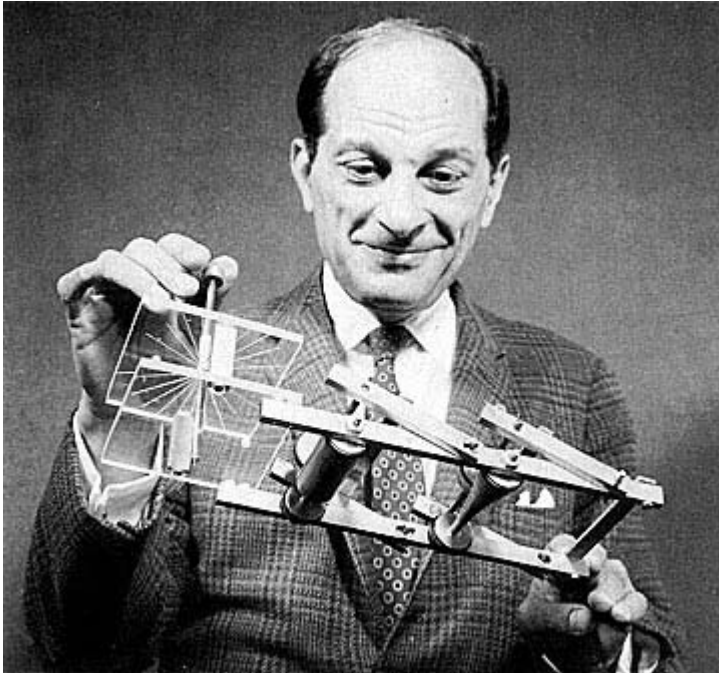


Figure 5: Stan Ulam and Toy

Ulam and some gadget he'd probably made for modeling some physical process.

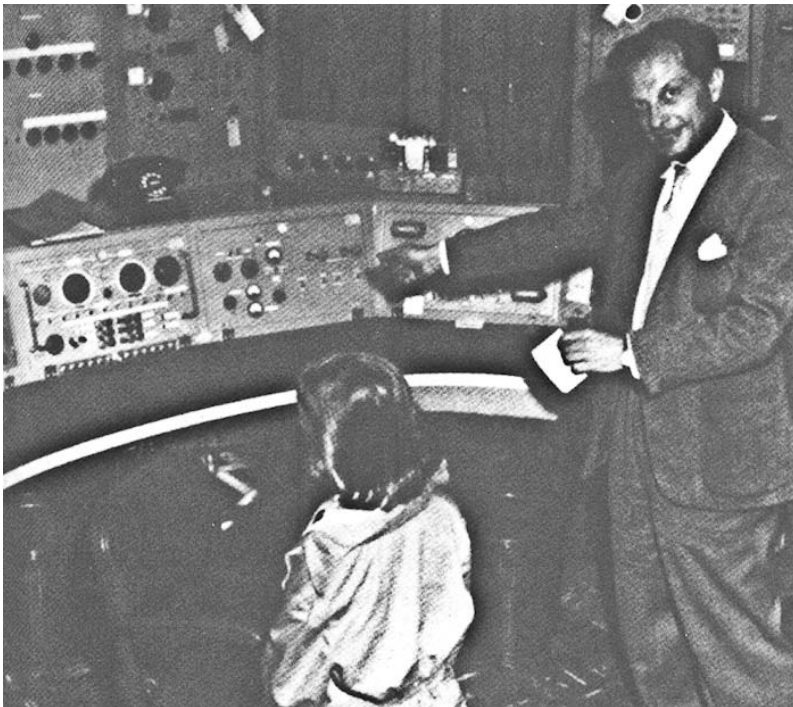


Figure 6: Ulam and MANIAC

Classic photo of Ulam and the MANIAC computer with his daughter Claire. I

first saw this photo in Ulam's autobiography, *Adventures of a Mathematician*. I wrote LANL and got permission to use it as an illo in my *Lifebox* tome.

MANIAC I had a memory of 600 words, storage of 80K, 11KHz speed, and had 2,400 vacuum tubes. The team that programmed MANIAC was led by Stan Ulam (1909-1984). By 1956, Ulam had programmed the machine to [play chess on a 6 by 6 board](#) (leaving out the bishops). Note that computer chess was an interest of Turing's as well—in 1950, Turing wrote the first computer chess program.

Following bio info drawn from [Wikipedia](#) entry on Ulam. Ulam was born in 1909, to a Jewish family in Lwow, Poland. He and his brother made it to the U.S. in 1938. The rest of the family died in the Holocaust. He helped invent the A-bomb and the H-bomb. Worked on the FPU model of nonlinear springs. Was first to speak of the "Singularity". In May, 1958, while referring to a conversation with John von Neumann, he said, "One conversation centered on the ever accelerating progress of technology and changes in the mode of human life, which gives the appearance of approaching some essential singularity in the history of the race beyond which human affairs, as we know them, could not continue."

From Wikipedia article on Teller: "In 1951, in the joint report by Ulam and Teller of March 1951, "Hydrodynamic Lenses and Radiation Mirrors", an innovative idea emerged, and it was developed into the first workable design for a megaton-range H-bomb." Love the title of the paper. It's about using an A-bomb to ignite an H-bomb core—Ulam's idea, then modified by Teller.

In 1954, Teller testified to the House against Oppenheimer, and the other scientists turned against him. I'm not sure if he was still in LANL at that time, but it's possible. Might as well use him as the villain, given his later record of extreme pro-nuke proposals.

Very interesting essay (although somewhat eccentric and possibly unfairly critical) essay by his mathematician friend (?) Gian-Carlo Rota: [The Lost Cafe](#). Rota says Ulam was lazy, didn't like to work out the details, preferred the flash. Was sort of alienated and sarcastic, didn't like authority, felt that ultimately everything was meaningless. Undisciplined. Generous and kind. Ulam didn't get along with Edward Teller, and developed his design for the H-bomb partly in a desire to demonstrate the Teller's original design was wrong. Teller then jumped on Ulam's design and worked on it. Ulam and Teller made a joint application for a patent on the H-bomb! Ulam was John von Neumann's only real friend. Good at rapid order-of-magnitude estimates regarding physical processes. Lived in his own mental world but liked company. Liked getting into new fields and picking off the interesting big results. Often didn't get around to publishing his results, just shared them informally. He had green eyes.

Punch Cards

[Punch cards](#) were used well before electronic computers. 80 column IBM cards were common. They were used in so called unit record machines that would process thousands of the cards, moving them around according to the holes, feeding them in pathways to process data. Some of these machines were also called tabulators. For a prank, one could punch every possible hole in a punch card to create a "lace card" which would inevitably fold during the processing and jam the system.

They could well have used IBM cards for the MANIAC.

Emails from Henry Wessells.

(1) 4/15/2008. I write because I grew up in Paoli, Pa., not too far as the crow flies from the Burroughs complex on Swedesford Road. In fact, downstream from it. It was an area in transition from dairy farms and country to suburbia, late 1950s to late 1970s). I lived there after the period you mention in *Flurb* #5, but I contribute three data which might color your understanding of the place:

(a) During the early 1960s, the farm downstream from us was home to the Philadelphia Folk Festival, where Pete Seeger (among others) played.

(b) During the late 1960s, the steel rolling mill further upstream dumped cyanide and killed all the fish in Little Valley creek. We marched in protest, dumped dead fish on the steps of the factory office (my youngest brother in his stroller pushed by a blonde Finnish au pair girl) and got some news attention...

(c) Because another downstream neighbor is Chubby Checker. [Wikipedia: "Chubby Checker, born Ernest Evans; October 3, 1941, lived in South Philadelphia. By the time he entered high school, learned to play the piano as well as entertain his classmates by performing vocal impressions of popular entertainers of the day."]

(2) 7/3/2008. Recently, I went for a couple of weedwalks along Little Valley Creek (Turing/Burroughs/chubby checker country). The first with my brother Archie, inventor of the weedwalk, weedwalk.com (no photos, though); the second with my mom. I will send a couple of pictures of old meadows overgrown with milkweed, and of the immature blossoms of the milkweed: interesting complexity and tasty, too. Saw a McMansion growing from an 18th c. stone farmhouse, an architectural tumor of unsustainability three or four times the size of the host house. Walking the creek we could see ruined willows, strata of humus and clay and the limestone skeleton of the hills, and a few spots where plant interlopers washed down from industrial park landscaping have taken root among the grasses and nettles and cattails.

And should you need another complexity factor, this town nr. Phila.—Paoli—was named in the 18th c. for a Corsican revolutionary.

(3) 7/15/2008. Herewith some photos of a meadow on Little Valley creek, Paoli, Pa., downstream from the Burroughs (now Unisys) plant. Milkweed plants, with immature blossoms, and a close-up of the edibles. Very fractal.

San Francisco as a Gay Mecca

From *Wikipedia*. "World War II saw a jump in the gay population when the US military actively sought out and dishonorably discharged homosexuals. From 1941 to 1945, more than 9,000 gay servicemen and women were discharged, and many were processed out in San Francisco."

Other Turing Stories

Admittedly my remarks here are steeped in what Harold Bloom calls "the anxiety of influence." But here goes.

After my Turing story, "The Imitation Game," came out, the British writer and critic Colin Harvey [remarked](#) that there is a "virtual sub-genre of Alan Turing stories (other writers who've trodden the Turing Path include Greg Bear, Greg Egan, Alan Leonard, Janna Levin and Neal Stephenson)."

The Greg Bear story is “Tangents” from 1986, and doesn’t actually feature Turing, but a person a little like him. I found the tale fairly mournful and drab, although I no longer remember the details.

The Greg Egan story is “Oracle” from 2000. This story is really humorless and didactic, with mini-tutorials on the work by Turing and Gödel. Plus it features, if memory serves, the plot turns on a rather nasty damsel-in-distress situation, and the ultimate science gimmick has to do with quantum computation and multiple universes rather than Turing’s work.

Janna Levin’s novel, *A Madman Dreams of Turing Machines*, from 2006, features Turing and Gödel as characters and is written and narrated, as I recall, from the viewpoint of a woman mathematician/author, which makes the word “Madman” in the title confusing and is a drag right off the bat. I started this novel and set it aside, or threw it across the room—but maybe I should go back and finish reading it.

Alan Turing appears in Neal Stephenson’s novel *Cryptonomicon* which, I blush to confess, I didn’t finish reading either, as it was so long and complex. I myself am Rudolf “Rudy” von Bitter Rucker...when I met Neal Stephenson a year or two ago he seemed very interested in my name, and I didn’t know why. And now I notice in a plot summary, that in *Cryptonomicon*, Turing is the sometime lover of a character called Rudolf “Rudy” von Hacklheber. Maybe I need to have another go at reading this novel, too.

I can’t track down the Alan Leonard story or novel.

My mathematical theologian friend Barry sent me a relevant link to a blog with the info, [Religion, Sets and Politics](#), from which I quote:

“Charles Stross has written an amusing novel THE ATROICTY ARCHIVES in which Turing figures in the background. The essential premise is that Turing did not commit suicide but was assassinated by the British government to cover up far scarier discoveries he made (so presumably the Brits still owe Turing an apology in that universe). In that novel, mathematics is deeply connected to magic and thinking about certain theorems can accidentally lead to summonings of Cthulhu and other eldritch horrors. Turing was killed for discovering a series of powerful theorems including a proof that $P=NP$ which if invoked improperly could destroy our universe.”

I liked this Stross novel, but I don’t really remember that part.

See also the best-selling graphic novel, [Logicomix](#), about the history of researches into the foundations of mathematics. I’ve flipped through it in a store, but, as a professional logician, I perhaps inevitably found it naïve and simplistic.

Samuel Steward

This is drawn from a review of *Secret Historian: The Life and Times of Samuel Steward, Professor, Tattoo Artist, and Sexual Renegade*, by Justin Spring, 2010. A quote from Steward’s journals appears in the book:

“The tattoos I have on me ally me with the herd, the toughs, the lower-class, the criminal—and I like it not only sexually but because that world spits in the face of the one which has contained me thus far.”

This seems like something that my Turing character might think or say. Possibly he could even become a tattoo artist in SF. Seward himself, once an English professor, ran two tattoo parlors, first one in San Francisco, mostly for sailors, then one on San Pablo Ave. in Oakland that catered to the Hells Angels. [Wikipedia info](#).

Emails from Peter Norvig

Peter Norvig, now at Google, is known for co-authoring a standard textbook on AI, which I used in teaching a class at SJSU. I had Turing come give a guest lecture to my class, and later he and I had a bit of email. He was the person who initially suggested I write an alternate or hidden history involving Alan Turing. His first email:

May 2, 2006: So here's a proposal: let's write together the story that Eugene Miya once suggested to me: what would happen if someone had told Alan Turing in 1953 or so "Alan, you really should move to San Francisco" (or maybe New York, but see <http://ask.yahoo.com/20060502.html> for the SF angle). We'd have affairs with Ginsberg and Cassady, and work out the programming language, OS, and applications that Turing would produce.

The same day, I wrote him that I was intrigued by the idea: "That's an intriguing idea. Turing was born 1912, so he would have been about 40 then. Would be funny if he hooked up with Neal Cassady or some more peripheral Beat. Chanting with Alan G. Would be great if he shot up heroin or took yage with William Burroughs. Alien intelligent goo. Hallucinated visions of endless machines. Gayness as a hidden state." But I also said that I didn't think it would be practical to co-author a story with someone who wasn't in fact a professional SF writer.

On June 6, 2006, I was still thinking about Turing, and I wrote the following to Norvig:

I was thinking that I might in fact find a use for an aspect of your Turing idea in a novel I'm working on. This wouldn't be a collaboration with you, but if you don't mind my using the idea, I'd mention you in the Acknowledgements.

My idea is that in my novel, POSTSINGULAR, we get into touch with a parallel world that's very similar to ours although their history diverged in the late 1940s. Rather than developing computers, they instead developed a gimmick they call "lazy eight" which amounts to being in touch with a ubiquitous point at infinity, resulting in teleportation, telepathy and endless Nature-based extra memory for everyone.

And I've been puzzling over how they might have gotten hold of the lazy eight crystal or mantra or whatever it is that seeds the change. I had been thinking to have it brought by a UFO, but then I thought it better if some person came up with it --- I'm thinking a guy is facing a prison term or execution and invents lazy eight to save himself.

Ok, fine, so who is the guy? And that's when I remembered your notions about Turing. He realizes his days are numbered, makes the lazy eight meditative head trick, teleports to SF. The lazy eight method is viral, it spreads all over the planet on its own like Vonnegut's Ice-Nine. I wouldn't actually have that

much about Turing, probably just a page, using this more as background kicker.

Would this be okay with you? As said, I'd happily acknowledge your help in a note to the novel --- the fact that I know you can only make me look smarter and more legit!

Norvig said that would be fine, and he invited me to give a talk at Google in any case. On April 10, 2008, I sent him a copy of my story, "The Imitation Game." And on May 15, I finally did give a Tech Talk at Google, where I read part of my novel *Postsingular*. I did not in fact acknowledge Norvig in *Postsingular* because, in the end, Turing isn't in that book, but I will remember Peter if and when *The Turing Chronicles* ever comes out.

Andrew Hodges, Alan Turing: The Enigma

This is a 500+ page biography, first published in 1983. The edition I have is the Walker and Company paperback of 2000. I read parts of the final chapter when I was writing "The Imitation Game" story in 2006, but in the summer of 2010, I finally read the whole book through, marking passages that seemed potentially useful for *The Turing Chronicles*. I'm simply going to copy in the most useful bits here, indicating the page numbers in my edition, along with the year, and Turing's approximate age (he was born on June 23, 1912.)



Figure 7. Turing Smiling.



Figure 8: Alan Turing and Christopher Morcom in 1928

As well as the book, there are notes and photos in Hodges's [online Turing scrapbook](#).

p. 34, 1927, age 15. Alan had first noticed Christopher Morcom early in 1927, and had been very struck by him ... he was a year older than Alan and a year ahead in school but fair-haired and slight. ... He shared with Alan a passion for science ... This was first love, which Alan himself would come to regard as the first of many for others of his own sex. It had that sense of surrender ('worshipped the ground he trod on'), and a heightened awareness, as of brilliant color bursting upon a black and white world. ('He made everyone else seem so ordinary.') At the same time, it was most important that Christopher Morcom was someone who took scientific ideas seriously.

p. 41, 1929, age 17. [Alan writing of Christopher:] "There were times when I felt his personality particularly strongly. AT present I am thinking of an evening when he was waiting outside the labs, and when I came too he grasped me with his big hand and took me out to see the stars."

p. 42, 1929, age 17. [Alan in a letter:] "Evidently I looked rather lonely as Chris beckoned to me (mostly I think with his eyes) to walk beside him. Chris knew I think so well how I liked him, but hated me showing it." "We never went on bicycle rides together. I think perhaps Chris was rather ragged about me at the house."

p. 45, 1930, age 18. Christopher was taken ill ... after six days pain, at noon on Thursday 13 February 1930, he died.

p. 47, 1930, age 18. Grieving heavily, Alan writes a number of letters to Morcom's mother. "I would be extremely grateful if you could find me sometime a little snap-shot of Chris, to remind me of his example and of his efforts to make me careful and neat." "I feel sure that I shall meet Morcom again somewhere and that there will be some work for us to do together, and as I believed there was for us to do here."

p. 49, 1930, age 18. Each night before going to sleep, Alan spent a long time looking at the photograph [of Chris].

p. 50, 1930, age 18. [Mrs. Morcom gives Alan some of Chris's things, and Mrs. Turing writes a thank you note.] "...he is treasuring with the tenderness of a woman the pencils and the beautiful star map and other souvenirs you gave him..."

p. 62, 1932, age 20. [At Cambridge now.] ...found him [Alan] full of ideas, talking excitedly in his own strange way, in which his voice went up and down in pitch rather than in stress. ... Kenneth [Harrison], who also [like Christopher] had fair hair and blue eyes, and who also was a scientist, had become a sort of reincarnation of his first great flame. One difference, however, was that Alan did speak up for his own feelings as he would never have dared with Christopher.

p. 63-64, 1932, age 20. Alan went to stay at the Clock House [the Morcom family home] again, this time with his father. Alan slept in Christopher's sleeping bag ... On the last evening, Alan asked Mrs. Morcom to come and say goodnight to him as he lay in Christopher's place in bed. The Clock House still held the spirit of Christopher Morcom. But how could this be? *Could the atoms of Alan's brain be excited by a non-material 'spirit', like a wireless set resonating to a signal from the unseen world?*

[Alan writes up his thoughts on this kind of question in a little essay for Mrs. Morcom, entitled, "Nature of Spirit". He's influenced by Eddington's notion that free will hinges on our mind taking advantage of quantum uncertainty to flip certain atomic "decisions" one way or the other.] We have a will which is able to determine the action of the atoms probably in a small portion of the brain, or possibly all over it. ... I think that spirit is really eternally connected with matter but certainly not always by the same kind of body...when the body dies the 'mechanism' of the body holding the spirit is gone, and the spirit finds a new body sooner or later perhaps immediately. ... why we have bodies at all [is because] the body provides something for the spirit to look after and use.

p. 65, 1932, age 20. [Alan]...believed

p. 94, 1935, age 23. If they [undergraduates] came to his rooms hoping for a glimpse of King's [college] eccentricity, they were sometimes rewarded, as when Alan say Porgy the teddy bear by the fire, in front of a book supported by a ruler, and greeted them with "Porgy is very *studious* the morning."

p. 132, 1936, age 24. "[His friend] Maurice taught him to drive, which was not an easy task, for Alan was ham-handed and not good with machines. Once he nearly reversed into the ... Lake and drowned them both."

p. 156, 1939, age 27. "...his room...was liable to be found with a sort of jigsaw puzzle of gear wheels across the floor...It was certainly far from obvious that the motion of these wheels would say anything about the regularity with which the prime numbers thinned out, in their billions of billions out to infinity. Alan made a start on doing the actual gear-cutting..."

p. 193, 1940, age 28. “[Worried about an invasion] He bought two [silver] bars worth about £250, and wheeled them out in an old pram to some woods.... One was buried under the forest floor, the other under a bridge in the bed of the stream. He wrote out instructions for the recovery of the buried treasure and enciphered them. ... The clues were stuck in an old benzedrine inhaler and left under another bridge.” [And later he could never find the ingots.]

p. 205, 1941, age 29. With reference to his work designing machines for decrypting the German Enigma code “The business of getting to the heart of something, abstracting its meaning, and connecting it with something that worked in the physical world, was exactly what he had been searching for before the war.”

p. 207, 1941, age 29. For a about six months (from spring to fall) Turing was engaged to a woman mathematician and fellow cryptanalyst named Joan Clarke. “...when Alan said that he could talk to her as to a man, it certainly did not mean that the had to be solemn. It was the other way round: he was free to be himself, and not conventionally polite..The joy, or the difficulty, was that they enjoyed so easy a friendship. The were both keen on chess...One day he and Joan were...looking at the daisies [and finding Fibonacci numbers in their patterns].”

p. 209, 1941, age 29. “Trousers held up by string, pyjama jacket under his sports coat... There was his voice, liable to stall in mid-sentence with a tense, high-pitched ‘Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah’ while he fished, his brain almost visibly laboring away, for the right expression, meanwhile preventing interruption. The word, when it came, might be an unexpected one, a homely analogy, slang expression, pun or wild scheme or rude suggestions accompanied with his machine-like laugh; bold but not with ... coarseness ...but with the sharpness of one seeing it through strangely fresh eyes. ... Joan said [his age] should be [recorded as] ‘Age 16.’”

p. 232. 1942, age 30. Turing joined the Home Guard so he could learn to shoot. “[Turing] had to complete a form, and one of the questions on this form was: ‘Do you understand that by enrolling in the Home Guard you place yourself liable to military law?’ Well, Turing, absolutely characteristically, said: There can be no conceivable advantage in answering this question ‘Yes’ and therefore he answered it ‘No.’ ... And ... he was duly enrolled, because people only look to see that these things are signed at the bottom.” He learned to shoot, but he refused to attend parades, and the apoplectic chief officer confronted him, and Turing said, “You know, I rather thought this sort of situation could arise...If you look at my form you will see that I protected myself against this situation.” He’d decided on the “optimal strategy if you had to complete a form of this kind. So much like the man all the way through.”

p. 249. 1943, age 31. “acquaintances at Bell Labs complained of Alan giving no sign of recognition or greeting when he passed them in the halls.... ‘You know at Cambridge,’ he said, ‘you come out in the morning and it’s *redundant* to keep saying hallo, hallo, hallo.’ He was too conscious of what he was doing, to slip into conventions without thinking.”

p. 249. 1943, age 31. He liked Greenwich village. “He said, ‘I’ve spent a considerable portion of time in your *subway*. I met someone who lived in your *Brooklyn* who wanted me to play *Go*. ... I had a *dream* last night. I dreamt I was talking up your Broadway carrying a flag, a *Confederate* flag. One of your *bobbies* came up to me and said: See here! You can’t do that! And I said Why *not*? I fought in the *War Between the*

States.’ Alan’s curious English voice, like [a] system encoding information via frequency rather than by amplitude, made a vivid impression on his ... colleagues.”

p. 251. 1943, age 31. “His high-pitched voice ... stood out above the general murmur of well-behaved junior executives ... Then he was suddenly hear to say: ‘No, I’m not interested in developing a *powerful* brain. All I’m after is just a *mediocre* brain, something like the President of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company.”

p. 252. 1943, age 31. Riding the ship from New York back to England, “...he spent his time studying a twenty-five-cent handbook on electronics, the *RCA Radio Tube Manual*, and invented a new way of enciphering speech.”

p. 265. 1943, age 31. “Alan was particularly good at taking some quite elementary problem and showing how some point of principle lay behind it—or conversely, illustrating some mathematical argument with an everyday application...It might be [for instance] wallpaper patterns for an argument about symmetries. His ‘paper tape’ in his [seminal monograph on] *Computable Numbers*, had the same flavor, bringing an abstruse branch of logic down to earth with a bump.”

p. 266. 1944, age 32. “With holes in his sports jacket, shiny grey flannel trousers held up with an ancient tie, and hair sticking out at the back, he became the cartoonist’s ‘boffin’—an impression accentuated by his manner of practical work, in which he would grunt and swear as solder failed to stick, scratch his head and make a strange squelching noise as he thought to himself, and yelp when shocked by the current that he forgot to turn off before soldering the joints in his ‘birds nest’ ... of electronic valves.”

p. 278. 1944, age 32. “Alan was also able to have the apple that as a rule he would always eat before going to bed ... and might be seen ... burrowing around for mushrooms... He particularly relished the name of the most poisonous of all, the Death Cap or *Amanita phalloides*. He would roll the name off his tongue with glee, and they would all search for it, but they never found a specimen.”

p. 281. 1944, age 32. “...just as when a little boy—if he though that someone else had cheated or hanged the rules, he would storm out and slam the door. Such behavior also typified his dealings with authority...”

p. 285-286. 1945, age 33. Working on a system named Delilah, for encrypting audio transmissions of speech, he developed what we would now call a chaotic but deterministic multivibrator circuit for generating reproducible noise patterns for encrypting the sounds. “He hated the showmanship that was required in negotiating for equipment. It was forever his bitter complaint that more adept players—‘Charlatans,’ ‘Politicians,’ ‘Salesmen’—would get their way not through expertise but through clever talk. He ... tended to expect reason to prevail as if by magic.”

p. 287. 1945, age 33. When “the Delilah actually worked—that was the joy of it, for all its deficiencies. Alan had created a sophisticated piece of electronic technology out of nothing, and it worked. ... Alan’s braces [suspenders] burst. Harold Robin, the chief engineer of the organization, produced some bright red cord from an American packing case. Alan used it every day thereafter as his normal way of keeping his trousers up.”

p. 290. 1945, age 33. “The world had learned to think big, and so had he ...[now] he wanted ‘to build a brain.’”

p. 308. 1945, age 33. Turing can be compared to the thinker Edward Carpenter who wrote, “...there were only two things really worth living for—the glory and beauty of

Nature, and the glory and beauty of human love and friendship...what other ultimate object in life *is* there?"

p. 342. 1946, age 34. "[a colleague] found many days when it was better to keep out of the way of the now somewhat isolated 'creative anarchy' that was Alan Turing. 'Likeable, almost lovable ... but some days depressed,' he appeared; his mercurial temperament and his emotional attitude to his work showing clearly."

p. 342. 1946, age 34. "...he distinguished himself by fainting when he grazed himself shaving. He had told Don long before about this reaction to blood..."

p. 363. 1947, age 35. "His whole enterprise was motivated by a fascination with ...an understanding of the magic of the human mind. ... 'In working on the ACE [computer] I am more interested in the possibility of producing models of the action of the brain than in the practical applications of computing.'"

p. 372. 1948, age 36. "Alan had told [his mathematician friend and confidant] Robin [Gandy] that, 'Sometimes you're sitting talking to someone and you know that in three quarters of an hour you will either be having a marvelous night or you will be kicked out of the room.' ... To the fastidious [Alan's] open-necked, shabby, breathless immediacy came as messy and coarse, though there were redeeming features; he could put on a roguish charm...and besides his piercing blue eyes he had thick, luxuriant eyelashes and a soft-contoured nose. ... Sometimes he struck lucky."

p. 372. 1948, age 36. Alan attended a talk by Wilkes, who was designing a rival computing system: "Afterwards he meanly said, 'I couldn't listen to a *word* he said. I was just thinking, how exactly like a *beetle* he looked.'"

p. 378. 1948, age 36. "He was ... fascinated by the fact that a machine ... could be perfectly deterministic at one level, while producing something apparently 'random' at another. It gave him a model for reconciling determination and free-will."

p.428-429. 1950, age 38. Alan had bought a house in Wilmslow near Manchester by now. He was turning away from computers. While working towards his paper on morphogenesis. "...somehow brains came into being every day...how did anything know how to grow?...Alan ... thought about embryology all the time...The greatest puzzle was ... how biological matter could assemble itself into patterns... enormous compared to the size of the cells."

p. 435. 1950, age 38. Biologist J. Z. Young recalled his conversations with Alan. "...there was his rather frightening attention to everything one said. He would puzzle out its implications often for many hours or days afterwards. It made me wonder whether one was right to tell him anything at all because he took it all so seriously."

p. 439-440. 1951, age 39. One of Alan's colleagues, Jefferson, described Alan as "'a sort of scientific Shelley,' Apart from the obvious similarities, Shelly also lived in a mess, 'chaos on chaos heaped of chemical apparatus, books, electrical machines, unfinished manuscripts, and furniture worn into holes by acids,' and Shelley's voice too was 'excruciating; it was intolerably shrill, harsh, and discordant.'" He had a "wince-inducing, mechanized laugh." His work on mathematical simulations of pattern formation on animals as "waves on cows and waves on leopards."

p. 444-445. 1951, age 39. Alan's rooms had, "the great muddle of pots and pans full of weeds and smelly mixtures, in which Alan was pursuing his desert island hobby, seeing what chemicals he could make out of natural materials, and in particular doing some electrolytic experiments." He was running computer simulations of his differential

equations, calculations that ran overnight, and “...usually he could be expected to emerge in the morning waving around print-outs to anyone who was around—‘giraffe spots,’ ‘pineapples’ or whatever—and then go back to sleep until the afternoon.”

p.462. 1952, age 40. Alan was charged with Gross Indecency after telling the police he’d had sexual encounters with a young man he’d met in the street. Alan had gone to the police as one of the young man’s friends had subsequently robbed Alan’s house. Alan was not overly concerned about being exposed as homosexual. “...he did not wish to be accepted or respected as the person he was not. He was likely to drop a remark about an attractive young man, or something of the kind, on a third or fourth meeting with a generally friendly colleague. To be close to him, it was essential to accept him as a homosexual; it was one of the stringent conditions he imposed.”

p.462. 1952, age 40. Alan’s brother advised Alan to plead guilty, given that he’d already made a self-incriminating statement to the police. “He though Alan had been a ‘silly ass’ to go to the police about the burglary, and that everything he had done showed his naiveté about the world outside the intellectual elite.” Among his colleagues, “There was no question of helping or extending sympathy to him—his personality ruled it out. ... he bore his afflictions cheerfully.”

p.472. 1952, age 40. So Alan pleads guilty, and they give him a year’s probation plus some crackpot “organo-therapy,” which involved injecting him with estrogens (intended to reduce his libido but now, oddly, a therapy often used by men planning a sex-change). In a after the trial, Alan writes, “The day of the trail was by no means disagreeable. Whilst in custody with the other criminals I had a very agreeable sense of irresponsibility, rather like being back at school. The warders were rather like prefects. I was also quite glad to see my accomplice again, though I didn’t trust him an inch.”

p.472. 1952, age 40. “A further consequence which for another person might have been major, but which for Alan had little significance, was that, with a criminal record of ‘moral turpitude,’ he was henceforth automatically barred from the United States.”

p.480. 1952, age 40. He showed his friend “Don the diffraction pattern that appeared when looking at the [train] station lights through his handkerchief.”

p.480. 1952, age 40. “...if his computer days were over, this did not mean the end of his underlying interest in the human mind.” He began seeing a Jungian psychoanalyst, hoping to integrate thinking and feeling and, “to apply intelligence to himself; to look at his own system for the outside like Gödel [in his incompleteness theorem], and break his own code...”

p. 448. 1953, age 41. Working with his therapist, Alan wrote an unfinished science fictional story about a gay scientist who’s known for some aerospace device known as Pryce’s Buoy [cf. the Turing Machine]. “He would walk round the shops...until he saw something which took his fancy, and then think of some one of his friends...who would e pleased by it. It was a sort of allegory of his method of work (though he didn’t know it0 which depended on waiting for inspiration.” See the these pages in the [Turing Archive](#); note that to access these pages you have to click through a screen accepting the terms of use. Here’s another quote I found there:

“Alec had been working rather hard two or three weeks before. It was about interplanetary travel. Alec had always been rather keen on such crackpot problems, but although he rather liked to let himself go rather wildly by appearing on the Third

Programme when he got the chance, when he wrote for technically trained readers his work was quite sound, or had been when he was younger. This latest paper was real good stuff, better than he'd done since his mid twenties when he had introduced the idea which is now commonly know as 'Pryce's buoy.' He always felt a glow of pride when the phrase was said."

p.483-484. 1953, age 41. In a letter to his friend Robin, "I've got a shocking tendency at present to fritter my time away in anything but what I ought to be doing. One thing I've done is to rig the room next [to the] bathroom up as electrical lab." He called his lab the "nightmare room." "In this 'laboratory' he was able to do 'desert island' experiments of an electrolytic kind... He would use coke [or coal] as electrodes ... and weed juice as a source of oxygen . He liked to see how many chemicals he could produce, starting from common substances like salt. Later, to pass an afternoon with a friend, he'd try to concoct a non-poisonous weed killer and sink cleaner from natural ingredients.

p. 484. 1953, age 41. In his letter to Robin Alan also said "Went down to Sherborne [his old boarding school] to lecture to some boys on computers. Really quite a treat in many ways. They were so luscious, and so well mannered, with a little dash of pertness, and Sherborne itself quite unspoilt."

p.483-484. 1953, age 41. "In a far more complex and more affluent Britain, the boundaries of official and unofficial ideas would become eels clear. An outsider, and intellectual beatnik like Anal Turing, might find more room to breathe."

p. 492-495. 1954, age 41. "The waves of inspiration had come only once every five years... the Turing machine in 1935, naval Enigma in 1940 [cracking the Germans' code], the ACE [computer design] in 1945, the morphogenetic principle in 1950." In 1954, he was working on another morphogenesis paper, on the so-called "word problem" of mathematical logic, and some physically applicable mathematics called the "spinor calculus."

p. 496. 1954, age 41. On a seaside excursion with his therapist's family, Alan visited "the Gypsy Queen, the fortune-teller...When he came out, he was white as a sheet, and would not speak another word as they went back to Manchester on the bus." On June 7, 1954, just short of his 42nd birthday, Turing killed himself.

p. 508. Postmortem. "In Alan Turing's case the questions [about his death] were not obvious, but precisely because the field of his expertise [code-breaking] was even more closely guarded than that of nuclear weapons." Turing's "iconoclastic originality had been acceptable in the brief period of creative anarchy...required to solve the unsolvable Enigma [code]. But by 1954 a very different mentality prevailed." Speaking of some of his papers left at home, Alan told his mother the "document is 'unclassified' (an idiotic word of American origin meaning 'not in the least secret...")"

p 516. Postmortem. "Turing never truly belonged to the confines of the academic world. His scattered efforts to appear at home in the upper-middle class circles to which he had been born stand out as particularly unsuccessful...." He had a "disdain for the more trivial functions of academic life" and a "mixture of pride and negligence with which he regarded his own achievements."

p. 518. Postmortem. "he was disconcerting in his rapid changes of mood, between forcefulness and naiveté, bristling with silent fury, but then breaking out in earnest charm."

“Bomb” by Gregory Corso

Published as a broadside by City Lights, 1958.

Budger of history Brake of time You Bomb
Toy of universe Grandest of all snatched sky I cannot hate you
Do I hate the mischievous thunderbolt the jawbone of an ass
The bumpy club of One Million B.C. the mace the flail the axe
Catapult Da Vinci tomahawk Cochise flintlock Kidd dagger Rathbone
Ah and the sad desparate gun of Verlaine Pushkin Dillinger Bogart
And hath not St. Michael a burning sword St. George a lance David a sling
Bomb you are as cruel as man makes you and you're no crueller than cancer
All Man hates you they'd rather die by car-crash lightning drowning
Falling off a roof electric-chair heart-attack old age old age O Bomb
They'd rather die by anything but you Death's finger is free-lance
Not up to man whether you boom or not Death has long since distributed its
categorical blue I sing thee Bomb Death's extravagance Death's jubilee
Gem of Death's supremest blue The flyer will crash his death will differ
with the climber who'll fall to die by cobra is not to die by bad pork
Some die by swamp some by sea and some by the bushy-haired man in the night
O there are deaths like witches of Arc Scarey deaths like Boris Karloff
No-feeling deaths like birth-death sadless deaths like old pain Bowery
Abandoned deaths like Capital Punishment stately deaths like senators
And unthinkable deaths like Harpo Marx girls on Vogue covers my own
I do not know just how horrible Bombdeath is I can only imagine
Yet no other death I know has so laughable a preview I scope
a city New York City streaming starkeyed subway shelter
Scores and scores A fumble of humanity High heels bend
Hats whelming away Youth forgetting their combs
Ladies not knowing what to do with their shopping bags
Unperturbed gum machines Yet dangerous 3rd rail
Ritz Brothers from the Bronx caught in the A train
The smiling Schenley poster will always smile
Impish death Satyr Bomb Bombdeath
Turtles exploding over Istanbul
The jaguar's flying foot
soon to sink in arctic snow
Penguins plunged against the Sphinx
The top of the Empire state
arrowed in a broccoli field in Sicily
Eiffel shaped like a C in Magnolia Gardens
St. Sophia peeling over Sudan
O athletic Death Sportive Bomb
the temples of ancient times
their grand ruin ceased
Electrons Protons Neutrons
gathering Hersperean hair
walking the dolorous gulf of Arcady
joining marble helmsmen
entering the final ampitheater
with a hymnody feeling of all Troys
heralding cypressean torches
racing plumes and banners
and yet knowing Homer with a step of grace
Lo the visiting team of Present
the home team of Past
Lyre and tube together joined
Hark the hotdog soda olive grape
gala galaxy robed and uniformed
commissary O the happy stands
Ethereal root and cheer and boo
The billioned all-time attendance
The Zeusian pandemonium

Hermes racing Owens
The Spitball of Buddha
Christ striking out
Luther stealing third
Planeterium Death Hosannah Bomb
Gush the final rose O Spring Bomb
Come with thy gown of dynamite green
unmenace Nature's inviolate eye
Before you the wimpled Past
behind you the hallooming Future O Bomb
Bound in the grassy clarion air
like the fox of the tally-ho
thy field the universe thy hedge the geo
Leap Bomb bound Bomb frolic zig and zag
The stars a swarm of bees in thy binging bag
Stick angels on your jubilee feet
wheels of rainlight on your bunky seat
You are due and behold you are due
and the heavens are with you
hosanna incalescent glorious liaison
BOMB O havoc antiphony molten cleft BOOM
Bomb mark infinity a sudden furnace
spread thy multitudinous encompassed Sweep
set forth awful agenda
Carriion stars charnel planets carcass elements
Corpse the universe tee-hee finger-in-the-mouth hop
over its long long dead Nor
From thy nimble matted spastic eye
exhaust deluges of celestial ghouls
From thy appellational womb
spew birth-gusts of of great worms
Rip open your belly Bomb
from your belly outflock vulturic salutations
Battle forth your spangled hyena finger stumps
along the brink of Paradise
O Bomb O final Pied Piper
both sun and firefly behind your shock waltz
God abandoned mock-nude
beneath His thin false-talc's apocalypse
He cannot hear thy flute's
happy-the-day profanations
He is spilled deaf into the Silencer's warty ear
His Kingdom an eternity of crude wax
Clogged clarions untrumpet Him
Sealed angels unsing Him
A thunderless God A dead God
O Bomb thy BOOM His tomb
That I lean forward on a desk of science
an astrologer dabbling in dragon prose
half-smart about wars bombs especially bombs
That I am unable to hate what is necessary to love
That I can't exist in a world that consents
a child in a park a man dying in an electric-chair
That I am able to laugh at all things
all that I know and do not know thus to conceal my pain
That I say I am a poet and therefore love all man
knowing my words to be the acquainted prophecy of all men
and my unwords no less an acquaintanceship
That I am manifold
a man pursuing the big lies of gold
or a poet roaming in bright ashes
or that which I imagine myself to be
a shark-toothed sleep a man-eater of dreams

I need not then be all-smart about bombs
Happily so for if I felt bombs were caterpillars
I'd doubt not they'd become butterflies
There is a hell for bombs
They're there I see them there
They sit in bits and sing songs
mostly German songs
And two very long American songs
and they wish there were more songs
especially Russian and Chinese songs
and some more very long American songs
Poor little Bomb that'll never be
an Eskimo song I love thee
I want to put a lollipop
in thy furcal mouth
A wig of Goldilocks on thy baldy bean
and have you skip with me Hansel and Gretel
along the Hollywoodian screen
O Bomb in which all lovely things
moral and physical anxiously participate
O fairylike plucked from the
grandest universe tree
O piece of heaven which gives
both mountain and anthill a sun
I am standing before your fantastic lily door
I bring you Midgardian roses Arcadian musk
Reputed cosmetics from the girls of heaven
Welcome me fear not thy opened door
nor thy cold ghost's grey memory
nor the pimps of indefinite weather
their cruel terrestrial thaw
Oppenheimer is seated
in the dark pocket of Light
Fermi is dry in Death's Mozambique
Einstein his mythmouth
a barnacled wreath on the moon-squid's head
Let me in Bomb rise from that pregnant-rat corner
nor fear the raised-broom nations of the world
O Bomb I love you
I want to kiss your clank eat your boom
You are a paeon an acme of scream
a lyric hat of Mister Thunder
O resound thy tanky knees
BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM
BOOM ye skies and BOOM ye suns
BOOM BOOM ye moons ye stars BOOM
nights ye BOOM ye days ye BOOM
BOOM BOOM ye winds ye clouds ye rains
go BANG ye lakes ye oceans BING
Barracuda BOOM and cougar BOOM
Ubangi BOOM orangutang
BING BANG BONG BOOM bee bear baboon
ye BANG ye BONG ye BING
the tail the fin the wing
Yes Yes into our midst a bomb will fall
Flowers will leap in joy their roots aching
Fields will kneel proud beneath the halleluyahs of the wind
Pinkbombs will blossom Elkbombs will perk their ears
Ah many a bomb that day will awe the bird a gentle look
Yet not enough to say a bomb will fall
or even contend celestial fire goes out
Know that the earth will madonna the Bomb
that in the hearts of men to come more bombs will be born

magisterial bombs wrapped in ermine all beautiful
and they'll sit plunk on earth's grumpy empires
fierce with moustaches of gold

A Life Full of Holes

Notes on Driss Ben Hamed Charhadi (Larba Lyachi), *A Life Full of Holes*, translated by Paul Bowles, (Grove Press, 1966).

In Morocco, the Arabic word “ouakha” means okay, fine, good luck.

Ginsberg's Journals

Alan Ginsberg, edited by Gordon Ball, *Journals: Early Fifties Early Sixties*, Grove Press 1977.

New York City, March-June, 1952

Alan gets marijuana (“T”) and peyote from a friend, Bill Keck, who says, the sense of God is, “When the universal order seems organized—when everything I see seems to belong to one organism, when everything about me swings, together. ... With T you are observing everything in unison order harmony swinging organized organism—with peyote you are part of it.”

He eats some peyote at his parents house and sits in the backyard writing notes while his relatives visit with the family inside. “...eyes closed toward light leaves in eye a golden glow hue—which darkens when you pass hand over lidded eye. It made me feel like a very transparent sort of organism.” “When the wind rushed through the grass you can see the green grass vibrating on the brown ground.” “The houses around here seem so primitive, with their poor television antennae tacked on to the patched up chimney—” “And I hear relatives’ honking mechanical voices in the house.” “...there’s so much to say from the bottom of the heart—but not say in open—people really can’t stand much reality—or me, hate to think of anyone talking back to me.” “What can you do with such a fucking universe?”

A dream. “...I am in bed with a boy...who covers me over with cloth on which are obscene hieroglyphs, one for each part of my body—they are supposed to act on my skin—while he watches I have sex with hieroglyphs.”

In the Yucatan, Mexico, 1954

He dreams a movie of William Burroughs and reconstructs the dream. “Bill in Europe—but can’t remember the dream O flat horrible reality closing in at morn after night of spectacles...Bill is shadowed by a spy from the future—spy from another dimension in hideous 3rd class train ride—set in background of Europe in the rain and decay...involving cross-passages of time. Fragments of a great ‘routine.’ Bill looks frightened—realizes he’s been followed all along ... Then—great change—a look of weariness & boredom, ennui, powerlessness and resentment. Deenergized. Then rage, a look of great annoyance—He lapses into a kind of insanity ... Fate or the future was after him with its rational inanity—his insanity defeats their plans—Bill still conscious playing the routine. Like the routine which felled him laughing on kitchen floor...in N.Y.”

In Uxmal alone. “Chichén—the main kick was the wild acoustic—somewhere in the middle of all these buildings is a place where you can clap your hands and be heard in heaven.”

“...only intensest writing is interesting, in which whole life direction is poured for profusion of image & care of surface and stipple & and sensual muscle of soul river thought.”

Worrying about my fate again—that a small breeze of nostalgia fluttered in my heart, thinking a moment past I had someone in the room I loved with me—no ghosts—a man of flesh to talk to and hug.”

“Sudden clearing where the sunlite bursts down as a great white shower.”

Visiting on the finca (ranch) of a woman he’s befriended, Karena Shields. “All the Jungle: all these rocky ruins: And suddenly in the ease and lethargy of monthlong guesthood on the ranch the singleminded conception of a vast Unfathomable god—and writing, the gift of writing thought seems like a candle in the wood.”

