

BOOK SEVEN CHAPTER 7 JULIAN UNITED STATES

Arriving home in San Francisco, Julian was frightened, well aware his work with the interspecies internet had caused his parents' kidnaping. After planing the seeds he'd been given in Bhutan in the back orchard, when two speckled starlings flew overhead, chirping *Parents safe* in morse code, he decided to return to school on the East Coast. Hopefully, a busy schedule would keep his mind occupied. Phoning the faculty counselor at his dormitory to ask if he could bring Silas, he had no idea Jane Green (Shilli, Emilie, Asha, Lapis' and Julian's close friend and attorney), had already contacted the school's head master to explain the circumstances. The answer was "Yes."

Silas (pronounced *C-lass*) first appeared at the trial in the Hague. Becoming friends with Julian's dog, Marco the dalmatian, the majestic yellow Labrador returned with them both to the United States. When Marco died, Silas rarely left Julian's side, the bond between them growing daily. Emotional support. Comfort. Devotion.

Not able to sleep, Julian began reading the book on the bedside table. His Uncle John had told him how, many years past, Stranger in a Strange Land had altered how he looked at the world. Julian's imagination captured, it wasn't until the sun's rays began glimmering through the window that, turning the last page, he realized it was morning. The word *Grok* said it all. "To understand so thoroughly that the observer becomes a part of the observed, to merge, blend, lose identity in group experience. It means almost everything that we mean by religion, philosophy, and science, and it means as little to us (because of our Earthling assumptions) as color means to a blind man." "Love is that condition in which the happiness of another person is essential to your own." Julian and Silas left that afternoon on a flight to Boston.

With his skin now gray blue, he thought it best to speak to the head of school to tell him what had happened in Bhutan. Whether or not anyone (the headmaster, faculty members, his schoolmates) believed him no longer mattered.

When Marcus the Labrador first suggested their daily morning meetings at the Halycon Hotel in Prague begin with a short meditation, it was a new experience for Shilli, Emilie, Asha, Samuel and Julian. Back at school, Julian started an active meditation club for anyone interested. Calm, clarity, circulation and concentration.

In his American History class, when the professor began to talk about the Nazi death camps in World War II, a boy Julian recognized from his meditation group raised his hand. “Would you tell us about the hundred thousand Americans who were rounded up on the West Coast and put in Internment Camps with sentry towers, barbed wire and armed guards? Two were members of my family. Japanese Americans posed no military danger. Wasn’t this racism similar to what happened in Germany?” Julian was intrigued with both the question and the answer. Introducing himself, Julian asked the boy if he’d like to meet after class. The two sat talking on the lawn outside the library.

Jiro, like Julian, had grown up in the San Francisco area. Noticing the initials O.P.S.I.N. drawn on the cover of Jiro’s notebook, Julian asked, “The word or an acronym?” Jiro - “Both. You know what opsins are?” Julian - “A light sensitive protein, the universal photo receptor molecules of all visual systems in the animal kingdom. They can change their conformation from a resting state to a signaling state upon light absorption, which activates the G protein, thereby resulting in a signaling cascade that produces physiological responses.” Jiro - “Wouldn’t you think by now we’d know more about how our own brains work?” Julian - “What’s your acronym?” Hearing Jiro’s answer, *Other Possible Solutions In Nature*, Julian knew the time was right to share his past experiences, the meetings with Marcus, the Interspecies Internet and the Council in Bhutan. Jiro - “I read about the trial and the Nobel Prize. Will there be another outage?” Julian - “Yes. don’t know when.”

Jiro - “We know our brains learn from new and unfamiliar environments, complex things that happen to and around us build new connections called synapses. If what we’re about to encounter pushes us past anything we’ve previously experienced, we’d better be ready for signals traveling one cell to another to stimulate our brains as never before. Changing brain prints here we come!”

Julian - "If information our brain receives affects our behavior, moods and thoughts, how do you think a brain would react if static electricity, flashes of light, was used to stimulate different areas?" Jiro - "Our brain has over a hundred billion neurons with wired together connections, how memories are formed." Julian - "Just like parts of a computer. All we have to do is figure out which parts control what? Could the brain's cortex change?" Jiro - "The concept of connectionism? Could a single unit, when connected to another unit in a certain way, increase one's ability to reason and remember?" The new friends spent the rest of the day (and evening) talking about not only connectionism, but also the importance of the human connection.

