

# ROARSHOCK PAGE

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**G**reetings at the end of another year, and the end of another volume of ROARSHOCK PAGE, reaching far back in the archives to present a look from a San Francisco life decades ago.

## SAN FRANCISCO SATURDAY NIGHT IN THE KITCHEN

The light from a few electric fixtures and music (Jefferson Airplane circa 1968) out of the fussy old stereo system in the other room surround my thoughts as I look beyond them out through the open window at the dark night air. The typewriter in need of service keeps missing letters. There are big holes in words and I have to go back and type over. My wife in the other room sits on the hardwood floor, cutting out pieces of brightly colored cloth and running them through her sewing machine. I'm not sure what she's working on now, but it could be patterns of material to be fixed on canvas with glue and paint next to gum wrappers and forgotten notes that she found on Leavenworth Street..... Saturday night and we got groceries and wine earlier at the store. We had Brie cheese, melted and sprinkled with pecans and brown sugar. Yummy stuff. Also herb and spice yogurt dip and fresh vegetables from our expensive neighborhood health food store..... Our five year old daughter staying with her grandparents until tomorrow. Everybody happy about that. We love her, they love her, and it's nice to get a break from her. This little box-like apartment up on a hill in the heart of San Francisco is a lot less crowded when occupied only by two adults with no small children clamoring for re-runs and the latest in kids' TV. I sure love her alright, and will be glad to see her coming home again, but it's nice having this little rest from responsibility on this little old Saturday night..... With dinner we had a bottle of red wine. \$3.50 bottle and quiet mellow, but my wife didn't like the wine. I sat down afterwards and smoked a few precious hits of what remains of the October weed I got a while back. On television was a documentary about San Francisco in the 1960s. It consisted of lots of newsreel footage and home movies dubbed over with narration, and interviews with famous personalities of that era. The show was interrupted every so often with commercials for our present American election campaign, proclaiming the virtues of George Bush over Mike Dukakis, pitting this corporate financed ballot measure against that multi-million dollar campaign. It was a stark contrast from the archival footage of concerned dedicated people who were our age back not so long ago when my wife and I were children..... Where are we and our friends now circa late October 1988? We seem to be working on primarily personal goals, pursued from isolation (even when we gather in groups of like-minded people). It's interesting to note the youngest of the new generation of wild dressed

longhairs (like the younger students in school with my wife at the San Francisco Art Institute) were not even born during the decade of the 1960s, though they are now all great fans of the Grateful Dead. Time certainly gets more compressed and relative as you move along, and now the very images from my childhood television viewings are presented as packaging for political advertisements of *this* time. But they can't fool me. I still am and always will be a tried and true damn radical American Patriot. Freedom! Freedom for everybody!..... Subversive thoughts of freedom can occur to a fellow relaxing with some inexpensive red wine and precious, highly illegal, marijuana on a Saturday night in a great American urban center..... Distracted on a 1960s bender (not that I'm not often on some kind of re-creational nostalgia bender), I could trade in these scratchy old Airplane records for the latest episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, or another high technology syndicated show from the world of today and tomorrow..... Why take time out of my most valuable Saturday night schedule to type half-legible words on old second hand paper? Ah, yes, my beautiful, talented and charming wife put me up to it. She said if I want so much to be a writer, I should go ahead and write, not sit around thinking about it. "You need to see if that's what you really want to be doing. If that's what you're really good at doing, or even if you like it."..... Well, I don't like it much. It's hard work. Much harder than thinking, but it is exhilarating when it is flowing well, and *great* when it makes sense when you read it back later! "Make it honest. Nobody cares about anything so much as if it's honest."..... Yet it's so easy to get carried away by the seductive images of old television programs and write general portraits of nobody in particular, avoiding the honest specifics of my own life, and the difficulties I'm having with basic issues of economy, even right now on this drunken Saturday night; that would be a much more interesting story accompanying the sewing machine as we are living in an 1980s time-warp..... Outside I hear sounds of traffic and laughter of young men and women partying on the street, and inevitable car alarms and police sirens..... Old friends invited us tonight to a Halloween costume party out in Concord, near the old stomping grounds we roamed. Now we are some thirty miles and more realities removed from those days..... Stop for a moment and muse. I rub a hand across my rough whiskered chin..... Out the window across dark empty space I see lights twinkling over in Eureka Valley and feel myself part of the collective life of the City. People fired up by emotion disappearing back into the foggy expanse of history, marching forward toward a future that unfolds..... People now are scared of sex and with good reason. Many free and promiscuous people in this City are now dead from AIDS, the killer disease. Many are suffering and dying even now..... What an era to be 28 years old, unemployed, flat-broke (including next month's rent). Too much beer and Chow Mein, and I'm not the classic example of the quick guy on the move in this fast paced ho hum hive. Though I probably look sharp walking along the street with