He thinks about the reporters at U.P. (United Press) “...thinking how feeble & scrawny those reporters are in their nests, thinking they are men of action, all they do is sit up at their typewriters full of sharpness or wiseacre of cynical knowledge of limited situations priding themselves on scrawny specialties of knowledge like Bullfighting or Railroads etc. & drinking at nite, like fat short man of U.P. I spoke to, full of defensive own paltry pride, small lives up in the News building, their whole actual horizon.”

Mar 23m 1953, beautiful written Sketch of Salto de Agua, using many unusual or coined words. “tinred & tile rust roofs” “sparsely dotted thatchroofs on little hill on other side” “vastly armadas of white fragmentary clouds in bright sky” “recurring crow of cocks from this side and that challenging and responding in various cockly hoarse tones as if the existed in a world of pure intuitive sound communicating to anonymous hidden familiar chickensouls from hill to hill.”

That evening he sits on the bridge there, “watching moon move over the hill you can see it rising and follow its destination thru the clear dimension of the sky in a slow circle from hill on one horizon to mountain on other, having the whole sky spread out unbroken but by stars in all 360 directions.” [I saw something like this one night camping alone on a hill top in Big Sur.]

Still in Salto de Agua. “The Kiosk proprietor a civilized looking citizen in a disgusting sort of way—acne and fatso glasses.”

Back on the Shields finca, April 16, 1954, Good Friday. “& palmtrees appearing again in the balmy wind presaging a rain—shifting their fronds in the wind with a dry soft rattle sound, so much like animal hairy windmills—insectlike in fact, like monstrous insects long white bodies encased in scales and at the top conglomerated in the head nerve center all these rattly animal feelers that move lethargically⁹in in the direction of the wind, settling & unsettling as in water.”

“The world Time—Like a great silver wall blocking the sky... One might sit in this Chiapas recording the appearance of time, like painting—the palmtree so much suggesting an animal force spraying up in slow time.”

Dream of walking around New York City with Jack Kerouac. “Impression of the unknown miles of movies & bridges & houses & alien life in Brooklyn, how one could go walking alone (or with others) not to explore but to enjoy & be awed by the vast human scenery just as one goes walking thru mountains in awe. For kicks, not to map the streets.”

Back in California, 1954.

“Of an eternity we have a number of score of years ... I have had several months near joy, and of that perhaps one day doing what I inmost want and of that a minute of perfection.”

On June 17, 1954, he’s staying stays with Neal Cassady and his family in Monte

Sereno, near San Jose, California. He's in love with Neal, mooning over him. "I feel like a strange idiot, standing there among wife & children all to whom he gives needs of affection and attention, aching for some special side extra sacrifice of attention to me—as if like some nowhere evil beast intruding I were competing for his care with his own children & wife and job which seems to occupy energize bore & tire him."

He drafts a poem called "Serenade" with this phrase, "The bomb appeared intolerable, light and radiance, and afterwards the grey world appeared as a ghost."

In Berkeley, Fall, 1955.

He writes some fourteen-syllable haikus.

"The madman
emerges from the movies:
the street at lunchtime."

"The moon over the roof,
worms in the garden.
I rent this house."

Ginsberg's Poem About Joan

This appeared in *Reality Sandwiches* (City Lights Books, San Francisco 1963). I had been reading Burroughs's mentions of this poem in his letters to Allen from Tangier in 1955, and then I found the text online, almost but not quite accurate, and then in *Reality Sandwiches* itself, in our bookcases.

DREAM RECORD: JUNE 8, 1955

A drunken night in my house with a
boy, San Francisco : I lay asleep :
darkness :

I went back to Mexico City
and saw Joan Burroughs leaning
forward in a garden-chair, arms
on her knees. She studied me with
clear eyes and downcast smile, her
face restored to a fine beauty
tequila and salt had made strange
before the bullet in her brow.

We talked of life since then.
Well, what's Burroughs doing now?
Bill on earth, he's in North Africa.
Oh, and Kerouac? Jack still jumps
with the same beat genius as before,
notebooks filled with Buddha.
I hope he makes it, she laughed.
Is Huncke still in the can? No,
last time I saw him on Times Square.
And how is Kenney? Married, drunk

and golden in the East. You? New
loves in the West —

Then I knew
she was a dream : and questioned her
— Joan, what kind of knowledge have
the dead? can you still love
your mortal acquaintances?
What do you remember of us?

She
faded in front of me — The next instant
I saw her rain-stained tombstone
rear an illegible epitaph
under the gnarled branch of a small
tree in the wild grass
of an unvisited garden in Mexico.

Sailing from Tangier to Miami

So Alan can get a ferry to Spain and a bus to Gibraltar pretty easily. I'd hoped he could get on a ship to Miami from there. But the cruise ships don't really go so directly.

By the way, it's only 35 miles as the crow flies from Tangier to Gibraltar. So a somewhat limited telepathic connection could reach that far.

In 1958, the Portuguese line CCN or Companhia Colonial de Navegação ran a "Central American Service" with a ship called Santa Maria that went to Lisbon, Vigo (Spain), Funchal (Island of Madeira), Tenerife (Canary Islands), La Guaira (Venezuela), Curaçao (Antilles), Havana, and Port Everglades (Miami).

I'll put Alan on the Phos, an imaginary Greek tramp steamer that goes from Gibraltar to Madeira to Miami, a distance of 4400 miles, leaving on December 26, 1954. If the ship makes 25 mph, the trip takes 176 hours, or 7.3 days, not even counting the layover in Madeira, so really they shouldn't get there till January 2, but I'm going to round the trip-time down to six days so they'll get to Miami on the evening of Saturday, Jan 1, 1955, which is a more symbolic kind of day to arrive.

For synching up the activities in Florida and Tangier, note that Tangier time is six hours later than Florida's.

I rode on the *Carl Fisser* when I was very young, with my brother and mother, from perhaps New York to Hamburg. I found a picture of it [online](#). Apparently the ship was built in 1951, and is not to be confused with the *Consul Carl Fisser*, which was sunk near Norway in World War II. I was 7 at the time, it was 1953. I don't think there were more than a dozen passengers, maybe fewer.



Figure 9: The Carl Fisser

Willam Burroughs, Jr.

Born July 21, 1947 to Bill Burroughs and Joan Vollmer. So in January of 1955, when Turing comes to Palm Beach, he'd be seven and a half.

Bill shot Joan on September 6, 1951. At that time Billy was 4. It was a bit more than three years before January, 1955.

Billy went to live with his grandparents in Saint Louis, and "they moved to Palm Beach, Florida, in spring 1952," according to an [interview](#) with James Grauerholz. Billy at that time was just under four years old. [Note that the Wikipedia entry on Billy incorrectly had said he was 10.]

William Burroughs Letters to Ginsberg from Tangier

From William Burroughs, *Letters to Allen Ginsberg 1953-1957*, (Full Court Press, New York 1982). Note that some of these letters are also in Oliver Harris (ed.), *The Letters of William Burroughs 1945-1959* (Viking, New York, 1993). Unless otherwise noted, all of the letters excerpted below are from Tangier.

6/24/54. I've been thinking about routine as an art form and what distinguishes it from other forms. One thing ... it is subject to shlop over into "real" action at any time. Do you dig me? I am not sure if I dig myself. And some pansy shit is going to start talking about *living* his art.

6/24/54. I am surrounded by curious Kafkian hostility. A number of people seem to have taken a violent, irrational dislike to me. Especially people who run bars. ... This is *not* imagination, Allen.

8/18/54. What am I doing here, a broken eccentric, a Bowery Evangelist, reading books on Theosophy in the public library—(an old trunk full of notes in my cold water East Side flag)—imagining myself a Secret World Controller in Telepathic Contact with Tibetan Adepts ... Could I ever see the merciless, cold facts on some Winter night, sitting

in the operation room white glare of a cafeteria—NO SMOKING PLEASE—See the facts and myself, an old man with the wasted years, behind, and what ahead having seen the Facts?”

8/18/54. I am having serious difficulties with my novel. I tell you the novel form is completely inadequate to express what I have to say. I don't know if I can find a form. I am very gloomy as to prospects of publication ... But still I need publication for development. A writer can be ruined by too much or too little success.

10/12/54 (*date uncertain*). Tremendous dream. ... I walk along a dry, white road. There is danger here. A dry, brown vibrating in the air, like insect wings rubbing together. I pass a village of people sleeping, living under mounds—about 2 feet high—of black cloth stitched onto wire frames. ... The vibrating is everywhere now—horrible, dry, lifeless. Not a *sound* exactly; a *frequency*, a wave length. The vibrating comes from a tower-like structure. A Holy Man is causing it. ... I approach [the townspeople] and ask “How much will you give me to kill the Holy Man?” We ... both know money is not the point.

12/13/54. You don't study Zen and then write a scholarly routine, for Christ's sake! Routines are complete spontaneous and proceed from whatever fragmentary knowledge you have. In fact a routine is by nature fragmentary, inaccurate. ... Sex mixed with routines and laughter, the unmalicious, unstrained, *pure* laughter that accompanies a good routine, laughter that gives a moment's freedom from the cautious, nagging, aging, frightened flesh.

2/19/55. I guess all writers suffer from fear of losing their talent, because talent is something that seems to come from outside, that you have no control over.

2/19/55. The novel is taking shape. Something even more evil than atomic destruction is the theme—namely an anti-dream drug which destroys the symbolizing, myth-making, intuitive, empathizing, telepathic faculty in man, so that his behavior can be controlled and predicted ... this drug eliminates the disturbing factor of spontaneous, unpredictable life from the human equation. ... Novel treats of vast ... malevolent telepathic broadcast stations ...

4/20/55. Why do I always parody? Neither in life nor in writing can I achieve complete sincerity ... *except* in parody and moments of profound discouragement.

5/17/55. Just back from 14-day cure in clinic. ... Everything looks sharp and different like it was just washed. Sensations hit like tracer bullets. I feel a great intensity building up, and at the same time a weakness like I can only keep myself *here*, back now in this doughy, dead flesh I have been away from since the habit started.

8/10/55. [Describing a crazy man who keeps accosting him on the street.] In fact there is something curiously sweet about him, a strange, sinister jocularity, as if we knew each other from somewhere, and his words referred to private jokes from this period of intimacy. On Monday, August 1, he ran amok with a razor-sharp butcher knife in the main drag, killed 5 people and wounded four, was finally cornered by the police, shot in the stomach and captured. ... I wonder if he would have attacked me? I missed him by 10 minutes. The whole town is still hysterical.

9/21/55. [He gets very high on opiates and makes a scene at his rooming house.] I could only remember snatches of what had happened, but I do remember wondering why people were looking at me so strangely and talking in such tiresome, soothing voices.

10/21/55. [He's working on the novel he calls *Interzone*, and which will become *Naked Lunch*.] This writing is more painful than anything I ever did. Parentheses pounce on me and tear me apart. I have no control over what I write, which is as it should be.

10/23/55. I am progressing towards complete lack of caution and restraint. Nothing must be allowed to dilute my routines. I know I used to be shy about approaching boys, for example, but I cannot remember why exactly. The centers of inhibition are atrophied, occluded like an eel's ass on *The Way to Sargasso*—good book title. You know about eels?

10/23/55. Yesterday I took a walk on the outskirts of town. Environs of the Zone are wildly beautiful. Low hills with great variety of trees, flowering vines and shrubs, great, red sandstone cliffs topped with curiously stylized, Japanese-looking pine trees, fall to the sea. ... The knife fight potential was ... one facet of that moment, sitting in the café, looking out at the hill opposite, stylized pine trees on top arranged with the economy of a Chinese print against blue sky in the tingling, clear, classic Mediterranean air ... I was completely alive in the moment, not saving myself, not waiting for anything or anybody ... This is it right now ... Actually I am so independent, so fucking far out I am subject to float away like a balloon ...

11/13/55. Arab Café: Sit down and had three words ... just three long words, with Miss Green ... Watching a glass of mint tea on a bamboo mat in the sun, the steam blow back into the glass top like smoke from a chimney ... Some Arabs at a table .. It is unthinkable they should molest me ... Suppose they do? And suddenly they have seized me, and are preparing to castrate me? It can't happen ... must be a dream .. In *Interzone* it might or might not be a dream, and which way it falls might be in the balance while I watch this tea glass in the sun ... The meaning of *Interzone*, its pace time location is at a point where three-dimensional fact merges into dream, and dreams erupt into the real world.

2/26/56. When I was a child I thought you saw with your mouth. I remember distinctly my brother telling me no, with the eyes, and I closed my eyes and found out it was true and my theory was wrong.

9/13/56. [Describing a boy who wants to spend the night at his apartment after sex.] I indicate as tactfully as such a concept can be effectively indicated that I considered this project inconvenient in the widest sense. ... So come along to Europe, Allen, and have a good time with the boys. I can wait. But just remember I'll always be there if you want me ... creak, creak, creak ... [sound of a rocking chair]

9/13/56. And you recall my dream (described in letter of 10/12/54) about the Holy man who was making with a Malignant Telepathic Broadcast? ... I am developing Holy Man concept in [my novel] *Interzone*. Latest Control Concepts: Anyone using telepathy as means of coercion must cut himself off from all protoplasmic contacts. He must always send, but never receive ... He becomes an automaton, a ventriloquist dummy, withers in orgoneless limbo.

9/16/56. I find my eyes straying towards the fair sex. (It's the new *frisson* dearie ... Women are downright piquant.) You hear about these old characters find out they are queer at fifty, maybe I'm about to make with the old switcheroo. What are those strange feelings that come over me when I look at a young [woman], little tits sticking out so cute? Could it be that?? No! No! He thrust the thought from him in horror ... He stumbled

out into the street with the girl's mocking laughter lingering in his ears, laughter that seemed to say "Who you think you're kidding with the queer act? I know you, baby."

10/13/56. Germs got no class to them. And the vilest of them all are the virus ... So bone lazy they aren't even hardly alive yet

10/29/56. My disregard of social forms is approaching psychosis. ... It's like the sight of someone about to flip or someone full of paranoid hate excites me. I want to see what will happen if they really wig. I want to crack them wide open and feed on the wonderful soft stuff that will ooze out. ... Kicks, man, kicks.

William Burroughs's Novel, The Western Lands

The Western Lands, 1987, is the final part of a trilogy, preceded by *The Cities of the Red Night*, 1981, and *The Place of Dead Roads*, 1984.

I realized that I hadn't carefully read these three books—I'd read parts of them thirty years ago when they came out, but I'm not sure I ever read them through. So I decided to read *The Western Lands* fairly closely.

The *Western Lands* of the book's title come from Egyptian mythology about the afterlife. Supposedly, beyond the Land of the Dead, lies a heavenly Elysium: the Western Lands.

Some notes on the book's contents.

(1) Burroughs often goes off on these great riffs like you'd find at the start of a story or novel—such as a detective story, or a science fiction tale, or an exotic adventure novel about explorers in the jungle. He slips smoothly into the genre conventions, but then begins warping them, and ultimately he drops the riff once he's gotten all the juice from it that he wants. He just about never bothers to really wrap up a sequence or bring it to a full conclusion. It's riffs. I especially noticed a lot of great science-fiction twists.

(2) He has this wistful obsession with beautiful young boys—he's always returning to them like a hungry man describing food, or a pauper describing treasure. This gets boring.

(3) Bill loves weapons and violence, but in a kind of twelve-year-old-boy way. His scenes of dismemberment and destruction are like scenes a schoolboy might draw on the flyleaf of his Algebra book. Schematic, energetic, more about the flow of action than about actual pain.

(4) He has great timing, and is often very funny.

(5) Much of the book mingles dreams and reminiscences—an old man is fingering the fabric of his life.

Reading *The Western Lands*, I marked passages that seem in some way relevant to my current novel project, *The Turing Chronicles*, which will include a version of Burroughs as a character. Page references are to the US Penguin paperback edition of 1988.

1. The old writer lived in a boxcar by the river. ... Often in the morning he would lie in bed and watch grids of typewritten words in front of his eyes that moved and shifted as he tried to read the words, but he never could. He thought if he could just copy these words down, which were not his own words, he might be able to put together another book and then...yes, and then what?

7. Can any soul survive the searing fireball of an atomic blast? If human and animal souls are seen as electromagnetic force fields, such fields could be totally disrupted

by a nuclear explosion. The mummy's nightmare: disintegration of souls, and this is precisely the ultrasecret and supersensitive function of the atom bomb: a Soul Killer, to alleviate an escalating soul glut.

22. We are shooting for ... incidents ... [such as riots created by] hogs released from concealed pens and trucks. Do we use actual hogs? Of course not. We tape the riot that would be precipitated by the intervention of hogs. Tapes of previous riots with hog noises cut in played back by fast-moving operatives as our agitators move in behind the tapes to incite the gathering crowds.

23. Allerton was a thin, blond man with an air of arrested age. He seemed to float a few inches above the ground, wafted here and there, a specialized organism at once torpid and predatory.

27. ...the same ancient guild---tinkers, smiths, masters of fire...Loki, Anubis and the Mayan God Kak U Pacat, He who works in fire. Masters of number and measurement...technicians. With the advent of modern technology, the guild gravitated toward physics, mathematics, computers, electronics and photography.

30. Joe the Dead belongs to a select breed of outlaws known as the NOs, natural outlaws dedicated to breaking the so-called natural laws of the universe foisted upon us by physicists, chemists, mathematicians, biologists, and, above all, the monumental fraud of cause and effect, to be replaced by the more pregnant concept of synchronicity.

31. Joe the Dead specializes in evolutionary biology. He dedicates his dearly bought knowledge ... to cracking ... biologic laws: "Hybrids are permitted only between closely related species...to break down the lines...is to invite biologic and social chaos." Joe says, "What do you think I'm going here? Let it come down."

42. Outside a Palm Beach bungalow waiting for a taxi to the airport. My mother's kind, unhappy face, last time I ever saw her. Really a blessing. She had been ill for a long time. My father's dead face in the crematorium. "Too late. Over from Cobblestone Gardens."

46. A rule that is almost always valid: never refute or answer a critic, no matter how preposterous the criticism may be. Do not let the critic teach you the cloth, as they say in bullfighting circles. Never charge the cloth, even if the critic resorts to actual misquotation.

58. And you know the difference between the difference between the air before August 6, 1945 [the atomic bombing Hiroshima] and after that date: a certain security. No one is going to explode the atoms you are made of...with a little strength and skill one could outlive himself...but now...

59. Joe is tracking down the Venusian agents of a conspiracy... It is antimagical, authoritarian, dogmatic, the deadly enemy of those who are committed to the magical universe, spontaneous, unpredictable, alive. The universe they are imposing is controlled, predictable, dead.

59.. More of Kim's irresponsible faggotry: he's going to rewrite history while we wait.

60. Produce the first all-virus rat, it's more efficient—instead of all these elaborate organs we have just cells, an undifferentiated structure ... If he can become Death, he cannot die.

98. [In this scenario, some people worship these hideous huge man-eating centipedes that the call 'pedes for short.] The spectators are completely naked, except for

exquisite centipede necklaces ... eyes dilated to shiny black mirrors reflecting a vile idiot hunger. “We feed with the ‘pede.” *La jeunesse dorée* of Pedeville, obviously.

100. In Picture Puzzle scripts, the glyphs are incorporated into the big picture: an eye, a phallus, water, birds, animals spell out the story. At first it’s just a picture with a special look, then glyphs swim out of clouds and water, pop out of swift lizards...

101. These were troubled times. There was war in the heavens, as the One God attempted to exterminate or neutralize the Many Gods and establish a seat of absolute power.

104. Neferti knows the arts of telepathic blocking and misdirection. You can’t make your mind a blank, for that would be detected at once. You must present a cover mind which the Pharaoh can tune into, and which is completely harmless: “For me the Pharaoh is a God.” You can’t lay it on too thick.

115. It started in the sensational press ... “Ancient Egyptian Papyrus Demonstrates That Life After Death Is Within The Reach Of Everyman.” ... soon the Papyrus starts unrolling very precise instructions for reaching the Land of the Dead. The message falls on ... the parched deserts of mid-America, dead hopeless wastes of despair, a glimmer of light and hope on a darkening earth.

119. [A young man makes an illegal deal with an old shopkeeper.] The old man’s face relaxes into contented depravity. “Of course one must always take the Big Picture...Yes, I have what you need.”

120. The road to the Western Lands is by definition the most dangerous road in the world, for it is a journey beyond Death, beyond the basic God standard of Fear and Danger. It is the most heavily guarded road in the world, for it gives access to the gift that supersedes all other gifts: Immortality. Every man starts the course. One in a million finishes.

132. Horus Neferti turned aside into a Jump Joint, where your dreams come true. Yeah, sometimes. They work like this: you got a scenario in your mind, usually made up of dreams. Sophisticated electronic equipment makes the dream solid. Or rather there are infinite nuances of solidity.

138. Film sequentially presented...now, imagine that you are dead and see your whole life spread out in a spatial panorama, a vast maze of rooms, streets, landscapes, not sequential but arranged in shifting associational patterns. Your attic room in St. Louis opens into a New York loft, from which you step into a Tangier street. Everyone you have ever known is there. This happens in dreams of course.

139. So I levitate fifty feet in the air just for jolly, wouldn’t you?

170. ...the old sets are brittle, falling off the page, waves dash against sea walls, old photos curl and shred. The Veiled Prophet Parade [in St. Louis] floats in the hot summer night...yellow glow of lights, giant leaves, eating pink cake, the cardboard around the edges blowing away in the rising wind, piers crumbling into the sea’s waves, wrecked house, rain, gray sky.

175. There comes that moment in a blinding flash of bullshit when he suddenly sees everything, and the way it all fits together as part of the great whole. He is everything and everything is him, and there is no aloneness, no separation, just endless love. He knows all the questions and all the answers, and there is only one answer so he wrote “Nature Boy” and got cured [meaning got rich]: “The greatest thing you’ll ever learn / Is just to love and be loved in return.”

177. Operation Clipper: Space sailcraft propelled by the blast that reduces planet Earth and its inhabitants to a smoldering cinder. It isn't good PR, not good at all.

179. The house on Pershing Avenue [Burroughs's boyhood home] is well back from the cobblestone street, worn smooth by centuries on the march. He finds his key. The lock turns. Inside he stumbles over a heap of toys...one Christmas after another in layers...a .30-.30 rifle at the top with a box of shells. A crust of broken ornaments crunches underfoot like snow.

186. [After a circus riot, a storm.] On this scene fell a sudden chill, as the temperature dropped fifteen degrees...freezing sweat, and the sky turned bright green around the rim and...the rubes fled the stricken field, screaming down the Midway as the hail pelted down big as hens' eggs, knocking holes in the tents. The elephants trumpeted frantically, and then the sound: like a low-flying jet, as the boxcars were tossed about like matchboxes ...with snakes and freaks and the great tents whipping into the sky...bleachers and seats and rifle ranges, Kewpie dolls and screaming railway cars, caught in a black whirlpool and pulled up into the sky.

188. [Boy explaining why he killed his friend with a shotgun.] ...it was as if, just as I pulled the trigger, making absolutely sure the pellets wouldn't hit Greg...*something moved my arm...*

200. (A leader advises his agents.) This future may not happen, if you all strike at the right time in the right places. So we have a human lifetime with a few moments of meaning and purpose scattered here and there... It is fleeting: if you see something beautiful, don't cling to it... However obtained, the glimpses are rare, so how do we live through the dreary years of deadwood, lumbering our aging flesh from here to there? By knowing that you are *my agent...*

221. Since music is registered with the whole body it can serve as a means of communication between one organism and another. ... Agent attends a concert and receives his instructions. Information and directives in and out through street singers, musical broadcasts, jukeboxes, records, high school bands...

231. [He describes a Valley with a priestly sect called the Corners because they eat a radioactive blue corn.] ...at the age of puberty, the mark of the Corner can be perceived: a look of dreamy despair, the look of a hungry ghosts in time of famine, but a noble resignation that transcends the hunger.

234. [Great crank SF idea.] A photo has no light of its own, but it takes light to be seen. Every time anyone takes a picture, there is that much less light in circulation. Slowly at first, the gathering darkness on the margin of vision...the mutters of voices at the edge of hearing.

236. [Dream narrative] ...a restaurant/hotel/station area, where one is always in doubt about this room reservation and rarely able to find his way back to his room if he leaves it in search of breakfast, which is always difficult to locate.

242. The visions, the glimpses of the Western Lands, exist in space, not time, a different medium and a different light, with no temporal coordinates or recurrences. The medium bears some relation to holograms.

245. [Recurrent dream] He...carried a huge covered basket. He was taking the basket somewhere, but he could not find the place to leave it. And in the dream there was a peculiar horror in wandering on and on through the crowd, and not knowing where to lay down the basket he had carried in his arms so long. ... *A child is dying in the basket.*

[Perhaps this is Bill's son Billy.] And there is no help here...

251. [A man describes visiting an old writer like Burroughs.] I went to see Bill. He told me he'd found a cat... I heard a ... mewling noise, but I couldn't see anything . Then I realized Bill was making the sound without opening his lips ... He opened a can of cat food, all the time making that sound ... he gets down on all four and rubs himself against invisible legs, purring ... Straightens up and put the plate of cat food on the floor. Next thing he gets down on all fours and eats it.

257. [A rain of old memories. Although the date must be slipped, as B was born in 1914, as in Village in the 1940s.] Back in the 1920s, looking for an apartment in the Village. I am wearing a cape and hold a [newly purchased antique] sword in my hand, a straight sword three feet long in a carved wooden sheath with a brass clip.

257. A tree like black lace against a gray sky. A flash of joy.

258. The old writer couldn't write anymore because he had reached the end of words, the end of what can be done with words. ... "Hurry up, please. It's time."

Burroughs, QUEER

A few excerpts from William Burroughs, *Queer*, Viking Penguin 1985. Written in 1951-1952, after he killed Joan on September 6, 1951. Written after *Junky* and before *Yage Letters*.

v. When I lived in Mexico City at the end of the 1940's, it was a city of one million people, with clear sparkling air and the sky that special shade of blue that goes so well with circling vultures, blood and sand—the raw menacing pitiless Mexican blue.

vii. It was sinister and gloomy and chaotic, with the special chaos of a dream.

xvi. What Lee is looking for is contact of recognition like a photon emerging from the haze of insubstantiality to leave an indelible recording in Allerton's consciousness...writing ... is the only way he has of making an indelible record, whether Allerton is inclined to observe or not.

12. A silence peculiar to Mexico seeped into the room, a vibrating, soundless hum.

25. Lee watched the thin hands, the beautiful violet eyes, the flush of excitement on the boy's face. An imaginary hand projected ... caressing his ear, phantom thumbs smoothing his eyebrows, pushing the hair back from his face ... [Lee's] mouth was a little open, showing his teeth in the half-snarl of a baffled animal. ... The limitations of his desires were like the bars of a cage ... his eyes looked out through the invisible bars, watchful, alert, waiting for the keeper to forget the door, for the frayed collar, the loosened bar ... suffering without despair and without consent.

34. ...one thing led to another and I ended up showing him how the cow ate the cabbage...

36. In the dark theater Lee could feel his body pull towards Allerton, an amoeboid protoplasmic projection, straining with a blind worm hunger to enter the other's body, to breathe with his lungs, see with his eyes, learn the feel of his viscera and genitalia.

81. You can smell one of those holy men ten miles downwind on a clear day. Sitting there pulling on his old prayer wheel so nasty.

84. He saw himself desperately rummaging through bodies and rooms and closets in a frenzied search, a recurrent nightmare. At the end of the search was an empty room.

100. Lee...lay down beside Allerton. "Wouldn't it be booful if we should juth

run together into one gweat big blob,” he said in baby talk. “Am I giving you the horrors?”

112. “How did he get down here?” Lee asked. Morgan chuckled. “How did we all get down here? Spot of trouble in our own country, right?”

116. [Trying to get yage from a botanist.] Lee was drunk. He began talking in junky lingo.

133. The Skip Tracer was talking in a voice languid and intermittent, like music down a windy street.

Lines from the Thousand And One Nights

I figure Vassar is a student of this work, also called *The Arabian Nights*.

Notes to Chapter Eleventh: “his description of the world to come, and of paradise with its pavilions and lofty chambers and its trees and fruits.”

The Thief of Baghdad and his flying carpet.

“Presently he met three men quarreling over a magic carpet, a food-producing cup, and a money mill.”

“She pretended to be ill, sent him to find the grapes of Paradise.”

“It was garden with trees of freshest green and ripe fruits of yellow sheen; and its birds were singing clear and keen, and rills ran wimpling through the fair terrene.” --- One Thousand and One Arabian Nights, Vol. 16, by Richard Francis Burton, this style s called cadenced prose, and in Arabic Saj’a, for the cooing of a dove.

“Therewith quoth the Nestling: ‘None save the pious Youth gains boon of Paradise (To whom the Lord doth pardon crime and sin and vice)’”

“The Distracted Slave of Love”

Los Alamos Pueblo Indians

From <http://www.losalamoshistory.org/prehistory.htm>:

“Around 1300 A.D., a second migration of natives from the Four Corners area, including the spectacular towns of Mesa Verde and Chaco Canyon, moved onto the Pajarito Plateau. They introduced the Tewa language and constructed large community dwellings on the mesa tops, from one to four stories high with as many as 600 rooms. They also carved out artificial caves from the canyon walls to create multiple cliff dwellings. Within 50 years of their arrival, the Tewas began to drift away. “

Tewa Language: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tewa_language:

“Tewa is a Kiowa-Tanoan language. Today is spoken in certain pueblos: Nambe, Pojoaque, Ildefonso, Ohka Owingeh, Tesuque.” Maybe I use some of these for names.

Some Tewa speakers live in Hano, Arizona. Hano’s a nice name, too. Popé was a leader of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Write it Popeh. Esther is a modern linguist. Pablita a painter. Puye cliff dwellings. P’ohwhóde is real name of San Ildefonso.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsankawi>. Tsankawi cliff dwellings are in Bandelier. Ancient footpaths in the soft rock called “tuff.” Also called Opuntia.

Popeh, Puye, Hano.

Outline Drafts

I only started curating this section in mid-January, 2011, about a third of the way through the book. I’m changing the outline so drastically that I thought I might as well

save any discarded (but possibly interesting) fragments of possible outlines here.

January 13, 2011. Discarded Outline of 2nd Half.

Chapter 9. The Chase

Alan and Ned skug some of the cops and get away with an impounded car, a 1955 Pontiac Catalina. The skugger-star is defunct so there's no really good tracking information on them for the moment. They go to meet Vassar at the Burroughs family's store, Cobblestone Gardens. Vassar's wife Susan is there. She flirts with Ned. Vassar and Susan want to leave town as much as Alan and Ned. They all get in the car and head west. On the first night, Alan and Ned go ahead and skug the couple, so that now all four of them are skuggers. Susan is into electronic music, and Vassar is into petty crime, pot and skirt-chasing—his mystic quest for the dark furrow. Amazing sex. They're a band of psychic gypsies, stealing stuff from stores. Now the cops get onto them, and they have some cat and mouse, some car chases, some tricks. They skug a few more cops, but there keeps being more of them.

Chapter 10: Evanescence.

It seems like they're trapped. Vassar gets into some weird trip that he's seeing ghosts. Vassar suddenly flies up into the air and disappears. He was helped by a dreamskug, but Alan, Susan, and Ned don't understand what this is. But with the help of the dreamskug, they manage to throw the cops off the track with a set of decoys—they skug some cattle into looking like them and send them off a cliff. And now they change their appearance again. Maybe Susan becomes a man, Alan stays a woman, Ned stays a man, and both the men are fucking Alan, which he loves. Or it could be that Susan is a woman too.

Chapter 11: Ulam's Programmer.

Alan, Ned, and Susan settle in at Los Alamos, lying low. The skugs plan to get some kind of boost from nuclear power or from a nuclear bomb, they want to make a device that will turn everyone on Earth into a skugger at once.. Alan takes advantage of Ned's atomic-energy or Los Alamos connection—recall that he underwent training to be a nuke tech for the Nautilus submarine. Maybe Ned imitates a security guard and helps get Alan, posing as a woman, to get hired to work at Los Alamos as a programmer on the MANIAC, helping Stanislaw Ulam work on nonlinear wave equations for use in creating small, safe, and stable hydrogen bombs. Alan makes progress on the work. He turns Ulam into a skugger.

Chapter 12: Dream Skugs.

Alan and Ulam have fun together, playing with the [MANIAC](#) computer. They are thinking about how kick the biocomputations of the good skuggers up to a new level. They realize the things you see from the corner of your eye are real—the dreamskugs. Burroughs shows up and makes a scene. I guess he has Driss along. Alan advises him on how to resurrect Joan.

Chapter 13: The Apocalypse According to Willy Lee.

Burroughs letters to Alan and Allen. Bill, Ned and Susan go down to Mexico City. They really are going to resurrect Joan. They resurrect the dead Joan Burroughs, driving down to the Panteón Americano in Mexico City and digging up one of her bones for the DNA, and growing her from that. I'm not sure where they'd get her mind and personality from. Maybe from Bill's memories. Or from Joan's ghost, using Alan's new meta-skugger capabilities. The resurrection is a big mistake, Joan is bad news.

Chapter 14-18. ??? Chapter 19: *Pied Piper*. Alan frees Earth of all skugs with a magical miniature H-bomb. Like the Pied Piper he leads the skugs into a higher reality, and goes there himself, with the dream skugs. Chapter 20. *Last Word* Transcript of a Burroughs tape-recording as he ruminates over what it all means.

June 13, 2011. Draft of Outline for Chapter 15: Nonlinear Feedback

[Plan: This chapter is double length, and is broken into short sections that I call POPs. I want it to be like a string of fireworks, a POP for every section. And I think I want a different point of view for each section.]

POP. Susan is creating her acousmatic music in her free time on the MANIAC, and has made friends with the mathematician Stanislaw Ulam. Susan is seeing the ghost of Vassar again, he relates to her music. He is interested in MANIAC, drawn to it like a moth to a lamp, now that Susan is connected to it. In the days while he was of sight he was hanging with the ghosts of the cliff-dwellers in the Bandelier National Monument. Vassar has found a way to “live” in the circuits of the MANIAC, his ghost is haunting the machine.

POP. With Susan’s help, Alan meets Ulam. Quickly Alan impresses Ulam, and is elevated to status as a research assistant. Alan uses his ski-bum-Peter’s ID to get past any potential complications about a security clearance, and Ulam smoothes the way. But Hosty is suspicious of Alan.

POP. Alan now tries to skug Ulam, but he can’t. Ulam has been vaccinated against skugs! He’s that important a figure. But it turns out Ulam actually doesn’t care that Alan’s a skugger, in fact he’s intrigued, he’s been wanting to meet one. And once he realizes he’s dealing with no less a mathematician than Alan Turing, he’s delighted. Turing, after all, has a very strong record in merging mathematics and practical technology.

POP. In his rented home, Alan is happy with Bill and Susan. Susan’s having an affair with Tina and Sue now. Vassar doesn’t mind.

POP. Bill has finished his memoir and has some time on his hands. Bill’s parents want to send Billy out for a visit, and he refuses. Feeling guilty, Bill returns to his obsession with mainlining junk. Burroughs wants to leave, he writes Allen Ginsberg in San Francisco. Neal Cassady shows up to ferry Bill away. Ginsberg is along, too, he wants to linger a bit, he’s hoping to see a bomb test, and Corso is into that too. Cassady did the drive in 30 Benny hours with Gregory Corso along as well, also a skeevy waitress named Dot whom Neal picked up on the road, somewhat to Ginsberg’s chagrin.

POP. Alan and Ulam have fun together, playing with the MANIAC computer. Alan and Ulam are staring at graphical cellular automata emulations of the equations. They’re working on some of the nonlinear wave equations that were used in creating hydrogen bombs. Susan is making some acousmatic sounds driven by these nonlinear rhythms as well.

POP. Cassady gets skugged by Alan and loves it. Like Vassar did, Neal views skugification as a new way to get high. Neal grows two extra dicks and has an orgy with Tina, Susan and Dot. Sue Stook gets mad. Ginsberg is slightly amused.

POP. Ulam says the administrators, egged on by the bellicose Edward Teller, want to develop a high-atmosphere bomb to broadcast a narrowly tuned lethal radiation across the continent, a treatment that supposedly kills skugs and skuggers. They call it the V-bomb for, let us say, vanadium, a toxic metal that’s often found in uranium ore.

The vanadium is playing some part in the reaction. Ulam himself feels the V-bomb is overly risky and, even if it were to work, it would be genocidal. With Alan pretending to support him, he develops a concept of neutralizing the threat, that is, they hope to prevent the skugs from reproducing, and to make humans immune to being skugged. Privately, Alan is thinking of ways to tweak the V-bomb in a different way, that is, so as to generate a skug-ray that converts all humans in to skuggers.

POP. Corso declines getting skugged. He shoots Burroughs up with a massive dose of junk to kill his skug. It works. It nearly kills Bill too, but he bounces back, leathery and stronger than ever. Bill and Corso find Naranjo to score more.

POP. The antiskugger sniffs Alan out, and Hosty comes to arrest him. Vassar and a horde of ghosts of the early Native Americans manage to drive Hosty into a terminal seizure by means of some rapid-fire CA patterns accompanied by acousmatic music. "Watch Only Once," Susan calls the work. Bill and Corso free Roland Gill.

POP. Alan is now a fugitive. He hides out at Naranjo's cousin Ricky's with the Beats.

Unused Passages

Alan and J. Edgar Hoover (Draft)

[I think this is too parodistic, I'd rather keep a lower-key more "realistic" tone. But maybe it could work. Maybe in fact I should dial it up higher, and have Hoover reveal himself to be a skug. Aug 17, 2010.]

Alan affixed a Happy Cloak to J. Edgar. It took the form of a fluffy black dress, with flounces and a very short skirt. Some of the Happy Cloak's tendrils flowed onto Hoover's legs, forming a garter belt, black lace stockings and high heels. Up above, a sheet of tissue from the Happy Cloak crept hood-like up the back of the F.B.I. man's head. The tissues roughed up and branched, taking a shape that resembled, from a distance, a curly wig. Subtler membranes flowed down Hoover's bull-dog face, bedecking his eyes with false lashes and pinkening his cheeks.

Alan led J. Edgar Hoover went into a hotel room with an enormous bed. Controlled by the Happy Cloak, Hoover sat on an upholstered Chippendale chair with with legs crossed.

Two blonde boys that Alan had engaged entered the room.

"Meet Edwina," said Alan, by way introducing Hoover. "She's game for some fun. And Edwina, this is Mark and John. We're going to be making a little video."

The heavy muscles of Hoover's jaws bulged, as if he wanted to shout in fury. But all he managed to say was, "Good evening, I'm pleased to meet you."

Flowing like lava, the Happy Cloak skirt slid up to Hoover's waist and formed itself into a Bible that settled into the G-man's hands. Hoover was in an unmistakable state of erotic excitement. One of the boys pulled on tight, green latex gloves and took the man in hand.

The Happy Cloak around J. Edgar's neck bloomed into a feather boa, half-hiding Hoover's face. He was lavishing stiff-lipped kisses upon the second blonde boy, who stood at his side.

Alan got it all on the video camera that he'd made and, while Hoover watched, he sent the information out as a data stream to parts unknown.

With the Happy Cloak crawled off him, it took a few moments for Hoover's customary personality armor to enclose him. "This has been the most wonderful night of my life," he told Alan in a sandpapery voice. "You'll have no more problems with the government." And then he was gone.

Pratt's Gun

But now the gun turned oddly flexible and deliquesced into a gout of slime that dribbled onto the interloper's melting body.

Burroughs's Story Idea

Science-fiction idea for a virus that infects matter. It's, like, a rune cast by alien cockroaches. The Roach Rune leeches the sparkle of the sun from the waves, the Japanese outlines from the pines, the exquisite curls of steam from my cup of mint tea. These stolen vital forces are channeled into reanimated zombie minions of Harry J. Anslinger patrolling every street corner of Our Cuntree. Vote Insect Trust or die.

The Skug Gun

But now, incomprehensibly, Pratt's gun melted and dripped to the floor next to the man's jellyfish-like form. Could the skug infest metal as well as flesh?

Strunk's weapon fired once into Alan's stomach—it wasn't so loud as a real gun, and the projectile wasn't exactly a bullet. It was more like the gun were an automated syringe, concussively injecting something into Alan's flesh. Reacting faster than thought, Alan pinched off the affected piece of his piece and sent it rolling to the floor. Rapidly his skugly tissues smoothed over the wound.

Wetware Upgrade

I had Neddy saying this to Alan. Not sure if it's plausible that he'd think of that word in 1955. Maybe Alan needs to make up the word himself.

"You have better...wetware?"

Burroughs Family and Bill

As they talked, Alan got the the feeling that the Burroughs parents didn't really know their grown son very well. And when they brought up shared family memories, he found that he could stall for a moment, root around in his memory-compost, and come up with an appropriate response. It was alright to be slow. After Bill's many years of riotous living, Mort and Laura's expectations from their son weren't high.

Alan Leaves A Message Skuglet For Bill

On a last minute impulse, Alan pinched off a thumb-sized fragment of his flesh. A skuglet. Via teep he accessed the skuglet's tiny mind. He told it to lie in wait in a corner of the bedroom closet until it sensed the presence of the real William Burroughs in his parents' home, should Bill choose to come after Alan to pursue their affair. The skuglet could merge with Bill to relay Alan's memories of his trip thus far—and to tell Bill of Alan's secret destination: Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Burroughs and Hopper Guess Alan's Plan

"To an American weapons lab, I'll warrant," says Hopper. "Look within. The skugs are groping towards some some plan involving atomic bombs. In fact—I didn't mention this to you before—one of our agents reports that my hand chose to recruit a *nuclear engineer* to be Turing's shadow. A Ned Strunk?"

Early Draft for a Start of "The Chase" Chapter

In the morning, the Palm Beach cops were busting bums, and Alan and Ned managed to run a scam to get some money. Ned budded off some crawler-hands which infected the cops, skugifying them, making them allies.

Ned and Alan got the cops to give them a car, a nice populuxe model impounded from a pimp. It was a nearly new 1955 two-tone Pontiac Catalina, in cream and red.

Alan and Ned showed up for the meet at Cobblestone Gardens at Monday, noon. At first Vassar was nowhere to be seen. In his place was a dark little woman who introduced herself as Susan Green. She said she was Vassar's wife.

"I'm an avant-garde composer. I'm into tapes and *musique concrete*?"

Alan was intrigued. "I know a lot about tape machines," he said.

"I'm happy to meet you two," said Susan. "You're terribly attractive, Abby and Ned. We might be able to make a go of this.

"How do you mean?"

"Vassar wants me to share him with you," Susan told Alan. She leaned closer, as if to inhale Alan's womanly scent. "And Ned can be a bonus for me. Wild. I like this kind of mix-em-up scene."

"Fine," said Alan. "But I don't have sex with women. Would you like to head West with us?"

"Yes, Vassar wants to move back to the West Coast. Where people can do what they like. And, hell, I'm sick of my job here. Bunch of idiots. Thing is, we don't have a car. Vassar's hoping he can charm Bill Burroughs out of some money."

"I don't think you'll find him so easily," said Alan.

"But, hey!" said Ned, all smiles. Evidently he was enthused by the prospect of sex with Susan. "We've got a brand new car to share with you two!"

Alan and Vassar Discuss H-Bomb Ending

"Me, I'm hip to the master plan, too," bragged Vassar. "I picked up on it when were doing skugger conjugation. *Uhn, uhn, uhn*. Alan wants to blow himself up with a hydrogen bomb from Los Alamos. Talk about your clear-channel radio! Shedding his light."

"That's something of a caricature," said Alan with a sigh. "And I would request that everyone does their best to hide this kind information from anyone outside our circle."

"An atomic bomb?" said Susan, laughing. She took this for a joke. "In Los Alamos? I'd love to tape the sounds."

"And be sure to get Alan's last words," said Vassar. "*Th-th-th-that's all folks! Quaaaaaaak!*"

"Don't always be a dumb-ass," said Ned. "This is real. An H-bomb's flash could spray skug vibes into everyone in the country. We'd be home free after that."

“You guys believe in the skugs that much?” said Susan, changing tack. “I keep thinking this is more like—I don’t know—a virus that I caught, and I’ll be well by the time I’m in California.”

Wild Bill

Driving north through New Mexico towards Santa Fe and Los Alamos, Alan stopped to rest outside a grocery. He heard a careworn, weathered motorcyclist talking to a woman just off her shift. Such a hard life this man must have had, he looked almost destitute. She was Roxanne, he was Wild Bill.

“Though you might better call me *Mild* Bill,” the man remarked and Roxanne smiled. But now Wild Bill pulled a two inch cigar stub from of his layers of clothes and lit it. Some subtle change in Roxanne’s expression made it clear that she’d now lost interest in the motorcyclist.

“Didn’t mean to scare you off,” said Wild Bill, picking up on her reaction. “Oh well. Another broken heart.” He got on his bike and circled around the parking lot before leaving, wobbly and alone.