Walking back to their dorms, they quizzed each other, keeping up with the ever increasing list of acronyms. RNO - Rule Nothing Out. QPQ - Quid Pro Quo. AHOD - All Hands On Deck. WAAN - Wink and a Nod. SIP - Shelter in Place. KIS - Keep it Simple. TSHS - That ship has Sailed. NTL- Never Too Late. ATW-Against the Wind. FITF - From idea to form. ESTD - Easier Said than Done. RWYA - Ready when you are.

As they approached Julian's dorm, Silas was sitting on the front steps with two King Charles Spaniels, expressive faces, white coats and chestnut markings. Silas - "I'd like you to meet COG. . ." Julian turned to the other dog, "I'm guessing you're NITION?" "Correct! We're brothers and switch names all the time, I think I can. I know I can. The natural world is pleased to contribute to your brain research. Opsins taken from the retina of a fruit fly, from algae that grows in ponds, a few examples of many. Men and women have different brains, neither with pain receptors. Your exploring the different regions is encouraging." COG- "Remember my name, C O G. Get rid of Coal, Oil and Gas." Jiro's smile told Julian he'd understood the dogs' communication.

Staring eye to eye with Julian, NITION continued. "Efforts to locate and describe the function of the genes in your body, your human genome project, is well intentioned. If you'd be interested to have the natural world help you to understand how an individual's genetic makeup can change, just let us know. Nature's answer is right in front of you." Jiro - "Excuse me for what you might consider a rude question. Are animals consciously self aware?" COG AND NITION answered in unison. "In order to understand other animals, first you have to understand yourself. RWYA!"

Three days before classes ended for the Thanksgiving holiday, Silas the Labrador was adamant. Arching his well defined eyebrows, staring at Julian -“We have to leave tonight. It’s time for us to go home! Tell Jiro.” Whatever Silas knew and wasn’t saying wasn’t important. A half hour after takeoff, Julian, Silas and Jiro seated comfortably, a flight attendant handed Julian a note from the pilot. “Your parents are safe. They will meet you at the airport.” Was it a coincidence this would be the last flight to land before the outage struck?

Six and a half hours, Boston to San Francisco, Julian and Jiro talked nonstop. Hearing how helpful it was, during the last outage, to have everyone participate, discuss any question, ask for and offer help, Jiro (who lived in a small town across the bay called San Anselmo) would organize daily meetings both there and in neighboring areas. After hearing the flight attendant’s preparation for landing announcement, Silas looked directly at Julian. Silas - “For obvious reasons I don’t like the word *debar*!” San Francisco had made the debarking of dogs illegal.

Julian -“It’s up to us to look past appearances, optimism and open minds instead of fear. Know what we don’t know.” Was it yet another coincidence that Julian’s best friend, Wayne, would arrive in San Francisco on a flight from Arizona only moments before Julian’s plane landed? Waiting for passengers to debark, seeing Wayne in the distance, Julian’s mother invited him to stay with them during his visit. When Julian saw his parents, after never ending hugs, questions were answered quickly. “We were never mistreated, didn’t see our captors. The police know every detail.” Julian and Wayne had their traditional opening conversation. “Hi, I’m Gordian.” “No you’re knot, I am.” Wayne - “The elders advised me to come to San Francisco. *A time is coming when you need to be together.*”

Jiro introduced Julian to his parents. Julian’s mother invited everyone for dinner the following week, giving Jiro the address. Arriving home, the first thing Julian did was phone Jane Green in Virginia, asking if she could arrange a meeting with someone at City Hall. He had an answer within the hour. The Mayor of San Francisco would meet with him tomorrow morning.

Before leaving school, the last thing Julian's favorite professor had said was "The truly creative changes and the big shifts occur right at the edge of chaos." Was his statement prescient? Would that chaos begin with another outage? Was the interspecies internet one of many creative changes ahead? Was the power of nature to energize beginning to be both recognized and understood? The human species' need to learn how to coexist with nature, for the benefit of both, was obvious. Julian and his parents spent the night catching up. Wayne and W.L. went to the guestroom to talk. *Well Loved* Silas had chosen his own nickname.