my pretty young wife and cute little daughter. Until the issue of my ever empty wallet and inadequate income invariably arises. Then I don't feel so very far removed from the ever expanding army of desperate people asking for money on the streets. People being promised George Bush and more prisons, and \$10,000 fines for personal use of marijuana. Yes, I am so very optimistic about my future here in the United States of America..... "Art!" my wife says over and over again. "Art! Art! Art! What do you think about this now, Mr. Meanest Penis!?" she asks me with a glare after I take a break from writing to watch a late night rerun of *STAR TREK* (the original series from the good ol' 60s). She points out a skirt she has been working on. It has paint on it and buttons and little pieces of cloth sewn onto it. "It's nice." I say. "It's fine." She fixes me with a sexy glare. "You mean, mean guy!" she says. "I want you to say that it's *great!*"..... I can imagine her reaction when she reads these words written in love. "I told you to write honest things about you. Not made up things that you attribute to me." How about this, dear wife, I am a writer. We never have had enough money from the day we moved to the City, however, not true when you say I never cared since I first got you pregnant. I did, I do, I always will..... Love you... But right now my wife's little painted skirt is totally fucked. It was finished and done. Why couldn't I say that it was fine? I don't remember what it was I said. "Just go away!" She pushes me away. I have such power and don't even realize it. In a visual medium where each piece is for keeps, you can't go back and clean up the rough spots afterwards. Yes, that failed piece of art has made her quite upset. "I worked so hard. And it was almost ready to go."..... It looks nice to me, but I don't seek perfection like she does. I do want the genuine article, the quality goods, or nothing at all. 1:30 AM now and this Saturday night moves right along. I forget what I'm doing, jotting down genuine feelings from my life, just like she told me. I do like being a writer! Much easier, though, to drink and watch TV, and wonder how to pay the fucking rent, and pay for the electricity to plug this typewriter in. I need a job to pay off the rent and the telephone company, but tonight I have typed and drank and toked up in a fiendish light of escapism. No money. Reality. No money. Zero dollars. No escape with me now back into my own head. Find courage, determination and opportunities, like those young Republican kids seem to get; they must have the right attitude. So many times my 'tude has gotten me into trouble. I don't have any money, and nobody cares what else I can do. What can I do for them? Am I a team player? Best on my own team, which is a poor team right now, and can't afford pizza, or a new team uniform..... Mr. Escapist back out from my skull to face the wide world. If I make it through these tough times, idiot fool though I may be, I might yet turn a corner..... Now..... Get the money! Pay them what they want. Get more! Pay them when they come around again. Do it! Do it! Then maybe write something real..... It is just after 2 AM and the bars have closed. I can hear a few speeding cars driven by real people out in a real world, or are those just phantoms that I've conjured up on this sheet of paper? And what is real? My signature on an Application for Employment? My name at the top of a bill that reads: *Won't You Please Pay Now?* Or an escapist writer's words with real emotion? All of these are real. But only the words will remain to speak of this tense dilemma. When the conditions of the crisis have long passed these words will endure to remind me how I felt.

— D. A. Wilson, October 1988

Ardmore Apartments, Nob Hill, San Francisco

## DECEMBER ALMANAC

12/01	1935	Woody Allen was born.
12/03	1927	<i>Putting Pants on Philip</i> , the first Laurel and Hardy film, was released.
12/05	1933	End of Prohibition in the United States.
12/10	1906	U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
12/11	2015	NEW MOON
12/12	1408	The Order of the Dragon was created by Sigismund of Luxembourg.
12/13	1962	Relay 1, first active repeater communications satellite launched in orbit by NASA.
12/15	1832	Gustave Eiffel was born.
12/16	1770	Ludwig van Beethoven assumed birthday.
12/18	1958	Project SCORE, the world's first communications satellite, was launched.
	1997	HTML 4.0 was published by the World Wide Web Consortium.
12/19	1998	President Bill Clinton impeached by U.S. House of Representatives, the second President of the U.S.A. to be impeached.
12/22	2015	WINTER SOLSTICE/NORTH EARTH
12/23	558	Chlothar I crowned King of the Franks.
	679	King Dagobert II murdered on a hunt.
	1823	<i>A Visit from St. Nicholas (The Night Before Christmas)</i> published anonymously.
12/25	2015	CHRISTMAS DAY
	2015	FULL LONG NIGHTS MOON
12/27	2008	Israel launched a 3-week war on Gaza.
12/30	1922	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was formed.
12/31	2015	NEW YEAR'S EVE

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Calling for Contributions! ROARSHOCK PAGE invites submissions of art, photographs, poetry, and micro-prose, to be considered for inclusion in future issues.

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