More Nature Cameos

Alan came across a hillside cemetery with a few cracked stones amid long grass and thick-trunked old cypresses, the trees not immensely tall. In the wind-blown grass, he accidentally stepped on something alive. It was a large lizard who’d been resting there, sluggish in the early morning sun. The weight of Alan’s foot had broken off most of the lizard’s tail, and the separated fragment was frantically twitching on the ground. The lizard himself remained motionless. Alan had the notion the wounded lizard was keeping himself under strict control, as opposed to his cut-off tail which had no control at all, desperately writhing. With the federal police after him, he needed to be like the lizard and not like the tail.

They made New Mexico that night, and stopped in a motel in Las Cruces. Alan studied the beautiful silhouette of some low mountains across a plowed field, the range like a long jawbone with teeth in it—a cow or dog jawbone that one might find in the woods. A dove sat on a twisting piñon branch in the shade of the tree’s main trunk, an iconic silhouette. A train not too far off was sounded its horn for the crossings in this land of trains. A red squirrel ram up a twisty pine tree: the squirrel fit the tree, and the two of them fit Alan’s perceptions of what he should see. Everything fit. It struck him that he and the plants and animals and the skugs were all of a piece, they were all part of the same wetware world.

The ubiquity of the same forms: trees, dendrites, clouds, mountains, animals, his thoughts. All were standard patterns that nature loved to grow.

Alan threw a raisin to some kind of a mouse, and the creature picked up the the raisin in her paws and wanted to eat it, but was uneasy at still being fairly close to Alan, but did so very much want to bite into the delicious raisin right away, so, torn by the opposing drives, the creature let out a gorgeous shrill liquid *squeek*.

Save for Chaps 14-17

Burroughs: Out of self-defense, we skuggers mastered the arts of telepathic blocking and misdirection. It doesn't do to make one's mind a blank—instead one presents a cover mind which is completely harmless: "I love my job and my cuntry." You can't lay it on too thick. Our imbecile oppressors invariably imagine us to be even stupider than they.

Alan's POV: Burroughs told me he'd found a cat... I heard a ... mewling noise, but I couldn't see anything. Then I realized Bill was making the sound without opening his lips ... He opened a can of cat food, all the time making that sound ... he gets down on all fours and rubs himself against invisible legs, purring ... Straightens up and put the plate of cat food on the floor. Next thing he gets down on all fours and eats it.

Can any soul survive the searing fireball of an atomic blast? If human and animal souls are seen as electromagnetic force fields, such fields could be totally disrupted by a nuclear explosion. The mummy's nightmare: disintegration of souls, and this is precisely the ultrasecret and supersensitive function of the atom bomb: a Soul Killer, to alleviate an escalating soul glut.

And you know the difference between the difference in the air ever since they started lighting off those atomic bombs. Before, you felt like nobody going to explode the atoms you're made of, you figured with a little strength and skill you could somehow live on and on. But ...

Save for Chapter 18: The Last Word

What am I doing here, a broken eccentric, a Bowery Evangelist, reading books on Theosophy in the public library—(an old trunk full of notes in my cold water East Side flag)—imagining myself a Secret World Controller in Telepathic Contact with Tibetan Adepts ... Could I ever see the merciless, cold facts on some Winter night, sitting in the operation room white glare of a cafeteria—NO SMOKING PLEASE—See the facts and myself, an old man with the wasted years, behind, and what ahead having seen the Facts?"

It started in the sensational press ... "Ancient Egyptian Papyrus Demonstrates That Life After Death Is Within The Reach Of Everyman." ... soon the Papyrus starts unrolling very precise instructions for reaching the Land of the Dead. The message falls on ... the parched deserts of mid-America, dead hopeless wastes of despair, a glimmer of light and hope on a darkening earth.

The visions, the glimpses of the Western Lands, exist in space, not time, a different medium and a different light, with no temporal coordinates or recurrences. The medium bears some relation to holograms.

Film sequentially presented...now, imagine that you are dead and see your whole life spread out in a spatial panorama, a vast maze of rooms, streets, landscapes, not sequential but arranged in shifting associational patterns. Your attic room in St. Louis opens into a New York loft, from which you step into a Tangier street. Everyone you have ever known is there. This happens in dreams of course.

The old sets are brittle, falling off the page, waves dash against sea walls, old photos curl and shred. The annual St. Louis Veiled Prophet parade-floats in the hot

summer night...yellow glow of lights, giant leaves, eating pink cake, the cardboard around the edges blowing away in the rising wind, piers crumbling into the sea's waves, wrecked house, rain, gray sky.

The house on my boyhood home, on Pershing Avenue in St. Louis, is well back from the cobblestone street, worn smooth by centuries on the march. I found my key. The lock turns. Inside I stumbled over a heap of toys...one Christmas after another in layers...a .30-.30 rifle at the top with a box of shells. A crust of broken ornaments crunches underfoot like snow.

There comes that moment of a blinding flash of bullshit when you suddenly see everything, and the way it all fits together as part of the great whole. You are everything and everything is you, and there is no aloneness, no separation, just endless love.

Ordinarily, of course, that's not the case. We have a human lifetime with a few moments of meaning and purpose scattered here and there. The meaning is fleeting, it's impossible to cling to it. With the glimpses so rare, how do we live through the dreary years of dullness, lugging our aging flesh from here to there?

What I was looking for from Alan was contact, or recognition like a photon emerging from the haze of insubstantiality to leave an indelible recording in his consciousness. I don't know if it worked. He was very turned-in on himself. Writing's my fallback. My way of making an indelible record, whether anyone is inclined to observe or not.

A photo has no light of its own, but it takes light to be seen. Every time anyone takes a picture, there is that much less light in circulation. Slowly at first, the gathering darkness on the margin of vision...the mutters of voices at the edge of hearing.

I'm an old writer. I can't write anymore because I've reached the end of what I can do with words. But even now I sometimes see something, and I can catch it. A tree like black lace against a gray sky. A flash of joy.

My life? I look back and I see myself desperately rummaging through bodies and rooms and closets in a frenzied search. At the end of the search was an empty room. This room.

Outside a Palm Beach bungalow waiting for a taxi to the airport. My mother's kind, unhappy face, last time I ever saw her. Really a blessing. She had been ill for a long time. My father's dead face in the crematorium. "Too late. Over from Cobblestone Gardens."

These are troubled times. There's the ongoing war in the heavens, as the One God attempts to exterminate or neutralize the Many Gods and to confirm his seat of absolute power. And—mark this well—science is a monotheism. Logic the only God in town.

Any univalent mode of thought is antimagical, authoritarian, dogmatic, the deadly enemy of those who are committed to the magical universe, spontaneous, unpredictable, alive. The universe of the scientists and monotheists is controlled, predictable, dead. But it's not where we really live. Just ask Turing.

Second Draft For Scene of Bill Being Dead

Still living, I humped my skug slug body after Joan, hopped out the window and—just for jolly—I levitated myself fifty feet high in the air. Wouldn't you?

Down at the Bounty Bar, Cortez had returned from the cemetery and run amok with a razor-sharp butcher knife. Perhaps Joan had possessed him? He killed five

people and wounded four, was finally cornered by the police, shot in the stomach and captured.

And now, sure as fuck, the cops were at the rented room's door. They'd heard the gun. Susan, Alan and I ended up in a holding cell. "Since music is registered with the whole body it can serve as a means of communication between one organism and another," Susan told me. "I can use acousmatics to bust us out."

"How do you mean?" I asked. Was this really happening? What a headache I had.

"I'll create a riot like you'd get if you released hogs in the police station. I memorized the sounds of some riots one time. I'll pump the sounds from my body, along with hog noises cut in, play it back, darting up and down the aisles to incite the surly cops."

"What the fuck are you talking about? Where am I? What's going on?"

We'd been in jail all night. The sun was coming up.

"Bill?" said Alan, leaning over me. "Bill?"

Susan was sobbing at his side.

I sat up and spit the bullet from my mouth.

"What a burn," I said. "Let's get out of here."

"Acousmatics," said Susan, leaning against the bars and beginning her sound.

A chill hit the air, the blood and sweat on me went freezing cold. The sky outside the windows was bright green. I could see hail pelting big as hens' eggs, breaking some of the windows. Elephants trumpeted frantically nearby—the jail was by a circus. A sound like a low-flying jet tore across Mexico City. One of the walls crumbled and I saw cars flying through the air like toys. Circus tents and freaks were whipping through the sky—bleachers and rifle ranges, Kewpie dolls and honking cars, caught in a black whirlpool and pulled up high and higher.

True awareness was coming back.

Joan had indeed left, but I was still in that room we'd rented, lying on the floor in a pool of blood, reflexively regenerating the tissues of my brain. I'd been lying here all night. It was dawn.

Alan Brag's About ACE

I suppose I helped start the trend in 1947, naming my first computer the *ACE*. Automatic Computing Engine.

Writing Journal

October 2, 2006. Writing "The Imitation Game"

[This appeared as a post on Rudy's Blog as "[Alan Turing](#)".]

I just finished reading David Leavitt, [Man Who Knew Too Much](#) (W. W. Norton, 2006). This is a short biography of Alan Turing (1912 – 1954) in the Norton series. Leavitt's book seemed a little weak in spots, but it reads well, and I wanted to read about Turing this week and couldn't immediately get hold of the longer and canonical bio, *Alan Turing: The Enigma* by Alan Hodges. (That is, it was sitting on my office bookshelf but I was temporarily unable to see it, knowing that it is so long and in such small print). Leavitt's book is better for a quick overview.

A lot of interesting facts in Leavitt's book. Not only Turing but Kurt Gödel were

inordinately fond of the Disney cartoon *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1938). Turing is believed to have committed suicide by biting an apple that he'd painted with cyanide, and was found dead in his bed on June 8, 1954. Turing was said to have enjoyed the scene where the Wicked Queen dips the apple in her poisonous brew and he even memorized her song and chanted it after seeing the movie:

"Dip the apple in the brew, / Let the sleeping death seep through. / [A skull icon appears in the skin.] A symbol of what lies within. / Now turn red to tempt Snow White, / To make her hunger for a bite. / When she breaks the tender peel, / To taste the apple from my hand, / Her breath will still, her blood congeal, / Then I'll be the fairest in the land!"

One interesting thing about Leavitt's book is that he places a lot of emphasis on Turing's homosexuality, and dares to hint—with, unfortunately, no corroboration that Turing may have been murdered by the British secret service: "...none of Turing's friends ever seems to have considered, at least in writing, a third possibility (one, admittedly, for which there is no evidence, at present anyway): namely, that the suicide was staged; that the man ... had become—like the hero of Alfred Hitchcock's 1934 film—a man who knew too much."

This said, it really does seem possible that Turing killed himself. Like the other logicians Gödel and Cantor, he seems to have been somewhat nuts. Funny how many logicians are crazy and irrational. A paradox.

I'd always thought that what may have put Turing over the edge was the estrogen treatments he was sentenced to after telling the police about a gay sex encounter he'd had. But actually the mandatory estrogen treatment ended a year before Turing killed himself. Turing never saw anything wrong with homosexuality by the way; in the terms of his famed "Imitation Game," there really was no difference between the sexes. Anyone can emulate anyone else.

In his last days, while working with a therapist, he began writing a short story about a man picking up a younger man for sex while doing his Christmas shopping. For me, as an SF writer, the exciting part is that in this transreal tale, Turing describes "himself" as Alec Pryce, a scientist interested in interplanetary travel! I found images of these pages in the [Turing Archive](#); note that to access these pages you have to click through a screen accepting the terms of use.

"Alec had been working rather hard two or three weeks before. It was about interplanetary travel. Alec had always been rather keen on such crackpot problems, but although he rather liked to let himself go rather wildly by appearing on the Third Programme when he got the chance, when he wrote for technically trained readers his work was quite sound, or had been when he was younger. This latest paper was real good stuff, better than he'd done since his mid twenties when he had introduced the idea which is now commonly know as 'Pryce's buoy.' He always felt a glow of pride when the phrase was said."

Pryce's buoy is an objective correlative for the Turing machine, and the pun on "boy" is deliberate, as Turing goes on to make clear in his unfinished tale. What might Pryce's buoy be? I'm thinking of the space end of a space elevator.

Another fascinating tidbit from Leavitt's book. In his last days, Turing wrote his

logician friend Robin Gandy a series of four postcards, the last three on March 8, 10, and 13 of 1954. The first card is missing. The cards were inspired by Arthur Stanley Eddington's Fundamental Theory, which the two men were reading. Images of these cards are online at the [Turing Archive](#) as well, and the images are Copyright P.N. Furbank.

Card 2

Messages from the Unseen World

III The Universe is the interior of a Light Cone of the Creation

IV Science is a Differential Equation.

Religion is a Boundary Condition

[Signed "Arthur Stanley" and with a post script "? Does the gravitation constant decrease?"]

(Card 3)

V Hyperboloids of wondrous Light

Rolling for aye through Space and Time

~~Shelter~~ Harbour there Waves which somehow Might

Play out God's holy pantomime.

(Card 4)

VI Particles are founts

VII Charge = e / π arg of character of a 2π rotation

VIII The Exclusion Principle is laid down purely for the benefit of the electrons themselves, who might be corrupted (and become dragons or demons) if allowed to associate too freely.

This is all pure gold, to my way of thinking.

In what might have been an even later letter to Robin Gandy (at the same link), Turing writes out some calculus formulae and says, "Can do the rainbow problem successfully for sound, but total failure for electricity."

Hmmm.

Turing in a letter about his trial. "Whilst in custody with the other criminals I had a very agreeable sense of irresponsibility, rather like being back at school."

Having written this post, I now discover Andrew Hodges, *Alan Turing: The Enigma* on my bookcase beside my desk, and read the long last chapter. Herewith some more notes.

Turing was lonely and conscious of his self-consciousness. Once, when in a pub with a friend, a boring logician appeared through one doorway, and Turing disappeared through another. As a boy, his favorite parts of the book *Pilgrim's Progress* were Doubting Castle and Giant Despair. Mathematics has always protected him from the world.

He had a Norwegian boyfriend called Kjell; possibly the authorities somehow stymied Kjell from visiting him. His estrogen treatment ended in April 1953. He never abandoned his homosexuality.

"Went down to Sherborne to lecture to some boys on computers. Really quite a treat in many ways. They were so luscious, and so well mannered, with a little dash of pertness, and Sherborne itself quite unspoilt."

In mid-May, 1954, Alan went with the family of his psychiatrist Greenbaum to a kind of boardwalk in Blackpool, and Alan went in to the Gypsy Queen fortune-teller, and came out white as a sheet and said nothing more on the way home to Manchester.

He died in the evening of June 7, 1954, just short of age 42. There was hardly an inquest, and his body was cremated.

Turing's work on decryption during the war was so secret that it was totally unknown to the public. In a sense, his knowledge was even more highly classified than atomic secrets. There was something of a frenzy about atomic security in the mid 50s, also a worry about the riskiness of homosexuals having access to secret info. Turing's unpredictability and lack of control would have alarmed the spooks. It's conceivable that they were privately threatening him with more prosecutions.

Once convicted, Turing would have been unable to visit the United States due to a criminal record of moral turpitude. Hodges calls him an "intellectual beatnik."

Turing was a soft machine.

May 17, 2007. Reading "The Imitation Game" at SF in SF.

[This was mentioned as a post on Rudy's Blog, "[My Alan Turing Story](#)."]]

I did a nice reading of the story at the SF in SF venue in San Francisco, with Cory Doctorow there reading from *Little Brother* as well. I think it was at this reading when Jeremy Lassen of Night Shade Books remarked to me that he would love for me to expand the story into a novel, and that he'd be happy to publish such a book.

By the way, "The Imitation Game" finally appeared in *Interzone* in April, 2008—they lost track of it for awhile or something.

March 5-11, 2008, "Tangiers Routines" and the Happy Cloak

[This section is combined and re-edited from two excerpts of my Hylozoic Notes document. I also posted some of these remarks on my blog as as "[Starting Tangier Routines](#)." on March 11, 2008, and "[Turing and the Happy Cloak](#)" on my blog, July 24, 2010. The completed story "Tangiers Routines" [appeared](#) in issue #5 of my Flurb webzine later in March, 2008. One of my readers hassled me that it should be "Tangier Routines," (even though Burroughs and Kerouac routinely wrote "Tangiers"), and I switched over to the "Tangier" spelling.]

I see this new story as a sequel to "The Imitation Game." The idea in this series of stories might be to move kaleidoscopically from one character to another.

Alan Turing (1912 - 1954), initially disguised as the Greek boy Zeno, meets Bill Burroughs (1914 - 1977) in Tangier. Burroughs was very lonely right then, would have loved having Turing to talk to.

Dig up more info on the slightly older man Brian Howard (1905-1958), educated Christ Church college at Oxford (1926). Spent a few months in Tangier at this time too with his boyfriend Sam, he was hooked on morphine, thought he had TB (though some doctors said it was neurosis), hung around a bit with Burroughs. He could have led Burroughs and Turing meeting. See *Brian Howard: Portrait of a Failure*, edited by MJ Lancaster, 1968, which quotes a letter from Howard mentioning Burroughs. I found this page [online](#), from the letter to his friend John Banting, in March, 1954.

If I fudge the dates a bit, I can suppose that Howard was still in Tangier in mid-summer of 1954, when Alan Turing hit the town. I want to write a story about him

meeting Burroughs. I think I might write my the story in the format of “lost” letters from Burroughs. I’ll call the story “Tangier Routines” and publish it in [*Flurb*](#). *Flurb* will print it for sure—I sleep with the editor (me).

PORTRAIT OF A FAILURE

ten cigarettes a day. Curiously enough, I have very nearly succeeded in doing this, with the help of certain sedatives. A great thing is to put on weight, because I have become quite a skeleton during these last six months. The resting during the day is no change for *me*!

There is only one disagreeable aspect. They tell me that at my age (nearly forty-nine), I cannot take this same *pillule-piquée* cure ever again, if I fail to make it work this time. I shall have to have an operation to collapse the lung. Tiresome, to say the least.

[Later] I am writing you in odd and charming surroundings. Namely, a café in the wickedest town in the world—and in the wickedest place in the town. I am in the Socco Chico, or Little Market, which is really a small square of shops and cafés, where the naughtiest and most shameless of the male whores (not all Arabs), bootblacks, peanut-sellers, tourists, money-changers and beggars all gather, of a late afternoon, to show off their various wares. Everyone within sight, from the tiny children to the elderly, fat waiters in tarbooshes, is for sale. And the hubbub is appalling. The lights are just coming on in MANGHARAN'S CELEBRATED SHIRTS opposite me, and the smell of Kief cigarettes is asphyxiating. (I've tried it, no effect, but I'm told one ought to eat it, in the form of tiny hot cross buns.) Sam, at the same table, is flirting with his shoe-shine boy, who is a blackamoor, squodgy nose, but good teeth and a charming smile: seventeen I guess. The other person at the table is a nice, if slightly long-winded, ex-Harvard creature of forty who is endeavouring to cure himself of morphinomania by taking this new medicine which the Germans invented during the war. There are several trade names for it. He uses two. Eukodal and Heptanal. Unfortunately, the effects are so much stronger, and more delicious than morphine *itself* that he now spends his whole time running from chemist to chemist buying it—and spends all his money on it, too. I, myself, have experimented with it (with the excuse that it *is*, genuinely, used, among other things, for suppressing the tubercular cough—and really, it is quite *extraordinary*. Especially, I find, Heptanal. One loses all desire for alcohol (excellent, for me) and I walk around in a benign dream. Also, it has *none* of the injurious effects of morphine. The only lie that its makers tell about it is that it does not produce euphoria (e.g. *pleasure*), but, of course, it *does*. However, since it cannot do me harm of any sort, I *do* take it. Here, it can be got without a prescription. (Nothing is easier to get than the drugs themselves here, of course.) I take two to four tablets, and then have to wait one and a half to two hours, because it takes that long to get going. I do *not* drink with it.

At the risk of seeming redundant—I repeat that since it is a *medicine*, employed by doctors to replace morphine, and is employed in tuberculous cases to suppress coughing, I cannot see that it can be physically harmful, in any way. And since, at the same time, it is quite heavenly—I think it rather a find.

If one keeps out of the bars, which I *have* to, **Tangier** is not expensive. And it is certainly extremely amusing. *Anything* goes, as they say . . .

Figure 10: Brian Howard Mentions Burroughs

Turing (disguised as Zeno) hooks up with Burroughs in Tangier in B's favorite bar in the Socco Chico (little market). They hit it off to a certain extent. Have a good talk on thinking machines. Has kif with Burroughs. Alan gets into a stoned rap about how to make a Turing Evaluator.

I've been considering the idea of an artist using a Turing Evaluator to start writing his books for him. Three problems: such a device violates the unsolvability of the halting problem, such a device operates at arbitrarily rapid or effectively infinite speeds, we would need a new kind of computer to run the algorithm.

Turing's new face is falling off. He lies low in Burroughs's rooming house. Turing himself doesn't like drugs. But he builds an opiated chicken liver supercomputer. Or maybe he uses lichens to get it working. Coaxing them into Zhabotinsky scrolls.

The device is inspired by Burroughs's Reich orgone notions, but is actually implemented by Turing using biological engineering. They're like mushrooms. Truffles, or shelf mushrooms. *Memshrooms*.

In terms of computer science, maybe people will be replacing their 1950s tape drives with memshrooms growing on the sides of their refrigerator-sized computers.

But it's more interesting if you interface a memshroom directly to your spine. They're like shelf mushrooms that grow in a ruff on your neck. Maybe Jack Kerouac visits Burroughs and gets some memshrooms on him. Later on, the memshrooms spread, and when Jack's reading *On The Road* on the Steve Allan show, it's mediated via memshrooms—it's the first cyberspace mind broadcast.

Right then in 1954-1955, Bill was putting together the routines that became *Naked Lunch*, although at this time he was calling it *Interzone*. It was the most creative time of his life, even though, of course, he thought he was fucked up. Maybe he was using the opiated-chicken-liver (or truffle-based) Evaluator. Maybe Burroughs's later work had such a drop-off in quality because he was no longer using the Evaluator. Maybe something happened to it, like his boy Kiki ate it, Kiki chopped up the Evaluator and roasted it in a tagine with couscous.

I could write the story in the form of "lost" letters from Burroughs to Allen Ginsberg. I was reading Bill's actual letters from summer, 1954, in Tangier recently. He style is very particular and wouldn't be that hard to ape. It'd be a bit tricky to do it without getting gauche. An even trickier thing is that the unvarnished Burroughs is so offensive. Certainly if I were true to *Der Meister* the tale would be unpublishable in most venues that come to mind—other than *Flurb*, and I do need a story for *Flurb*.

Alan and Bill don't have sex, neither one finds the other appealing, even though they're the same age. Alan manages to have sex with Burroughs's boy Kiki. Burroughs is mad and hits Alan with a very large dose of majoun. Or maybe heroin or some other opiate.

Alan feels himself drop down to cellular consciousness. He's taking advantage of his studies of morphogenesis. He sees the infinite mind of Nature, and then sees:

(a) How to get around the Turing Halting Problem and how to make an Evaluator. He imagines he can predict Burroughs's behavior, also other people. He takes Burroughs's money and passport, goes to the dock, gets a ship to the United States, planning to go to California.

Or, better, he sees:

(b) How to form himself into something like a slug (the things I'll later call skugs). Alan crawls across the room and *schluppp*, he assimilates Burroughs. Or rather merges with him. In any case, the process ends with only one queer forty-year-old in the room. Feeling very full, Alan/Bill went into the outhouse in back and took a seventy kilogram dump — eliminating redundant parts. Like a corporation that's "right-sizing" after a merger. Like a corporation that's "right-sizing" after a merger. And then home to re-organize the Burroughs Corporation!

It could be significant for the end of my story that Burroughs's grandfather founded the Burroughs Adding Machine Company, later [Burroughs Corporation](#), which was just beginning to get into computers in the mid-1950s.

Perhaps after the merge, Burroughs becomes a different man. He became obsessed with the *machinery* and gimmickry around writing. The typewriter, the Dream Machine, the cut-up. Now and then, by the light of a full moon, he'd sometimes find himself writing out lines of 8-bit code.

Either the memshroom or the skug concept could be informed by Burroughs's notion of the Happy Cloak, which he [lifted wholesale](#) from Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore, *Fury*, 1947. (My link goes to a preview on the Rosetta Books ebook site.) A quote from *Fury*, originally published in *Astounding* in 1947 under the pseudonym Lawrence O'Donnell, later published as *Fury* by Henry Kuttner (Grosset & Dunlap, 1950), and as *Destination: Infinity* (1956).

A culture catering to hedonism has its perversions of science. And Blaze could pay well. More than one technician had been wrecked by pleasure-addiction; such men were usually capable - when they were sober. But it was a woman Blaze found, finally, and she was capable only when alive. She lived when she was wearing the Happy Cloak. She wouldn't live long; Happy Cloak addicts lasted about two years, on the average. The thing was a biological adaptation of an organism found in the Venusian seas. It had been illegally developed, after its potentialities were first realized. In its native state, it got its prey by touching it. After that neuro-contact had been established, the prey was quite satisfied to be ingested. It was a beautiful garment, a living white like the white of a pearl, shivering softly with rippling lights, stirring with a terrible, ecstatic movement of its own as the lethal symbiosis was established. It was beautiful as the woman technician wore it, as she moved about the bright, quiet room in a tranced concentration upon the task that would pay her enough to insure her death within two years... The woman, swimming in anticipated ecstasy, managed to touch a summoning signal-button. Then she lay down quietly on the floor, the shining pearly garment caressing her. Her tranced eyes looked up, flat and empty as mirrors. The man who came in gave the Happy Cloak a wide berth.

Burroughs actually uses some of the above text in [The Ticket That Exploded](#), and he does in fact credit the quote. He uses the Kuttner-Moore stuff after his great (and very weirdly punctuated) line (the double and single quotation marks are Burroughs's):

“Skin like that very hot for three weeks and then—” the guard snickered ‘—wearing the Happy Cloak..

I have a lot about the Happy Cloak in my novel *Software*, too, of course.

July 22-23 2010. The Turing Chronicles?

So now I'm thinking about treating those two stories (“The Imitation Game” and “Tangier Routines”) as the two chapters of a novel. I can see the novel emerging as a fix-up, that is, as a series of stories. So all I really need to commit to right now is to write another story—and that may then prove to be another chapter of *The Turing Chronicles*.

Suppose that we have a scene of Alan with Laura and Mortimer Burroughs at the old man's little knickknack store in Palm Beach, it was called Cobblestone Gardens, sold antiques and gifts. And Mortimer is charmed and repelled by Turing who, just now, looks like Bill. And there is talk of Turing going to work for the Burroughs Corporation in Paoli, Pennsylvania.

Just the other day, Sylvia and I were at the beach in tiny, rural Davenport, and I noticed a courtyard with a store selling “Antiques and Gifts.” Just like Mortimer's store. I peeked inside. Old glass bottles, and zillions of tchotchkes. Hard to imagine a straight man running a place like this. Where was Mortimer Burroughs at? How was his relationship with son Bill? The parents did, after all, send Bill off to boarding school in Los Alamos as a boy.

When Alan shows up in Palm Beach he will in fact bear a clone-like resemblance to William Burroughs, and Bill's parents, Mortimer and Laura Lee Burroughs, may not believe Alan's protestations that he is not really their son.

They almost want to have him committed, but he prevails on them to get him an interview at the Burroughs research center in Paoli, and he gets a job. Maybe this is too unlikely. How could someone posing as William Burroughs get a security clearance with the Burroughs record of the time—I think some drug convictions, and the shooting of his wife Joan in Mexico. Alan could of course change his face for this, but I'd like to have him keep looking like Burroughs for awhile so as to befriend the Beats.

Alan isn't really interested in the research center in any case. He wants to be doing research on biocomputation. If he somehow does go to Paoli, we might suppose that he develops a what Burroughs would call a Happy Cloak, or what Alan would call a skug—and he gets a woman to wear it in the fashion show that the Burroughs lab puts on in March 1955 (fact!) to benefit the local Boy Scout troops. Aw, I think I'll skip Paoli, and rather have Alan head for California, that's more interesting to me. I'd like to stay away, at least for awhile, from 1950s “giant brain” machines.

Another secret agent is hassling Alan again, right in Palm Beach. Alan's not completely free and clear. “They” are still stalking him. Perhaps the agent is drawn by Mortimer's preliminary inquiries about Alan working a Paoli disguised as son Bill. Or, simpler, the agent's network had seen Alan boarding the liner to Miami and they'd deduced where Alan is. Or, still simpler, They are tracking some remaining bit of skug that Alan brought along.

Who are They? In England and in Tangier, Alan had thought it was the British intelligence, MI5. And in the US he thinks it's the FBI or the CIA or the NSA who are

after them. Fairly soon in the book, we'll learn that it's the aliens (who he'll be calling the skugs) who are after him. I think we might learn this in the chapter after "Tangier Routines" that can be the reveal there.

Alan skips town, he heads out to the West coast to hang with Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, maybe he hitchhikes out, or hitches with Jack, or gets a ride with Neal Cassady. Possibly he hooks up with a boyfriend from the ship and hitch hikes with him. In any case he'll be there for the Six Gallery reading on October 7, 1955.

[Eventually, I can perhaps see Alan hassling J. Edgar Hoover or that anti-communist guy [Joe McCarthy](#), maybe both at once. Maybe Hoover is in drag. Hoover is a skug. The Overskug. Probably I don't do this, I don't want to get into gauche name-checking.]

Possibly he meets up with von Neumann in Los Alamos, or perhaps, better Stanislaw Ulam. Maybe Alan is hoping to help the Brits with their H-bombs or, more likely, the skugs are urging him to witness a bomb test. The bomb tests are entangled with the skugs' plans—perhaps Alan means to use an H-test as a lure for the skug mothership, which would want to feed off the blast. Or maybe the skugs want him to go to the bomb blast. Possibly wrap the book up near the bomb blast, it feels kind of traditional to end a Fifties saucer novel with an H-bomb blast.

I summarized some research in my [Thermonuclear Weapons](#) entry above. Looking at the nukes timeline on Wikipedia, I see the Soviet RDS-37 blast in November, 1955, which would be good for the timeline.

Possibly Turing had sussed out the secret from the von Neumann and Ulam crowd, and he'd planned to give it to Britain, but then got diverted or kidnapped to Russia. The RDS-37 killed three onlookers. Maybe one was Turing. The skug aliens tank up on the blast and leave, all of them, maybe taking Turing or his software with them.

"He died that we might live."

Actually, I don't think the Russian test works. For one thing, I'd like to compress the time span, so that we get to the nuke in the spring of 1955. For another, I think by then the Russians pretty well knew how to make an H-bomb without any more intel from the US, although possibly Turing might know some special secret tweaks from Ulam.

I'll go with a smallish A-blast the first Teapot series shot on February 18, 1955, this bomb was called "Wasp." For this shot, ground forces took part, like with soldiers running *towards* the still-forming mushroom cloud. I see Alan in this group, programming CAs into the ylem-like plasma, so as to create a skug Gate.

An issue is whether the novel is (a) a secret but true history in which the odd events are hidden from public knowledge or (b) an actual alternate history that's free to be floridly different from ours.

I'll go with the former option. It's cuter, although it imposes more constraints. But constraints are good for a literary work, they form a trellis for the imaginative vines to grow upon. For now I'll subtitle the novel *A Secret History*.

August 17-22, 2010. Purpose of the Book

In the first part of this month, I did write another Turing story, "The Skug," that can serve as Chapter 2, it's a segue between Turing leaving England and Turing meeting up with Burroughs. At first I was calling the chapter, "Undifferentiated Tissue," but it

turns out Alan will be calling these living globs “skugs.”

I just heard on August 16, 2010, from Jeremy Lassen at Night Shade Books that next week they hope to make an offer for my latest novel, *Jim and the Flims*, which I’ve been having a little trouble selling. This gives me a lot of energy towards writing another novel. I’m not washed up after all, not adrift on an ice floe like a toothless superannuated Eskimo!

“And lo, the stone was rolled from the entrance to His tomb.”

As I noted in the May 17, 2007, entry, Jeremy once said, casually, that he’d like to see a novel along the lines of *The Turing Chronicles: A Secret History*. Possibly I’ll pitch that to him too, in a while. Maybe even even work a two-book deal, although in a way two separate deals might be better. And I’d want to show the Turing proposal to Hartwell at Tor as well. In any case, it’s a boost to feel that I have a good chance of selling the Turing novel, it gives me energy to work on it.

At this point I have to pause and focus and think about why I want to write this Turing novel. What does it mean to me? Where do I want it to take me? And—a related question—how can I grow my three-chapter stub into a novel?

I relate to Turing, to his oddness, his love of logic, his interest in physical experimentation, his fascination with the nature of the mind, his messiness, his otherworldliness, his rebellious streak.

Turing’s gayness interests me as an objective form of going against accepted social norms. And it’s a humanizing challenge for me to internalize this worldview and handle it in a believable way. I did write the gay character Ortelius in my Bruegel novel, and I think I can get back into that head space. It was kind of enlightening. The key is to not become so embarrassed or uneasy that I start camping it up or being parodistic—although some camping is good, as in the Burroughs pastiche chapter or chapters. You don’t want to get all solemn and hushed about homosexuality. It’s not a tragic, mortal disease.

It would be nice to get a bit of a love story going, let Turing find a boyfriend. A younger guy he meets in SF, maybe through the Beat scene. They’re happy, taking walks. Or Alan hitches to California along with the guy whom he befriended on the boat, call him Billy Bradshinkel for now. The name is one that Wm. Burroughs uses in some of his stories about high-school gay romance. In modeling this, I think of male friends whom I’ve felt close to—guys with whom I might have shared a house, back in our light-hearted youth, even though, personally I don’t really see having sex with my male friends. But I have to at least pretend to visualize that possibility so as to imbue my Turing with a realistic emotional life.

All this said, I’m not enthused about writing gay romance. The topic kind of bores me, I can’t get worked up about it. I want some *women* in the book! Suppose Alan makes a woman friend on the ship ride to the US, rather than that he meets a male lover. It’s platonic with the woman. Her name is Susan.

I like the idea of Turing interacting with a few historical figures that interest me. I already have William Burroughs, and it seems natural that—if Alan keeps the Burroughs appearance for awhile—he could meet Ginsberg, Kerouac and Cassady. Maybe even hang out with them quite a bit, that could be fun. A beatnik novel!

I could go on and have Alan meet Stan Ulam and perhaps Kurt Gödel as well, later in the book, after the deal with the Beats somehow blows up in his face. I don't want to overdo it and have Alan meet *too* many famous people. But, yeah, it would be nice to write about the Beats and Gödel (or maybe Ulam). I totally want Alan Turing to be at the Six Gallery reading of "Howl" in October, 1955. I actually met Ginsberg, Burroughs and Gödel, after all, and I could fake Jack and Neal. And I could fake Ulam.

If I end up steering Alan towards a nuclear bomb blast test site, then this doesn't really lead through Gödel, who wasn't an atomic scientist at all. If I'm heading for a bomb blast, I'd probably guide Alan through Los Alamos, and have him hang with Stan Ulam.

The novel could be set in the years 1954-1955. It's nice to think of writing about the Fifties. There's a bit of the Fifties in *All the Visions*, but I could do much more.

Fifties suggests alien invasion! Saucers! Pods! *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*! Perhaps the skugs can turn normal humans into skugs as well, just like the pod people did. Not sure about this yet.

My talk of "skugs" means there are special beings on Earth, a type of aliens, who've mastered the move of turning into a skug, that is, into a slug of undifferentiated tissue. Perhaps that's their native state. Or perhaps they're more in the nature of energy beings, and they've taken on the form of protean masses of undifferentiated tissue to explore Earth or, looked at differently, to explore our level of reality.

The aliens alertly picked up on Turing's morphogenesis paper and realized he'd soon be a formidable ally or opponent with his knowledge of these morphogenetic and biochemical processes.

Perhaps they initially did mean to kill him in Manchester. Perhaps they've already done a number of executions. But when Alan escaped and made a fake face, they realize Alan was advancing more rapidly than they'd expected. And then they decide to use him as a kind of agent.

It's Alan who dubs the beings "skugs," which is a word I'm into these days. (My granddaughter Zimry says "skug" for "slug." We like to open up her parents' composting bins and look at the worms and count the big fat slugs. We got to eleven the other day, and Zimry said, "Yeven skug" or "Eyeven skug.")

The alien skugs are in line with the Burroughs theme of parasitic lamprey-like narcotics agents and police detectives.

A question I haven't decided on yet is whether or not an alien skug can fully convert a human into being a skug. Can Turing in particular become a skug? If he does get this ability, when does it happen? I think that, in the chapter with Burroughs, he's not fully a skug, it's more that some skug-flesh has engulfed him and is tailoring him. And maybe the skug leaves a little slug inside Alan.

Maybe I'll call Chapter Two "The Skug," and work that word into this and the Burroughs chapter. And I'll set up the agents in England and in Tangier as being, in retrospect, a skug skugs who only *took on* the form of humans. That guy Pratt in Alan's apartment, he converts into a skug with such *surprising alacrity* because he's really an alien skug himself all along. Alan doesn't quite get it initially, just thinks his lab-made skug ate Pratt fast.

As I mentioned in the previous writing note, I'd like to organize the story so that, in principle, it could all be true, although the events that I describe are a secret aspect of

the history.

More is needed for a novel, though. We have Turing's interactions with the skugs. Possibly there's only *one* skug. Some secret agents are after him, and then it turns out that some or all of the agents are skugs. Maybe all the agents are, at least initially, one and the same skug. Possibly the skugs are converting some humans into skugs as well. *Then what?*

I could segue into full saucer novel mode, as in Ian Watson's *Miracle Visitors* and my *Saucer Wisdom*. Really get into the Fifties and Beat aspects of UFOs.

Perhaps I end with the "Starship Launch" story idea sequence, and Alan leaves Earth. Or he leaves on the refueled mothership after the nuclear blast. Or he passes through a Skug Gate created in the eye of a nuclear blast. Perhaps by leaving he somehow saves us, although also he impoverishes us.

[What if Turing becomes a science-fiction writer? One of the last things he did in his life was to write part of a transreal SF story about an "Alec Pryce." Maybe by now Turing is in fact a friend of mine writing under various pseudonyms as I reveal in an "Author's Note."]

I do like the idea of Turing meeting up with Kurt Gödel to help wipe out the skugs. It would be nice for Alan to meet Kurt. There does seem to be some cultural sub-niche interest in tales about the great logicians. Gödel of all people would be open to odd suggestions of aliens, after all, he was said to worry about spirits and ghosts. Maybe he was right. But, as I'm saying, maybe Ulam makes more sense. I could save Gödel for another story.

August 23-26, 2010. More thoughts on plot.

I went to a party at Richard Kadrey's in San Francisco on August 22, 2010. On the train up to Richard Kadrey's I hand-wrote corrections on the Burroughs chapter, working in the skug ideas, and I hand-wrote some extensions to this Notes document. And I continued re-printing and revising this section of notes for a whole week.

Shortly before I left Richard's party, a big guy was talking to Richard about publishing and he happened to mention my Tor editor, David Hartwell. And I was like, "That's my editor." And then it turned out the big guy was Jason Williams of Night Shade Books. He handles the publishing end of things and Jeremy Lassen handles the acquisitions and the editorial work. He confirmed Jeremy's interest in buying *Jim and the Flims*, and is himself enthusiastic about the deal, and said they'd in principle like to publish a number of books by me.

And then on August 25, Jeremy made my agent a good offer for *Jim and the Flims*. So looking ahead, I think I really would be able to sell them *The Turing Chronicles*. But I'm not doing to try and pitch it to them right now. I feel like the concept isn't together enough yet, also, when the time comes, I'd want to pitch it to Tor Books as well, and that would take some time. I'll wait on the Turing pitch, and wrap up the *Jim and the Flims* deal right now.

Coming back to the shadowy secret agents, that is to the agent or agents in Manchester and to agent Pratt in Tangier—it might be nice to assume that they're all alien skugs. There might just be *one* skug doing this, that is, Pratt in Tangier is the same

as the lone killer agent in Manchester.

How do I jibe the cyanide murder in Manchester with Tangier-Pratt's more cajoling routine? Maybe at first they meant to kill Alan, and have him die in a scandalous way—in a hotel room during a homosex tryst—thus discrediting his published work on Morphogenesis. But then they get interested in using Alan's skills when they see how nimbly he gets free.

What are the skugs ultimately trying to do?

- *Nuke gate.* One of the skugs goals is to attend a nuclear bomb test so as to—drain energy to refuel a flying saucer? Perhaps, more interestingly, they want to program the sun-like blast to create a gate to bring in more skugs. The skugs come, not from distant stars, but from wrinkles in space. Up from the subdimensions. Like underworld demons. Possibly there's only the one skug on Earth to start with. He got here via a hole made by an H-blast, and now he wants to use another blast's core as a way to get home. And maybe he takes Turing with him to Skugland, and we have a whole Part II in Skugland.
- *Pod people.* The skugs want to take up parasitic residence on or inside the bodies of more and more humans on Earth, or at our size scale. Pushing further, perhaps skugs want to convert humans into more skugs. Why? Perhaps we're to be a microworld for a still higher reality? But why would skugs want to do this?
- *Social engineering.* The skugs are learning about the human race as a cultural exercise. They want to meet the Beats. They have a socio-cultural problems that they think we might solve by example. Maybe they're hung-up on some quantum mechanical aspect of their tiny native size scale. Like the "measurement problem" bugs them, wherein a system is in a mixed state till observed. Suppose they want to manipulate our society, treating it like a tunable activator-inhibitor system, see my section above, "[Activator-Inhibitor Systems in Psychology and Society](#)."

They could of course be working on several of these options at once.

Re. the nuclear gate option, it might be useful for the skugs to have Alan go to America, land of the nuclear bomb. The skugs were perhaps given entree from the subdimensions to Earth by the March 1, 1954, hydrogen bomb tested at Bikini Atoll. Castle Bravo. And they want Turing to help them witness a blast. The next one up is the Teapot Wasp blast of February 18, 1955. It's only a one kiloton A-bomb.

At least that's what the history books say. Maybe it was an exotic mini-H-blast? Nah. It's not clear that you can have an H-bomb blast be much under a megaton, which is a thousand times as strong, and no way could you have troops near a bomb like that. So I think we'll go with the one kiloton Wasp shot, but allow for some exotic add-on upgrade feature.

I'd like to focus in on a very clean and specific Maguffin relating to the bomb test. It might as well be that Turing and Ulam are adding something to make the fireball a gate to Skugland, something involving Ulam's nonlinear wave-equation CAs (see my Capow project) and Alan's activator-inhibitor reactions. It's a reasonable fit. (The first

computation run on the Eniac in Princeton was a 3D continuous-valued CA to simulate the Metropolis differential equation in an effort to get a virtual preview of the behavior of an exploding H-bomb's core.)

Two things thing about the nuke gate. First of all, the skug drags Alan through to the other side, to "go home." But also some fresh skugs come through to earth at the same time, and these guys will be uncool.

Summing up one more time: The skugs *are* activator-inhibitor reactions, and they wanted to kill Turing because he was beginning to learn too much about this class of techniques. The skugs get interested in Alan after he escapes, they decide he can help them with the nuclear gate, pod people, and/or social engineering. They goad him towards the U.S., so he can get close to *and tweak* a nuclear blast.

The skugs view the Beats as useful. Perhaps they think the Beats will make society amenable to their presence. Or, more airily, maybe the Beats model a solution to the quantum mechanical "measurement problem." How can reality be unpredictable yet determinate? "Groovy, man. *fingersnap*"

Pratt in fact guides Alan to Burroughs for the dual goals of meeting Beats and moving to U.S.

Possibly we have two competing factions of aliens, with the second set cropping up after the nuke gate opens in Nevada. Having two distinct *races* of aliens fighting on Earth is a traditional move, and I used it in *Spaceland* (Kluppers and Dronners), *Hylozoic* (Peng and Hrull), *Frek and the Elixir* (Orpolese and Unipuskers), *Jim and the Flims* (jivas and yuels), and probably in some other stories and novels.

The win with the two-alien-factions scenario is that the factions can stand for competing archetypal human traits or political tendencies. Also it sets you up for nice battle scenes and double-crosses.

Perhaps this time, I'll just have two different *kinds* of skugs, rather than two distinct races. However we differentiate them, it's good to have an idea of what the factions stand for.

I think of the skugs, in a positive way, as standing for smoothness and gnarly computation. My negative things are tendentious logic, dull computation, perhaps as instantiated by Turing machines and their 2 or 3 dimensional variants that are called vants or turmites. I guess some skugs could behave in these non-life-enhancing ways, maybe if their reaction is tweaked to be essentially binary, with very time spent in intermediate states.

We need to account for what happens to the skug flesh that crawls out Alan's back window in "The Skug" chapter. If Pratt was a skug to start with, then the skug could once again take on the form of Pratt.

Maybe Driss mentions to Alan that he's seen Pratt being very slimy around town, backing up the idea that Pratt is a skug.

Suppose that Alan only brings a *sample* of skug flesh to Burroughs's apartment. But he manages to amplify the stuff and goose it up so that it can cover Alan and Bill like the drug "merge" that I first wrote about in *Wetware*. And this skug only sculpts Alan, and helps Alan and Bill's cells communicate so that Alan becomes visually a twin of Bill's. Alan perhaps imagines that he's taught this skuglet to "be good" and not eat him

like it did Pratt—in reality, Pratt was all skug, and his dissolution wasn't really the doing of the skuglet. The skuglet just knocks Pratt-the-skug out of his temporary humaniform equilibrium. In a way, just as the skugs may have feared, Alan has an anti-skug weapon in the form of his skuglet. It makes a skug drop its disguise and revert to its primordial jellyfish-like shape.

When Al and and Bill are done merging, there remains, once again, a rather modest amount of skug flesh, a skuglet that Alan takes with him on the passenger liner.

[Suppose the skuglet lives inside Alan, like a thinking cap that a "moldie" might put in a human's brain in my novel *Freeware*. Maybe the skuglet talks to Alan from inside. No. I want Alan to be autonomous.]

As Alan departs on the passenger liner, he sees Pratt on the dock waving goodbye, maybe with Driss (the two-timing little traitor!) at his side. Maybe Driss guided Pratt to Alan. And then just when the dock is barely visible, Alan thinks he sees Pratt jump in the ocean—later we'll realize it was to swim underwater and attach himself to the keel of the ship.

On the ship, Alan befriends a woman named Susan, they have a platonic relationship. This is an echo of Alan's engagement to a woman a few years earlier.

Then we have Palm Beach. Mortimer talks about getting Alan a security clearance.

In Palm Beach, an attractive youth calls himself Greg Arthur crops up and Alan has an affair with him. Arthur keeps trying to steal the skuglet. Susan is suspicious of Greg Arthur and in some way protects Alan. There's a show-down, and Arthur fades away. Alan decides to head West. Susan comes along.

Neal Cassady shows up and drives Alan out West. Neal has his girlfriend with him, perhaps Luanne, Caroline, or Natalie, I'll check the dates. Neal views Turing/Burroughs as a mark, a source of cash.

Who is Susan, really? A double agent? A skug herself?

Somehow the Beats, cellular automata, activator-inhibitor morphogenesis, skugs, and nuclear tests come together. Possibly I draw on my story "Instability," co-written with Paul DiFilippo, wherein Neal Cassady drives right into an A-test site. That might be a way in which Alan gets to the scene. Neal drives him. Would be a cool scene to recycle.

I'm also liking the use of the activator-inhibitor model to affect society. The skugs might encourage the Beat movement, simply as a way to make society more interesting and potentially more congenial to them.

What if the invasion was in fact a success? The skugs are among us.

August 27, 2010. Still planning

Rethinking, I'm going to suppose that the killers in Manchester were the British MI5 after all. For awhile I thought they might be skugs, but it's more political to have the killers be British secret police, just like I wrote it in the original story version of "The Imitation Game."

I'm going to call the sole initial skug Oolar for now. I want to make him more of a fun and jolly character. More alien. Not a stereotype secret agent. More like a junky than like a cop.

No stereotypes!

Oolar found out about Turing by searching world data (via a telepathic quantum-entanglement version of Googling) and finding the paper on “The Chemical Basis of Morphogenesis,” and then finding that Turing had seemingly been assassinated. And then, delving into secret channels, Oolar learned from the secret autopsy that Turing had changed his face and is on the loose.

Somehow he tracked him to Tangier—how?

Rather than having a rival skug come through the gate, let’s suppose rather that the scientists and military pigs perceive the Gate, and want to turn it to their own uses. Possibly they see some hope for turning bomb blasts into stable reactor cores.

[Maybe there’s some reality behind the whole Groom Lake, Majestic, Area 9, Dreamland, Men in Black spiel? Nah, I think that horse is too dead. Writing about that stuff is too much a matter “jacking off into a used rubber,” in the phrase I coined many years ago for boring copycat story ideas.]

And when Turing comes back from Skugland he has to tangle with the scientists/army/security. But maybe he’s become a kind of gay Superman.

Oolar is good, the wave equation, mixed states, like the Orpolese. Maybe mixed states are real for Alan in Skugland.

The anti-Oolar pig forces are collapsed state, quantum measurement, like Unipuskers?

September 8, 2010. Story Arc. Time Travel.

I wrote up some ideas for the novel last week and then, in the process of cleaning up and synching my laptop and desktop files I lost the entry. Well, I can remember it pretty well, and rewriting an entry just makes it smoother.

On the biz front, we’re inching towards the contract with Night Shade for *Jim and the Flims*. I’d like to get a story anthology deal with them, too, but it’s not clear if it makes sense to try and go for a two-book contract.

I assembled a million-word (!) document of thirteen sets of book-writing notes to be “published” as a PDF distributed on a CD or a flash drive as *Twenty Years of Writing* with the deluxe edition of my memoir *Nested Scrolls*.

I published issue #10 of my webzine, *Flurb*, featuring my *Turing Chronicles* chapter “[The Skug](#)” as a stand-alone short story. I finished writing the short story “Fjaerland” with Paul DiFilippo and sent it to *Asimov’s*. I’m very nearly done writing the short story “The Hive Mind Man” with Eileen Gunn, and I she plans to send it to *McSweeney’s*. Earlier this summer, I sold my story “The Fnoor Hen” to *Asimov’s*, and sold the story I co-wrote with Bruce Sterling, “Good Night, Moon,” to *Tor.com*. So, counting “The Skug,” that’s five stories since I finished *Jim and the Flims*, and now I’m about storied out.

The decks are clear for *The Turing Chronicles*. Let the mayhem begin!

I’m leaning towards a three-act structure like I’ve used in so many of my novels. It’s the old Monomyth pattern: Departure, Initiation, Return. I) Alan meets the Skugs, II) Alan goes to Skugland via a magic door, iii) Alan comes home and kicks butt.

Even more concisely, I might call the pattern *zzt-shine-zzt*, where the first *zzt* suggests a rolling forward to encounter something, the *shine* is the encounter, and the second *zzt* is the rolling back. In the early 1980s I was using that phrase with my kids to describe the motions of the groundhog in Punxsutawney Phil, in Pennsylvania, who

supposedly comes out of his hole on February 2, and, if he sees his shadow, retreats, thereby predicting six more weeks of winter. I was bitter because the predictions seemed nearly always to be for more winter, and I felt this was a hoax perpetrated upon us by evil forces who wanted us to believe it would be winter, knowing that the back-reaction of society's massed mentation upon mutable reality would in fact make the prophecy come true. I argued that Punxsutawney Phil was in fact a robot, a stuffed groundhog on wheels on rails, rather than being a live animal, and that the reality-manipulating authorities simply rolled him out, flashed a light, and rolled him back. *Zzt-shine-zzt!* The kids loved this rant, they were amused by how passionate and bitter I would get.

Anyway, back to the story arc. Maybe I do for three acts, of about 30,000 words each, give or take.

(Act I) Alan learns of the skugs and witnesses a skug gate in the heart of an atomic bomb blast in Nevada, 1955. I see a sequence of seven chapters. "1. The Imitation Game," "2. The Skug," "3. Tangier Routines," "4. Prodigal Son," "5. On the Road," "6. Howl," "7. Bomb." Note that the last three are named after works by Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Corso, respectively.

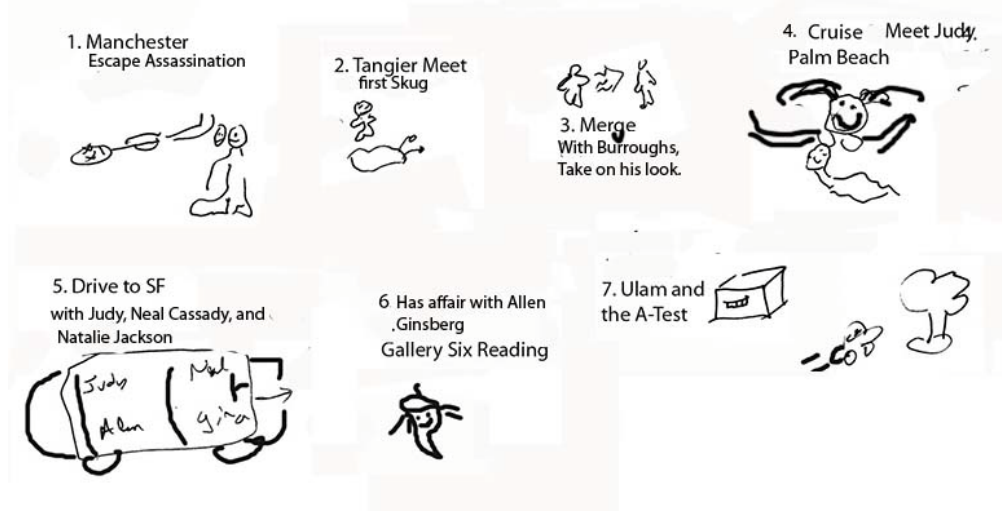


Figure 11. Seven Chapters for Act I

And then? Here's a thought, similar to the plots I usually have.

(Act II) He passes through the 1955 gate into Skugland, where he has some adventures.

(Act III) He comes back through the gate into, I think, contemporary America, interacts with contemporary characters, discovers an ongoing skug beachhead, and saves us from alien domination. "Alan died that we might live."

What is Skugland? What makes it an interesting scene? And what are the skugs? I had been thinking of Skugland as a different level of reality, but I'd like something fresher and perhaps more cartoony than everything-is-in-a-mixed-state-in-Skugland. I do want something that's philosophical, profound and mind-boggling. But I also want something that's entertaining as classic power-chord SF. Ideally I can do both.

A simple idea: What if, instead of being a different level of reality, Skugland is the far future. Let's say it's the year 4024 in the forty-first century. I might base it on the scene described in the "Transcending the Body" section near the end of *Saucer Wisdom*.

And then I'm writing a time-travel novel, which is something I've been wanting to do. Part I: 1954-1955, Part II: 4024, Part III: Around 2012.

I've never really done a novel that has time-travel at its core. Well, wait, *Master of Space and Time* has a couple of time travel scenes that largely revolve around time-travel paradoxes. And in *Hylozoic*, there's a kind of time-travel back to Hieronymus Bosch's time (they travel to the past of a parallel world). And they hop among time streams in *Mathematicians in Love*, and I think they kind of change the past—undoing that surfing accident. In *Saucer Wisdom*, Frank Shook hops into the future and back, reporting on what he finds. But I haven't made time travel the real mainspring of a novel in any traditional kind of way.

A side note. I recently reread, with considerable enjoyment, Heinlein's *Door into Summer*, which Heinlein claimed he'd written in two weeks.

This is a really solid time-travel book. They use cold sleep to get into the future, and a mad-scientist's time machine to return to the past. We have a guy going back and changing his past to make things work out the way that, in fact, he knows they really did. He ponders, but steers clear of, paradoxical behavior—e.g. he refrains from slitting his past self's throat. Heinlein even has a nice half-page where the character opines that in some sense we can't create a paradox and that there is, after all, only the one timeline—a viewpoint that I myself like, and would prefer to use. I should copy out Heinlein's rap for reference.

Regarding Heinlein's slang—at this point a lot of it seems painfully corny. Is this simply from the passage of time, or was Heinlein already painfully corny in the 1950s when he wrote the books? The 1950s Beat writers like Kerouac and Burroughs used contemporary slang, and their books still don't seem corny, at least not to me. Perhaps the difference might be that Heinlein's slang was fake from the start, a literary construct. That is, I half-suspect that his contemporaries never *did* talk like the characters in his books. One feels, on the other hand, that the Beats were writing the slang used by actual living and breathing individuals of their particular historic time. Be that as it may, the slang in *Door into Summer* is peppy, and more enjoyable than painful.

The one sour note in *Door* is the flirting with *Lolita*-style pedophilia—although the main character, Dan Davis, does make his attraction for this 11 or 12 year old girl Ricky at least ostensibly acceptable by holding back and re-meeting her in the future when she's grown to a marriageable age. The trick is done very neatly, and, after all, there's nothing really so shocking in giving taboo sexual motives to a fictional character. And apparently Ricky was in fact modeled on Heinlein's third wife, Ginnie. So in a way it's okay. But really it made me want to puke.

Come to think of it, Turing might conceivably go into the future for some romantic quest, although I'd want the precise problem to be something other than forbidden love for a young boy. Maybe he's bringing his ill lover (Ginsberg?) into the future to find better medical treatment? Maybe he sends Allen back to 1955, but proceeds to 2012 himself.

Back to my plot. I do like the time travel idea. So then the book really can be hoaxingly presented as a true and factual *Turing Chronicles*. The way I found out the stuff that happens in Parts I and II is that Turing told all this to some contemporary 2012 individual in Part III, and I either was this confidant myself, or, maybe better, I got the secret Turing back-story from the confidant and possibly managed to meet Turing myself once or twice as well..

So I'm going to be saying that Turing really was here in Silicon Valley quite recently. Possibly one of the future-based skugs (such as Pratt) *was* Turing, in which case we have a paradoxical time loop to deal with? Or perhaps Turing's would-be assassin in 1954 was a Turing from the future, come to set Alan off on his chase.

So I might (option a) write Part III from the point of view of a pseudo Rudy Rucker, as I did in *Saucer Wisdom*. Possibly I befriend Turing and help him look for a job, or for VC funding. But keep in mind that that *SW* to some extent bombed in the marketplace, perhaps people had too much trouble figuring out what was or wasn't real or serious or veridical— although possibly the problem could just have been the sarcastically sincere title, and the packaging as a nonfiction book.

Alternately (option b) I could introduce a contemporary fictional character in Part III, and perhaps in a very brief Author's Preface, I hoaxingly say this is a real person and that I met them and perhaps even met Turing myself, and in an Author's Afterword, I can limn some weird final exit. There really are (or recently were) skugs in our world, although, in the final Afterword scene that I limn, we find that Turing got rid of them.

I'd like this ancillary character in Part III to be a woman, so we don't get stuck with a complete men-only sword-fight of a book. It could be that she's the more educated sister of a working-class guy whom Alan loves. Mercedes, the sister of Rodrigo. Maybe she works at Google, selling ad spots on the search-result pages. Perhaps I know her because she was one of my students when I taught CS at San Jose State.



Figure 12. Mockup of “Turing and the Skug”

Today I started on a painting with working title, “Turing and the Skug,” which shows Alan standing outside the local Los Gatos Ace Rural Supply Hardware on Santa Cruz Avenue. I see Alan on foot, Rodrigo in the forklift, and a shadowy but rather large skug in the supply barn.

Sept 20-Oct 1, 2010. On the Road

I was on a road trip for three weeks with Sylvia, touring the Wild West. I didn’t think about the novel very much, letting it percolate at some deeper level. Here are three notes that I made.

Sept 20, 2010.

What if Alan Turing has an affair with Allen Ginsberg. High concept! I’m reading Ginsberg’s *Journals: Early Fifties Early Sixties*, finding some good lines. I’ll type them out in a research entry. I need to get his voice down, and internalize it so I can mimic him.

We could have Allen G. discussing Neal and Peter Orlovsky with Alan T.

G had a dream about Burroughs combating a mind from “the future or another dimension.

Maybe Turing takes Ginzy to 4020 with the skugs.

Sept 21, 2010.

G’s journals are blank for Fall, 1954 - Spring, 1995, when I’m seeing most of my novel taking place. But I’m sure there’s more Ginsberg info out there.

What role could Ginsberg play in the plot? Well, what *is* the plot anyway?

Ginsberg motivates Turing (how?) to drive into the nuclear bomb blast? G gets T worked up against the skugs? G is sick and T takes him to Skugland to heal him? They take a copy of “Howl” to the futurians? Or maybe “Howl” is written in Skugland.

It feels like a natural to have Neal Cassady and Allen Ginsberg joining Turing in Los Alamos with a stolen car that Turing drives into the blast. I don’t think I want Neal in Skugland, though. We’ll get enough of him on the drive across the country.

Skugland needs to be concretely imagined, it can’t be diaphanous ecstatic veils of mind-merge and direct-matter-control. I like the looks of the red rocks at Arches and Monument Valley.

Oct 20, 2010.

I need an overall science gimmick for the book, can be a simple idea.

Tweaking society.

There are no time *paradoxes*, but the future *does* influence the past.

October 5, 2010. Looking for the Plot.

I don’t want to make the mistake of overcomplicating things as, frankly, I think I’ve done in my last few novels: *Postsingular*, *Hylozoic*, and *Jim and the Flims*.

Possibly the action I’ve outlined for Act I might almost be enough. I’m reading William Gibson’s latest, *Zero History*, and it’s striking how very simple the plot is. He just keeps circling around the same little cluster of characters, having them talk to each other, without all that much going on. I do have a tendency to get bored or impatient with daily routines, and then I rush on to the next “special effect.”

This, said, I do want to have a good SF spine to the book.

October 9-11, 2010. What is Pratt? Use Time Travel?

[I blogged part of this post as “[Turing and the Skugs. The Invariant Timeline Model.](#)”]



Figure 13. “Turing and the Skugs”, 40” x 30” inches, Oct 2010, Oil on canvas.

I made this painting because I’m gearing up for a novel involving the computer pioneer Alan Turing, the beatniks, some shape-shifting beings called skugs, and possibly some time-travel. Although it would be simpler to do the book without time travel, which what I’m more likely to do. Don’t want too many ingredients in the stew, after all.

I got the word “skug” from my non-identical twin granddaughters, aged three. When I visit my son’s house in Berkeley, I always like to open up his worm farm and study the action with the twins. We find a lot of slugs in there, and we marvel at them. The girls tend to say “skug” rather than “slug,” and I decided I liked the sound of this word so much that I’d use it for some odd beings in my novel.

This isn’t the first time I’ve done this kind of thing—the alien ostrich-like beings called “Peng” in my novel *Hylozoic* take their name from a pet stuffed penguin, also named “Peng,” who’s greatly prized by my other granddaughter, in Madison, Wisconsin.

So what about having the assassin or assassins in Chapter One, “The Imitation Game,” be from the future? And what about having Pratt be a skug?

It would be dramatic to have one of the shadowy Futurians to be the future Turing himself. And then the future-Turing is implicated in the murder of Zeno, whom he loved. I’d rig it so the future-Turing is in fact *fighting* the assassination, fruitlessly trying to avoid the (we’ll suppose) inviolable necessity of altering the past in exactly the ways that one knows it was altered. We might suppose there are two factions of Futurians, some trying to expunge Turing from the past, the others (including future-Turing) trying to

save him. Perhaps Alan even thinks he's blocked the poisoning, but then events conspire to make it happen—like maybe he thinks he's gotten rid of the poison tea, but then it turns out the maid already took it up to the room. You can't change the past. Maybe he even runs upstairs yelling, but is too late. We might prefigure this with the original Alan hearing some ruckus down the hall.

The idea I'll work with is that Turing's skugs become hugely influential perhaps in the future or perhaps just in some contemporary and underground way. (1) They're used for prostheses. (2) They act as standalone programmable robots. (3) Humans switch to skug bodies and enjoy the power of shapeshifting.

(What would this do to reproduction? Perhaps any two people could then mate to bear a skug-child—a result which would pretty much eliminate any real distinction between homosexual and heterosexual couples. Not that you'd have to remain physically of one "gender" if you're a skug—remember that you could shapeshift. Although, even so, there might still be a genetic gender—the Y chromosome thing. I don't want to go too far into this—beware of the "yuck factor" educed by overly detailed biotech.)

Anyway, we're supposing that most of the Futurians are skugs—although there are some fundamentalist hold-outs, who are initially presented as bad, but who maybe are good. The main group of Futurians revere Turing for having brought skugs about, the rebels wish he'd never lived.

The main group of Futurians wouldn't want to go back into the past and mess with Turing's life when, so far as they can see, everything has worked out well. But suppose that the anti-skug Futurians are going back to try and change history, and some of the ruling Futurians have banded together as something like "time police."

As *Analog* book-reviewer Don Sakers points out in a [recent column](#), we really have two options with time-travel stories. Either the past can't be changed and we have an *invariant timeline* or you think you can change the past, but in fact you're changing the past of some alternate universe and there in fact zillions of these *multiverse timelines*.

I'd kind of forgotten about the more Golden Age invariant timeline notion, but when I recently reread Robert Heinlein's *Door Into Summer*, I was reminded of it. Heinlein has a nice half-page in the last chapter. His character opines that in some sense we can't create a paradox and that there is, after all, only the one timeline—I'll copy out Heinlein's rap for reference. (I'll edit the Heinlein quote to remove his assumption that a single divinity "designed" the universe. It's perhaps simpler to regard the universe as a pattern that emerges from some kind of constraint system—like a warped soap film that finds the shape of a minimal surface spanning a curved loop of wire. Or, more in Heinlein's spirit, like a current in some pre-designed circuit.)

"There's a [higher reality] that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." Free will and predestination in one sentence and both true. There is only *one* real world, with one past and one future. "As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end..." Just *one* ...but big enough and complicated enough to include free will and time travel and everything else in its linkages and feedbacks and guard circuits. You're allowed to do anything inside the rules...but you come back to your own door.

... I'm not worried about "paradoxes" or "causing anachronisms"—if a thirtieth-century engineer does smooth out the bugs [with time travel] and then sets up transfer stations and trade, it will be because [some unknowable forces] designed the universe that way. [We have] two eyes, two hands, a brain; anything we do with them can't be a paradox. [There's no need of] busybodies to "enforce" [antiparadox] laws; they enforce themselves. ...

The control is a negative feedback type, with a built in "fail safe," because the very existence of [some present situation] depends on [my not changing it in the past]; the apparent possibility that I might have [changed things] is one of the excluded "not possibles" of the basic circuit design.

Anyway, back to the main question for today: who or what is Pratt? As I presently have the text revised, Pratt is urging Alan to go see Burroughs. So Pratt would seem to be a pro-skug Futurian.

But, you know—the whole idea of people coming back in time to do things they already know they did seems kind of stupid. Lacking in tension. I think I'll drop the backwards time travel entirely and allow, however, for a jump forward in time.

That is, I do something along the lines of Act I, which culminates with Turing driving a stolen new 1956 Buick into a bomb fireball and ending up in 2011. And then I write some *Saucer Wisdom* type hoax after that, involving me meeting Turing, and learning of the skugs.

So the skugs become an ongoing contemporary underground faction. The people who are skugs are, let us say, skuggers? Or skugmen and skugwomen?

Pratt is just a British agent, and the agents were indeed the ones who tried to kill Turing, and Pratt is there to follow up. Alan's little miniskug eats or converts Pratt into a skugman. What becomes of Pratt after he's a skug? Suppose he continues scheming with the British spies, and that he follows Alan to Palm Beach and confronts him there during a gay sex act in which Pratt and Alan merge. Alan flees to the West Coast.

We have a kind of Mad-Scientist's-Weird-Plague-Alters-Humans story, a golden oldie worthy of the 1950s setting. And the scientist is perhaps trying to undo the plague, but the Evil Warmongers want to use it.

Turing himself is irrevocably a skug after the Burroughs chapter, so we have the Mutant theme as well.

I still need to figure out what to put in the second and third acts. But perhaps I can stretch out the current story to fill that up. The Tangier chapter could, for instance, get longer, or even split in two, if I enhance Driss's character. Maybe Driss's mother comes over to meet Alan.

I should build up Turing's work on computational morphogenesis some more in the first two chapters. It would be good if there were some huge insight that he's had, but I can't think of it right now.

October 15-18, 2010. Gearing up for a fourth chap, "Shapeshifter"

[I blogged part of this entry as "[Wild West #7. Moab. Alan Turing and the](#)"]

[Beats.](#)”]

I’ve been revising the “Skug” and “Tangier Routines” chapters for the last week or two. I’m making the story more straightforward than I’d been saying in these notes.

Turing’s skug eats Pratt and Pratt’s personality is gone for good. Alan finds a way to teach the skug to preserve his personality when it eats him.

Phrase I heard the country/roots band Plan B singing at the Lost Gatos Market last Sunday. “This life ain’t ... what it seems. / I got lost ... walkin’ on the street of dreams.”

This expresses something of the feeling I’d like to have in my *Turing Chronicles*.

On the ship to the U.S., Alan masters shapeshifting. He goes around the ship as a woman, calling himself Abigail, and has an affair with Greg Arthur. Tells Greg that “she” is stowed away in Alan Turing’s room. At disembarking, Turing tells Greg that Abigail will meet him at Cobblestone Gardens next week.

If I have the Burroughs-letters chapter, it would seem reasonable to have more chapters that take the form of beat pastiches. Maybe some letters or journal entries by Ginsberg, I like his journal style, so chatty and self-examining, I could imitate that.

And maybe a “lost” essay or story by Kerouac—Jack’s letters and journal entries tended not to be so good, that wasn’t a good form for him. I can see a draft of a transreal SF story by Jack, and the chapter even has Jack’s idea of an SF title, like “The Skug Women of Planet Three.” Or “One Flesh.”

It’s worth noting that Kerouac and Burroughs were both intrigued by science fiction, and that Jack sometimes talked about writing SF. Burroughs pretty much *did* write SF, although his work tends not be categorized that way.

I still want Alan to make friends with a woman. What if he meets up with an early electronic composer, as he has some facility in that direction thanks to his Delilah analog voice encryption project. They barely had the phrase electronic music in 1955. They called it *musique concrète*, see Wikipedia [history of electronic music](#). Some called it acousmatic art, where that weird word means you can’t see the source of the sound. They used Ampex tape recorders, sampling natural and manmade sounds (like factory noises and ship sirens and motors) collaging them, speeding them up, slowing them down, echoing and looping. Sometimes playing a tape track with live instruments.

Burroughs himself was really into tape recordings for a time, come to think of it. Edgard Varèse and Karlheinz Stockhausen were active in the late 40s and early 50s. They had the idea of synthesizing music via electronically produced signals. In the U.S., John Cage was involved with the Music for Magnetic Tape Project. Turing’s friend Christopher Strachey wrote a music program for a computer based on an early Manchester computer.

Susan Green is the woman. Perhaps she’s a lesbian, and Turing, as Abigail, is pursued by her. The “imitation game” to the second power.

I might work in some ab-ex painters as well.

As an aftereffect of Alan and Bill’s Xmas Day union within the skug, Burroughs

will be a shapeshifter now too, I suppose. Perhaps he keeps this somewhat under control? Or confronts Alan again later on.

What of the rogue skug that ate Pratt? We might suppose that it's doused in gasoline and burned in Tangier. It's caught eating a goat. Burroughs can mention this. He sees the event while he's out getting his mail.

And suppose that Alan confirms this on his way out of town. But maybe Driss is betraying him.

I see Alan driving from Palm Beach to SF with someone like Neal Cassady. Certainly Neal himself could fit into the story, given that we have Burroughs already and possibly Jack K and Allen G on deck. But I feel some uneasiness about writing about Neal. It might be gauche, derivative, dull. I don't want to come across as a Beat fanboy. It would be better to invent my own madman. Make it fresher. Yes, I enjoyed writing the Burroughs chapter, "Tangier Routines," and Burroughs might even come back. But that doesn't mean I have to put in pop-up cameos for every single Beat.

If I have a Cassady-like character, I want some friction with Alan so we get a different take than a weak copy of the *On the Road* or *Visions of Cody* transcripts.

It's more interesting for me if I make a fresh character and fresh adventures rather than reprising things that Jack or, for that matter, Tom Wolfe told.

Even further into the fanboy mode, I could bring in Neal's girlfriend Natalie Jackson (called Rosie or Rosemary Buchanan by Kerouac in *Dharma Bums*).

Historically, in the fall of 1955, Natalie impersonated Carolyn to withdraw funds from her bank for Neal to squander at the racetrack on some scheme of his. He'd hang out with Natalie at a Victorian house at 1403 Gough Street, at the apartment of Robert LaVigne there.

Overcome by guilt, Natalie killed herself on November 30, 1955.

I'd feel totally uncomfortable and lame to be rehashing this stale, picked-over gossip. It's better to invent new things. Events that "should have" happened. Like I did with the Bruegel novel.

So okay, the cross-country driver isn't Neal.

I recall the name of a character who was just about to make an entrance when I broke off work on my novel *Twinks* in, I think, 1982. I think his name was Vassar Lafia. Vassar could be Alan's driver instead of Neal. A fictional lesser-known friend of Burroughs's.

And Vassar could be into some soul-sleeping horseshit along the lines of Neal's Edgar Cayce stuff. Only it's sort of true, and Alan is picking up telepathic or chthonic vibes.

Maybe Turing doesn't like Vassar at first. Vassar's a bumptious blue-collar stoner, and it seems like Alan would have to be sexually attracted to him. But at a personal level, Turing dislikes him initially. He's won over into some intricate mind analysis game. Maybe Vassar gets Turing to be stealing gas and food. And Susan is making music out of it. And using her tape recorder to rob people.

While in Abby form, Alan tells Susan that his friend Alan is getting a ride to SF

with another friend, Vassar Lafia, and Abby can ride along.

When Susan gets in the car, it's just Alan and Vassar, and she's uneasy. Vassar wants to fuck Susan and she's putting him off. Alan calms Susan, and at the edge of town he shapeshifts into Abby.

Vassar is impressed. Suppose they go for a sexual three-way that night or the next. Alan/Abby is happy to be getting Vassar's embraces, and Susan's happy to be making it with Abby as well.

I'm still casting about for a way to avoid having the novel be a series of homosexual love stories. I need a mix.

It might be interesting, after they get to San Francisco, to have Alan use skug power to swap genitalia with Susan Green. The couple would be a metaphor for a certain kind of man-woman pair. "She wears the pants." Oh, I don't think I'll do that. Alan wants men, not women.

But it might work to have Alan sometimes turn into a woman, Abby. Although he might keep his male genitalia even then.

Re. Alan's boyfriend in SF, I figure he's not Alan Ginsberg, for the same reasons why I don't want to use Neal Cassady as a character. But the guy is, I think, an experimental film maker along the lines of Bruce Conner. And the film maker and Alan do go to the Gallery Six reading.

Maybe we can work in something like Jay DeFeo's painting The Rose, which Bruce Conner documented. Not *this* painting, but some other weird artwork.

If we leave out Alan G as a character, maybe Alan only sees Jack K kind of from the outside there at the reading, and Jack seems mainly like a loud drunk.

I'm thinking I'd like to work some giant ants into the novel. The first SF movie I really really wanted to see (and my parents wouldn't let me go) was *Them*, a giant ants movie. Giant ants are very 1950s, after all.

Possibly Turing causes the giant ants with his tinkering? Perhaps the pursuit of the giant ants leads him into the A-blast? I'm tempted to reprise the scene in that otherwise weak 2008 movie, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, where Indy wanders into a fake suburban town set up to test the effects of the blast, and the houses are full of mannequins. He could have Burroughs along with him for this.

Maybe Burroughs describe it in more letters.

October 21, 2010. San Francisco Notes.

[I blogged this entry as "[Post-Impressionist SF](#)"]

Sylvia and I were up in San Francisco two days ago, I visited with my artist friend Paul Mavrides, and then the three of us went to see the show "Post-Impressionist Masterpieces from the Musée d'Orsay" at the de Young museum in Golden Gate Park.

I mentioned to Paul my idea of having Turing blunder into the fake town set up by an A-bomb test-site, and Paul said this had been used not only in *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, but also in a 1954 Mickey Rooney comedy called *The Atomic Kid*, and in the last episode of the first season of a 1986 TV series called *Crime Story*. I don't think I'll look at either of those, but the fact that the idea's been used three

times makes me feel a little more free about using it again. It's kind of a standard trope by now.

I loved Paul Signac, [*Women at the Well*](#), of 1893. Some really great gnarly shapes at the bottom. And [*Beach at Heist*](#) by Paul Lemmen, 1892.

In the evening we went to a reading at Booksmith on Haight Street, and I checked out some big cartoon books, one of which included "Death Sentence," a comic from *Tales of Terror* #14, March, 1954, with art by Sid Check. A scientist grows some protoplasmic slime in a glass bottle, much like Alan Turing culturing his skug in my novel. By tweaking his culture with I think radiation, the scientist gets the stuff to undergo "forced rapid evolution of 1,000,000 years," effectively becoming a creature typical of the far future. Some of the goo gets into a cut on the scientist's finger and then, "He was a changing, shapeless mass of ulcerative protoplasm." The goo splits and redivides, eating everyone in sight. Perfect.

It was great being in San Francisco at night in the fog. Such a sense of promise and excitement.

I hadn't been on Haight Street for about a year, and it looked a little better than I'd remembered—usually I always just go to Valencia Street these days. There really are some good clothes stores on the Haight, the restaurants aren't bad, and there weren't as many gutterpunk panhandlers as usual.

October 25, 2010. *The Inner Skug.*

I'm working on my "Shapeshifter" chapter. I need to decide whether Alan can talk to some skug soul within him. He trained the skug in the "Skug" chapter two, and seems to have had conversations with it. He was swallowed and reshaped by the skug in the "Tangier Routines" chapter. And in the "Shapeshifter" chapter, he'll draw on his skug qualities to alter the shape of his body like Plasticman might do.

Does the skug have a personality? Does Alan talk to it?

There is a default SF convention that these kinds of mad-scientist-spawned blobs are insatiably hungry, wanting to devour the whole human race. And in this case the skug would be goading Alan to merge with more people. It could also be that the skug is somehow hooked into some aliens from another world, dimension or size scale, and in this case, it could have a strong personality.

But I think it makes the story too difficult if Alan is continually arguing with another mind that lives within himself. Given that the skug is a newly created life form, it might not have much character. This would make it easy to manage, it could be a bit like an unborn child that Alan is carrying. I'd rather have Alan's skug aspect be more like a hidden superpower.

Possibly further along in the novel, the skug hooks into some type of alien mind, but for now, I'll dumb it down. And, I think, refer to it as "it" rather than "he" as I'd been starting to do.

October 29-30, 2010. *Strunk in "Shapeshifter" Chap. Story Arc.*

[I posted some of this entry on my blog as "[High Concept: Shapeshifting with Skugs](#)."]

This "Shapeshifter" chapter has been growing all week, and could still get a little bigger. It's up to 6,200 words, so I might eventually fission it—these days I tend to want chapters of 3 or 4 thousand words, although there's no real need for that. In any case, I

might as well let the material grow until I feel it's well-enough rounded out, and worry later about how to slice it up.

There is, after all, no pressing need to *rush* off the ship, into Miami, and onto a car for the drive to California. I might as well make the most of the scene I'm in now. I'm having fun thickening up the characters and I could keep doing this for awhile. For that matter, I could go back and enhance the conversations and relationships that Alan has with Driss and Burroughs.



Figure 14: Nude Nabs UFO

Lately I've been looking at this recent oil painting of mine, *Nude Nabs UFO*, that hangs on my office wall. I did a lot of layers on it, and the colors are very rich. Writing can be like that too. You keep adding layers and extra bits until it has this nice patina. That's more along the lines of what literary novelists do—as opposed to frantically rushing on to new special effects and wild surprises, as I'm sometimes prone to do.

So what's going on in this chapter anyway? Well, Alan is booked onto the *Phos* tramp steamer from Gibraltar to Miami as William Burroughs, but has learned to turn himself into a woman called Abby. And, as Abby, he's fucking this character Vassar Lafia who's a bit like Neal Cassady, although more of a world traveler. I'm giving Vassar a kind of Cassadyesque style of speech, and I'm resisting veering into a heavy Southern or Western accent for him.

Vassar is something of a cad, but I'm working to not have him come across as a complete sexist pig. To this end, I'll need one or two more conversations between Alan

and him. Alan is in love with Vassar, he likes how raffish and rebellious he is. I'd like Vassar to be sweet and dreamy, tough and naive, a diamond in the rough with clever turns of phrase. I don't want to end him to be a drunk punk, at least not all of the time.

There's a sinister and slimy guy named Neddy Strunk on the ship, and as the *Phos* nears Miami, Neddy has a confrontation with Alan into his custody. Somehow Neddy knows that Turing has become a shapeshifter, and he wants something from Alan, but Alan loses it and violently throws Strunk over the ship's railing before listening any more. Looking down into the Bahamian waters, Alan sees Neddy's body as a glowing white form that follows the ship for a bit and then dives into the depths like a dolphin.

I think Strunk is in fact a skug. It may even be that Strunk and the skugified Pratt are one and the same, thanks to potency of skug flesh.

I'll suppose that a chunk of Pratt followed Alan from Tangier to Gibraltar—maybe Alan glimpses an odd scorpion on the ferry. And the thing eats some local and mutates into the Portuguese purser and then into Neddy Strunk.

Going back to where Pratt came from in the first place—I'll stick with the easy answer that he was indeed a British agent that was eaten by Alan's skug culture. [I think I better not go with the wilder idea that Pratt was *already* a skug. In this case he could perhaps have been grown by the British intelligence labs, using some of the formulae and papers that Alan left behind. It would have helped them if they'd been able to spy on Alan's ongoing work in Tangier—possibly Driss could have been passing on some lab notes or skug samples to the British Embassy all along. But the story is going to be cleaner if Alan alone is creating the skugs.]

So what does Strunk want from Alan? Maybe he craves Alan's company as Alan is his creator? No, he wants a wetware upgrade. The skug that Alan used when dissolving Pratt wasn't fully optimized like the skug that Alan used when merging himself with William Burroughs. The Strunk-skug grew from a scrap of Pratt, and doesn't have such good functionality. He acts autistic, or shy, or even zombie-like.

Why doesn't Alan welcome the Strunk-skug? I think it's mainly that he doesn't quite understand what Strunk is, and fights with him and throws him overboard before Strunk's skuggy nature comes clear as he glows and swims away. At a deeper level, Alan's repulsion is like that of Dr. Jekyll repelled by the deeds of Mr. Hyde, like the Baron von Frankenstein repelled by his monster, or like an author repelled by his id.

Looking ahead along the story arc, I really would like to know what these mysterious agents and skugs are up to. And what will Turing's goal be? What happens in Miami, on the drive West, in California, in Nevada at the bombsite, and in (if we end up there) the Los Perros of 2011?

I'd like a rather clear-cut task that will guide Turing's actions over the chapters to come. I know from experience that the task in and of itself doesn't have to be all that important or recondite—we're really just talking about a Maguffin. But the reader likes to have a fixed goal in mind.

Here are some Possible Goals and Subgoals. Note that it's not necessarily a problem to reuse a goal—if we think in terms of, for instance, the Monomyth, then we don't really expect our story arcs to have wildly different geometries. It's the details and the trimmings that make each book unique. This said, it's worth trying to come up with a fresh story line. Anyway, here's what I can think of at the moment, off the top of my

head

*Make everything into a computation and viscerally understand that everything is alive—learn to speak with animals, trees, air currents, and even stones. (Used in *Postsingular* and *Hylozoic*.)

*It's often good to have two competing forces in play besides the hero, and his or her goal is to game the conflict. Like he might want to repel the some aliens called, like, the Oozers and the Klanks, who are competing for the domination of Earth. "Which will it be: chaotic Oozer anarchy, a humorless Klank dictatorship, or our own human future?" (Used in *Frek and the Elixir*, only it was Unipuskers and Orpolese, also in *Hylozoic*, where it was the Peng and the Hrull).

*Find true love. (Goes without saying, but keep it in mind.)

*Nudge our global civilization away from some menace like plasticity, conformity, destruction of the environment, prejudice, or cultural rifts—by learning to manipulate societies like tweaked computations. (This might a good subgoal for Turing, thus his involvement with the Beats.)

*Tunnel from the 1950s into an alternate reality by passing through the core of an exploding thermonuclear bomb. I could segue this into a road trip that never ends. (Like the little pig in the Geico ad, squealing, "Wee wee wee," in the breeze of an open car window, and the trip never ever ends. *Squee!*) How could we work this? Think of a Riemann surface, where multiple sheets are glued together along a singular boundary. You travel around and and around, and every time you pass the bump, wow, you're in a new layer of reality. And the glitch happens to be inside the stressed spacetime at the heart of a nuclear explosion. (This could all be a last scene, with the endless road trip only hinted at.)

Backing off for a moment from my thoughts about a goal, I want to think about the "high concept" method of structuring a plot. You make one simple but drastic change in the world that percolates out with many interesting effects. What I'd like to do in *The Turing Chronicles* is to work *shapeshifting via skugs* as my high concept.

Shapeshifting is a fairly rich metaphor: Universal computation. Transgendering. Artistic creation. Personal growth. Psychosis.

And the skugs who potentiate the shapeshifting have the connotation of creativity out of control. The beatniks.

Note that the skugs are strictly lab-made, and will not be extraterrestrial aliens. Generally a skug will be integrated with a person and simply be giving them higher powers. Perhaps from time to time a skug can in some sense go rogue and behave like a subhuman—this would represent a kind of curdling in the shapeshifter gift. Some people lose control and become wholly chaotic, devolving into rogue skugs.

A really cool shapeshifter is the character Plastic Man in the Jack Cole comics of the 1940s and early 1950s. In 1999, Art Spiegelman wrote a wonderful New Yorker article "[Forms Stretched to Their Limits](#)," about Jack Cole. And later Chip Kidd added Cole's strips and illustrations to the article to make a lovely book, *Jack Cole and Plastic Man* (Chronicle Books, 2001). I may first heard of Plasticman [sic] in Thomas Pynchon's [Gravity's Rainbow](#).

I clarified these ideas by talking over the plot with Sylvia this afternoon while we went walking in the hills. She remarked that it might be best not to overcomplicate the story—that is, not to have any aliens in cahoots with the skug, and not to add in the element of time travel that I'd been toying with. If I do have Turing drive into an A-bomb blast, we might suppose that this happens at the very end of the book, and leave it a mystery whether his skug powers let him use the blast as a tunnel to an alternate or a future reality.

Summing up my plot again, it's about a guy who invents a method for turning himself into a shapeshifter or, more concisely, a skug. He does shapeshifting for fun, and now and then for commercial gain or for sexual pleasure. He might become a woman, a dog, a big bird. He is able to communicate this skugly power to others, and the shapeshifting spreads. Pretty much everyone at the Six Gallery reading of Ginsberg's "Howl" was a skug. And what orgies they had in those times.

In a nutshell, or, rather, in a tweet, I see my Turing and the skugs story as follows. "Being creative = shapeshifter = skug infection. Art = communicable disease."

Back to story-arc. How does the scientist-created-mutation-story end? I see two models that I'll call Retraction and Repression. In either model, the scientist dies nobly fighting at the end, or perhaps he flips into some unknown new dimension of reality.

(Retraction) The scientist decides it was a mistake and, with great labor, manages to roll back the infestation. In the Retraction story line, the skugs get so freaky that Turing himself realizes they were a mistake, and he labors to undo them.

(Repression) The government or some more free-form group akin to a lynch mob battles to wipe out the mutants. In the Repression story line, the right-wing segments of the government crack down on the skugs.

My knee-jerk reaction is to go for the Repression model, because that's closer to how I see our actual society operating. But really the Retraction model offers more dramatic possibilities. We begin with a Repression model, and Turing is defending the skugs from exploitation by the military and making skugness a tool of the intelligentsia. But then the skugs go too far. One might think here of psychedelic drugs—initially they were hailed as tools of psychic liberation, but over time we came to see them as the enemies of some people's well-being, burning them out. At some point the skugs could start doing much more harm than good. And then Turing might, albeit reluctantly, join in the crackdown against skugs.

So I'm saying I'll start with the Repression model and segue into the Retraction model. And Turing is in some sense killed by the skugs at the end. Maybe he Pied Pipers them into a nuclear blast which would be a very classic 1950s-SF kind of ending.

November 3-4, 2010. Neddy Strunk and Susan Green

It will turn out that that Strunk adhered to the keel of the *Phos* after Alan threw him overboard. His skug powers freed him having to breathe.

And maybe Strunk tails Alan's cab to Mortimer Burroughs's house in West Palm Beach by clinging to the underside of the cab like I think Robert Mitchum does in *Cape Fear*.

Once Alan gives Strunk a wetware upgrade, Strunk will have more of a personality. On the *Phos* he was still kind of zoned-out due to his integration with the low-grade beta-version of the skug.



Figure 15. Aboard the Lake Champlain in 1953.

Turns out Strunk is a deserter from the U.S. Navy. My first thought was that he'd been on an aircraft carrier docked at Gibraltar, the [*Lake Champlain*](#), shown above, with a sailor handling a depth charge.



Figure 16. The USS Nautilus, around 1954.

Another, more intriguing option, is to claim that Strunk was a sailor on the [*Nautilus*](#), the first nuclear-powered submarine. The *Nautilus* was commissioned into service on September 30, 1954, but more work followed, and the reactor only started

running on December 20, 1954, not reaching full power for two more weeks. The ship is said to have gone to sea for the first time on January 17, 1955. But I could bend the truth, and claim that the Nautilus was on a secret or illicit run across the Atlantic and back, reaching Gibraltar on December 25, 1954, surfacing just long enough for Neddy to jump ship. The thing only went about 25 knots, or 30 mph, so would have taken about a week either way.

Neddy was a petty officer and shipfitter who had some technical training and security clearance for working with the nuclear reactor that powered the ship.

I see Strunk as a proto-beatnik, a malcontent. He likes cards and is an excellent poker player. He won a big pot on the sub. He got mad at his chief officer for riding him, possibly about some casual homosexual activity. Neddy went AWOL, bought a cheap suit and was planning to bum around Europe. Possibly he wanted to sell some nuke secrets to spies. But then the skug assimilated him, and sent him after Turing.

Strunk comes from Skylight, Kentucky. I see him as being something like my old character, Randy Karl Tucker.

Lafia is from the West, maybe Missoula, Montana.

Susan Green is Vassar Lafia's wife. She believes in open marriage, is cool about sharing Vassar with Abby.

Neddy turns up, Alan gives him the wetware upgrade, merges with him a little. Neddy perks up and is immediately less zombie-like. His native personality is able to shine now, with the fresh skugware.

Subliminally, Neddy will have some of Pratt percolating up in him as well, but we'll only bring that in later, when Neddy will snap and do something Prattish like calling the FBI. For now, we only notice that there are some buried conflicts in Neddy's personality.

Possibly Neddy and Abby team up on some robberies, using teep.

I need to mention Captain Eugenio again.

November 8, 2010. The Lives of the Burroughs Family

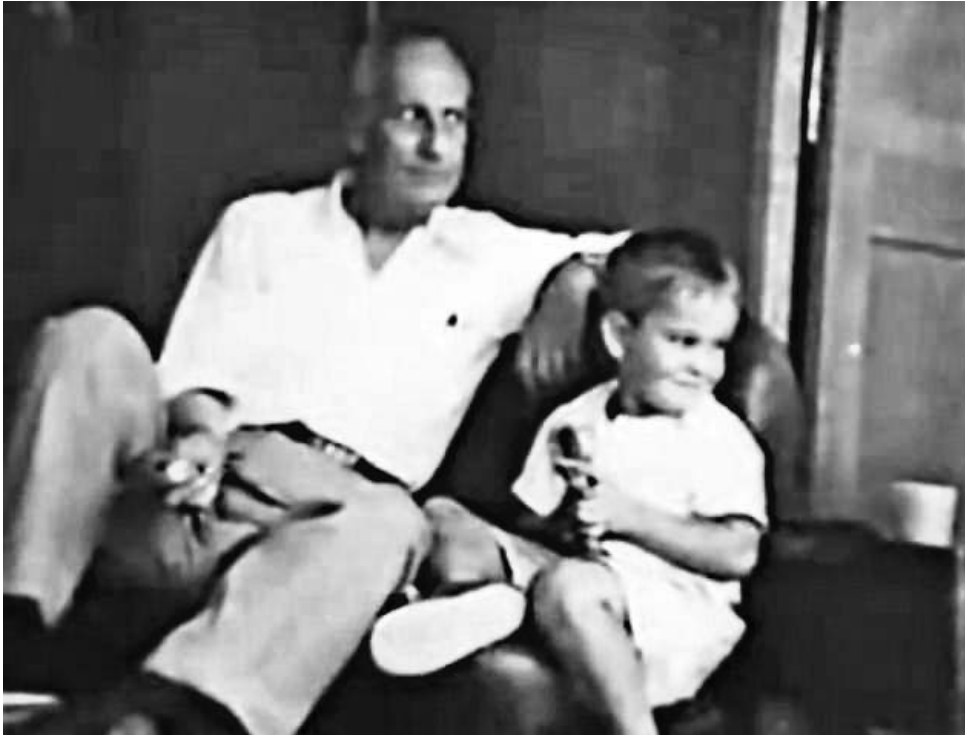


Figure 17. Bill Burroughs's Father and Son, Mortimer and Billy, Jr.

I found a photo of Mortimer Burroughs with Billy, Jr., on a [memorial page](#). Mort was born in St. Louis in 1885. So was seventy in 1955. He lived ten more years. His wife Laura Lee was three years younger, and from Georgia.

I'd forgotten that Bill's son Billy was living with the grandparents, which complicates things. Billy was born in 1947, so he'd be eight in 1955.



Figure 18. Burroughs's Mother, Laura Lee Burroughs

And I found Laura Lee's photo in [this article](#) "Like Mother, Like Son," about some books on flower-arranging that she wrote for the Coca-Cola company!

I also learned that the Burroughs home was at 202 Sanford Ave in Palm Beach, here's a [satellite view](#). I've been using the street-view mode to walk around near the house. Palm Beach is this narrow strip of sand with water on the inland side as well. I got the location from William Burroughs Jr.'s third (and posthumous) book, *Cursed from Birth*, part of which is [online](#).

Mote and Laura moved to Palm Beach so I could grow up wholesome. For ten years, we lived at 202 Sanford Avenue, a street lined with royal palm trees where the houses get smaller and some of them have no servants. My grandparents ran an antique-furniture business on Worth Avenue, Cobblestone Gardens, where they sold elegant antiques to the very rich, and always met them at the door. The house was full of the creaking stuff. Some of the rooms were furnished according to different historical periods, but after Mote was gone, my grandmother sold a lot of it and scrambled up the rest. We had a lot of old Victorian articles with taloned paws carved on the legs; one coffee table actually had wings.

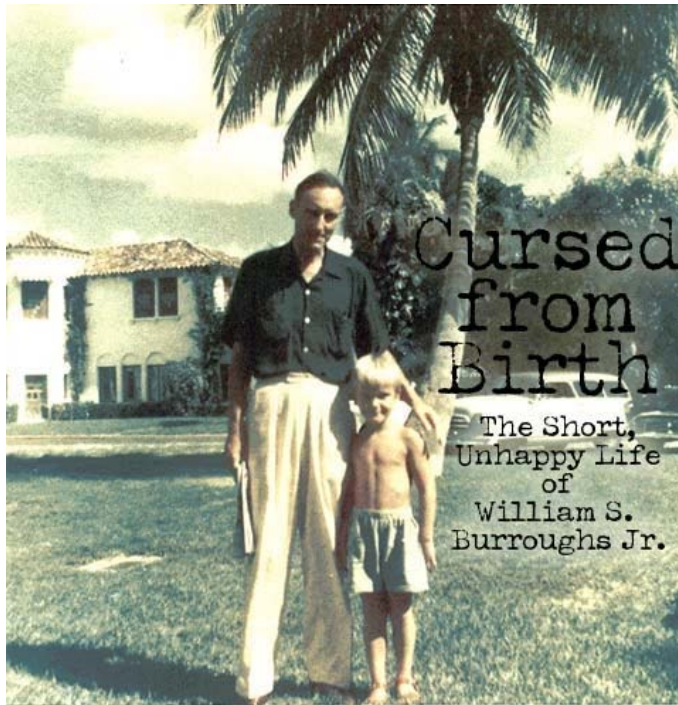


Figure 19. Photo of Bill and Billy from cover of *Cursed from Birth*.

(There's some Joan Vollmer stuff on [Wikipedia](#), too.) Joan was buried at the [Panteón Americano in Mexico City](#), on Sept 9, 1951, in *fosa* 1018 in Section A / New. Some remarks by Burroughs:

You see, I've always felt myself to be controlled at some times by this completely malevolent force, which Brion [Gysin] describes as the Ugly Spirit. My walking down the street, and tears streaming down my face, meant that I knew that the Ugly Spirit—which is always the worst part of everyone's character—would take over, and that something awful would happen.

...

I am forced to the appalling conclusion that I would never have become a writer but for Joan's death, and to a realization of the extent to which this event has motivated and formulated my writing. I live with the constant threat of possession, a constant need to escape from possession, from Control. So the death of Joan brought me in contact with the invader, the Ugly Spirit, and maneuvered me into a lifelong struggle, in which I have had no choice except to write my way out.

I'm toying with the idea of resurrecting Joan. Reading "The Death of Joan Vollmer Burroughs: What Really Happened?" makes the scene pretty clear. I'd have to do some research to effectively write a Mexico City scene, but, hey, I already faked *Tangier*. This said, I'm not entirely sure I want to get into Joan's shooting. The whole

story is so pathetic and depressing. Can I possibly make it right? That's the challenge, isn't it.

Another thing that makes me hesitate is that *Jim and the Flims* was a "bring back a dead wife" book already—am I suddenly obsessed with this theme? My brother's wife died this summer, and Sylvia and I have had our own brushes with mortality of late, so I suppose resurrection is on my mind.

A plus of resurrecting Joan is that it puts a clear subplot into the book.

November 15-16, 2010. Still in Palm Beach.

I've been away from *The Turing Chronicles* for about a week—I had to process the publisher's copy-edits on my autobiographical memoir, *Nested Scrolls*, and then I went ahead and reread that whole book, tweaking it.

I've been thinking off and on about the current chapter, though.

I need to have a page of dialog for a conversation while Alan is sitting in the kitchen with Mote, Laura, and Billy Jr. I need to make these people come alive somehow, even if what I put in is wildly inaccurate. I'm thinking I could use Roland G's parents as models for the Burroughs parents—Mr. G was a classy gentleman farmer. And Billy—I see him as an unhappier version of me as a boy. It would be intense if the topic of Joan's shooting came up in this conversation. Have Alan accessing the heretofore unexamined memory in response to something Billy says.

Aboard the ship, I need to show Alan playing with his shapeshifting abilities a little. I'd like to see him go ahead and take on the look of a giant banana slug, just like the "skug" in my recent painting. And maybe when Alan's making love with Vassar, he melts a little, perhaps evoking a comment from Vassar. Or what if—how embarrassing—Alan's penis suddenly pops out, just for second, while he's in bed with Vassar. Vassar is, like, huh? "Gawrsh, Mickey."

Following the suggestion of a fan's comment on a recent blog post of mine, I read a little of Iain Bank's first SF novel, *Concerning Phlebas*, which has a shapeshifter or "Changer" as a character. In this novel, the shapeshifting is quite slow; it takes several days, like a process of biological growth. But I'm going to want the shapeshifting to be fast, like for Plasticman. Something that I *can* use from *Concerning Phlebas* is that a shapeshifter needs to focus fairly steadily on their desired form. I like that idea.

Since Alan's norm is to change shape very rapidly, it could be that any sudden shock can distract Alan from maintaining, say, his Abby shape, and he could then revert to his default Alan shape with the abruptness of a Zeeman catastrophe machine settling into a new minimal energy configuration.

Neddy Strunk slimes up the wall of the Burroughs house, and into Alan's second-story room. Alan is backing off. Neddy takes on his Strunk look, and Alan is, like, oh no. Seeing this, Neddy has the idea of taking on a crude approximation of Vassar's appearance. He embraces Alan and, almost against his own will, Alan finds himself slipping into his Abby shape. Soft mood music.

They're fucking, but it's more than that, it's skug conjugation. They're exchanging cytoplasm. On an impulse, Alan shoots a tendril **thwap** upwards to stick to the ceiling of the Burroughs guest bedroom, and Neddy does the same. They dangle in the air, slowly twisting, like a pair of mating hermaphroditic slugs. And that's when Mrs. Burroughs and young Billy Jr. walk in on them.

The wild thing is—after this sight, Laura *still* thinks that this is her son William

Burroughs, even though it's Alan in the Abby shape deformed into a dangling skug. I mean, that's the kind of guy that Bill is, right? He *does* this kind of shit. Laura Lee throws him out of the house.

One downside for the real Bill is that now the parents will stop sending a monthly stipend to Tangier, and they ignore any further requests from that quarter, taking them to be forgeries. This will be good for the plot, as it would give Bill a motive to come back to the US and to have some further interactions with Alan a few chapters down the line.

When Alan leaves the Burroughs manse, he just keeps looking like Abby. It's too confusing if he's constantly changing his face. Young Billy tags along on his bicycle, Alan and Neddy can't ditch the kid. Billy saw them dangling, he vaguely understands, and is kind of enthused and impressed. I figure eight-year-old boys enjoy gross mad-science things. Billy, too, thinks that, deep down, Alan really is his father William Burroughs. They go into a diner.

Neddy looks like his Ichabod Crane self just now, but in the diner he decides to be colored. At this time restaurants in Florida were, I think, segregated. But Neddy gets a hair or some skin-flakes from a bus-boy who resembles my college friend Jack W. And then, sitting at the table with Alan and Billy, Neddy changes his race. The southerner cashier evicts them. I think it's important to bring in racial issues in the novel, as well as homosexuality. Skugs symbolize the "others" of the 50s mind—blacks, beatniks, communists, homosexuals, intellectuals.

Billy shows the two guys where bums sleep in Palm Beach. Maybe Alan doesn't try to pop Billy's illusion that he's Billy's Dad. In parting, Alan even issues the kind of apology about Joan's death that perhaps Bill Sr. never did.

Maybe Billy Jr. will reappear later on. It would be kind of nice to honor his memory as well as Bill Sr.'s. Billy is kind of a forgotten man, and is in some ways more emblematic of today's generation than is Bill Sr. He's not heroic though. I was just rereading Billy's memoir, *Kentucky Ham*, and, just as I remembered, it's pretty sad. A lost, neglected kid trying to act hard and tough. Heartbreaking, really.

In the morning, the Palm Beach cops are busting bums, and Alan and Neddy manage to run a scam to get some money. They'll be doing this quite a bit, acting as a team. The way they work it is that Neddy, who's more aggro about being a skug, gets locked into a paddy wagon and then, on the spot, buds off some crawler-hands which infect the cops, skugifying them, making them allies.



Figure 20. 1951 Pontiac Catalina.

Maybe Neddy and Alan even get the cops to give them a car, let's say it's a nice impounded gangster car, maybe from a mulatto pimp. Looking [online](#), I find a nice populuxe 1955 two-tone Pontiac Catalina, shown above. Perfect.

Alan and Neddy show up for the meet at Cobblestone Gardens that next day. And they drive to California with Vassar and Susan, having swinging sexswap along the way, which suits Alan and Neddy fine—Alan prefers Vassar; Neddy prefers Susan.

November 25-27, 2010. Skugs and Skuggers

At one point recently, I was starting to talk about Neddy having a touch of Pratt's personality, because he got skugged by a scrap that crawled away from Pratt being burned. But this would be a mistake. Alan put some of Pratt's skug onto himself (after tweaking it further) and he doesn't talk about being contaminated by the guy. Pratt's not in there. In *fact* I forestalled this in the "The Skug" chapter: "It seemed as if Pratt's personality was no more. Alan concluded that the skug's still rather rudimentary biocomputation was irreversible."

So we'd have to suppose that the Pratt skug roaming the streets of Tangier had no real personality, and was equivalent to the stuff in the bud that Alan then tweaked to a higher level and put onto himself and onto Burroughs.

Note that Alan *had* tweaked the Pratt skug a bit more before its release into the alleys, and this can have been enough of a tweak so that a sample of that skug would *not* have wiped out Neddy's personality in the same way that the untweaked skug had wiped out Pratt's personality.

Was any of Driss's personality in the original skug? No, just a DNA sample isn't enough for a personality dump. And for the same reason, Alan didn't pick up any of Katje's personality by absorbing a fleck of her skin?

I need a word for the people who've been taken over by skugs. They aren't exactly skugs themselves; I think of a pure skug as being one of those globs that doesn't necessarily have any human personalities inside it. When a skug eats you, you are a

skug, yes, but you're also to some extent yourself, in that you can look like yourself and act like yourself.

I'll go with *skugger*. "He's a skugger," sounds right, with its echo of a racist epithet. "She's a skugger, too." There's an echo of slugger, too, which suggests a heavy hitter. I do like the -er ending, which suggests an on-going activity. Like bopper in the *Wares*. Bopping it up. Skugging it up.

If I wanted to back off from skugger, I could have skugman, but that's gendered, so I'd need skugwoman as well, and a generic skugperson, but really I want a unisex and colloquial appellation. So skugger seems like the way to go.

Or *skugster*—but that's kind of 1980s, and we're in the 1950s. Yes, gangster is 50s. And the hipster echo is good, given that we'll be hanging with the beats. But in the 1980s, the -ster ending took on a jokey quality, used in nicknames, like I might be called the Rudester. It's become a kind of diminutive, and cutesy-pie.

Another option is *skuggie*, but that's also diminutive.

I'll go with skugger, and I can search and replace if I change my mind.

Speaking of nomenclature, I think I'll use *skug* as a verb to describe the act of turning someone into a skugger. "They skugged her." "I got skugged, too, man. It's great." I think of the [lyrics](#) to Bob Dylan's song, "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35". Here's a verse with "skug" instead of "stone," and with the second to last line changed for the sake of the rhyme.

Well, they'll skug ya when you're walkin long the street
They'll skug ya when you're tryin to keep your seat
They'll skug ya when you're walkin on the floor
They'll skug ya when you're walkin to the door
But I would not feel like such a grub
Everybody must get skugged

I was considering "skugify" or "beskug" for the action of conversion, but I think plain "skug" is better. Simpler words sound more like speech.

Alan and Bill have copies of each other's personalities due to their merge. And now, I suppose, Alan and Neddy have copies of each other's personalities due to *their* merge. I should have them mention this to each other, or become aware of it, as they sit and chat on the beach.

Another thing that needs to come up in this chat, or soon thereafter, is why the skug-hand from the Pratt skugger (a) followed Alan and (b) took over Neddy Strunk in particular. And (c) what was the Pratt skugger *doing* when he was skulking along the alleys of Tangier for the forty-eight hours or so?

(a) We can suppose that the skuggers like to band together. They're an endangered minority, at least for now. And I think that it'll soon be clear that they're bent on world domination, as befits their role as objective correlatives for the 50s bogeymen: intellectuals, artists, communists, dope-fiends and homosexuals. "Everybody must get skugged." We might suppose that Alan has mentioned in the presence of the Pratt skug that he plans to leave the country, and the skug will have remembered this, and

wants to tag along so as to get a beachhead on another continent.

(b) The hand-shaped fragment trailing Alan could have skugged anyone along the way, but it chose to use Neddy Strunk. I think we'll need to suppose that Neddy has some kind of special skill, knowledge, or access that the skug will find useful. Perhaps we don't find this out for awhile. Given that I'm thinking of ending the book with a scene involving a nuclear test near Los Alamos, it would be useful to suppose that Strunk has a security clearance, and that the prescient skug plans to take advantage of this. So we might assume that Strunk's ship was carrying nuclear warheads, and that Pratt has some technical training. In this case, I'd need to change his manner of speech a bit to make him sound at least slightly more educated.

(c) Wouldn't it be reasonable to suppose that, while on the loose for two days, the Pratt skugger might have skugged some locals? Maybe this *did* happen, and, when Burroughs re-enters the story later in the book, he'll talk about it. Tangier is almost all skuggers after a few months, thanks to the Pratt skugger's efforts. They burned him too late. Alan should wonder if this has indeed happened.

As the book goes on, I want Alan to realize that the skugs have very powerful minds, more so than he anticipated. Their high intelligence is due to (i) parallelism, that is, they're using each organic cell as a computing unit and (ii) connectivity, that is, via radio waves, they're in touch with each other, and with as much of the human data-base as is being broadcast on radio, TV and telephone.

When imagining the skug experience of hearing all the radio stations at once, I think of Patti Smith's record *Radio Ethiopia*.

November 28-Dec 2, 2010. What's the Plot Again?

I'm getting close to being a third of the way through *The Turing Chronicles*, and I need to think about the plot some more. Once again I've reached what Sheckley used to call a "black point." I'm not at all sure where to go.

So, okay, fall back on craft. Around the end of the first third, a book needs a conflict, a bump, an unforeseen development. So far it's been pretty straight-ahead. Turing learns to tweak biocomputations, he creates a skug, the skug can convert humans into shapeshifting skuggers. Now the plot thickens. Somehow.

Perhaps Ned Strunk or Vassar should die soon? They're overly much like each other, so it could be a drag to have them both around, especially riding in the same car. If I can keep them both alive, I've gotta individualize them better. I should find actual transreal models for them, as opposed to using stock stereotypes or beat characters from Jack K's mind transcripts. The characters have to come to life and be my own. They need conflicts, quirks, motivations.

At present they both seem like hillbillies. And Vassar is a pale imitation of Neal Cassady. Maybe Vassar could resemble a California friend of mine, and Strunk could be like one of my boyhood pal. I can hear both their voices pretty well in my head.

I'll write up some ideas about them and Susan in the [Characters](#) section above. And then I'll go through the novel and adjust their dialog so Vassar sounds like a California hipster, and Ned like a smart guy from Louisville.

And for now I'll postpone killing one of them.

I'm wondering if Alan really needs to make it out to San Francisco after Palm Beach—I don't presently have a good reason for this in the plot. It's just that meeting the Beats in SF was just an early goal of mine for this novel.

But now I worry that dragging in the other Beats besides Burroughs could feel too fannish. On the other hand, some readers might feel disappointed if I don't wave around a Ginsberg puppet and a Kerouac puppet. If I put them all in, it gives the story a (pinheaded) high concept: "Alan Turing, mutants, and the Beats."

Over the last couple of days, I've been rereading the latter part of Jack Kerouac's *Desolation Angels*. Trying to bring in Jack as a character would be daunting, as Jack's already fictionalized himself so well and it feels imitative to do it myself. For that matter, it would be repetitive as well, given that Jack appears in my stories "Inertia," "The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics," and as the bopper Emul in *Wetware*. I did enjoy writing those Jack K characters though.

I was just reading in *Desolation Angels* about Jack and the guys riding crowded three in back and three in front for a "horrible" 3,000 mile drive from Mexico City to NYC. There was the car owner, a random Puerto Rican passenger, Jack and Allen Ginsberg, also Peter Orlovsky and his autistic (?) younger brother. This crew, or some mix like it, could show up near the end of the book when things come to a head near the end of the book and there's a mini-H-bomb-test near Los Alamos or something. The beats explode on to the scene like an end-of-the-fireworks-show super-shell.

What do the skugs want? Initially the skugs are fairly protean and inexperienced, so they're ready to play anyone's games—as long as the skug-human partnership serves their basic goals.

By way of setting up a fight, I'll have the skuggers bifurcate into two camps, as in a religious or cultural schism. Their goals:

(a: Survival) All the skugs want ordinary things like food and shelter. And all of them want to multiply and continue as a species.

(b: Colonization) The more conservative faction wants to take over as many humans as possible, as in a classic alien invasion. We're useful to them as partners or ultimately as slaves. We know how to do things, how to feed and house ourselves, how to socialize, and so on.

(c: Transcendence) The more liberal faction has a higher drive, akin to art or science. With their skug teep, they sense the existence of spirit entities, and they want to host the spirits instead of mere humans. Moving further along these lines, the spiritually inclined liberal skugs eventually dream of transcending their flesh and becoming as spirits: aethereal vibrations of some kind.

The colonization-oriented skugs are aligned with the forces of governmental repression and control, a working with forces like the CIA, MI5, the NSA, the military, the police, and so on. The transcendence-aligned skugs gravitate towards the human causes of art, liberation and anarchy. So we've got the classic conflict: Feds vs. Heads, GOP vs. Dems, Tories vs. Liberals, Squares vs. Beats, Geezers vs. Kids, Straights vs. Freaks, the United States of America vs. Rudolf von Bitter Rucker.

We'll reserve the word skuggers to refer to the humans who are paired with the good, transcendence-oriented skugs.

We need a term for the humans who are paired with nasty, colonizing skugs. I

considered “nazi skuggers,” but “nazi” has too much baggage. Alan wouldn’t really like this terminology, having fought (by proxy) against real Nazis during the war. Anyway, it’s better to have a single word. I studied a Wikipedia list of [Slang Terms for Police Officers](#). Riffing off this list and my thoughts, I get: quisling, snail, pig, skugpig, puritan, boss, scolder, skerk, bullyskug, heat, puerco, babosa (Spanish for slug), troll, trichina worm, cyst. As a 60s type, I like skugpig, but it’s too close to skugger.

So, okay, how about pigskug? Okay, but, that name modifies the skug, rather than the human-skug hybrid. So I guess I should say pigskugger—its very close to skugger, but I can’t think of anything better. The skuggers vs. the pigskuggers. I think maybe that works.

Suppose Vassar coins the name. Or Burroughs. The derisive use of pig didn’t grow popular till the 1960s but in 1955, a subcultural person might have known it.

We also need a name for the skugs that get taken over by spirits. So we’ve got skuggers, pigskuggers—and what? This one really shouldn’t end with skugger.

Maybe “spoogers” for spooky skuggers, but that sounds too much like “boogers.” Spongers? Maybe yes, in the sense of the spirits catching a free ride, and who sponge off a skugs form. But it’s not quite right. Bolgie, bulgie, bulgies?

Let’s just use skugriders? No, that won’t work, it confuses the eye, you see girder in there. Slimerider, ghostskugger, spookmollusk, dreamsnail. I like slimerider, but that confuses the eye, too. Dreamskug is better, I think. And maybe those occupying spirits are in fact things that come from dreams. I *could* use “dreamskug” but I won’t, so the word stands apart better from the other two. Skuggers, pigskuggers, and dreamskugs.

Fine.

Now—let’s talk about our plot bump. It’s always good to one or more unexpected and implacable *enemies* appear. I’m seeing the skuggers as human mutants, so I can’t exactly set up two competing alien races, as I often have done.

But, as I’ve been leading up to, I can think of two kinds of enemy that might work: (Enemy 1) pigskuggers, that is, skugs who’ve merged with humans who work for the forces of repression, and (Enemy 2) dreamskugs, that is, skugs with heretofore unknown spirits living in them. In fact I’ll use both. I’ll run with the pigskuggers for the middle part of the book and spring the dreamskugs into action for the final act.

(Enemy 1) Pigskuggers.

We can suppose that the pigskugger faction starts in Tangier. And I think I can do the exposition for this part via a chapter consisting of more “lost” letters from William Burroughs. I can run this after another Turing action chapter, and have it come on a bit like a flashback at that time.

For the second letters chapter, we’ll bring a new character a cop or agent named—what should I call him? I’m tempted to use Hauser, as a riff on the pair of cops Hauser and O’Brien in *Naked Lunch*. But that’s kind of gauche, I think, to copy WSB that closely. Also it’s better to have an Anglo-Saxon name for the guy. I’ll use Jonathan Hopper. I like the suggestion of hopping about, as among bodies. And the echo of the memorable freak (Frank Booth) played by Dennis Hopper in *Blue Velvet* is all to the good. I see my Jonathan Hopper character as a reactionary tight-ass with a wild anarchic

side. Likable at times, but prone to fits of rage. A bit like an unpredictable older brother.

Hopper comes looking for Pratt the day after he got skugged. Hopper encounters the Pratt zombie skugger and is himself skugged. This session doesn't wipe out Hopper's mind (recall that Alan had already done some tweaks on the zombie skugger). Hopper sees the military and espionage opportunities of having skuggers in the Queen's employ.

Using his own skug teep, Hopper quickly sniffs out Turing's whereabouts on Christmas morning as soon as Alan and Burroughs get skugged. Hopper would like to bust Turing, but the skug within Hopper wants Turing to make it to the US. As a pigskugger, Hopper is already a double agent. He's working for skug domination, as well as for the Pig.

Urged on by Hopper, the zombie's hand trails Turing in any case, but the hand is something of a free agent, and it skugs Ned because of Ned's nuke connection, which the roaming skug can teep in Ned's mind. The resulting Ned skugger isn't a pigskugger, although Hopper wishes he were. As I say, skugs tend to take up the politics of those they assimilate. And Ned is a proto-Beat.

Accepting that Ned's going to get away from him, Hopper changes course. He confronts Burroughs, and uses his advice on assembling a cadre of sixty-four skuggers in a basement in Tangier—to some extent the group is made up of skuggers the Tangier cops have already busted and they go ahead and skug a few more prisoners. They're controlling them with electric shocks and morphine, forcing them to toe the line and be pigskuggers. They're merged together like a sinister artichoke. A human starfish. William Burroughs is an advisor. Bill's into the Tesla and orgone energy aspects of the set-up. They don't get the pigskugger-star working until Alan's already in Palm Beach. The pigskugger-star "sees" the beat skuggers Alan and Ned in Palm Beach via a global psychic network like giant Tesla field. And they send a telegram to US cops after Ned and Alan. This ends the part that Burroughs narrates in his letters chapter.

In another chapter, which possibly comes first, we'll start with the cops about to roust Alan and Ned. In a back-reaction to being viewed, Alan has a timely vision of the Tesla-field pigskugger starfish. He sees the combine shortly before the cops arrive to bust them, and he and Ned outflank the police.

First of all, they give themselves mental blocks so the pigskuggers can't see them. And secondly they imitate cops and make off with an impounded car, that 1955 Pontiac Catalina I was talking about.

(Re. the mind-block, I remember this trick from the telepathic mutants in those Andre Norton post-WW-III novels I read as a boy, I'm thinking these books might have been *Starman's Son* and *Stargate*. I remember Norton's alien Trinity of gods: Lor, Loi, Lys.)

(*Enemy 2*) *Dreamskugs*.

In the third act, to kick it up a level, I'll reify some spirits. A dreamskug won't have a human component at all, it is a skug with a mind that came in from the aether.

The spirit minds might be nature spirits like elementals. Or they might be inspired by Native American peyote or psilocybin or yage myths, or by Burroughs's remarks about the Ugly Spirit that impelled him to kill his wife Joan. Or they might be human ghosts. Or elves of the subdimensions.

In this context I'd like to try and write about this particular idea I've always

had—the idea that the world is teeming with other living beings whom we can't quite see. At best we see them as flashes out of the corners of our eyes. Or hear them as unclear and never repeated whispers. I feel like I've tried to write about this before and have always somehow flinched away from it.

So I'm looking for something kind of New Age or religious or psychic or woo-woo for the dreamskug minds. Possibly they could be emergent archetypes from the human group-mind, if you want to just explain them away.

[Note that the dreamskug minds *could* be space aliens—but I don't want to take such a hard-SF line in this novel. Just to map out what I'm getting at, though, the dreamskugs could be like the so-called "Metamartians" in *Freeware* and *Realware* who were globs of computationally rich imipolex animated by alien mental software that had arrived via cosmic ray. Or, in the same vein, they could be like the Peng in *Postsingular*, who also are software-transmitted beings who manage to instantiate themselves by repurposing ordinary terrestrial matter.]

So we have the scene with the pigskuggers sending the cops after Alan and Ned. They hook up with Vassar and Susan and head for Los Alamos.

After a couple of days together, all four of them are skuggers. Susan is into electronic music, and Vassar is into petty crime, pot and skirt-chasing—his mystic quest for the dark furrow. I'm not sure what Ned is after. Maybe Ned wants to build an atomic bomb?

Suppose that the pigskuggers Tesla rays get to Vassar during the drive. He's off on his own, chasing the dark furrow. Susan doesn't mind that much, she's fucking Ned. Alan is jealous about Vassar's womanizing, but is preoccupied with the mathematics of skug systems.

Just as they near Los Alamos, Alan realizes Vassar is about to betray them. Tearfully he eliminates Vassar. There's a fight. Alan manages to throw the pigskuggers off the track with a decoy. There's an early intimation of a dreamskug, but they don't yet understand what it is.

So then Alan, Ned, and Susan settle in at Los Alamos, lying low. It goes almost without saying that the skugs are, being 1950s mutants, really into nukes. They plan to get some kind of boost from nuclear power or from a nuclear bomb. Alan takes advantage of Ned's atomic-energy or Los Alamos connection—recall that he underwent training to be a nuke tech for the *Nautilus* submarine. Ned helps Alan find an in. Alan, posing as Abby, gets hired to work at Los Alamos as, get this, a programmer. I remember that Stan Ulam had a woman assistant who coded up his nonlinear wave equation simulation for him. "We wish to thank Miss Mary Tsingou for efficient coding of the problems and for running the computations on the Los Alamos MANIAC machine," reads a footnote in E. Fermi, J. Pasta, and S. Ulam, "[Studies of Nonlinear Problems](#)", published in 1955, and based on work done in 1952, which however was ongoing. See also my own paper on this topic, "[Continuous Valued Cellular Automata for Nonlinear Wave Equations](#)" written with the mathematician Daniel N. Ostrov.

Alan becomes Ulam's programmer, and works on nonlinear wave equations for use in creating small hydrogen bombs. Alan and his two friends are continually making themselves invisible to the pigskugger Tesla spy umbrella, but there are going to be some problems with leaks.

Alan is thinking about how to eliminate the pigskuggers. And he's also thinking about ways to kick the biocomputations of the good skuggers up to a new level. Maybe he does, and this is where enemies-option-(3) kicks in.

And then Burroughs shows up and upsets the applecart. Alan and Bill go down to Mexico City. They go to resurrect the dead Joan Burroughs, bombing down to the Panteón Americano in Mexico City and digging up one of her bones for the DNA, and growing her from that. I'm not sure where they'd get her mind and personality from. Maybe from Bill's memories. Or from Joan's ghost, using Alan's new meta-skugger capabilities.

The carful, including the resurrected Joan, drives from Mexico City to Los Alamos, just when the pigskuggers are about to win. And then in a final reverse, Alan frees Earth of all skugs with a magical miniature H-bomb.

December 3-4, 2010. Outlining

I ended up putting so many story ideas into my repeatedly revised five-day entry, "Nov 28-Dec 2, 2010. What's the Plot Again?" that I decided to extract some chunks and work them into my [Outline](#). I really didn't have any outline up till now. But that's not all that unusual. Normally I rewrite the outline numerous times while I'm working on a novel.

In the old days, I never had an outline at all. And in recent times, the first time I wrote up an outline would often be as part of a proposal, with the outline accompanying, say, the first third of the novel. I'd send that to a publisher, and then I'd work with the outline as the book moved on.

On my last novel, *Jim and the Flims*, Tor didn't like the outline and the first third, and the novel was rejected, and I ended up completely changing the outline and sending the entire finished book to Night Shade. The upside here was that, when rejecting the book, Dave Hartwell made some suggestions that in fact helped me with the revision.

My feeling this time around is that I should go ahead and finish, or get very close to the end of *The Turing Chronicles* before proposing it to a publisher. If I send it out too early, in a half-baked state, I'm risking rejection. And when it's ready, I'll probably send it to Night Shade and Tor. Or conceivably I might see if I could break the book out as a mainstream lit release.

Looking at the outline in its larval state today, I see, as is often the case, a large and frightening lacuna in the story. I don't seem to have enough plot to fill the twenty chapters I'll need to reach 90,000 words—about seven of the chapter summaries are still blank. This said, it could be that some of the chapters I'm imagining could split. As I mentioned in my note, "[October 5, 2010. Looking for the Plot](#)," I'd like to avoid overcomplicating the story and piling on too many effects. It could be nice to stretch out the emotional qualities, with many conversations and small, telling incidents.

I have a few ideas coming out of the outline thus far.

The hand that follows Alan and skugs Ned might as well be from agent Hopper, rather than from the Pratt skug. Then we can have a Burroughs letter mentioning the launch of the hand.

I want to describe a skugger combine in Tangier which acts as a telepathic Tesla field scanner to detect skuggers worldwide, and which will find Alan and Ned in Palm

Beach. But—Occam's Razor—why wouldn't Hopper simply stake out the house of Burroughs's parents? I suppose we could say that his men get there too late.

In fact Alan and Ned could notice a cop car going by the house when they leave the clothes store in Palm Beach. They head for West Palm Beach, originally founded as a place for the black servants who worked at the rich Palm Beach homes, see this [Palm Beach Post article](#). Count Basie played here, there was an all-black jazz club called the Sunset Lounge. Maybe I could lift that scene about Charlie Parker's first visit to a jazz club from his bio, *Bird Lives: The Life of Charlie Parker*, by Ross Russell (Charterhouse 1973), p. 55. I copied it down in my [notes for Hylozoic](#), here it is partly edited towards the altered state I'll use for my appropriation.

Looking across the beams of the spotlights shining onto the bandstand, Alan saw a lavender haze of smoke that curled and wreathed, floating lazily upward, shaped by the rhythms of the band. Somehow Ned had obtained a kief cigarette for them as well, and now Alan was borne aloft into lavender haze. The space of the Sunset Lounge grew deeper. The bar, the polished glasses, the long mirror, the waitresses poised like blackbirds to fly to their customers, the tables, booths, dancers, musicians—everything in the club was exactly where it belonged. The room had been there forever and would never change, fixed in time and space. The passage of time was a discarded illusion. Joyful and calm, Alan heard musical details that he'd normally miss, miniature sounds—the trumpeter's little blue comments, the saxophone's half-notes amid the main line, the bassist's fingers wheenking on his heavy strings, the low and slow harmonics of the drum. The music was a living circuit, a shared sea of sound reprocessed by the musicians' minds.

And Alan is getting into it, and then he gets a vision of the eye watching him, the daisy of melted-together pigskugger street Arabs in the basement of the British embassy in Tangier, overseen by Hopper.

He doesn't initially grasp what it is he's envisioning, but he's scared. He and Ned go down to the beach and dig themselves in.

"In the morning they woke to the barking of the police dogs."

They're busted. And then I cut to a Burroughs in Tangier chapter. And after that comes a chapter where Alan and Ned get clear of the cops, get a car off them, and in fact reach a temporary agreement with the pigskuggers not to be stalking them as, after all, being a skugger is more important than being a *pig*. But later on, they'll have a pigskugger problem again.

December 7-17, 2010. My Second Chapter of Burroughs Letters.

As an aside, here's a great line I heard from my friend Gary this week when he was talking about his quest for God. "I went for the Holy Ghost. He was cool. He was the sidekick."

I reread my marked-up old 1983 copy of *Letters to Allen Ginsberg 1953-1957*,

which I used in Lynchburg for planning my Burroughs-based character Tad Beat in *Master of Space and Time*. I typed up my favorite bits and saved them [here](#) in these Notes, and went ahead and [blogged the bits](#) as well.

I'm making slow progress. I'm continually distracted by all the borderline obsessive-compulsive crap I'm doing with my websites. I made a [Rudy's Lifebox](#) page. Then blogged about it. Then tweeted the blog post. Sheesh.

But it's good to be distracted. It gives my subconscious time to grind exceedingly fine.

I see the skugger-star as being a teep antenna for tracking Turing, fine. But if Hopper wants to bust Turing, couldn't he have alerted some cops in Gibraltar? Or couldn't he have learned early on from Burroughs that Turing would go the house of the Burroughs parents in Palm Beach—and then staked out the place?

Maybe Bill isn't telling Hopper everything he knows? But wouldn't Hopper have gotten most of Bill's thoughts from their merge session?

I'm thinking it's too much of a burden to try and give teep to the skuggers. If they have it at all, it should be really weak, with a range of only a few feet.

Dec 16, 2010. I keep revising this chapter, adding a little more each time, and now I have some new ideas to work in. I'll make a local list of some pressing To Do items.

To Do:

- * Once skugged, Bill is off junk and even booze. Craves sweets. Like an insect. I'll put in fixes for his recent letters, and need to go back do the fixes for Turing and Ned too, make it that they're always just into sweets, not booze or tea. They can synthesize pot or junk within and get high on their own if they wanna.
- * Driss and Kiki become skuggers too, after sex with Alan and Bill on Xmas day. Or maybe they already were skuggers. Set up the scene where Bill witnesses the burning of the Pratt zombie so that the Arab boys are in fact skuggers, offing the zombie because he give them bad name, only Bill don't at that time realize what he see.
- * Might as well have Driss be in the group of captives in the Embassy basement. Kiki have run off to Fez.
- * At the end of this chapter of letters, Burroughs teeps in on Turing at his parents and is mad that his payments will be cut off, and oddly envious that Turing is talking to young Billy, and disturbed at the notion of resurrecting Joan. He's fed up with the Brit cops, too. He decides to head back to the US. Easier for him, now that he no longer needs junk. Gets a passport from Jonathan Hopper as a parting gift.

I feel like I'm turning the corner now, swinging towards the book's middle third.

Dec 17, 2010. I'm distracted today, lots of complicated email and computer dealings. I took care of the first of the To Do items above yesterday, but still don't have

the next two. I'm a little tired of imitating Burroughs, and I'm worrying I'm losing the voice. It's an odd mind-set, to be using such a particular and quirky format to create text that advances the plot of a science-fiction novel. Like making a portrait out of collage snippets. I'm eager to get back into the straight narrative.

Another problem is that I feel more and more uneasy at the prospect of resurrecting B's dead wife, Joan Vollmer. Last night I came across a [web page](#) by a young guy who claims to have visited Burroughs when he was 82, soon after Allen Ginsberg died, and not long before Bill died, and Bill got drunk and suddenly shouted, "Shoot the bitch and write a book! That's what I did."

This doesn't dovetail with the delicately shaded emotions that, like, Bill's friend James Grauerholz limns. Of course Bill could have been jiving the kid. Or exorcising his demons by saying the worst thing.

Dec 18-20, 2010. Hopper, Soames and the Skugger-Star

I'm making good progress on my second Burroughs letters chapter.

But I need to sort out the allegiances and motivations of Hopper and his higher-ups regarding the skugger-star and Turing. And I need to square up the time-sequence of spy contacts between the star and Turing.

I woke up this morning worrying about it. I always have this sick feeling that I won't be able to sort out these kinds of conflicts. But I always do. Either I chip away and make a series of small adjustments or I do some kind of cut-the-Gordian-knot reconstellating of the tale. This one I think I can fix with small adjustments.

Backing up, the Brits' interest in Turing is two-fold. Initially they simply wanted to assassinate him for being a security risk. But then, as Pratt revealed, they became interested in his ability to change his face, and were planning to bring him back into the system as a military consultant.

Hopper's boss, Mr. Soames, sent him after Pratt and Turing, and Hopper found out about the skugs. In the draft as it currently stands, I'm saying saying Hopper is already a skugger when he meets Burroughs. I like the bent-cop vibe this has.

But why would Hopper, being a skugger, have orchestrated a roundup of the local Arab skuggers? Let's suppose that Hopper saw Pratt and reported the existence of skuggers before he himself got skugged.

And then I have to ask, if Hopper is pro-skugger, why does he fling his hand after Turing? So he can tell Soames, "Turing gave me the slip, but I've recruited a man to tail him." And as a skug, he wants to be in touch with Turing.

The skugs themselves want to be able to track Turing, they're for the skugger-star teep antenna. Hopper sells the idea to Soames as a new kind of spy system. Soames has some hope of arresting Turing in the US and extraditing him. But Hopper doesn't want to help make this happen, nor does Burroughs.

But *then* Burroughs gets angry about Turing killing B's stipend, and about T meddling with Billy and talking of resurrecting Joan. He goes over Hopper's head and gets Soames to call the cops on Turing, only there's some delay—we're talking 1955 trans-Atlantic phone call from Tangier to Palm Beach, after all—and the cops come by Burroughs's house too late.

And then the skuggers lose the focus for a few hours, and then Burroughs sees Turing in the club and sends the cops there, and then Turing gets his block happening, but in the morning the cops come after Turing on the beach.

Turing co-opts the cops and the skugger antenna falls apart about then, so Turing isn't going to be hounded.

And at this point also, Burroughs decides to come to the US himself. And I'll have him bring Driss along.

I went back and did more revisions, and then I worked all of this back-and-forth into the chapter's final letter, from Burroughs to Jack Kerouac. I had to think about synching up the activity, given that the time in Tangier is 6 hours later than in Palm Beach, so I made this little table:

Event	Time/Date in Palm Beach	Time/Date in Tangier
T kicked out of B house	9 am / Jan 2	3 pm / Jan 2
T finish breakfast	11 am / Jan 2	5 pm / Jan 2
T at nightclub	9 pm / Jan 2	3am / Jan 3
T wake on beach	7am / Jan 3	1 pm / Jan 3

Dec 21, 2010. Again With The "Now What?"

I've made extreme imaginative efforts and have finished my new Burroughs chapter "Dispatches From the Interzone." As I remarked before, molding an SF action-novel out of William Burroughs letters is like collaging a landscape out of frames from the Sunday funnies. And I had to draw all those wacky little frames too. Or it's like building an epic out of haikus. But I like the way the chapter came out. It's funny, I think, and deep as well.

But now I'm unsure of the coming story arc. To some extent I'm back where I was a month ago, when I wrote my entry, ["What's the Plot Again?"](#)

It's daunting how many scenes and ideas a novel needs. But I don't have to write the whole novel at once. All I need now is to write the next chapter. So now what I need is to outline the Chapter where Alan and Ned join forces with Vassar and Susan fairly well, and also get some clear idea of what happens in the chapter after that. And the chapters further on can still ripening my subconscious for awhile, I guess. Though I certainly wouldn't *mind* knowing what's going to be in them.

It's a long process, I tell myself. And there's no rush. But that's not exactly true. My sense is that I don't feel as if there *is* a rush, then I might not drive myself hard enough to actually finish the book. Onward!

Last month I'd imagined I could pump up a "pigskugger" faction to serve as an ongoing enemy and all-purpose bugaboo. But, first of all, I ended up hardly using that word as (a) it began seeming gauche and (b) really all the skuggers are going to be on the same side, no matter what any officious pigs think they're going to get the skuggers to do. So the enemies will have to be plain, ordinary pigs as I'd initially expected. Control-freak normie cops.

Note also that in my "Dispatches from the Interzone," chapter I did indeed get Burroughs to organize a trans-Atlantic skugger-star teep antenna, as I'd planned to. But by the end of the chapter the construct falls apart and the individual skuggers go their own ways. And this is as it should be, because it would be too much of an onus for

Turing to have a skugger-star tracking him on his road trip to Los Alamos.

It'll just be regular cops chasing him, although, for a while, there will be more and more of them. We'll see an ongoing attrition in the forces of control, as more and more of them will be converted into being skugs—starting with Jonathan Hopper and continuing the West Palm Beach police who try to take custody of the skuggers Alan and Ned. More cops come, but then I want Turing to get fully in the clear for awhile before he hits Los Alamos. So we've got an action spike here, the rising tension of the chase and the (temporary) release. He'll need some slick move for the escape, possibly this is where we introduce the dreamskugs.

I realized today, it's as if I'm telling the story of *The Invasion of the Bodysnatchers*, but I'm telling it from the p.o.v. of the pod people, and I'm viewing these alienated mutants as a positive force. Which is, after all, precisely what happened culturally as the 1950s segued into the 1960s.

If then have Turing pulling the skugs up into a higher reality, it vaguely correlates with Tim Leary lifting the hippies out of politics and into Lotus Land.

And what happened then in the real world in terms of the culture wars. What aspect of reality might I transrealize into Turing's next move?

I'm thinking of the internet as being the thing that resurrected political action. And it could be that Turing starts manifesting himself via the web. I could even go transreal for the last couple of chapters, and be getting messages from Turing in "real time." Or there's an astral blog site that only I and a few privileged others (such as the readers of my book), can see.

Alan and Ned skug some cops, they get a car, they drive to Los Alamos with Vassar and Susan. Once they get hold of an atomic bomb, they figure they can do a high-energy flash-teep broadcast that skugs every human being on Earth at once.

We have the cop chase, the cop-skugging, and the gambit for anonymity.

We have Alan settling in with Ulam at Los Alamos, inventing the world-skugging device. Maybe Alan is having private doubts if this is really the right thing to do. He's also being visited by visions of the higher-order dream-skugs.

Burroughs shows up to disrupt him. They do the side-plot of going to resurrect Joan. And in the process Alan gets further insight into the dreamskugs, and becomes more strongly convinced that he needs to block the world-skugging move.

So now Alan goes back, and convinces Ulam to alter the culminating H-bomb blast, in which Alan and perhaps Ulam, rather than skugging everyone on Earth, move skugdom into a higher plane. This could be a strong end.

At this point maybe the book is done, or maybe I still need a few chapters. If it's the latter case, I *could* go on and do some scenes in Dreamland, or in whatever kind of "world" the dreamskugs live in. And then I'd need something else for the book's end.

January 13, 2011. Midpoint. A New Outline.

I'm working on the next chapter after the Burroughs-pastiche "Dispatches from Interzone," chapter. The new chapter is currently called "Rampant Skugification." (Later I changed the name to "Cops and Skuggers.")

Initially I saw the cops who bust Alan and Ned on the beach as being like Oliver Hardy and Stan Laurel, whom our kids used to call "fat man thin man" when we watched them on TV in Germany. These actors were born as Norvell Hardy in Harlem, Georgia

and Arthur Stanley Jefferson in Ulverston, Lancashire. So maybe I'll call the characters Norvell Dunn and Arthur Ulverston.

But then I didn't bother with double names. I called the cops Norvell and (out of the blue because I like the sound) Landers. And they aren't all that much like Laurel and Hardy after all.

I was going to move straight from the conversion to the Cobblestone Gardens scene, but now I'm thinking I might as well run through the scene at the police station. It adds texture to the book, dramatizes how they skug people, and develops the Ned and Alan relationship. I want to position them as buddies rather than as lovers, even if they did have slug-style sex in the house of Burroughs's parents.

The work is moving slowly this month. It's taking some time to ramp back up after the Xmas break. Also I pissed away days and days tweaking my music collection on my computer for my new iPhone, and coming to terms with the obtuse and balky iTunes music management software. And blogging about it, God help me. As an on-going part of the process, I'm "ripping" some vinyl records to files. Converting analog to digital, which is, of course, a good analogue for my lifebox and *Ware Tetralogy* [Digital Immortality](#) kick, which I recently blogged about as well.

One cool thing about *The Turing Chronicles* is that it shows Alan moving against the tide, that is, he's going from digital computers to analog biocomputations. But the more relevant thing is that it shows something computational (the skugly biocomputation) becoming symbiotic with human life (like people carrying smart phones).

I remain unsure about the over-all plot, which is hanging me up. When I'm lost at sea in the middle of a book, I fall back on what we used to call "paper-shuffling." That is, I play with organizational matters. Tidy things up. It's like—when I lose my wallet, glasses or keys, I can often find them by cleaning up my whole office.

So I reread and revised the recent chapters.

Doing the revision helped me get me back up to speed on Vassar's and Ned's personalities. I mustered the will-power to flesh out my [Characters](#) sketches a little more today. One issue that crops up—and I believe I've mentioned this before—is that in some ways Ned and Vassar seem a little too similar to each other, so it's not so interesting to have both of them in the car on Alan's road trip. And I do have in mind that Vassar should die, which also has the benefit of putting Alan at romantic loose ends, assuming we can keep him from being in a romance with Ned. But in any case, I should sharpen Ned's and Vassar's personality differences some more. Simple distinction: Ned is a pessimist, Vassar is an optimist.

I've also been firming up my ever-evolving conceptions about the skugs and their origins, and this involves revisions. It seems a bit much to suppose that the skugs have really strong personalities, as they're just AI-tweaked networks of biocomputations. I need to keep reminding myself that they're *not* alien invaders. This said, I do have the possibility of giving the skugs a hive-mind personality that's to some extent based on what they pick up over radio and TV signals. This could be a correlative for, e.g., the hive minds you see if you study Twitter or Facebook or Google search results.

While tidying up, I noticed that the chapter with Alan on the *Phos* ship was twice

as long as the other chapters, so I broke it in two. So now I'm thinking in terms of 20 chapters, averaging a bit over 4,000 words each, which brings me in between 80k and 90k. By this measure, I'm 0.4 of the way through the book, between a third of the way through and half-way through. When I finish the present chapter, I'll be at the half-way mark.

Looking ahead, I *had* been planning to have a higher level of reality populated by dreamskugs. But yesterday in the car, driving up to Berkeley with Sylvia, I was telling her about my plans for the book. And when I got to the dreamskugs, she was like, "What!? Don't do that again, Rudy! One kind of creature is *enough*. Don't always overdo it." And she's right. It boggles the mind to think about how many kinds of critters I jammed into each of my last three novels, that is, *Postsingular*, *Hylozoic*, and *Jim and the Flims*. It's okay and maybe even good that I packed those books with alien eyeball kicks, but it's a baroque high-SF supercartoon style that I'd like to get away from for *The Turing Chronicles*. I'd like to see this one be a more stripped-down. Like a 1950s black and white SF invasion movie. Like *Them* or the originals of *The Fly* or *The Invasion Of The Bodysnatchers*.

But way of opening up to my new plans, I moved the latter part of my former outline into a new "[False Paths](#)" section. Having this kind of data repository means that I feel less constrained in making brutal cuts and changes to the old outline. And then, taking into account the remarks in the remaining part of today's entry, I rewrote the second half of my working outline, with new material starting at the [outline of Chapter 9](#) and running through the outline form proposed final Chapter 20.

So what were my thoughts in creating the altered outline?

The main line of action is, as I've said before, the explosive and exponentially growing skugification of humanity, possibly with some set-backs, and with a return to the status quo in the penultimate chapter. I need to keep remembering to stick with this.

In order to fill out the book, I can have some cameos about how skugification changes people, and what the process means. Keep in mind that skugification is in some respects an objective correlative for computerization, and the increasing hold of digital devices over our lives.

I also need setbacks, so there's a back-and-forth struggle. In Palm Beach Alan imagines that the skuggers are invincible. I've made it very easy for a skugger to induct a non-skugger—it only takes a touch. And the skuggers don't seem to be hurt by bullets, they're like men of rubber in that respect.

But then we'll have some governmental faction invent an anti-skug vaccine. The skugger condition is, after all, a bit like a disease, or like a parasitic attack.

One big question that I'm now resolving is what Burroughs is doing in the novel. I'm sending him on a path to come to Los Alamos and to encounter Alan there. But then what?

I think it's best if Bill and Alan fall deeply in love. I generally feel that a novel needs a romance story for its beating heart. The clash between Alan's and Bill's personalities will be interesting, a natural for a fictive love tale. Both of the guys are more attracted to younger men, so their grand passion didn't arise in any decisive way during their chaotic initial encounter in Tangier. But when they meet again in Los Alamos, they can simply decide to *look like* young men. I'll build up some prefiguring

fond thoughts about each other after Alan's departure from Tangier.

A vexing issue: Once you introduce Burroughs as a character, you almost have to deal in some way with Bill having killed his wife Joan. I'm inclined to have Bill go down to Mexico and try resurrect Joan Burroughs—but I need to find an angle to weave this into the plot—otherwise it's too creepy and irrelevant. If Alan and Bill are lovers, then the trip could work. It's kind of macabre honeymoon, harebrained and crackpot, and in some way related to our nation's War Against The Skugs. I'm expecting that the attempt to resurrect Joan to be, at least on the surface, almost a complete failure. An overreaching. But as a side-effect, Alan will figure out a way to counter the anti-skug vaccine.

Back in Los Alamos again, Alan and Stanislaw Ulam are about to a world-skugging nuclear blast. And then at the last minute Alan changes his mind. Burroughs talks him out of it. Alan is vaporized up in an H-bomb blast, taking the skugs with him and in fact removing their memory from the minds of everyone alive. This novel is, after all, a "*true story*," a secret history.

And to close out the book, we have a final kicker chapter purportedly from the last journals of Burroughs in 1997, reminiscing about Turing, and suggesting that at some level he can still talk to him.

January 19, 2011. *Gazaks For The Plot Hole*

[I blogged some of this entry as part of a long post, "[Unpredictability and Plotting a Novel](#)"]

The good news is that I'm more than halfway through my "Cops and Skuggers" chapter now, and I can more or less see how to write the upcoming "Four Way Jam" chapter and the "On The Road" chapter—according to my current numbering scheme, these are, respectively, chapters 9, 10, and 11, although these numbers and, for that matter, these chapter titles may change (and when they change I may or may not revisit this entry and update it to match the altered reality).

I was happy for a few days with my new outline of last week. But now, that I'm down to actually implementing it, it's clear that the outline has a big hole in the middle. Not enough plot.

So I think I'll need something like the "dreamskugs" after all, that is, some incorporeal beings who one sees from the corners of one's eyes. But that isn't the right name for them, for any talk about *dreamskugs* blends with and muddies the biocomputational *skugs* that Alan Turing discovered/invented/enabled. The spirit-things need their own name. So I'll call them *gazaks* for now. An onomatopoeic word mimicking, say, Alan's anxious grinding of his teeth and or retching at their initial appearance. "Gaaak!" Also *gazak* echoes Kazakh, a tribal name I picked up from *Gravity's Rainbow*. I want to say "A Kazakh from Ukduk."

[Researching this last phrase, I find the story I wrote with Bruce Sterling back in the 1980s, "Storming the Cosmos," and the mention of some "Central Asian Uzbeks from Uckduck, a hick burg in Uzbekskaia," although now I can't confirm on Google that there is in fact a town of this name.]

Anyway, yeah, let's have some of those *gazaks*. Elemental spirits, elves, discarnate ghosts, souls as software images embodied in nature's flows. Or maybe these critters are beings whose time is in the direction of our space and thus they are (comfortable sigh of relief) a kind of alien. Their interaction with us might as well be

what potentiated the appearance of Turing's skugs. They "saw" Turing on the verge of providing a biocomputational interface to link the two worlds, and they helped him make it happen. And then, near the end of the book, the gazaks soul-suck a lot of people off into their world, which may or may not be a pleasant place.

I think the attempted resurrection of Joan Vollmer can work emotionally and plot-wise in my novel if it plugs into something woo-woo like the gazaks.

There's no need to fully nail down the gazak plot-strand today. As I said, I do have a pretty good idea of how to write the next couple of chapters. Probably I'll work in some gazak prefigurings just to set the stage. Leaving holes in the drawn walls of my maze so later paths can loop back in.

January 24, 2011. Finishing the "Cops and Skuggers" Chapter.

I have nearly enough words for the "Cops and Skuggers" chapter now. My characters are standing around talking, killing time in an interesting way, which is good, and it's gonna be the end of the chapter by the time they actually get on the road. I might spring the news about the feds getting Landers and/or Norvell right at the end.

Meanwhile I found a nice picture of Vassar and Susan's 1936 Ford pickup truck online on [Wikimedia Commons](#). Not that the truck will be in the story for long. They're going to join forces with Alan and Ned, riding in their brand-new 1955 Pontiac Catalina. They might ditch the truck at Cobblestone Gardens. Well, maybe Laura Burroughs will give it to Bill when he comes to Palm Beach from Tangier, and Bill can drive the truck to Los Alamos and maybe even to Mexico City with Alan, which would be cool.



Figure 21. Vassar and Susan's 1936 Ford Pickup.

January 25, 2011. Cronenberg's Film of Naked Lunch

[I blogged most of this post as "[Cronenberg's NAKED LUNCH As Transreal SF](#)"]

So all right, I'm starting a new chapter, currently numbered 10 and named "Four

Way Jam,” to be followed by a chapter 11, “On The Road.” I’d like to have a little of the Kerouac *On The Road* and Twain *Huckleberry Finn* type nature writing in here, maybe I’ll sift through some of my journal notes on trips.

For whatever reason, most people don’t think of William Burroughs’s novel *Naked Lunch* as science-fiction, but really it is. Transreal SF, that is, a form of autobiography in which one’s experiences are made more vivid by transmuting them into SFictional tropes. Burroughs himself often wrote admiringly about SF in his letters, and said that’s what he was indeed writing. But people ignore this. Perhaps it’s that so few SF works aspire to such a high literary level, or that *Naked Lunch* doesn’t have a straight-through plot-line. But if you look at the tropes in the book, it really is SF—aliens, imaginary drugs, telepathy, talking objects ... the gang’s all here.

I’m thinking about the book both because Burroughs is a character in my novel-in-progress *The Turing Chronicles*, and because I watched most of David Cronenberg’s *Naked Lunch* via Netflix instant-watch last night.

What great cinematography—the framing, the colors, the segues, the simple but telling effects. The acting is great too, it’s understated, which is important—it’s easy to go over into gauche, hammy stuff when portraying legendary figures like the Beats. Susan Davis is a wonder as Joan Vollmer (called Joan Rohnert in the film), and as Jane Bowles, also called Joan in the film.

And what a wonderful script. Cronenberg himself has the credit for the screenplay. You can find it online, transcribed from the movie by some fanatic, at [Drew’s Script-o-Rama](#). The novel *Naked Lunch* doesn’t have a single clear plot-line that would make a movie—indeed the lack of such a plot is a key artistic element of the book, and a key aspect of the mythos around the book.

For the purposes of the film, Cronenberg created what Wikipedia terms a “[metatextual adaptation](#).” That is, he blended elements of the novel with the by-now-legendary story of Burroughs’s life—the shooting of his wife, the expatriate years in Tangier, typing the pages of *Naked Lunch* high in his Tangier room, Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg helping him assemble the manuscript. All of this material is outlined in Burroughs’s letters, and in the reminiscences of his Beat friends—the transreal oeuvre is blended together to produce the transreal film.

It’s a brilliant move on Cronenberg’s part to have the typewriters be alien beings. For a writer in those pre-computer days, a typewriter was an object of great mana. A partner, a friend, a tool—more reliable than any computer ever is. I remember in 1982 going on a trip with nothing in my suitcase but underwear, my rose-pink IBM Selectric typewriter and some Clash and Ramones records. And to have these machines become talking insects or alien heads is a great concept.

Cronenberg made two marketing moves to enhance the film’s general appeal.

First of all, rather than having the main character be addicted to opiates, the Bill Lee of the movie is addicted to not-quite-real substances like cockroach-extermination-powder and the powder of the “black meat,” taken from very large fresh-water Brazilian centipedes. Burroughs himself used this move in the novel—rather than going on and one about heroin as he’d done in *Junky*, which is a turn-off for many readers, in *Naked Lunch*, the characters are obsessed with these more science-fictional drugs.

The second market-friendly move by Cronenberg—which aroused the [ire of some](#)—is that he plays down his Bill Lee character’s homosexuality. To some extent this

fits with the Burroughs of the early 1950s. Bill was, after all, married for a time—before he shot his wife. And, judging from his letters, he was always put off by overly flamboyant flaunting of one's homosexuality. One gathers from Burroughs's work that there there was a definite transition period for him in the early 1950s, and Cronenberg sets his character in the period of the transition.

By time Burroughs was actually living in Tangier, he was well past the transition, constantly writing about boys in his letters, so in that sense the film is historically inaccurate. But we're not talking about true history in the movie *Naked Lunch*. We're talking about attaching the images and dialog of an author's fantastic novel to a mythologized version of the author's life. And in some ways the transitional state is a good choice to use for the film.

I did find the ending of the movie a downer, to have Bill repeating the same dreadful mistake that he'd made near the start. Cronenberg is taking off on a possibly ill-advised remark by Burroughs to the effect that if he hadn't shot Joan he might not have become a writer. That's not a place that most of us want to go.

For my taste, it always a little cheap and obvious to give a novel or a movie a serious feel by using a hard, downbeat climax. What's the line? "Tragedy is easy, comedy is hard."

One of my favorite bits in the film is when the Burroughs character is talking to the Paul Bowles character, and the older man is telling Bill all these shocking intimate things about himself, and Bill says, "I'm surprised you're telling me all this," and Bowles says, "Well, I'm not saying it out loud. The conversation you're hearing is telepathic. You see, if you look closely, the words you're hearing don't match the motions of my lips."

Another great bit is when Bill is passed out on the beach with, he thinks, his broken typewriter in a gunny-sack. And Jack and Allen show up to cheer him up. And Bill mumbles, "A little trouble with my typewriter." And the boys look in the sack, and all that's in there is trash—empty pill bottles and cans and bottles.

So now what lessons can I learn for my novel?

Certainly it's going to be easier for me to write about a possibly resurrected Joan character now that I've seen Susan Davis's interpretation of her. Although I also see this character as akin to my Sondra Tupperware in *Master of Space and Time*.

The whole thing of having weird SFictional events impinging on Bill's real life is very much a part of *The Turing Chronicles*, so I feel like I'm on the right track there. I might ponder ways to amp this up—like how to get more precise objective correlatives for Bill and Alan's various interests?

Definitely I should get Bill a typewriter while he's with Alan.

I tend to want to look for some upbeat kind of transcendence near the ends of my books, and I don't really see too much of that in the *Naked Lunch* movie. But I'll do that anyway.

A couple more lines I liked in the movie. Someone tells Bill, "Joan was a centipede." And someone else tells him he should become an "operative" for the CIA. That's a real paranoid-schizo kind of word, operative. And you get instructions from your "control."

January 26, 2010. Videos of Burroughs.

On a site called [Dangerous Minds](#), I found links to two YouTube videos of Bill with some friends in Lawrence, Kansas, in 1996 when he was 82, a year before he died.

I'm thinking I might use this last setting as the coda/last-chapter of *The Turing Chronicles*, called maybe "The Last Word." B talking about what "really" happened to Alan Turing at the A-bomb test site in the spring of 1955...

So the last chapter could be a transcript of a video rather than letters. A good match with the forty-year jump forward in time, from typewriter to video.

Web-surfing out from the *Dangerous Minds* post, I found a 90 minute BBC documentary on Burroughs, made for the Arena series. The documentary is on [YouTube](#), broken up into nine ten-minute segments, quite watchable.

Some observations: Burroughs has a gravelly voice. He often speaks in a very deadpan fashion, understating his outrageous lines. He makes a lot of hand gestures, one in particular, which he's described as the "junky gesture," is spreading his fingers and flipping his hand forward, with the palm up.

He really loved to play with his weapons: guns, knives, black-jacks, even as an old man. Like a twelve-year-old boy. He has the aura of a *bad* boy. He speaks of one of his characters as getting red when angry or passionate, and giving off a sharp smell—perhaps B himself has these qualities.

One of his friends, Lucien Carr, says it takes a long time to get to know B.

B recalls that a boy, the cook showed him how to call a toad out from under a rock. "Toad-calling. A lost art."

He was afraid of the dark. He had nightmares, and when a servant mentioned that "opium gives you sweet dreams," he decided he'd look into that when he got a chance.

He recalls a line from his Los Alamos Ranch School song where he went at age 15, he remarks that the song prefigures the A-tests. He's also written about this in an essay in *The Adding Machine: Selected Essays*. Here's a [link to the page](#) (p. 5) with the quote: "Far away and high on the mesa's crest/ Here's the life that all of us love best / Los Allll-amos." Actually on the video, I thought he said "light" not "life," which would be a better fit with thoughts of the bomb's White Light, and I may use this version in my book.

At one time, kidding around with Ginsberg and doing little theatrical routines for a photo session, he called himself the Baroness, dressed in drag, and took the role of "a sinister old lesbian." Talking to Ginsberg and pretending to be ignorant and forgetful, he jokes about Kerouac's book being called, "On the Route."

After Harvard, he was in the Army for 6 months—I'm not sure why he was thrown out. Briefly he considered trying to be a secret agent of some kind, perhaps in the CIA.

His wife Joan Adams, also known as Joan Vollmer—he says she once remarked to him, "You're supposed to be a faggot, but you're as good as a pimp in bed." Bill speaks of being controlled by the Ugly Spirit when he shot her, the worst, and hidden, aspect of his personality.

In his poem memorializing Joan, Ginsberg asks, "Joan, what kind of knowledge have the dead?"

Burroughs is something of a fop, a dandy, very dapper in his suits. Guarded. Frequent tic-like twitches of his thin lips. When his brother Mortimer, on camera with

him, goes on about *Naked Lunch* being garbage, Bill seems to tighten his surface, and he holds up his chin.

January 27, 2011. Travel Notes For the Road to Los Alamos

I looked on Google maps and designed [Alan's route](#) from Palm Beach, FL, to Los Alamos, NM. He'll go across the Floridian panhandle, through the little tag-end pieces of Alabama and Mississippi that touch the gulf, through Louisiana near New Orleans, then along the coast to Port Arthur and through Austin, Texas. He'll have a long haul through west Texas, and then cut north into New Mexico at Las Cruces. From there it's a straight shot to Santa Fe and Los Alamos, though some pretty country. I'll paste in a picture of the map below. I took a less than direct route as I want them to spend the nights at some spots where I've been: New Orleans, Holly Beach LA, Sonora TX, Las Cruces NM.

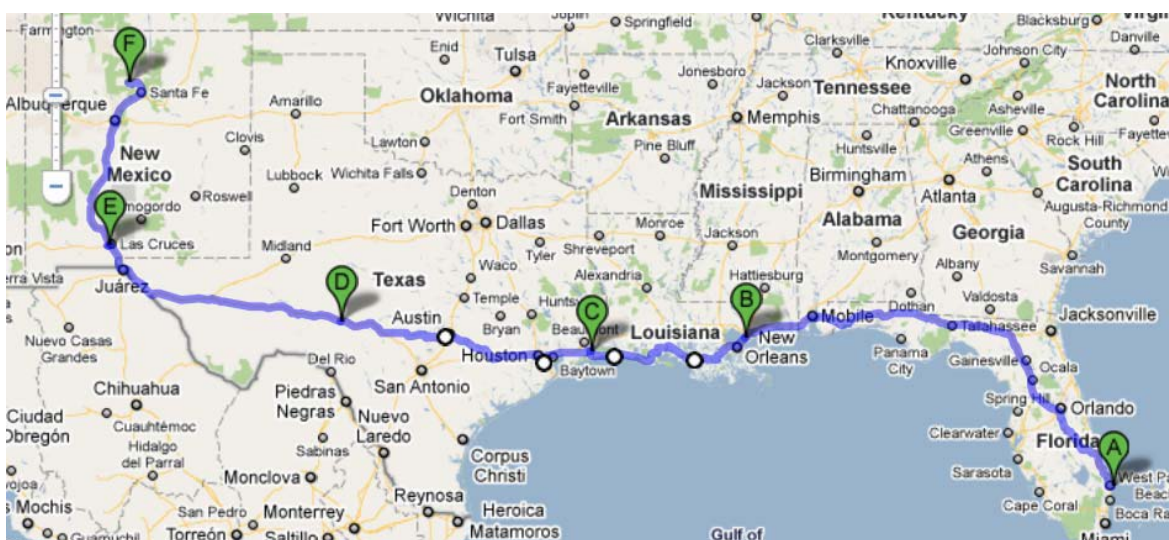


Figure 12. Route from Palm Beach to Los Alamos

Via the route I've mapped, it's about 2,300 miles, and in 1955, you probably were lucky to average a shade over 40 mph, so I think we'd be looking at nearly 55 hours of driving. If I break it into five days, they could do 11 hours a day, which isn't impossible. But I think I'll break it up like this:

Day 1: Palm Beach (A) to New Orleans (B), about 800 miles, we'll say they drive straight through, maybe do it in 18 hours.

Day 2: Hit town at 6 am, get a room, have sex,. Kill the day in New Orleans, maybe leave at suppertime and do short 5 hour drive to Holly Beach get there at 11 pm (C).

Day 3: 11 hour drive to Sonora (D).

Day 4: 11 hour drive to Las Cruces (E).

Day 5: 10 hour drive to Los Alamos (F)

I always remember that when Jack Kerouac wrote *On the Road*—seemingly all at once—he was drawing on an accumulation of little notebooks in which he'd written down trip notes. So I'm thinking I'll look through my voluminous journals for

descriptions of landscapes in the areas where Alan will be traveling through. I'll paste them in here and begin editing them for possible inclusion, placing each edited excerpt under a subheader indicating where the spot was.

The originals for these notes came from journal entries about Holly Beach, LA, 1999, New Orleans, 1999, Lafayette, LA 1999, Sonora, Texas, 1999, Near Las Cruces, NM, 1999, Santa Fe. 1998, Colorado Rockies, 2004, Wyoming Rockies, 2004, Montana, 2006, South Dakota, 1997. I also lifted a description of a Florida road from *Software*.

One problem is that I have Alan taking this trip in early January, 1955. And all of my trip notes are in fact from summer trips. But given that Alan's route is near the Gulf of Mexico, we can assume the climate is relatively summery.

FLORIDA

This was rolling countryside, with plenty of streams. Palms and magnolias gave way to blackjack pines and scrubby live oak. Brambles and honeysuckle filled in the spaces between the struggling little trees. And in some places the uncontrollable kudzu vine had taken root and choked out all other vegetation.

It was only eight-thirty, but already the asphalt road was shimmering in the heat. The frequent dips were filled with reflecting water-mirages. They'd rolled down the window's of the Catalina to and let the air beat against their face's. The car's big engine roared smoothly and the sticky road sang beneath the tires.

The wild scrub gave way to farmland, big cleared pastures with cattle in them. The cows waded about knee-deep in weeds, munching the flowers. White cattle egrets stalked and flapped along next to them, spearing the insects that the cows stirred up. The egrets looked like little old men with no arms.

They came upon a protected rookery in a swamp. A staggering number of egrets and herons were in the trees, dense cypresses and willows. Every single tree in the water full of nests, a big nest on every branch of every tree, birds in incalculable profusion, bird heaven. But — wait — what's that bumpy dark form in the water? Alligators. One of them had risen up from beneath the surface and had duckweed all over him, his nostrils and eyes were like tiny knots on logs. He lay there utterly immobile, waiting all day for that one egret or heron or ibis or spoonbill to fuck up and wander too close while pecking up frogs and fish

Alan ate his first hamburger in Pensacola, Florida. He felt like he was taking some unknown drug. Fearful of the coming effects.

NEW ORLEANS

The buildings in the Vieux Carré or French Quarter were mostly two-story buildings, very human in scale. Many had ironwork balconies with slender supporting columns coming down to the sidewalk. It's sunny (or raining?). Bizarre characters, but gentle-seeming. A woman calling herself Bloody Mary gave a tour of the graveyard called St. Louis #1. Dressed in a black dress with a long slit, draping herself on the crypts, delivering her memorized spiel like an onstage actress. A lean black man with a cyst the size of a golf ball on the side of his face sang "As Time Goes By" to them with a little tap-dance. Such a hard-luck guy, but turned out in a clean suit. (By the way, here's a link on [Louisiana Voodoo](#).)

In the evening they went to Bourbon St. There was free music everywhere and a grainy-voiced street-corner barker shilling people for an upstairs tattoo parlor. Wild

Cajun bands. Outside the door Alan saw a man walk by with a cross on his shoulder — an eight-foot wooden cross. Peering out the door, I saw him further down the street, a gray-haired guy in jeans and a gimmie cap. The cross was a signboard, as it turned out, there was a red letters all along the cross-bar, saying “Repent!”

ABBEVILLE, LA

There was a church in Abbeville, a big Catholic church in the steaming hot town. Outside the church stood a statue of Mary, or of a saint, and on a plaque under the statue it said, “I will let fall a shower of roses.” Alan had a mental image of William Burroughs saying this while taking a shit.

They were standing on a bridge and an excited young white cop pulled up in his car and asked if we’d seen a “black male subject” go by on foot. It made Louisiana seem like a cartoon where the cat is forever chasing the mice.

They had lunch at a Cajun place called Pat’s Wharf. Alan had a half-order of boiled crayfish: they gave him 76 of ‘em, some an inch long, but most were three inches long and a few were four or five inches long, served on a big flat pan.. He just ate the tails, the thin black waitress showed him how. “Don’t you feel sorry for them?” asked Susan. “76 trombones in my stomach,” said Vassar. Alan spoke to a woman outside, a regular old-lady time (my age, actually!) and she had a wild Cajun accent, a mixture of French and Southern.

HOLLY BEACH, LA.

Alan enjoyed the randomness and oddity of the place names. They spent a night in a tiny redneck beach town amidst the Louisiana bayou — the swampy border of the Gulf of Mexico. This “town” just a wide place in the road with a non-chain store, a hundred cabins and trailers. They rented the upper floor of a wooden shack.

All around them was the beach — a fully immersive environment. The steady rhythmic crashing of the small brown-green waves. Faint bursts of radio voices and music. Cars, trucks — and now a private plane — going by at the water’s edge. This was a beach which permitted driving — which struck Alan as idiotic. The poor crabs!

He could see a milky blue sky with cloud puffs. His view was framed by the low, slanting plywood roof of this second-story porch. There was a railing of diagonal lathwork. Straight ahead a line of power poles sketched a perspective and disappeared behind jumbled silhouettes of dowdy dinky cottages made of wood siding, of paneling, of painted plywood, of corrugated iron or tin. Palaces and havens for the American tourists. The metal roofs were silver with lines and patches of warm brown rust. A plywood wall is lemon-yellow, the grid of the panels’ butt-lines visible, overlaid on the triangular shape of the gable’s low peak. The brown-grey water was calm except at the shore where it the waves endlessly lapped. At the horizon were the little techno-smudges of several dozen floating oil-rigs (which had started going up in the late 1940s).

At night the rigs were lit up like Christmas trees or like spaceships. It seemed science-fictional to see these great machines out on the water. Closer in was a trawling shrimp boat. It had long booms sticking out to each side, and these booms drag a huge net. The boat moved slowly, laboriously, rocking from side to side, pulling the heavy weight of the net.

They had supper at the single restaurant here, the knotty-pine-paneled G & G Seafood. The shrimp were succulent and delicious.

SONORA

God, Texas was big. They drove all day through nothing. Stopped in some dying small towns, Sonora. Susan ate a filet mignon steak for supper, she was so happy about it and proud of herself, her first steak in maybe a year — “I’m practically a vegetarian, but when in Texas...” She leaned back in her banquette, sticking out her stomach and patting it, gleeful as an eleven-year-old.

They toured some caverns near Sonora. Alan was taken by the names of the mineral formations in the cave: the draped “cave bacon,” the white “popcorn” on the walls, the “soda straws” poking out of the ceilings, the “coral” branching up from the floors, the “flowstone” like doughy frozen-water slumps. One agglomeration of whitish flowstone was called “Moon Milk Falls.” The guide turned out the lights here so they could experience the darkness. Alan felt a tingling sensation.

And then the guide led them back the way we came, and Susan thought some of the formations had gotten bigger from when they’d seen them on the way in—despite the fact that the formations took tens or even hundreds of thousands of years to grow. Alan let himself imagine that the tingling moment of darkness by the Moon Milk Falls had lasted for a hundred thousand years. Out in the parking lot, the other tourists seemed to float about in globes of light.

That night they laid down on the frozen gravel and stared up in the sky and saw about ten or twenty meteorites, blazing across the sky kind of like sparklers being thrown, making such a long big mark that there was actually time to say to someone “look over there” and they’d look and the mark would still be there, unlike an ordinary shooting star. At first, looking at the stars and nothing happening, Alan was wanting to press Enter to start the simulation.

WEST TEXAS

A desert landscape, they had coffee in a classic western coffee shop in truckstop strip town. Granby is so gritty and sun-blasted and wind-blown, yet here we have as great a human passion as in the palaces of Renaissance Venice. On the street outside the coffee-shop, a local old-timer started talking to me, incredibly he seemed to think I was a local too, well, I guess there aren’t many non-locals bother to stop in Granby. That Western openness.

In the coffee shop, Alan saw a stuffed head of a steer the size of a car, his name was Old Blue and he’d led a drive of steers from like deep West Texas to Fort Worth, and they cut off his head and stuffed it and sent it back here to West Texas. “That’s *tight*,” said Susan. “To do a thing like that.”

Arid trails leading into the red mountains. So much empty space, mind-boggling. How feeble these few descriptive words are. Alan had never fully understood there still were beautiful natural spaces this empty. The stark, immense valleys soothed his soul. It bothered him that there’s so much more beauty than he could fully take in. Over and over he wanted to leap out of the car and immerse myself in the landscape, but always upon stopping the immensity escaped his grasp. It’s country so big that only driving seemed like an appropriate way to move about. Although, really, the best contacts with the nature came when he managed to slow down and merge into it.

LAS CRUCES

Alan Turing sat on the balcony of their room near Las Cruces, New Mexico, looking at the beautiful silhouette of some low mountains across a plowed field, the range like a long jawbone with teeth in it—a cow or dog jawbone that one might find in the woods. A dove sat on a twisting piñon branch in the shade of the tree's main trunk, an iconic silhouette. A train not too far off was sounded its horn for the crossings in this land of trains.

The red squirrel running up a twisty pine tree: it *fit*, the squirrel fit the tree, the two of them fit Alan's perceptions of what he should see. It struck him that he and the plants and animals and the skugs were all DNA, they were all part of the same wetware world.

Before getting back on the road in the morning, Alan took a walk, admiring the clumps of prickly pear cactus, the lobbed with buds along their rims, and with yellow and red flowers sprouting amid the thorns. He liked how the cacti were so perfectly placed among the grasses and the dry red rocks. Nature's wise and lovely designs, at the fertile border between order and chaos. Little lizards lifted up their striped tails to run away.

Alan came across a hillside cemetery with a few cracked stones amid long grass and thick-trunked old cypresses, the trees not immensely tall. In the wind-blown grass, Alan accidentally stepped on something alive. It was a rather large lizard who'd been resting there, sluggish in the early sun. The weight of Alan's foot had broken off most of the lizard's tail, and it was frantically twitching on the ground. The lizard himself remained motionless. Alan had the notion the wounded lizard was keeping himself under strict control, as opposed to his cut-off tail which had no control at all, desperately writhing.

With the federal police after him, he needed to be like the lizard and not like the tail.

NEW MEXICO.

Outside a grocery Alan overheard a careworn, weathered biker talking to a woman just off her shift. Such a hard life this man must have had, he looked almost like a bum. She was Roxanne, he was Wild Bill, "though you might better call me *Mild* Bill," he remarked. He pulled a two inch cigar stub out of his layers of clothes and chewed it, ready to light up. "Didn't mean to scare you off. Just kidding." He got on his bike and circled around the parking lot before leaving, wobbly and alone.

Alan looked over at a butte, a huge single red rock, fluted on the sides. *Such* a mass of quanta.

What was reality? Alan had a rush of ontological wonder sickness. Why did anything exist?

The ubiquity of the same forms: trees, dendrites, clouds, mountains, animals, my thoughts. All standard pattern that nature loves to grow.

Alan threw a raisin to some kind of a mouse, and the creature picked up the raisin in her paws and wanted to eat it, but was uneasy at still being fairly close to Alan, but did so very much want to bite into the delicious raisin right away, so, torn by the opposing drives, the creature let out a gorgeous shrill liquid *squeek*.

The mesas. The Indians didn't go into these mesas much. One reason suggested is that there are exceedingly strong thunderstorms here. This is said to be a power spot.

The Indians thought it sacred.

Incessant wind. Striking animals Alan saw: chipmunk, red squirrel, yellow swallowtail butterflies, snake, white-tail deer, a quail, prairie dogs. The snake looked so armless.

The humans were going by mostly in male-female pairs, perhaps a carry-over from the nesting instinct. He is showing her places where she can safely breed their pups.

January 31, 2011. "Four Way Jam" & "On The Road"

So that's a good trove of descriptive stuff I found in my journals, and a good route from Palm Beach to Los Alamos. And now I'm kneading in some story and some action. There's plenty of action to put in, so I think I'll end up with two new chapters, say a Chapter 10, "Four Way Jam," (with the title relating to the group sex, the group conjugation and the music in New Orleans), followed by a Chapter 11 called "On The Road," if that's not too presumptuous.

I'm glad to reap two chapters from the journals, as I feel the need for more material to paper over the blank spot I currently have around the 2/3 mark in the outline. I probably have more travel notes than I can use, unless I can think of lots of cat-and-mouse chase action to fit in.

I emailed my old writer pal Greg Gibson yesterday:

"Getting deeper into the Turing novel. He has an affair with Burroughs coming up, I think, and then they try to resurrect Joan—what a horrible disgusting idea, but it seems somehow unavoidable. It's like a tar-baby, this story, it just keeps glopping more filth onto me. I'm anxious about figuring out the plot, there are still some big holes, and two of the characters are indistinguishable, Ned and Vassar. At least I'll kill off Vassar pretty soon."

His answer: "Nice to be busy, iddnt?"

I do still need to straighten that out with Ned and Vassar, to make their voices more distinct. I hear Ned's voice as being like that of my boyhood Kentucky friend "Hank Larsen," I can hear it quite well. I've been making him perhaps overly hip, and a bit more pessimism and number-obsession would be good. Today in fact I went through and had made him less hip, and more geeky, and had him talk about numerology off and on, which kind of annoys Alan (for being amateurish) but is also a quite familiar kind of talk for him.

I don't quite hear Vassar's voice and I think it drifts. My latest idea is try making him sound like a New York version of Sta-Hi.

I continue to be uneasy about resurrecting Joan. I think I owe it to her memory to try—it seems too harsh the way the Beats spoke of her afterwards, almost like she was asking for it, or that she didn't matter. Can I make the resurrection attempt work? Burroughs comes across as a relatively self-centered person, an eternal kid. It's hard to visualize him wanting to resurrect Joan, so I'll need some angle relating to the skugs and the gazaks to motivate the attempt. Perhaps the attempt is more Alan's idea than it is Bill's. Perhaps Bill happens to be the one acquaintance of the fugitive Alan who has a handy connection to a dead soul—and by now Alan senses that the spirits have some

connection with the dead.

I'm also having a little trouble seeing a love affair between these two reserved men. Certainly it would involve, letting down their character armor: Turing his reserve, Burroughs his sarcasm. I already did that to some extent in their Tangier Christmas scene, but I'd need to push it more.

Working on the material, my big impression is that I really need to expand the stuff that my characters do. I need as much of that as of the travel notes. And to keep it interesting, I really need to get a prolonged chase going.

I think I'd supposed earlier on that a single skugger's teep doesn't reach all that far—hence the skugger-star sixteen-person antenna in Tangier. So maybe they're out of the reach of Landers. Okay, I worked that in.

I think some rather ordinary kind of slip-up leads the police onto their trail. Suppose that something Vassar says in a bar in New Orleans gets someone on their tail. They see a guy running out to make the call to the feds. They're coming to N.O.

On the way out of New Orleans, Alan skugs a gas-station attendant or maybe, better a graveyard guide. Bloody Mary. Telepathically, Bloody Mary tells Alan she'll stay on guard and give him an early alert when she senses the approach of pursuers.

After spending a night in Holly Beach, they awake to see a cop checking the license plates of the cars. The feds have gotten the number from Landers back in Palm Beach, or from the cop-shop impound-lot records.

Alan skugs the cop like this: Feeling uneasy, he vomits. The vomit is in fact a spawned-off skug, the skug slithers from his mouth, takes on the form of a seagull, and dive-bombs the cop, sinking into his flesh and skugging him on the spot.

And then we might suppose that soon Landers is brought on the scene as a skugger-detector, riding in a helicopter or maybe just in an ambulance. The sinister ambulance, yeah. They go to using their teep blocks, and they stay up for a day or two.

They know the teep block drops down when they sleep. But then they're exhausted, so they creep into that Sonora cave and sleep there. They skug a woman guard or caretaker and get her to take them down there and spend the night as well.

February 4-5, 2011. Vaccine, EM Teep, Gazaks

Antiskug vaccine.

The feds are protecting themselves with an antiskug vaccine. The Captain's wife managed to call the FBI, and they bagged Norvell in Palm Beach, and turned his body into a vaccine. I looked up vaccines on Wikipedia, one idea is to treat people with a non-infectious version of the infectious agent. I found an interesting interview about growing vaccine cultures on [fertilized chicken eggs](#). You want a fertilized egg that's about ten days old. It can use up a whole chicken egg to brew one dose of flu vaccine.

Skugger teep.

Let's keep it simple and assume that skugger teep is an electromagnetic signal. The skug infection (a) makes your brain sensitive to radio waves and (b) allows you to broadcast a specially encrypted type of radio waves. Your broadcast power is weak, so you can't teep over great distances. But you can pick up radio anyway. It's an off-beat kind of encryption, not exactly like AM or FM, more like some modern kind of voice phone encryption. Or perhaps phase modulation? I'll research for some outré alternate way of coding things into EM waves.

But—*I need to decide*—what *is* the exact range of skugger teep? Maybe just a mile? [I had it at a mile for awhile, and then, on July 5, 2011, I cut it down to half a mile to make something in the Los Alamos chapters work.]

What Are Gazaks?

Perhaps gazaks are akin to the Orpolese in *Frek and the Elixir*, that is, they could be persistent electromagnetic fields shaped like tori. You take a tornado-like helix, bend it around into a circle, connecting the top to the bottom and you get a shape like a donut with a grain around it, like a twisted bagel. Or a barber pole pattern on a torus. These would come in left-handed and right-handed forms, I believe.

Does it really have to be a helical torus? Maybe not. I just think of a closed curve as being more stable, as Escher sometimes drew souls—as shown below. By the way, note that the two heads have mirror-image handedness, so if you stretched out the band, the coils would annihilate each other. And I don't think that link near the top would matter, I think you could shake it out.

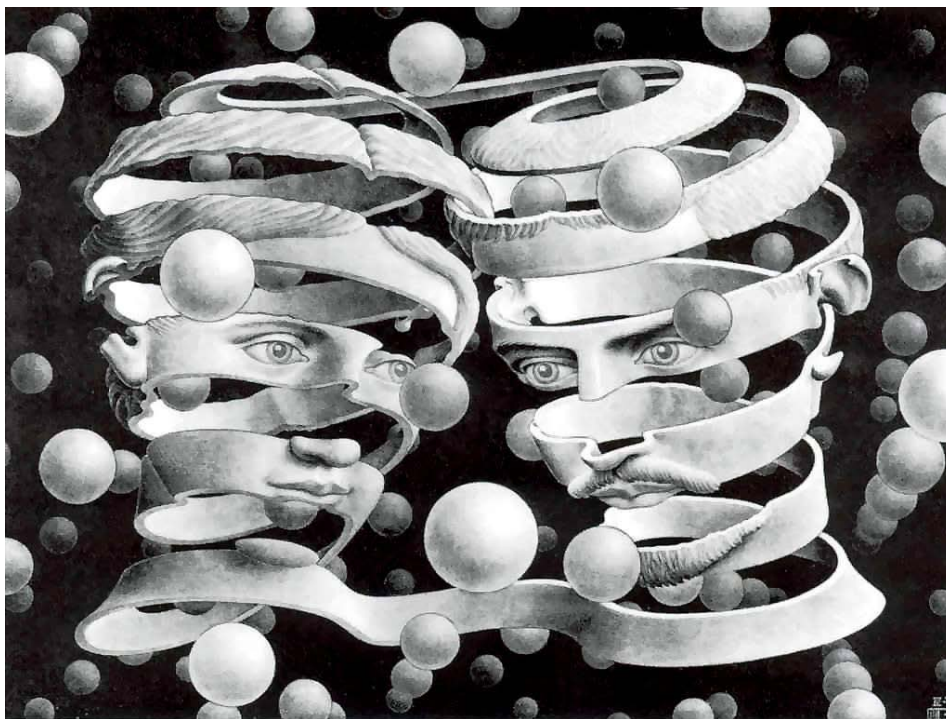


Figure 23. Maurits Escher, *Bond of Union*

My Orpolese came from stars, and they involved the magnetohydrodynamics of plasma. They related to what fusion researches call a “[spheromak](#),” a closed circular vortex loop of plasma, also called a magnetic smoke ring. The plasma contains helical currents and magnetic fields that are continuous around the toroid. A plasma is an ionized gas in which the nuclei and the electrons move independently, and the electrons and nuclei can be thought of as two separate fluids. The spheromak moves according to the equations of motion of magnetohydrodynamics (MHD), and the plasma it's made of is also called a magnetofluid.

But I don't want something as high-energy as the Orpolese. Perhaps something more like a mesh or a fishnet is better, like a field-line structure. I want a subtle energy. Perhaps it can be electromagnetic, like mild ball lightning. Or it might be based on some exotic microtubule structures in the air, little vortex filaments that link together into a

mesh. Suppose the nodes of the mesh are exotic particles that are quantum-mechanically entangled with the neighboring nodes.

I'm thinking that gazaks are the same thing as human ghosts, and in fact Joan's ghost is bugging Burroughs. Ordinarily ghosts disperse after a short time. But some of them manage to persist. When you die, a net of energy floats out of you like a jellyfish.

The ghost drifts out on a person's dying breath, a spray of quantum-entangled "memnon" particles that jointly carry a lifebox encryption of the departed's personality. Microtubules spring up among the memnons, and the tubules become the edges of a mesh. Like a gossamer handkerchief, or rather, like a spider web sparkling with the morning dew.

The skugger-generated gazaks are akin to the regular ghosts, but they're more durable.

And the gazaks don't look like snakes, as I'd been thinking earlier. Perhaps they look like the Wilis in Act II of the ballet, *Giselle*.

Feb 14 & 22, 2011. On the Plane To and From Spain

Feb 14, 2011

I've been away from *The Turing Chronicles* for ten days. I had to input some editorial suggestions for my novel, *Jim and the Flims*, and proofread the page proofs of my memoir, *Nested Scrolls: A Writer's Life*. They'll both be coming out later this spring. Exciting, that. It makes me happy to read the memoir. I've had a good life.

Right now, Sylvia and I are in business class on an Air France plane to Bilbao, in the Basque region of Spain. I'll be giving a talk on how to make money from free software for a conference called Garum Day. They needed a well-known computer hacker to come speak, and I was a close enough fit, so they got us these plane tickets, and are supposedly going to pay for seven nights of hotel as well. So far, so good—it's nice in business class, almost like we're in a little compartment on a train.

I managed to write up a talk and make Power Point slides for it over the last couple of days, so I don't have to worry about that.

So back to the novel? Well, I won't do much on it while I'm in Spain, but I can work for a few hours on the flight over and the flight back. I'll start by integrating some hand-marked changes on the latest print-out of the current chapter.

Before that, two points come mind, one short range, one long range.

Short range: My first draft of the New Orleans orgy feels awkward, I have to fix that.

Long range: I'm concerned that as Alan and his friend Ned continue skugging people, they seem less and less sympathetic. It may be necessary to have Turing morph into something of a selfish villain. Now, usually in my novels, the characters grow nobler—so I'd be doing a reverse, and having a main character who becomes base and even evil. I can counterbalance this downward evolution by having the William Burroughs character redeem himself and become more heroic. Along these lines, I'd need for Burroughs to express real remorse for murdering his wife—I could work this into drama by having him come to terms with her ghost, a literal ghost that Alan can see as well. And near the end, with Turing a totally degraded slave to twill of the alien skugs, it's Burroughs who attempts to dissuade and then actively prevents Alan Turing from destroying our civilization by skugging everyone in the world at once. (As a matter of historical fact, Turing *did* succeed in destroying civilization—he enslaved us to the

ever-expanding race of computers.)

(This kind of plot structure reminds me of an X, that is, one branch of the X is Alan going downhill, while the other is Bill rising up. I'd like to say this is "chiasmus," but that word in fact describes a localized rhetorical device with a rather different meaning.)

Feb 22, 2011

So now we're on the way home from Bilbao, with a ten hour plane ride in front of us. I'll do a little work on the novel along the way.

I had a dream on the night of February 16, 2011, after my big talk to about a thousand businessmen. There's something in it that I might be able to use in *The Turing Chronicles*: a type of flight. Here's the relevant part of my notes on the dream from my "Diary7" journal.

I end up in the home of an unfamiliar couple, they're Santa Cruz types. I lean back and hover in the air, as I do sometimes in dreams—it's a mild form of a flying dream. I'm floating on my back as if I were floating on water. I ask the hard-bitten stoner couple if they're impressed, and they aren't.

They guy pulls out an air-gun and fires it at me. A couple of crooked nails strike my chest. Fortunately I'm protected by a heavy bib like you wear for an x-ray at the dentist's.

On waking, it occurred to me that in this kind of limited flying dream—where I'm floating above the heads of my peers, although they refuse to recognize that I'm doing something unusual—I'm dreaming an objective correlative image of being more intelligent than most of the people around me. I float above them, and they don't even notice this.

So, like I say, I'm thinking I might be able to use this kind of mild flight in *The Turing Chronicles*. It would be a new element to throw in near the end. I can see Stan Ulam lolling in mid-air.

How to explain it? Let's say it's a simple Maxwell's Demon trick: you're somehow herding all the upward-traveling air molecules beneath you, and they suspend you like a beach ball atop a geyser. You're using your teep to get in touch with all the atoms. (I could equally well do something similar with a massively parallel quantum computation, but that would be too anachronistic for a story set in 1955.) Ulam was into stochastic processes such as the Monte Carlo method of simulation—I could draw on some mumbo-jumbo buzzwords from the field of statistics. Central Limit Theorem. Variance. Sigmas. Law of Large Numbers. Ergodicity.

On the trip, I've been reading Burroughs's late novel, *The Western Lands*. Maybe when I finish it, I'll make a detailed list of things in it that I might draw upon. One preliminary thought is that Alan might be a little amused and charmed by Bill's repeated fruity rhapsodies about the onyx or jade or pulsing or milky or crystalline penises of boys in jungles at dawn. When Bill goes on like this, it reminds me of how the perennially impoverished Edgar Allan Poe would droolingly write about treasure, as when he

inventories the contents of the chest found in “The Gold Bug.” Alan might tease Bill about this.

March 5, 2011. Back Into It

So finally I’m getting back to *The Turing Chronicles*. I had that trip to Spain, as well as the revisions and copy-edits for *Nested Scrolls* and for *Jim and the Flims*, which I mentioned before—but then I had another session with *Jim and the Flims*, making about 800 corrections. So it’s been about a month.

When I’m away from a novel for this long, I begin to think I won’t ever get back. And I become almost scared to try, or perhaps it’s more that I feel queasy at the amount of inner work it’ll take to get plugged back into it again.

It’s a nice warm day, and, as chance would have it, I’m typing this entry at a table on the porch of the Cafe Pergola in Santa Cruz, looking down on the very spot where I depicted Jim and Weena as meeting up with Chang, Header, Ira, and Ginnie in *Jim and the Flims*. I feel a nice moiré overlap of the trans and the real.



Figure 24. “A Skugger’s Point Of View”

I got cranked up by finishing my painting of the end of Chapter 11 yesterday. In this painting, “A Skugger’s Point of View,” I wanted to render an extreme first-person point of view...in which we see the dim zone around a person’s actual visual field. The person in question is the Alan Turing character in my *The Turing Chronicles*. As a skugger, he has the ability to stretch his limbs like the cartoon character Plastic Man. He’s traveling across the West with his two friends, Vassar on the left and Susan on the right—Ned isn’t in the painting.

In this scene, Turing's posse is being attacked by feds, one of whom bears a flamethrower. Turing is responding by sticking his fingers into their heads, to convert them into skuggers as well. We can see Turing's arms extending from the bottom edge of his visual field. Even though it's not quite logical, I painted in his eyes as well because they make the composition better. And those inchoate yellowish shapes in the borders of his mind are the gazaks.



Figure 25. 1949 Hudson Commodore.

Getting back to the start of my Chapter 11: “On The Road,” they’re going to switch to the car of a police informer they’ve skugged. I’ll say it’s a Hudson—I seem to remember Neal Cassady ranting about a Hudson in one of Jack’s books. Here’s a nice one I found in Wikipedia. I like the sun-visor, and, again, the two-tone paint—although for the purposes of my story, I’ll make the Hudson a dull gray, as it’s meant to be a fairly crappy car.

March 12-15, 2011. Action Scene.

March 12, 2011

The “On The Road” chapter got so long that I split it in two. I now have an “On the Road” chapter 11 with New Orleans and Holly Beach, and then a “Coyotes” chapter 12 with Texas and the flight to New Mexico. I’m thinking at the end, Vassar and Ned are dead, Susan and Alan are left, they get a helicopter ride to the mesa lands of New Mexico in a thunderstorm, and take off on foot, disguised as coyotes.

The Landers skug-spy-in-a-jar is a powerful weapon for the normal humans, as was the Burroughs hive-mind-skug-antenna in Tangier. I want the skugs to learn to destroy themselves (and possibly their human host) if they’re in danger of being co-opted.

At this point, I’m saying that the skugger teep only reaches about a mile. I’d like the skugs across the world to be able to have some kind of coherent hive-mind-like plans. Must I posit a longer-range channel for skug-to-skug communication, so that the skugs can make their plans in synchronization? I’d rather not do this, as then it’s not really clear why humans are limited to the one-mile-teep radius.

What if we suppose that skug-to-skug contacts can hop from person to person, as a repeatedly relayed message—like a human nerve impulse hopping from nerve cell to nerve cell. And it could be that we humans have some of this hive teep ourselves, although we tend not to notice it.

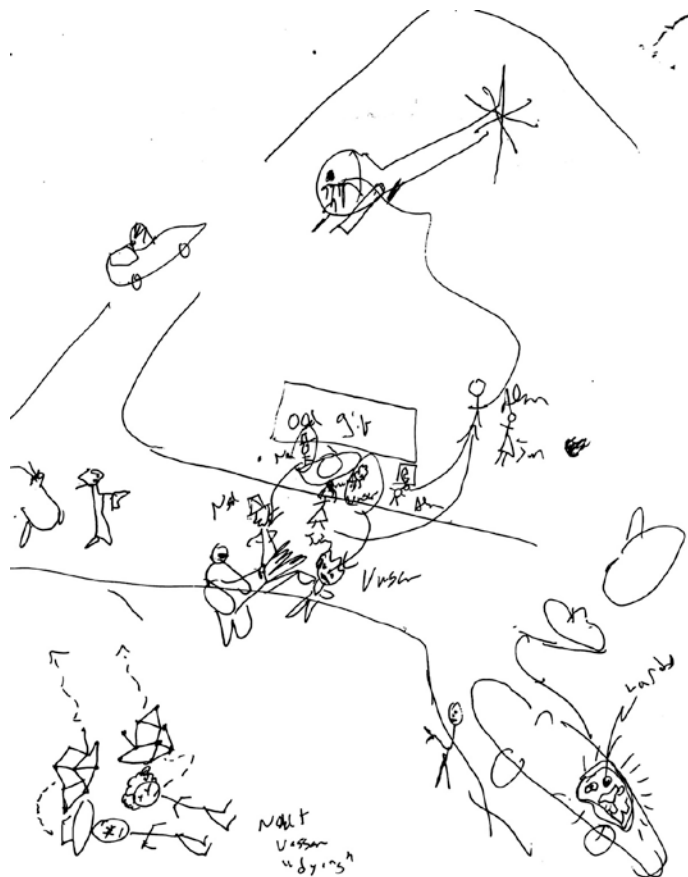


Figure 26. Sketch of Gormly Showdown

I'm trying to write up the big action scene today, and am having some trouble getting it going. But I made a messy sketch, as shown above, and that helps.

March 14, 2011

I put in an archenemy yesterday, an important thing to have, a guy called Dick Hosty, leader of the anti-skugger forces. I took the name Hosty from *Finnegans Wake*, which has an ongoing kind-of-villain of that name.

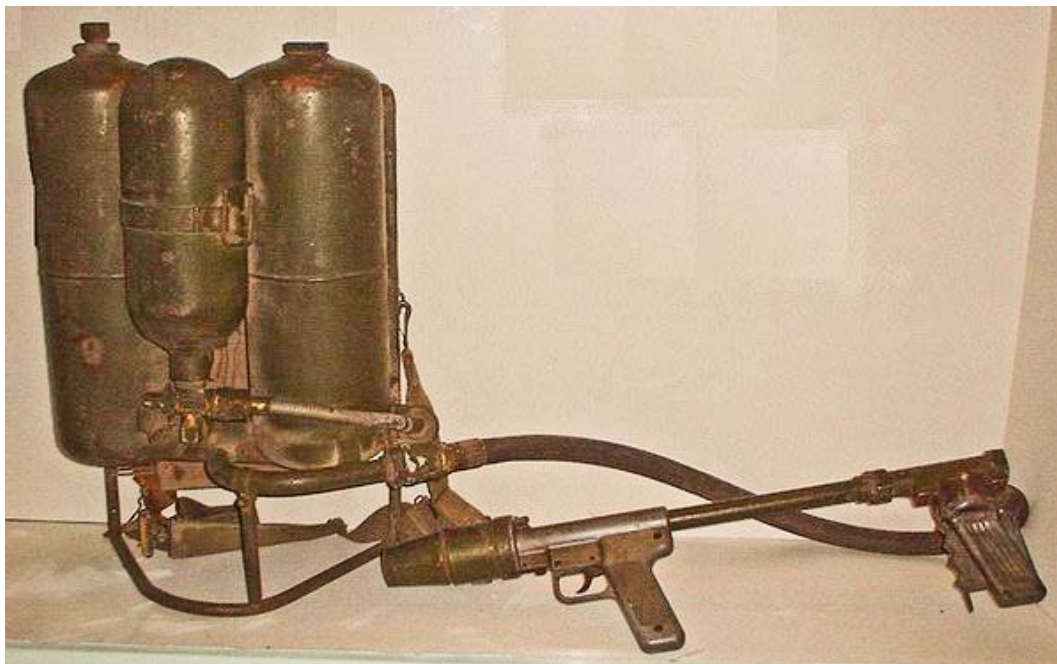


Figure 27. US Army M2 Flamethrower

Above is a picture from Wikipedia of the kind of WW II Army surplus [M2 flamethrower](#) the cops would be using against the skuggers in 1955. The small tank in back holds pressurized nitrogen, the two big tanks hold something like kerosene, which is forced out in a spray, and lit by a wick in the nozzle. It's only good for about ten seconds of flaming spray, but the flame reaches fifty feet or more.

I see a guy rescuing Alan and Susan from the shoot-out in a [Bell 47G](#) helicopter as shown below. This chopper was introduced in 1953, with the full bubble canopy. Alan sends up a tendril to skug him so he has to help. It's a two-seater, so Susan has to squeeze into the middle.



Figure 28. Bell 47G Helicopter

I want the pilot, Mike Naranjo, to carry Alan and Susan nearly to Los Alamos from the neighborhood of Sonora, Texas, (which I'm calling Gormly). This would be about 550 miles, but we can suppose that they don't quite make it, maybe they come up a hundred miles short, so it can be 450 miles. Now, the Bell 47G cruises at about 85 mph, so the trip would take five or six hours.

The 47G's range on a full tank of fuel is 245 miles, so it would need to refuel at least once. They could readily fill up at some country gas station near, let us say, Roswell, NM, if that's not laying it on too thick. Or near Lubbock. Its engine would use avgas, which is really just high-octane car gasoline, so, if necessary, I'm sure they could use car gas, although they can readily enough stop at a crop-duster-serving airport and skug the one or two guys running it.

(Originally I was going to call the pilot Mike Novak, in fond memory of the 1950s *Steve Roper* comic-strip character Mike Nomad, whose birth name was Mike Nowak. But I also want Mike to be half Native American, and to help my characters in Mexico, so it's a better fit if he's part Latino rather than part Polish. "Naranjo" means "orange" and is in fact a not uncommon surname.)

March 15, 2011

I'm almost at the end of my action chapter 12, currently called "Coyotes."

The eidetic mental image I have for the final scene is of the chopper in the snow, and the storm has suddenly broken up, the veils of snow parting to show a brilliant blue sky above, sun twinkling on the crystals. Alan and Susan morph in to coyotes and trot off down an arroyo. Naranjo gasses up his chopper with gas siphoned from a stalled truck and heads south. I'd like to have Naranjo crop up again when Alan and Bill are down in Mexico. I don't see fighter jets coming in now, or the chopper being burnt. A peaceful scene.

Re. turning into coyotes, a couple of thoughts. Coyotes normally weigh about 40 pounds, with the largest one on record weighing 75. So Alan and Susan would each be the size of three average coyotes. One interesting fix: each of them *does* turn into three coyotes, working together via teep. The body as an archipelago. The typical coyotes are like medium-sized dogs, about two feet tall and three feet long—plus a foot and a half of tail. Susan and Alan form a pack of six.

I could go to wolves or grizzly bears—a typical American wolf might weigh 80 pounds, although they can run over a 100, and a grizzly can easily be the size of a man. But the symbolism of coyotes as tricksters is a better fit for Alan and Susan in this context.

Rather than each of them becoming a pack of three, I could claim that a skugger can in fact slough off as much as, say, 80% of their mass, and still preserve all the relevant biological and mental information in the small new body. The brain is, after all, only about three pounds, and I assume that some highly compact DNA-style coding can map the original body's form. You could fit the three-pound brain inside, say, the chest of a coyote, or smush it out long and skinny like marrow and run it from the coyote's head down along the underside of the spine.

I like the pack of three idea better—it's more SFictional, and somehow more symbolic. Like—if I split myself into three coyotes, which parts of my personality would go into which? Biter, Licker, and Howler.

March 16, 2011. Rewriting Outline. Plan “Mutant” Chapter

As I near the end of my current chapter 12: “Coyotes,” I need to look ahead and see what lies ahead. So I rewrote the latter part of the [outline](#), beating it down to eighteen chapters and cleaning things up.

I’ll switch back to the Burroughs POV for chapter 13, maintaining the structural rhythm of POV alternations. At this point another chapter of faked letters would feel repetitive and, perhaps too parodistic and playful. The novel is getting heavier and more earnest. I need a framework in which Burroughs can take a more serious and emotionally available tone.

So I’m thinking I’ll have the forthcoming chapter 13 be of double length (eight or nine thousand words), and be the text of an imaginary unpublished novelette or story by Burroughs, an autobiographical piece along the lines of *Junky* and *Queer*. And he’ll call this novel *Mutant*. *Skugger* would be a title possibility, too, but I already have chapters called “The Skug” and “Cops and Skuggers.” And *Mutant* sounds more like a Burroughs title anyway. (In the end, I called it “The Apocalypse According to Willy Lee.”)

I want to do it as a double-length chapter, all in one long take, as this part of the story needs to belong to Burroughs and to be seen through his eyes. But I don’t want to rush it, I want to have enough space to stretch out and milk the drama for all it’s worth.

If it’s a short story, I suppose I need to change the names of the transreal characters, as Bill did in his other works? So as not to make it too confusing, I’ll use some very simple and obvious pseudonyms, perhaps “Bill Lee, Alan Turner, and Susan Jones.” The renaming move is in fact a good fit with my novel’s shapeshifting and “imitation game” themes.

Note that, in reality, during the years 1954–1958, Burroughs was continuously in Tangier, generating a mound of routines which Jack and Allen would help him assemble into *Naked Lunch* in 1957. So, in the closing “Last Word” chapter of my novel, I might have Burroughs report that, after his go-round with Alan Turing in early 1955, he abandoned work on *Mutant* and went back to his routines in Tangier. Maybe he’s been scared to publish *Mutant*, as it’s all true, and the public has forgotten this reality.



Figure 29. Sketch of Alan and Susan as Pack of Coyotes

As I was saying before, I think it will be dramatic if Alan and Susan turn into a pack of coyotes at the end of Chapter 12 and wander off into the blizzard, which has recommenced (all this as suggested in the top part of the sketch above), and get lost. They sense a teep beacon or a spirit guide. The guide might be Ned and or Vassar, the teep might come from Burroughs or Naranjo.

They go in a circle (as indicated in the bottom part of the sketch), and end up in a humble Indian home near where Naranjo parked his helicopter. Bill Lee hears a scratching on the Indians' door, and a pack of six coyotes scramble in and melt into Alan Turner and Susan Jones. They find Burroughs sitting there in a rocking chair.

How did Burroughs find his way to the Indians' house from Tangier?

Let's look at my [time line](#) and see if I can make this work. I have Burroughs leaving Tanger on the afternoon of January 3, Europe time. And I'd want Alan to find him either in the evening of January 6, US time. Suppose that everything went smoothly as possible, and that Burroughs takes a ferry to Gibraltar, and thence a chain of planes from Gibraltar to London to New York to Miami (or possibly direct to Palm Beach, if that connection existed at that time). The trip would take at least 24 hours, and probably more like 36 hours, given that we're doing this in 1955. Taking into account the 9 hour time difference between Europe and America, it could be effectively 24 hours, so he'd arrive in Palm Beach on, let's say, the evening of January 4. He could hang around there for a day, and maybe he gets a phone call from Turing on the evening of January 5. If he jumps on a plane early on Jan 6, he could hit Los Alamos late in the day on Jan 6. How does he end up in the Indians' house? He gets information from Vassar's ghost. And then, as I've been saying, Vassar's and Ned's ghosts lead Alan in, with Bill's teep contributing.

March 17-19, 2011. Seeking A Way Into "Mutant"

March 17, 2011.

So now I'm trying to get my head in the right place to write a lost Burroughs novelette, *Mutant*.

I typed up my favorite [excerpts from Burroughs's The Western Lands](#) yesterday. Just to get started, I think I might collage together these bits and my [excerpts from Letters to Allen](#), which I also have on hand—and then I'll have a skeleton of a document to work on.

I used a similar process to get going on my three most recent chapters encompassing the travel sequence from Palm Beach to Los Alamos. I started with a framework of travel notes from my journals, and fleshed those out into the action. When inspiration quails, use craft and process.

The idea of faking a Burroughs novelette is a little daunting. When I looked at a photo of him this morning, I felt scared. But his prose doesn't scare me. I was reading *Queer* as well last night, which is an autobiographical novel about his Mexico City period, only 30,000 words long, and there are some things in there I can use. This said, *Queer* doesn't strike quite the tone I want.

First of all, it's third person, and I want *Mutant* to be in the first person, like *Junky* is, so we have heat and immediacy and rush. Secondly, *Queer* is in places a little too stiff and literary. Bill didn't have his mature style down yet when he wrote *Queer*. This said, in its youthful rawness, *Queer* cuts close to something I need to deal with: it shows Burroughs as a suffering, unhappy human being—as opposed to the hectoring, poised,

insect-carapaced gnarl-master that he matured into.

March 19, 2011.

Finished reading *The Western Lands* and found a few more bits. There's a great routine where Bill thinks he's found a pet cat, but, seen from the outside, he's gone crazy, he's making cat sounds and eating the cat food himself, on all fours on the floor. Maybe I can use this in the final chapter.

I reread *Queer*, which Bill wrote in 1951-1952 waiting to get clear of the courts after killing Joan on September 6, 1951. It's a minor work. But it has some strong evocations of Bill's lust for Allerton, the man he was infatuated with. Some Burroughs routines are present in the form of reported spoken monologues, but they don't kick as hard as they do in *Naked Lunch* and other later works—he doesn't quite have the timing down yet. There's also a prefiguring of *The Yage Letters*, as Bill made an unsuccessful preliminary yage-foray to South America with Allerton. I copied a few of the [good lines](#) into my Research section.

For the latter part of his life, Burroughs lived with James Grauerholz, first in Manhattan, I believe, and then in Lawrence, Kansas. In 2001, four years after Bill's death, Grauerholz wrote a seventy-page paper, a kind of monograph, "The Death of Joan Vollmer Burroughs: What Really Happened?," and presented it at an academic conference. It has some interesting photos, first-hand accounts, and excerpts of the contemporary reportage in the Mexico City press, particularly in *La Prensa*.

In the context of the paper, Grauerholz at one point takes on the persona of an imaginary prosecuting attorney who delivers this paragraph.

"Burroughs thought of himself as a tough guy, but really he was merely less fearful of other people when he was carrying a gun. He was an inveterate show-off and grandstander, and very resentful when his ego-balloon was pricked by anyone—as it so often was, because he had an enormous weakness for folly and superstition. He was a drunken coward with a gun, who shot his annoying wife."

From a physician's report on Bill in 1949: "The patient...gives me the impression of being grossly immature, lacking all adult sense of responsibility, and being grossly dependent on his wife, who seemed to enjoy taking care of the serious problem which he represented."

These aren't necessarily Grauerholz's true opinions of Burroughs at all—but they do show a useful point of view. When I wrote *The Hollow Earth*, featuring Edgar Allan Poe as a character, I began developed, along with deep sympathy and affection, a weariness for and contempt for certain aspects of his personality. This is what happens when you know someone extremely well. You know their faults and are irritated by them—even within a framework of continuing admiration and affection. And I feel this happening to me vis-a-vis Burroughs now, as I continue delving.

The gun-toting was something of a tough-guy facade, and, when Burroughs was drunk, people would often take his gun away from him, which it would embarrass him to recall when he sobered up. Joan would chaff him about this.

In the Mexico City period, Joan was drinking heavily, a bottle or two of tequila a day, staring in the morning. She was in poor health, her face was swollen, she limped from a case of polio, dressed in old flower print dresses, went barefoot most of the time, her upper teeth were missing.

They hung out at the Bounty Bar, which Bill calls the Ship Ahoy in *Queer*.

Bill was born in 1914, Joan in 1923. When Bill first met Joan in 1944, he was 30 and she was 21, nine years younger than him. They felt an almost-telepathic mental intimacy.

March 21, 2011. “Burroughs Mutant Cutup”

[For this entry, I’m pasting in a preliminary document that I called “Burroughs Mutant Cutup,” and which I prefaced with a sententious discursive subtitle as shown below. I like the idea of using cutup material to develop my Burroughs pastiche, it’s very much a technique that he himself might use. As I work on this material, I’m finding a tone. Rather than using the joking tone of the letters, I see this as being written in a slightly more traditional style, such as B used in *Queer* and *Junky*.]

Being a collage of excerpts from three of William Burroughs’s books, *Western Lands*, *Letters to Allen Ginsberg 1953-1957*, and *Queer*, also including fragments from the fake Burroughs letters in Rucker’s novel-in-progress, *The Turing Chronicle*—this cutup assemblage to be used as a sketch to be “overpainted” by Rucker to create an imaginary Burroughs report or novelette, which will be an 8,000 word chapter of *The Turing Chronicles*—the chapter is currently called “Mutant,” but this name may change. The (W) material is for use in my novel’s closing chapter, probably called “The Last Word,” although I might shift some of it to my so-called “Mutant” chapter. When I archived this 4,900 word file here in this post on March 21, 2011, I’d “overpainted” the sections (A)-(D), with (E)-(L) and (W) still in raw cutup form. And then I went ahead and pasted the file into my novel document and continued overpainting and expanding it.

(A) BACKGROUND

Reaching puberty, I began wondering whence I’d grown and what I might blossom into. I’d study myself in the mirror, practicing looks: the dreamy despair of a child from famine-land, the lonely ghost who thirsts for the fluids of sex, the blank-faced gunsel, the noble who has dared and lost all, the junky on the nod.

Evidently I was queer. I’d watch a boy’s delicate hands, his beautiful dark eyes, the flush of excitement on his cheeks, and I’d project imaginary psychic hands, caressing his ears, smoothing his eyebrows, pushing the hair back from his face.

Going to the movies with a pal, I’d feel my body pulling towards him, projecting an ectoplasmic amoeboid tentacle that strained like a hungry blind worm enter my friend’s body, to breathe with his lungs, to see with his eyes, to learn the feel of his viscera and genitalia.

Reviewing these states of mind in front of my mirror, I’d dig how, as I heated up, my mouth would fall slightly open, with my teeth showing in the half-snarl of a baffled animal. Yes, an animal—the social limitations upon my desires were like the bars of a cage. Every day I was looking out through the invisible bars, watchful, alert, waiting for the keeper to forget the door, for the frayed collar, the loosened bar. And eventually, of course, I found my way free.

One thing led to another and learned the art of showing boys how the cow ate the cabbage. “Wouldn’t it be booful if we should juth run together into one gweat big blob,” I like to say in baby talk, when we lay at ease afterwards, fully sated. “Am I giving you

the horrors?”

Queer or not, when I was thirty I started living with Joan Vollmer, who was nine years younger than me. We were on the same wavelength, to a nearly telepathic extent. I’ve always longed to be understood, and at times Joan came close. And, *faute de mieux*, sex with a woman isn’t bad.

I failed Joan in innumerable ways, and we reeled beneath our various addictions. But for seven years she took care of me. We drifted through New Orleans, Texas, and down to Mexico City. And then, early one evening, as part of a drunken comedy routine, I shot her in the head. I have no real defense. The gun shot crooked, I was possessed by an ugly spirit, she telekinetically drew the bullet towards her brain—words, words, words. Shooting Joan was the one thing of all that I longed to undo.

The musical-chairs, tragicomic opera of Mexican justice was alarmingly hard to predict. I skipped bail, landed in Tangier and devoted myself to full debauchery—and to the literary arts. Wouldn’t you? A number of the people in Tangier took a violent, irrational dislike to me. Especially the people who ran bars.

For any number of years I’d been developing my routines, crazed and vaguely menacing rants like out-of-control burlesque comic might do. I’d lay my spoken-word art on friends and foe alike. My goal was free-flowing laughter, unstrained and pure—a rollicking hyena laughter to set me free of my nagging, frightened flesh.

Not that everyone found me funny. My routines sometimes led me into ostracism, eviction, and threats of arrest. The routines bubbled out of me like mephitic gasses from a Wild West spring. “Pardon me, Señor, you should have made that belch a fart.” All too often, a routine could shlop over into real action. Go into a bar and call one man a moronic baboon, petition the next for sexual favors, wave your gun in the bartender’s face—and it can turn all too real.

As I say, my final number with Joan was meant to be a routine, I was pretending to shoot a glass off her head, pretending to be drunk and criminally reckless—but was only *imagining* that I was pretending. Joan fell dead with my bullet in her temple. I couldn’t stop longing for a way to go back and re-edit my reality tapes. Or a way to appease Joan’s ghost. Of course she’d followed me from Mexico to Tangier.

I hoped to craft my pain into novel, but of course the received, calfskin-bound notion of a novel was radically inadequate for expressing what I needed to say. I was determined to refine my routines direct into a new style of high lit. Not so easy as it might seem. For one thing, it falls flat to run the obvious move of having a character who declaims your routines. Textually you want the routines to emanate direct from the unreliable author, like you’re reading transcripts off a cuneiform stone from a UFO.

Sometimes in the mornings in Tangier, I’d lie in bed and see grids of typewritten words in front of my eyes, moving and shifting like a sentient crossword puzzle. I’d get my wobbly pen and try to copy down the words, maybe taking dictation from the telepathic mind control voices in my head as well. As the muse wills it. I’d come to accept that, if I’m writing routines, I can’t control what I write, which is, after all, a certain kind of literary ideal—the blind poet jacking his marble bone on Mount Olympus. Typed and scribbled papers accumulated on my floor.

(B) BILL MEETS ALAN

My intimate association with Professor Alan Turing began in Tangier, in the final days of 1954. The man had fallen on hard times and, against all better judgment, I

allowed him to move into my apartment for a week.

Turing was a well-known British mathematician, who'd done code-breaking work during the war, later turning to the design of giant electronic brains. When I met him, his new kick was to program the processes of biological growth. Not unloath to experiment upon himself, he'd infested his face with something akin to cancer.

Why did I fall in love with this man? He was two years older than me, which would normally put him out of my range—I prefer the younger stuff. And, at the time when I met him, there was, as I say, something deeply wrong with his face. But he was at least fit and trim—and as his experiments went on, his face gained a very seemly and pleasant look. And I my own body would become trimmer and more youthful as well. To some extent we molded each other into desirable mates.

More than anything, I enjoyed his intellectual companionship. Even if he was somewhat awkward and professorial in his speech, the donnishness was itself a kind of routine, his own joke against the world. Alan was a born outsider, unfettered in his will to follow every arcane obsession to its end result.

I should also mention that Turing was as frankly and unapologetically queer as me—without being at all effeminate. A man's man, in the proper sense that the phrase should have. A final endearing quality of Alan's was that he hated the authorities as much as I—and with good reason. The British Secret Service were bent on assassinating him. And why? For being queer.

Soon after I agreed to let Turing move into my rooms, he told me there was a sense in which he was planning to become a human-sized cancer tumor. He speculated that instead of having the customary array of elaborate, fiddling, committee-work body-organs, he'd become a shapeshifting slug of undifferentiated tissue. He'd brought with him a pound of his special undifferentiated tissue in a cloth sack. He called the thing a *skug*, and he talked to it like a pet.

Initially I took this as fanciful eccentricity—or as a somewhat mad scientist's notion of a comedy routine. As if bent on pushing his jape to the limit, Turing doctored his skug with odd compounds from the souk and with radio waves. And then, lo and behold, something unprecedented occurred. Turing made the biological transition into a new form of life. He merged his doctored skug with his body, becoming what we'd call a *skugger*. And a few minutes after his change, he'd skugged me as well.

(C) BILL IS A SKUGGER

I found it very agreeable to be a skugger. Alan and I had fabulous sex that was more than sex—it was full-body conjugation. And, as skuggers, we became shapeshifters, capable of molding our flesh into whatever mad form. And—added attraction—we were now telepaths as well.

Every human has a rudimentary ability for telepathy—or for *teep*, as we nicknamed it. The brain is, after all, an electrically active system, and it gives off faint signals akin to radio waves. A skugger's body is more sensitive to these teep signals, and better able to generate them in a purposeful manner. Even so, a lone skugger's teep extends at best for a mile.

From the very start, we skuggers were in conflict with society's rulers. We were variously regarded as mutants, as carriers of a contagious disease, and as mad terrorists bent on destroying the human race. Each of these assessments was in some degree correct. But—let me repeat—being a skugger felt like a wonderful thing, a condition that

one was eager to propagate and share.

During the coming skirmishes, the authorities would sometimes manage to capture and to subvert a skugger, making a spy of him or her. The quisling skuggers never lasted long. Anyone trying to use telepathy as means of coercion becomes an automaton, and withers in orgoneless limbo.

Out of self-defense, we skuggers mastered the arts of telepathic blocking and misdirection. It doesn't do to make one's mind a blank—this would be too glaringly obvious. Instead one presents a cover mind which is completely harmless: "I love my country and I want to get a raise." You can't lay it on too thick—I've found that our imbecile oppressors invariably imagine their victims to have intellects even more minimal than theirs.

(D) TANGIER TO LOS ALAMOS

Soon after Alan and I became skuggers, he left Tangier for the States. He was still in great anxiety over the British Secret Service's plans to murder him. The British Embassy people briefly drew me into an ill-starred attempt to spy on Turing via a skugger-hive-mind parabolic-dish antenna. Although, as I say, skugger teep reaches only a mile or so, if a group works in concert, they can in fact bounce signals off the ionosphere, broadcasting and receiving teep signals from halfway round the world.

While spying on Turing—who was off in Florida by then—I became passionately exercised over the fact that he'd chosen to imitate me, and to visit my parents and my son in Palm Beach.

I went into a hysterical fury when I overheard Alan telling my son Billy that we might find a way to bring my dead wife Joan back to life. Really, I suppose that I was afraid. Hateful as the behavior seems, I tipped off the Palm Beach police to Alan's status as an invading mutant, and I offered long-distance advice about how best to apprehend him. And when this attempt misfired, I set off for Palm Beach in person. My plan was—what? Hard to remember now. Perhaps I meant to kill Alan. Or to fuck some sense into him.

On my plane trip to the States I began feeling a certain degree equanimity. One of the salubrious side-effects of becoming a skugger was that I'd abruptly lost my addiction to opiates—and this without having to suffer the agonies of withdrawal yet again. Stepping off the plane in New York City, everything looked sharp and clear, as if just washed. Sensations were hitting me like tracer bullets. In the past I'd thought of my flesh as uninteresting meat—but as a skugger, I felt as fabulously alive as an electric eel.

It was odd to be at my parents' house. Alan had behaved scandalously, and they were annoyed with me as soon as I arrived—my mother's kind face was unhappy. But young Billy was thrilled to see me—he enjoyed all the weird science-fictional action swirling around our comings and goings. The local press was filled with curious outrages that, I assumed, Alan and his loutish American friend Ned had perpetrated, Ned being a skugger too. Apparently my mother had witnessed them in the act of sexual conjugation while hanging from the guest bedroom ceiling. I was, of course, green with jealousy. To give your heart to a physically less than stunning man and then to be jilted? Impossible.

But Alan phoned me and was very conciliatory, indeed he begged me to meet him in Los Alamos. And so I flew after him, promising the family that if I managed to settle in Los Alamos, I'd have Billy come out for a long visit.

Landing in Los Alamos, I picked up no teep of Alan. But, standing in the whirl of

snow outside the tiny airport, I saw a polyhedron of glowing lines. A ghost. It says it was the soul of Vassar Lafia, a dissolute man I knew vaguely Tangier. The ghost guided me to a Native American man in a pickup truck, who drove me to a low farmhouse well outside of town. At the house I met a half-Indian named Naranjo. He was high on peyote, I think, and seemed in some sense to feel he'd brought me to this, his cousin Ricky's house.

I sat there sneaking nips from a pint of bourbon that I'd thought to bring—although, as a skugger, I could get as high as I wanted by internal effects, I still enjoyed the flare and burn of liquor in my mouth.

At midnight there was a frantic scratching at the door. Naranjo stood and opened it. A pack of six coyotes came rushing in, led by the ghosts of Vassar and of Alan's new friend Ned. The coyotes merged together to form Alan and a woman called Susan Green. And and I embraced profoundly. Indeed we were in love.

[End of the "overpainted" material as of March 21, 2011, 2:30 pm.]

(E) JOAN'S GHOST TORMENTS BILL

In the night he's tormented by Joan's ghost, berating him and swooping at him. [Boy explaining why he killed his friend with a shotgun.] ...it was as if, just as I pulled the trigger, making absolutely sure the pellets wouldn't hit Greg...*something moved my arm...*

It might or might not be a dream, and which way it falls might be in the balance while I watch this tea glass in the sun ... The meaning of Interzone, its pace time location is at a point where three-dimensional fact merges into dream, and dreams erupt into the real world.

An anti-dream drug which destroys the symbolizing, myth-making, intuitive, empathizing, telepathic faculty in man, so that his behavior can be controlled and predicted ... this drug eliminates the disturbing factor of spontaneous, unpredictable life from the human equation. ... Novel treats of vast ... malevolent telepathic broadcast stations ...

(F) TRIP TO MEXICO

Susan suggests they travel down to Mexico City together to lay Joan's soul to rest.

"How did I get down there?" I asked. I chuckled. "How did we all get down here? Spot of trouble in our own country, right?"

Alan approves of the idea, as just now the search for them is so hot. Their friend Naranjo flies them down there, in a stolen small plane. Bill dreams of resurrecting Joan. Alan is interested in the project as it will shed light on the ghosts or what I used to call gazaks. And they want to muddy their trail before attempting to go to Los Alamos yet.

(G) THE SCENE IN MEXICO

When I lived in Mexico City at the end of the 1940's, it was a city of one million people, with clear sparkling air and the sky that special shade of blue that goes so well with circling vultures, blood and sand—the raw menacing pitiless Mexican blue.

It was sinister and gloomy and chaotic, with the special chaos of a dream.

I am progressing towards complete lack of caution and restraint. Nothing must be allowed to dilute my routines. I know I used to be shy about approaching boys, for

example, but I cannot remember why exactly. The centers of inhibition are atrophied, occluded like an eel's ass on *The Way to Sargasso*—good book title. You know about eels?

Low hills with great variety of trees, flowering vines and shrubs, great, red sandstone cliffs topped with curiously stylized, Japanese-looking pine trees, fall to the sea. Looking out at the hill opposite, stylized pine trees on top arranged with the economy of a Chinese print against blue sky in the tingling, clear, classic Mediterranean air ... I was completely alive in the moment, not saving myself, not waiting for anything or anybody ... This is it right now ... Actually I am so independent, so fucking far out I am subject to float away like a balloon ...

[Describing a boy who wants to spend the night at his apartment after sex.] I indicate as tactfully as such a concept can be effectively indicated that I considered this project inconvenient in the widest sense. ...

Allerton was a thin, blond man with an air of arrested age. He seemed to float a few inches above the ground, wafted here and there, a specialized organism at once torpid and predatory.

In fact there is something curiously sweet about him, a strange, sinister jocularity, as if we knew each other from somewhere, and his words referred to private jokes from this period of intimacy. On Monday, August 1, he ran amok with a razor-sharp butcher knife in the main drag, killed 5 people and wounded four, was finally cornered by the police, shot in the stomach and captured. ... I wonder if he would have attacked me? I missed him by 10 minutes. The whole town is still hysterical.

Horus Neferti turned aside into a Jump Joint, where your dreams come true. Yeah, sometimes. They work like this: you got a scenario in your mind, usually made up of dreams. Sophisticated electronic equipment makes the dream solid. Or rather there are infinite nuances of solidity.

[Dream narrative] ...a restaurant/hotel/station area, where one is always in doubt about this room reservation and rarely able to find his way back to his room if he leaves it in search of breakfast, which is always difficult to locate.

(I) ANIMATING JOAN

The old man's face relaxes into contented depravity. "Of course one must always take the Big Picture...Yes, I have what you need."

Alan, Bill, and Susan go to the Panteón Americano in Mexico City and dig up some of Joan's bones for the DNA, and use a skug to make a copy of her body, and then they work on getting her mind and personality from Bill's memories.

A silence peculiar to Mexico seeped into the room, a vibrating, soundless hum.

(J) JOAN'S REQUESTS

She was talking in a voice languid and intermittent, like music down a windy street.

Joan wanted me to take care of our son Billy. I had a sense that I carried a huge covered basket, I'd been carrying it in my arms for a very long time. And now I realized our son Billy was in the basket. He might die.

There's a big scene of the embodied Joan's ghost. She re-enacts the William Tell scene—possibly getting Susan to fire the gun. Burroughs stands as target with a glass on his head. The bullet hits him in the forehead. He slumps to ground. Jane laughs

mockingly, and is gone.

But Burroughs manages to restore his brain and recover from the wound.

(K) SCIENCE VS. MYSTICISM DISCUSSIONS WITH ALAN

Can any soul survive the searing fireball of an atomic blast? If human and animal souls are seen as electromagnetic force fields, such fields could be totally disrupted by a nuclear explosion. The mummy's nightmare: disintegration of souls, and this is precisely the ultrasecret and supersensitive function of the atom bomb: a Soul Killer, to alleviate an escalating soul glut.

And you know the difference between the difference in the air ever since they started lighting off those atomic bombs. Before, you felt like nobody going to explode the atoms you're made of, you figured with a little strength and skill you could somehow live on and on. But ...

Modern science is the same as the ancient guild of tinkers, smiths, and masters of fire. Loki, Anubis and the Mayan God Kak U Pacat. With the advent of modern tech, the guild gravitated toward physics, mathematics, computers, electronics and photography.

I'm a natural outlaw, dedicated to breaking the so-called natural laws of the universe foisted upon us by physicists, chemists, mathematicians, biologists, and, above all, the monumental fraud of cause and effect, to be replaced by the more pregnant concept of synchronicity.

To break down the lines...is to invite biologic and social chaos." Joe says, "What do you think I'm doing here? Let it come down."

(L) TAPE WORK WITH SUSAN

We are shooting for ... incidents ... [such as riots created by] hogs released from concealed pens and trucks. Do we use actual hogs? Of course not. We tape the riot that would be precipitated by the intervention of hogs. Tapes of previous riots with hog noises cut in played back by fast-moving operatives as our agitators move in behind the tapes to incite the gathering crowds.

These were troubled times. There was war in the heavens, as the One God attempted to exterminate or neutralize the Many Gods and establish a seat of absolute power.

It is antimagical, authoritarian, dogmatic, the deadly enemy of those who are committed to the magical universe, spontaneous, unpredictable, alive. The universe they are imposing is controlled, predictable, dead.

Since music is registered with the whole body it can serve as a means of communication between one organism and another. ... Agent attends a concert and receives his instructions. Information and directives in and out through street singers, musical broadcasts, jukeboxes, records, high school bands...

[After a circus riot, a storm.] On this scene fell a sudden chill, as the temperature dropped fifteen degrees...freezing sweat, and the sky turned bright green around the rim and...the rubes fled the stricken field, screaming down the Midway as the hail pelted down big as hens' eggs, knocking holes in the tents. The elephants trumpeted frantically, and then the sound: like a low-flying jet, as the boxcars were tossed about like matchboxes ...with snakes and freaks and the great tents whipping into the sky...bleachers and seats and rifle ranges, Kewpie dolls and screaming railway cars,

caught in a black whirlpool and pulled up into the sky.

(W) THE LAST WORD

So I levitate fifty feet in the air just for jolly, wouldn't you?

What am I doing here, a broken eccentric, a Bowery Evangelist, reading books on Theosophy in the public library—(an old trunk full of notes in my cold water East Side flag)—imagining myself a Secret World Controller in Telepathic Contact with Tibetan Adepts ... Could I ever see the merciless, cold facts on some Winter night, sitting in the operation room white glare of a cafeteria—NO SMOKING PLEASE—See the facts and myself, an old man with the wasted years, behind, and what ahead having seen the Facts?"

In Picture Puzzle scripts, the glyphs are incorporated into the big picture: an eye, a phallus, water, birds, animals spell out the story. At first it's just a picture with a special look, then glyphs swim out of clouds and water, pop out of swift lizards...

It started in the sensational press ... "Ancient Egyptian Papyrus Demonstrates That Life After Death Is Within The Reach Of Everyman." ... soon the Papyrus starts unrolling very precise instructions for reaching the Land of the Dead. The message falls on ... the parched deserts of mid-America, dead hopeless wastes of despair, a glimmer of light and hope on a darkening earth.

The road to the Western Lands is by definition the most dangerous road in the world, for it is a journey beyond Death, beyond the basic God standard of Fear and Danger. It is the most heavily guarded road in the world, for it gives access to the gift that supersedes all other gifts: Immortality. Every man starts the course. One in a million finishes.

The visions, the glimpses of the Western Lands, exist in space, not time, a different medium and a different light, with no temporal coordinates or recurrences. The medium bears some relation to holograms.

Film sequentially presented...now, imagine that you are dead and see your whole life spread out in a spatial panorama, a vast maze of rooms, streets, landscapes, not sequential but arranged in shifting associational patterns. Your attic room in St. Louis opens into a New York loft, from which you step into a Tangier street. Everyone you have ever known is there. This happens in dreams of course.

The old sets are brittle, falling off the page, waves dash against sea walls, old photos curl and shred. The annual St. Louis Veiled Prophet parade-floats in the hot summer night...yellow glow of lights, giant leaves, eating pink cake, the cardboard around the edges blowing away in the rising wind, piers crumbling into the sea's waves, wrecked house, rain, gray sky.

The house on Pershing Avenue [Burroughs's boyhood home] is well back from the cobblestone street, worn smooth by centuries on the march. He finds his key. The lock turns. Inside he stumbles over a heap of toys...one Christmas after another in layers...a .30-.30 rifle at the top with a box of shells. A crust of broken ornaments crunches underfoot like snow.

There comes that moment in a blinding flash of bullshit when he suddenly sees everything, and the way it all fits together as part of the great whole. He is everything and everything is him, and there is no aloneness, no separation, just endless love.

So we have a human lifetime with a few moments of meaning and purpose scattered here and there... It is fleeting: if you see something beautiful, don't cling to

it... However obtained, the glimpses are rare, so how do we live through the dreary years of deadwood, lumbering our aging flesh from here to there?

[Great crank SF idea.] A photo has no light of its own, but it takes light to be seen. Every time anyone takes a picture, there is that much less light in circulation. Slowly at first, the gathering darkness on the margin of vision...the mutters of voices at the edge of hearing.

I went to see Bill Lee. He told me he'd found a cat... I heard a ... mewling noise, but I couldn't see anything . Then I realized Bill was making the sound without opening his lips ... He opened a can of cat food, all the time making that sound ... he gets down on all four and rubs himself against invisible legs, purring ... Straightens up and put the plate of cat food on the floor. Next thing he gets down on all fours and eats it.

What I was looking for from Alan was contact, or recognition like a photon emerging from the haze of insubstantiality to leave an indelible recording in his consciousness. I don't know if it worked. He was very turned-in on himself. Writing's my fallback. My way of making an indelible record, whether anyone is inclined to observe or not.

I'm an old writer. I can't write anymore because I've reached the end of what I can do with words. But even now I sometimes see something, and I can catch it. A tree like black lace against a gray sky. A flash of joy.

My life? I look back and I see myself desperately rummaging through bodies and rooms and closets in a frenzied search. At the end of the search was an empty room. This room.

Outside a Palm Beach bungalow waiting for a taxi to the airport. My mother's kind, unhappy face, last time I ever saw her. Really a blessing. She had been ill for a long time. My father's dead face in the crematorium. "Too late. Over from Cobblestone Gardens."

March 25-29, 2011. Rocking a Burroughs Routine.

March 25, 2009.

I'm going good, filling in the overpainting of the double-length Burroughs POV chapter 13. I think it's called "Raising Joan" now instead of "Mutant." (Eventually I called it "The Apocalypse According to Willy Lee.")

They're about to fly a small plane from Santa Fe to Mexico City. That's about 1,400 miles. The [Cessna 172 Skyhawk](#) was in production in 1956, which is close enough, it cruised at 140 mph. So the flight could be done in ten hours! It had a range of about 700 miles, so they'd need to refuel probably twice.

March 29, 2009.

I'm just about done with the chapter now, I've got 7,500 words on it, and I was shooting for 8,000. Cool. It's a real *tour de force*. I overlaid a welter of incidents and characters onto that cut-up source material.

I knew all along that if I was going to use Burroughs as a character I'd have to deal with the Joan thing, and I was worried that I wouldn't be able to do it. But I think I've nailed it. I went right to the core and confronted the crime. Bill raises Joan from the dead and she shoots him in the head. Perfect.

Today I'm feeling like this chapter is one of the more powerful things I've ever written. It's very intense and creepy, funny in spots, spooky and scary in others, very dark and abandoned and transgressive. *Heavy* in the best 60s sense of the word. At

times, while writing it, I really did have that feeling of taking dictation from the muse. Writing it as fast as I could type.

And now I feel like I've broken the back of the book. It's an easy coast home from here. I could even start thinking about sending it out to some editors.

By the way I decided not to use that made-up word "gazak" I was talking about earlier. I'll just say "ghost." Everyone knows what that means, and that's what we're actually talking about, although I do still have Turing propound a science-type explanation of ghosts that I worked up on Feb 5, 2011, when I was [talking about gazaks](#).

March 31, 2011. Talked to an Agent

With the "The Apocalypse According to Willy Lee" chapter done, I feel like I'm almost home free with the novel. I can see the once-distant shore. At this point my mind turns to finding a publisher. I think the book has a good chance with Dave Hartwell at Tor and with Jeremy Lassen at Nightshade. I've talked about the book with both of them at various times over the last couple of years, and they're interested. There's always a faint hope of selling it as to a mainstream publisher as well, although I don't really know how likely that is, or whether it would actually help me sell to a wider audience.

So at a time like this it's useful to talk to an agent. I've had the same agent, Susan Protter, for thirty years (although I did have a one-book hiatus when I used John Brockman to represent my *Lifebox* nonfiction book). Susan's done a good job. But now she's getting close to retirement age, and she's a single-person agency. I feel it's time to switch to a new, somewhat younger agent, and I want an agent who's part of a multi-person agency that can keep track of a Rucker Estate's rights on the behalf of my family after I'm gone.

So I had a phone conversation with John Silbersack today. He just sold a book for my friend Terry Bisson. John's not all that young, but I think he's at least under sixty. And he's part of an agency of about twenty people, Trident Media. After we talked, I sent him the current chunk of chapters 1-13 of the novel, along with a short outline of the chapters 14-18 come. Also I sent him a summary of the sales of my recent books—I got the numbers off my royalty statements.

I read those numbers to him on the phone. Silbersack remarked that there seems to be a downward trend, in that, at least thus far, *Hylozoic* (2009) didn't sell as well as *Postsingular* (2007), and I think *Postsingular* sold less well than *Mathematicians in Love* (2006) and *Frek and the Elixir* (2004), and I think those did less well than *Spaceland* (2002).

I have some hopes of *Jim and the Flims* and/or *Nested Scrolls* reversing the downward trend. And it may make more sense to be pitching *The Turing Chronicles* after those two books come out.

I had been thinking it would be nice to have *The Turing Chronicles* come out in 2012. I've mentioned in these notes that 2012 is the centennial year of T's birth. There will some academic conferences celebrating him, one at Stanford and one organized by Stephen Wolfram. Silbersack pointed out that most publishers are already working on their fall 2012 list right now, so hitting that target isn't all that likely. Possibly Tor or Nightshade could rush the book out in 2012. But realistically, the average person isn't going to be that into the Turing centennial, and to the extent that the centennial stirs up Turing awareness, some of that will linger into 2013. "It's not worth putting yourself through hoops," he opined.

April 10-19, 2011. Scraps From the Road

I'm on a three-week European trip now: Lisbon, Geneva, Munich. I didn't think very much about the novel. But I do have a few things to note down here.

Burroughs should take some of the uncut heroin from one of the keys at the end of Chapter 13, "and sank into that blissful state just shy of terminal overdose. The skug's delicate metabolism let me hang there for much of the flight home." Or no, it's better if he wants to get high but the skug won't let him. Later he will however find a way.

Maybe I can work in this thing Burroughs wrote maybe more than once, about an American blonde woman with just the right look of peevish discontent that causes a Cadillac to assemble itself beneath her ass. Perhaps he says this about their landlady in Los Alamos.

Another Burroughs line I might use comes from his dislike of psychedelics as reported in Tim Leary's *High Priest*. "Love in slop buckets."

Take some images taken from the *Cemitério dos Prazeres* graveyard in Lisbon, and fold them into my Mexico City graveyard scene: Wild cats; Mausoleums like little houses, with the iron doors rusted through, and the lids of some caskets askew; Cypress trees; Winged hourglass icons.

And the painter in the graveyard chapel says, "They want a mural of a dying man with an hourglass and a scythe on the floor at the foot of his bed and he's reaching up ecstatic towards a benevolent triangle of white light."

It seems like a repeat to have a graveyard scene in Mexico following on one in New Orleans. I'll have to alter or drop the New Orleans scene.

I can draw on the recently released [online FBI files](#) about UFOs and Cattle Mutilations for some of the hysterical tone that develops over the invasion of the skuggers.

On April 15, 2011, I was in Munich at my cousin Rudolf von Bitter's apartment. I was alone, with Sylvia off in Budapest. Sitting in the cafe of the *Alte Pinakothek* museum, I started another round handwritten revisions on a printout of my outline for the closing chapters 14-18, and I typed the changes into this part of the [outline](#) on the plane home, on April 19, 2011.

April 21, 2011. Planning The Ending.

I'm still working on my revision of the outline for the final chapters, probably to be numbered 14-18. And while I do this, I'll note some things that are coming up.

Maybe Susan Green disguises herself as [Bebe Barron](#), née Charlotte Wind, born in 1925. She'd be just a couple of years older than Susan, or maybe the same age. She and her husband made the acousmatic soundtrack for the 1956 movie [Forbidden Planet](#). Wikipedia says, "MGM producer Dore Schary (a man) discovered the couple quite by chance at a beatnik nightclub in Greenwich Village while on a family Christmas visit to New York City; Schary hired them on the spot to compose his film's musical score."

My novel is in early 1955, and the *Forbidden Planet* movie came out on April 1, 1956. So I think I can go ahead and assume the movie was getting into production already in early 1955? In this case the meet could have been at Xmas, 1954, and I can suppose that Susan would know about this. In fact I can suppose she'd just been in New York and had met up with Bebe, who was an old friend from the small circle of woman electronic music composers.

Whoah, I just found a [cool video](#) of Bebe Barron talking about the *Forbidden Planet* music when she was an old lady of seventy or eighty. She says she and her husband met Dore Schary at an art opening party they crashed (possibly at a beatnik nightclub).

She has some good lines that I want Susan to use. Bebe and her husband didn't plan the sounds made by their software, the noises emerged from the equations—it's a Wolfram-style viewpoint.

I'm adding a new thread about Christopher Morcom, a fellow student whom Alan had a crush on as a boy. Chris died just as Alan was starting at Cambridge, aged about twenty. At that time, Alan felt sure he'd see Chris in the afterlife, and he imagined that Chris's spirit was in some way directing Alan's actions from the beyond.

I'll suppose that, over the years, Alan had become more doubtful about the possibility of an afterlife. But now, having seen Ned's, Vassar's, and Joan's ghosts, Alan has resurrected his hope of re-encountering Chris. (Not that Bill wants to hear this.) And perhaps as a way to fan the flame, he takes on Chris's appearance as his final disguise in Los Alamos.

The big win with the Morcom move is that, digging into the *Alan Turing: The Enigma* biography again, I find that Alan had a definite notion of spirits existing outside the body, which dovetails wonderfully with my story. And it sets us up for a happier ending—Alan dies in the V-bomb explosion, yes, but he's gonna be with Chris.

I'll have Neal Cassady show up in the same car he drove in "Instability," the A-bomb story I co-authored with Paul DiFilippo. Neal has done the 1200 mile drive from San Francisco averaging, say 40 mph, in 30 straight hours, fueled by Benzedrine.

Allen G., (who was in SF, CA, at this point, living in Berkeley, having just finished "Howl") has urged Neal to do the "rescue," but Allen himself doesn't feel like taking the insane car trip, and maybe Jack is back East. In any case, I'm thinking if I have Ginsberg and/or Kerouac show up with Neal it might make my novel a little too fannish, and a little too cameo-stuffed—although I did love the bit in the Cronenberg *Naked Lunch* when those two appeared in Tangier. But here I think it would work better not to have the cameos, if anybody comes with Neal it could be Corso perhaps, who'd be interested in Bill's junk stash.

Perhaps it's Neal, Gregory, and perhaps a new waitress girlfriend Deb whom Neal's picked up along the way. Think of DH's married girlfriend in NB, what was her name? I think Mimi. Don't use that name, but the memory helps with the character. How about the name Dot, I like that name a lot. Both Gregory and this high-strung Dot could help Neal bring down the pigs. If her name was Deb, she could say, "Deb spelled backwards is bed," but so what.

And I'm still thinking maybe it's better just to be generous and throw in Cassady,

Corso, and Ginsberg all three. We'll see. But I really don't see a way to bring Kerouac in too.

I'll present four possible options for the V-bomb's action—at the end, I'll spring the fourth as a surprise.

Proponent	Action
Government	Kill all the skuggers and all the skugs.
Ulam	Make the skugs and skuggers non-infectious.
Skugs	Turn every human into a skugger.
Turing	Convert every skugger back to human, and kill all the skugs.

Table 2: V-Bomb Options (First Take)

May 15, 2011. Where Have I Been?

So now I'd like to get back into the novel again. Where have I been? I was on a trip to Europe till April 19. Then I was busy till April 26, correcting the bound galley of *Nested Scrolls*. And then I revised the Burroughs monologue chapter 13 of the novel for about a week, and revised the novel outline again.

And then—disaster! I was in the hospital from May 4-9, stricken by a series of six seizures emanating from the scar in brain that was left by my brain hemorrhage in June, 2008, three years ago. I may need to take antiseizure drugs for the rest of my life.

From May 10-15 I was putting together an email interview by Terry Bisson and an essay, "Surfing the Gnarl," for a small anthology of the same name from PM Press. I need to reread this and see if I was together enough.

I don't feel creative or energetic just now to restart *The Turing Chronicles*. Maybe tomorrow.

May 29, 2011. In the Fog

To make things harder, I had a total hip replacement on May 24—it had been scheduled before my seizures and we went ahead with it. I was in the hospital for two more nights. I lost 20% of my blood in the operation, and am weak from that, and a little stunned and staggered by the pain from the wound around my hip. Also, thanks to the antiseizure meds, I conk out for a nap once or twice an afternoon, and wake up in a pool of sweat several times a night.

Today, Sunday, I went down to the farmer's market with Sylvia, and a group was playing for tips, a Black family, a young woman saxophonist, a grizzled singer and keyboardist, another older guy on congas. The grizzled guy was singing laconically and sweetly, the woman was running sweet riffs on her sax, the sun splashing down on them and the green lawn. "I'm so glad to be alive," I told Sylvia, and burst into tears, with her crying too. We've been through such a hard month.

Over the last week, I managed to mark up the existing scrap of my new chapter (presently numbered 14) and type in the changes. If anything, I'm making it more outrageous than usual. It's like—I have nothing left to lose.

June 4-9, 2011. Back to Work

June 4, 2011.

I finished a rewrite of *Surfing the Gnarl* for the “Outspoken Authors” series at PM Press, edited by Terry Bisson. The first version, which I wrote shortly after my seizures at the start of May, was a paste-up, somewhat stereotyped and impaired, like I did it in a rehab room in a church basement. The new version 2 is, I think, three times as good. I’m getting witty again. I’d hate to lose my ability to write. But if I did, I wouldn’t fully notice, I now realize. I’d still think I *was* writing, but it would be stiff, self-aggrandizing old-man crap. Actually there’s a level below that which I’ve dipped into this last month—not even being able to properly type, with the error rate up to heretofore unseen levels. Even now I’m getting more typos than usual, in particular from my right hand, which seems a little sinister. Anti-dexterous?

I’m writing mostly lying on my back on the living-room couch, my legs up on two couch cushions, restful for the thigh muscles. I walked ten blocks yesterday. I’m healing. And the antiseizure meds seem to be coming under control, though I still have a yawning fit and a nap most days.

June 5, 2011.

Miraculously apt link I stumbled on: In 1969, Burroughs wrote a freaky, paranoid [review](#) of Colin Wilson’s SF novel, *The Mind Parasites*. I’ll use some of this mind-set in his impending rants against the skugs. Thank you, Muse. Good to have you back.

I changed the title of this chapter from “Tech Staff” to “Identity Theft,” but that’s too much of a 21st C phrase, and is really only a small part of the chapter, so I changed the name once more, to “Los Alamos,” which is good, that town name has a lot of *mana*, also the chapter is basically about them wandering around the town bouncing off people.

Changed the previous Burroughs-pastiche chapter title from “Raising Joan” to “The Apocalypse According to Willy Lee,” which is funnier and more intriguing.

In Los Alamos at the interview, we can bring back FBI Agent Dick Host, a tall Texan in boots and a ten-gallon hat, rides pickup truck, And he’s enslaved Agent Roland Gill, who’d been a skugger and an ally of Alan’s for a bit. Roland Gill is the antiskugger. Somehow the surname “Gill” cracks me up. It’s so short and rudimentary.

June 8, 2011.

I’m really looking forward to a scene of killing Dick Hosty. Did I mention that “Hosty” is, unless I’m mistaken, a villain in Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*? I think I’ll use Vassar’s ghost against Hosty.

I changed Judy Green’s name to Cathy Green. 271 occurrences. I felt the “Judy” name clashed too much with the “Joan” of Burroughs’s dead wife—it made certain passages slightly confusing. It’s better if you can understand a passage at a quick first glance, without having to study the names more closely. The change seems okay, as, to me, Cathy has a similar cultural feel as Judy, although I do feel slightly uneasy whenever I make this kind of possibly tone-deaf wholesale change.

[On June 22, 2011, I decided I didn’t like “Cathy” and I changed it to “Susan.” 287 replacements.]

June 9, 2011.

I reworked the outlines of the closing chapters this morning. I’m almost done with my Chapter 14, currently called “Los Alamos.” Before starting on the next chapter, I’ll knock off the outstanding items on my To Do list, and polish the outline of the final

Chaps 15-18 yet again.

I almost feel like printing out the whole book or perhaps just the recent chapters and rereading to get everything fully consistent. But right now I's prefer to quickly tidying up the To Dos and then rushing forward as far as momentum carries me, revising the outline as I go. The climbing party on Everest in the late afternoon. The early Antarctic explorers nearing the South Pole. The SCUBA divers nearing the end of their air supply, with a fabulous wreck just below. Peering ahead for the best route forward.

Where was Vassar when he dropped out of sight after the snowstorm, while they flew down to Mexico City? Let's suppose he was hanging out with the ghosts of the cliff-dwellers in the Bandelier National Monument. And let's suppose, moreover, that when Vassar helps kill Dick Hosty later on, the ghosts of the early Native Americans are with him.

June 12-15, 2011. Kaleidoscopic Nonlinear Feedback.

June 12, 2011.

I'm done with Chap 14, "Los Alamos," and now I think I'll write a double-length Chap 15 called "Nonlinear Feedback."

Up till now I'd planned for two separate chapters, one involving Alan, Ulam and the plans for the V-bomb, and the other involving the arrival of Ginsberg, Cassady, and Corso.

But now I'm thinking it'll be richer if I shuffle these two chapters together. And it won't feel so much as if the Beats are simply making some kind of corny cameo appearance. I'll blend them more thoroughly into the mix. They can accomplish a number of plot tasks. Like killing Dick Hosty, freeing Roland Gill, deskugging Burroughs, tuning in on Vassar, etc.

And my working title, "Nonlinear Feedback" expresses the kind of flow I'd like to see. One weird kick after another, each kick jolting the next one to a higher level than anticipated. Each kick adding nonlinear feedback to the flow.

I'm worrying at the question of how to shape all of the planned material into a whole. Today I had the idea that I might use a kaleidoscopic approach. Structure the chapter as a series of short POPs, a half-page to two pages per POP, with each POP from a different point of view. Kaleidoscopic. Nonlinear. Feedback.

By way of trying to outline this I'm shuffling together the outlines of the two formerly separate chapters. Maybe now I can refine this outline so as to indicate the separate POPs, possibly with a unique point of view for each one.

When I say "POP," I'm thinking of a string of firecrackers going off.

June 13, 2011.

Today I went over the now double-sized chapter outline and broke it into discrete POPs. I'll print out the list and cut up the POPs, and shuffle them by hand, Burroughs-cut-up style.

This modernistic design method is making me feel more excited about the chapter than I was before, and that's good.

June 14, 2011.

I'm going to start calling the sections "pops" instead of "POPs." Why capitalize? I did the cut-up and shuffle yesterday, taped it together, and now I can see a simple pattern I can add: rotate the point of view from pop to pop, cycling from Susan to Bill to Alan, with three of each for nine pops in all.

I had this idea of Burroughs using an OD dose of heroin to get the skug out of his body, but that seems a little obvious and hackneyed and slavishly drug-worshipping. I don't want Hindu chanting either. Need something odder. A peculiar yoga position? Or eating some of those substances that Turing used to make a skug in the first place? Bill teeps the recipe from Alan, and Ginzy makes a kind of curry dish out of the mixture. Bill and maybe Susan eat it, but we'll leave Neal and Alan as skuggers for now.

Better idea—have Vassar and the ancient cliff dweller Indian ghosts get rid of the skugs of both Bill and Susan.

I've done four or five rewrites of the Chap 15 outline in the last few days, and it's still not quite right. But I'm getting closer. And now, at 9:30 pm, yet one more revision for today. I dropped this rigid notion I had of rotating the point of view in strict order, and I'm going to drop the potentially jarring section breaks.

I got my latest design by trying to figure out the timeline. I realized I'd like to line the events up in temporal order, and make it a long smooth flow. I will in fact switch points of view repeatedly during the chapter, but I'll be using the risky "drifting point of view" favored by Philip K. Dick (and by amateur writers). Still using a third-person narration, but getting close-in on the current viewer. If I'm careful with it, I can make the drift work, and, as I say, I'd like avoid putting in "now entering Burroughs-land" type section breaks to signal the shifts.

I'm glad I at least have control of the timeline now. With a complex chapter like this, it's all about finding a way to get control of the material. Thinking in terms of point of view or date are ways to chunk the material at a higher level.

June 15, 2011

I printed out the outline two more times today, and marked it up, and entered the changes, and now I feel pretty good about it. It's possible to overdo outlining, of course. Like I'm dithering at the edge of the ocean, adjusting my swimwear, afraid of running into the surf.

By the way, it's 1200 miles from San Francisco to Los Alamos, so Neal could drive it in 30 hours, averaging 40 mph, or even in 20 hours, averaging 60 mph. Let's call it 30.

Another thought. The reason I merged those two chapters was to spread out the Beat material. When I write up the merged chapter at double-length, it may end up seeming feasible to split it in two. But for now I'm leaning for the intensity of the long breath.

I came up with a lot of To Do entries to make things work.

Our daughter Isabel's coming tonight to visit five days and now it's 2 in the afternoon and my back hurts and I'm sick of working, so it may be that I don't actually start writing the chap till next week. That's fine.

June 22, 2011. The V-bomb

Isabel's gone—a great visit—and now I'm getting back into the novel.

I [blogged](#) most of this entry on June 22, 2011.

Looking ahead, I'm thinking about the nature of the V-bomb. I think I can simplify things and not launch it in a rocket. We'll suppose that the V-bomb rays are expected to pass through matter, so there's no particular need to set it off high up in the atmosphere. It's just sitting in a tin shed in the Frijoles Canyon.

I found a nice photo of the [Trinity bomb](#), shown below, with exposed wiring. It

was build in Los Alamos, they called it The Gadget, and it exploded in the first nuclear weapons test of an atomic bomb, which took place on July 16, 1945, near White Sands, New Mexico.

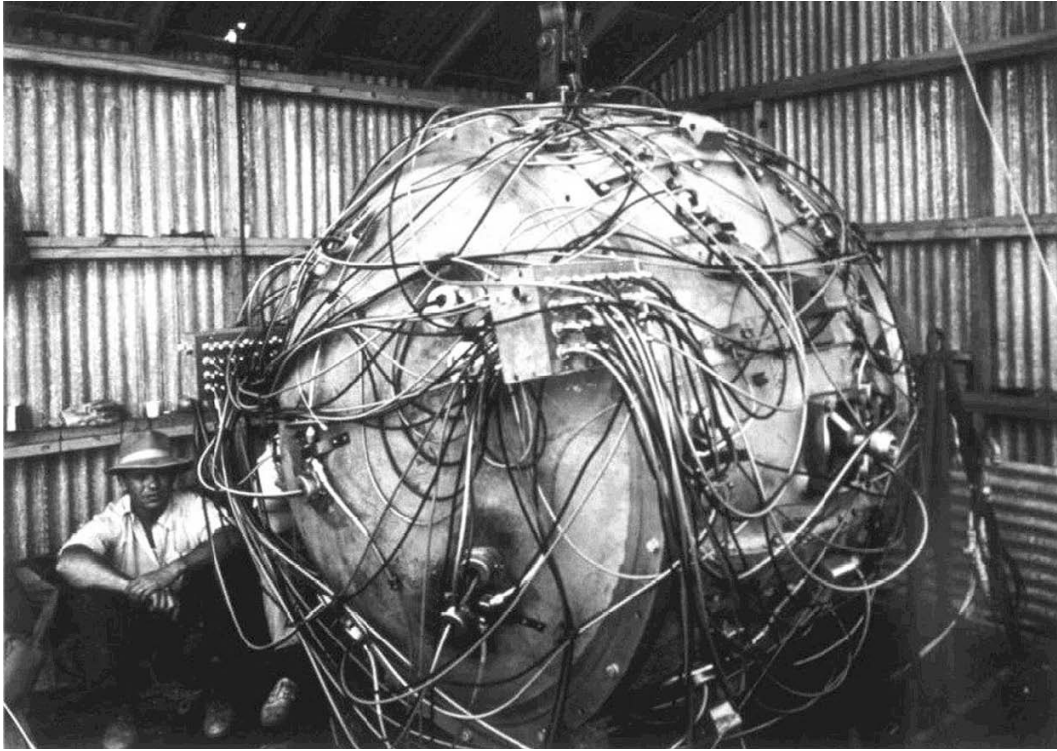


Figure 30. “The Gadget,” 1946. The First A-Bomb.

I see Turing getting *inside* the V-bomb. And instead of expanding outwards, the V-bomb implodes. I got the imploding idea from a painting called *V-bomb* that I’m currently working on. Here’s a mockup of the next stage of this painting, which I’ve been repeatedly revising for a couple of weeks.



Figure 31. Mockup of V-bomb painting.

My idea is that Turing is squatting in the V-bomb on the right, and then he's vaporized and becomes the living essence of the blast—which is shrinking towards a tiny size—and then, when the blast is sufficiently compact, a rip opens up in the fabric of space, and Turing slides through into the afterlife.

Note, however, that he'll need to send out some rays—or perhaps some logic paradox?—to destroy any free-ranging skugs, and to restore any skuggers to their normal state.

June 28-July 2, 2011. Still Planning the Endgame

June 28, 2011

On [April 21, 2011](#), when I wrote Table 2, was thinking the novel might mention four possible options for the special bomb's action. But *four* is too many options, it's confusing, and even I can't remember them all if I've been away from the outline for a couple of days. I think it has to be only *three*.

So I think I'll have to let Ulam's plan match that of the government's. After all, Ulam did design the H-bomb. So, even though he's a good guy, it's not necessary to suppose that he'd back off from an extermination plan and have some fourth option. So now I have the three options in the table below. And, again, Turing's move is a kind of punch-line or synthesis or twist at the end.

Proponent	Effect	Mechanism
Government	Kill all the skugs and skuggers.	V-rays increase the frequency of the skugs' intrinsic pulsations so greatly as to shake them and their hosts to death.
Skugs	Turn every human into a skugger.	V-rays are tuned to increasing human vibrations to jump the incremental gap between human vibrations and skug vibrations and thus boost humans into being skugs.
Turing	Erase skugs from the skuggers, and kill all freestanding skugs.	V-rays find the phase of the skug vibrations and get 180° out of phase and nullify the skugs' intrinsic pulsations.

Table 3: Refined V-Bomb Options

In describing the skug strategy in Table 3 above, I speak of “increasing human vibrations to jump the incremental gap between human vibrations and skug vibrations.” For this to make sense, I’m assuming that skugs and humans have some kind of intrinsic vital-force vibration, and that the skug vibration is a little higher in frequency.

In speaking of an intrinsic frequency, I’m thinking of my old sense of having an intrinsic mental vibration of about thirty pulses per second, oscillating between the One and the Many, that is, oscillating between viewing myself as merged into an overarching reality, and viewing myself as a separate entity fighting his way. Possibly the bump in frequency could be a noticeable effect of becoming a skugger, and in this case I have to weave this back in. Fine, add to the To Do list.

What will be the mechanism for transmitting these effects? We’ll use a new kind of ray.

Alpha, beta, gamma, delta, and epsilon rays all have definitions already. And the next letter in the Greek alphabet is zeta. Zeta rays? If I go with zeta rays. And then our big bomb would be the Z-bomb. In a way this fits, as “Z” might suggest “the last bomb.” Also reminds of Z-gas in the wonderful Robert Lawson book, *McWhinney’s Jaunt*.

But, wait, I’ve been planning to call it the “V-bomb” in honor of my wife, SylVia, whom I also call V-bomb from time to time. How can I stick with that? Well, I’ll just have to call the new ray the V-ray. V for vivid, vivacious, vital, vibrant.

In order to get the required effects, we’ll suppose that the V-ray somehow relates to the “characteristic vibration” of a living being. Perhaps I invoke DeBroglie’s notion of matter waves (quantum mechanics).

If I want to take the pseudoscience route, note that, historically, we had some illusory [N-rays](#) around 1903, also I might invoke the perennial interest in [Kirilian photography](#).

It would be nice if Turing’s final fix uses some kind of logical paradox or programming trick in order to cancel the skug vibrations. Or he uses the paradox as a way to circumvent the skug control of his actions.

June 29, 2011

I am planning that Bill and Susan should remove their own skugs before the big V-bomb event, they're in a car with Ginsberg. I worry that this isn't essential for the plot, and that it undermines the drama of Alan removing all the skuggers' skugs with the doctored V-bomb?

But I feel it's best to keep this do-it-yourself scene. Let's suppose that Susan carries it out by means of acousmatics—by mere sound waves—and by using such an unlikely method, she outfoxes the watchful skugs who would otherwise have prevented it. And then there's a plot-based motivation for carrying the (attractive) acousmatics thread all through the book.

How does it work? Think of noise-cancelling earphones in which a sound form is created to be precisely out of phase with a noise you don't want to hear. Alan has unwittingly set her up to do this, with his info about V-rays, and it's, like, a dry run for Alan's final tweak to the V-bomb.

June 30, 2011

I'm revising my outline this morning for perhaps the thirtieth (fiftieth?) time. It's becoming my way to wade into (or put off) the work of the day.

Today I worry that I should drop the three Indian ghost characters that Vassar brings along from his days in the cliff-dwellings. I like the idea of them, but the final scenes are already playing on a crowded stage, so maybe they're too much? If we suppose that Susan effects the expulsion of her and Bill's skugs with her acousmatics, then we don't really need the Indians?

On the other hand, if Vassar doesn't bring the Indians along, then there's less of a plot reason for his time in the cliff pueblo in the first place. And putting Vassar with the cliff dwellers is a nice local color feature. I did some research, they would be Tewa Indians from the 1500s and maybe 1600s.

Suppose that I have the three Tewa ghosts chanting and dancing on the Caddy's dashboard and this does in fact inspire Susan in her "exorcism." And of course Ginsberg's Hindu chants should blend in too.

By the way, I see the tweaked acousmatics and, later, the special V-ray, as *antiskug* tools. But I'd been calling those enslaved skuggers in tanks "antiskuggers." Word clash! I'll change the enslaved skuggers to "skugsniffers." Search and replace: 19 occurrences.

More background work: I fixed all the open [To Do](#) items, about nine of them, with numerous cascades of changes in the novel. And then I making further revisions to the outline, also some unnecessary tweaks to the formatting of this *Notes* document. These tasks took all day.

July 2, 2011. Here Come the Beats

So all right, it's Tuesday, January 11, 1955, and Allen Ginsberg and Neal Cassady arrive at the granny cottage in Los Alamos, driving a 1955 turquoise and white Cadillac DeVille that they rented at the Santa Fe airport.



Figure 32: 1955 Cadillac DeVille

July 6-10, 2011. Bloodlust Writing Frenzy

July 6, 2011.

[\[Blogged the first part of this note on July 6, 2011.\]](#)

I wrote a lot in the past week, working out many kinks in the outline for the ending, weaving in a lot of fixes, and writing maybe five thousand words of new material. I feel like I'm around the corner and into the home stretch. To use a more colorful and accurate metaphor, I feel like a primitive hunter in the woods.

I've been on the trail of this shaggy beast for five years, if I counting the preliminary first two chapters. It's wounded now, I can see more and more of its spoor on the leaves, I can hear it in the underbrush up ahead, I'm pushing forward, heedless of the branches scratching my face, my whole being is focused on the task of taking down the beast at last, I want to bring it to the ground and tear out its throat to see it shudder and lie still, and to bathe my face in its ink, finishing my quest at last.

For the metaphor-impaired: Do understand that I'm speaking figuratively—in reality I've never hunted and, generally speaking, I even go out of my way to avoid killing insects. But a novel I've been actively working on for a year—and planning for five years—that's a beast I want to lay to rest.

My computer programmer friend John Walker used to speak of a "bloodlust hacking frenzy" when pulling long hours to finish a project. Bloodlust writing frenzy, yeah.

July 8, 2011.

Writing every spare moment the last few days. I'm in the zone, it's going really well, flowing like water. Wonderful. I've done so much work on the outline, that I can paste bits of it in and just fill in the blanks and then beef it up on the rewrites.

My process is to iterate this cycle: (i) Print the last few pages, (ii) Mark them up with a pen, (iii) Type in my changes and interpolate segues, conversation, and inner

dialogue (iv) Write some new material at the growing tip, that is, the end—then return to (i). I'm hitting up to six or seven cycles per day this week—normally it would be more like one or two or three cycles.

Off topic: I'm inspired by this line from Werner Herzog's Fitzcarraldo:
"Everyday life is only an illusion behind which lies the reality of dreams."

Here's a Burroughs rap for "The Last Word," to be used when I get there:

"Although I didn't dare say or even think it consciously, I was obliquely searching for a way to make the ambient mélange of sounds into a skug-vibe cancelling rhythm. A deskugging song. And when I began singing in my rather poor voice, I found I'd added the final tweak that the storm of sound needed. I felt the moorings of my skug loosen within me. And, having felt that, I drew back—drew back so quickly that my skug wasn't quite aware what I had done, didn't realize that William Burroughs now knew a deskugging method. Quicker than thought, I encrypted the pattern and sent it to Alan via teep."

July 9, 2011

Hey, as of yesterday, my novel file is finally longer than my Notes file! 81,621 words in the Novel file versus 80,750 words in the Notes. A turning point. Although the Notes could yet pull ahead again.

Going up to San Francisco for a night today, seeing John Shirley read tonight, and reading at Borderlands tomorrow. Will bring the laptop and keep the fire going. I'll sleep at my son's house, he and the family are out of town.

July 10, 2011.

In the morning, alone in my son's house, I did some work on the novel and essentially finished it.

First I had a false-start idea for the V-bomb chapter: Alan phones Ulam and asks him to stay away from the Utopia Project site. Ulam is disappointed that Alan didn't find a deskugging method, he feels more and more guilty about the genocide aspect of the V-bomb killing all skuggers. Alan says "I know a way to avoid killing any skuggers." The skugs think he means by making everyone a skug. Ulam thinks Alan means by deskugging everyone. Alan says he will doctor the bomb, Ulam says fine, maybe he even phones security and tells them he is coming to pave the way for Alan in a Ulam disguise.

But I realized that wouldn't work. Ulam wouldn't want Alan to doctor the bomb. And then I realized that, Ulam wouldn't be near the bomb since it was about to go off. And since Alan was imitating Dick Hosty now, he could just drive in to the site and tweak the bomb. No need to drag Ulam in. It's all about *simplification* near the end.

And then I wrote the V-bomb chapter right through to the ending. Hooray! I'm basically done. I just have to add "The Last Word," by Burroughs. I was really happy at this point. I walked to the BART stop and a homeless guy looked at me and said, "You the happiest man I see today!" And he was right, I was grinning, aglow, joyful.

One more thought I had later that day: For Alan to effectively modulate the V-rays, and to not hamper the explosion, he should dematerialize into matter-waves right before the explosion.

In the afternoon, I was hanging out on Valencia Street in SF with my artist friend Paul Mavrides, telling him about the plot of my novel, and about the last scene I'd just written. Paul was laughing in a friendly way. "So that's the perfect way for you to

distribute your ideas from now on. Dematerialize into matter waves and modulate the V-rays.”

July 11-12, 2011. Bingo.

Okay, I wrote “Last Word,” the last little chapter on the evening of July 11, sitting in my California-Craftsman-style La-Z-Boy recliner armchair in my living-room with Sylvia reading on the couch. The book’s first draft is done. Calloo, Callay!

And then on the morning of July 12, I lay out on my yoga mat in the back yard and marked up the last sections two times, retyped them twice, then went over it onscreen one more time and fixed a last To Do item.

Finis coronat opus.

May 11, 2012. No Action

Nine months have gone by, and still no action on *The Turing Chronicles*. Dave Hartwell at Tor or said no, and Jeremy Lassen at Night Shade is lukewarm. My new agent John Silbersack issued a May, 10, 2012, “closing date” to the publishers who have the manuscript, but now it’s May 11th and I haven’t heard anything.

Today I was fantasizing that I take a low advance from someone, anyone, and they do a trade paper edition, I do the ebook edition, and we market it as “Rudy Rucker’s beatnik SF masterpiece.” If it comes out in trade paper and not in hardback, maybe I could even bag another Phil Dick award for it. Castles in the clouds.

May 18, 2012. Prophet Without Honor

So, like I said, no offers on *The Turing Chronicles*, it was rejected by the big houses and the small publishers both. With the big guys this is all about my recent sales numbers, with the smaller guys, who knows. We did push them with that May 10 “closing date,” so maybe they rebelled against that. I do feel like this is as good a novel as I’ve ever written. Possibly the gay romance, the Burroughs junkie routines or the Beat humor could have put off some readers—but that kind of stuff isn’t really unusual these days, is it?

At this point, John Silbersack is still pushing Amazon to publish it, and they may get come through. They’ve just started publishing books themselves, even paper ones, I guess you call this a vertical monopoly, as opposed to the horizontal monopoly they’re already working towards by edging out all the other retail booksellers.

If Amazon doesn’t come through, I’m likely to self-publish *The Turing Chronicles* with my new ebook/POD publishing “business,” Transreal Books. I discussed this with Silbersack, and he agreed that, in these times of change, self-publication seems more legitimate than it used to. He also pointed out that we could use a self-pubbed book as a platform or launch-pad for selling off audio rights and foreign rights.

I’m so relieved that I have Transreal Books in place as my fall-back. I kind of saw the writing on the wall this winter, and I got the thing together just in time.

In these times, going down to a tiny publisher other than myself seems like pointless hassle. Granted, they would have better distribution to SF specialty stores than I do—but I might still figure that out. And right out of the box, I have better access via the Net than your average small publisher. I get a million visits on my blog per year. And, of course, if I publish it myself, I’ll be getting about twice as big a cut per book.

August 3, 2012. Preparing for Self-Pub “I Arise Again.”

So, okay, the Amazon editor liked *The Turing Chronicles*, but his board thought the book “too avant-garde,” and that was pretty much the last commercial channel that we had to try. So I really am going to self-publish this novel.

I’m thinking of a three-pronged release: Creative Commons edition for the buzz, an ebook edition on Amazon and Transreal Books, and a print-on-demand edition via CreateSpace (for Amazon) and Lightning Source (for bookstores). I’m lining up a couple of people to proofread the book—one of them my old college friend Arthur Hlavaty. I think I’ll go public with it in early September. It’ll be good to get past this complex roadblock and get back to being a writer again.

Meanwhile I’m rereading the Turing novel for the first time in a year, marking it up fairly heavily for corrections. I normally save this stage until I’ve gotten some editorial input, which is why I hadn’t done it yet.

I like doing the final polish, filling in the continuity cracks, intensifying the characterizations, stripping out foreshadowings of plot threads that I didn’t end up developing, toning down comic routines that after a year’s remove don’t seem as funny, abridging the “vamping” sections where I was writing along while waiting to see what was going to happen, replacing default automatic words with better ones, and so on.

I’d agreed to do a ten-minute spot as part of a Clarion group reading at Borderlands Books in SF last week, and I wrote a new thousand-word story in the form of a “beatnik SF” writer who can’t sell his books anymore, very transreal, so much so that it was a little painful and raw to read it. Titled “I Arise Again.” I’m trying to sell the story to the *Communications of the Association for Computing Machinery*.

August 110-16, 2012. Done Revising. To Do List

I finished reading it through for markups and correction phase. I feel pretty good about the book. It gets a bit slow in the “On the Road” chapter, but otherwise it rolls right along. Maybe do some cuts in that chap.

As I’ve said before, I guess I can see why regular publishers flinched at the book. Burroughs is such an unruly character to put in—vulgar, obscene, nihilistic, a junkie, and gay in an unsweet way. I sort of let myself go in this novel, in the sense of being Burroughsian. I think the book’s *funny* in many spots. But not everyone gets this kind of humor.

Title change: *Turing & Burroughs* instead of *The Turing Chronicles*.

To Do list. The asterisked items have been taken care of.

- * Early on, there’s a scene of a skug growing a bunch of snail-antennae. Would be nice to see this effect again.
- * At one time, I’d planned for the skugs to evolve towards a higher-order aethereal form, and I have some prefigurings of this. But in the end, I don’t think I went with this option—it seemed like a bridge too far. So I should remove the prefiguring.
- * The voices of the secondary characters aren’t consistent and distinct. Not everyone should be a hipster. Search through the whole book multiple times, doing a run for each of the secondary characters, and giving each of them a voice: Vassar, Ned, Susan, Ulam, and Naranjo.

- * Have Turing think of Christopher Morcom several times earlier in the book to set up the final line about him joining Christopher in heaven. Call him Chris sometimes.
- * There's no real point in having Burroughs throw away his Mexican heroin. Would be more characteristic if he keeps it, and has it in the car with him when he leaves at the end.
- * The appearance of the Joan and Vassar ghosts should be consistent. I think I could drop the initial idea of all the ghosts looking like polyhedra. Vassar might as well be a gold manta from the start, and Joan a cuttlefish.
- * In a related issue, I need to clean up Alan's visions of polyhedra-with-snake-tails ghosts. He should have visions of Christopher Morcom.
- * I don't presently do much with Vassar meeting the Tewa Indian ghosts. Better if there's just one of these ghosts and I individualize him, and he plugs Vassar into the V-bomb test site, or does something else.
- * Would be good to wrap up an ending for the pilot Naranjo.
- * Have Vassar's ghost turn off Hosty's police radio.
- * In the "Last Words" chapter, Bill should say a bit more about his love of Alan.

So as of August 16, I've taken care of all the to do items, and I think the book's quite good. I printed out the last five pages and rewrote them three times. Looking good. Another fucking masterpiece.