When Julian and Silas arrived at the Mayor's office, a staff member asked "I'll watch your dog. Do you have a leash?" After explaining the importance of Silas being at the meeting, what seemed like a long five minutes, Julian and the majestic yellow Labrador were shown into Bluet Vardon's office. When the mayor walked from behind her desk, Julian smiled, extending his hand. "I'm Julian Emerson. This is Silas." Silas went to sit at the closed door. Gesturing to two wing chairs, "A pleasure to meet you, Julian. I met your parents last year at a gallery opening of your mother's photographs."

Julian - "Thank you for taking the time for see us. We're here on behalf of the animals and the natural world, to offer our help." "I read about the trial and Nobel Peace Prize. Your attorney explained that you communicate with animals. Is this how you think you know what's going to happen . . .?" Interrupted by a scratching noise at the door, the mayor stood up.

A small (less than a pound) hedgehog with a stubby tail, solid shaft spines glistening, a sweet face with white fur, introduced himself to Silas. "I'm HESSE." Bluet Vardon picked him up, placing him on a tiny pillow on her desk. "Julian, I've never shared this with anyone. My parents were killed in a fire when I was in college. Two years ago my husband, a professional baseball player, died in a car accident. After the funeral, HESSE was on my doorstep. All rolled up, he looked like a softball. When I heard "May I stay with you?" I didn't know if I was crazy or just exhausted and sad. After applying for a permit, I was allowed to keep him. HESSE convinced me to run for office, all the ideas for my campaign strategy, logo, advertising, appearances, were his."

HESSE - "Like you, Julian, I don't believe in coincidences." Bluet Vardon - "If and when an outage begins, do you know how long it will last?" Julian - "No. When it starts, you'll be addressing the people of San Francisco. Will you ask everyone to do no harm to any animal? They're here to help. There is nothing to be afraid of. Neither food nor water will be a concern. Crops, after harvested, will reappear in three days, easily distributed at local markets. Hospital back up generators won't work, nor will electronic emergency protocols." HESSE interrupted. "I'm tired, have eaten all the eucalyptus leaves I can." He curls up on the small desk pillow, "Please let me know if I can help." Bluet Vardon smiled - "He sleeps eighteen to twenty two hours a day."

Julian continued "Mayor Vardon, If you like, I know several people who can visit hospitals and schools to explain what's happened. Marathon runners can carry emergency messages. In the past, daily neighborhood meetings have been very positive. Union Square, Haight Ashbury, Chinatown, Golden Gate Park, Pacific Heights and Russian Hill come to mind. Silas and I can organize a morning meeting at the Presidio."

The meeting over, Julian walked to the parking lot. As he turned his car onto the street, he thought he heard a noise from the back seat. "I'm GREGORY. I live with Dr. Boyle at USF, University of San Francisco." When Julian arrived home with a Koala Bear, no one was surprised. The two went to talk privately in the kitchen. GREGORY - "It will begin tomorrow, November 22nd. The police will arrive soon. Ask them to have those now in jail help during the outage."

Julian's father knocked on the door. "Julian, the police are here to see you." Julian already had one skirmish with the law when he'd put away (and forgotten) a jury summons, resulting in a warrant for his arrest. The two officers had no visible reaction when Julian arrived with a Koala Bear. Julian - "How can I help you?" First officer - "We're here to investigate a robbery." Julian - "I don't understand." The second officer replied. "Your fingerprints were at the crime scene." When GREGORY tugged at Julian's arm, he bent down to listen. "Wanted you to talk with the police... won't last much longer.. .dying from a sexually transmitted disease." Surprise registered on both officers' faces at what Julian said next. "Gregory took the baseball, Did you know a koala bear's fingerprints are indistinguishable from a human's?"

Julian reached into his pocket and handed the mayor's business card to the blond haired officer. When he stepped outside to make a phone call, Julian began talking with the second officer, asking if he would introduce the idea of a Prisoner Release program during the upcoming outage to his superior. Supervisor dogs would guarantee no illegal activity. The officer nodded affirmatively. "You obviously know something I don't." Julian smiled and said nothing. The police drove GREGORY the koala bear back to USF. No charges were filed.

The outage began the following morning. Cascade failures: satellite relays, power grids, cell phone towers, radar stations, airport to plane and all military communication, television and radio broadcasting, power lines, a catastrophic failure of all the battery powered and electricity driven devices in the world. Backup power sources did not operate. Nothing was immune.

The San Francisco City Hall was built as the People's Palace, the crown jewel of the Civic Center Plaza. Anxious and frightened, hundreds of people had gathered, waiting to hear from their elected officials. Julian, his mother Marie, father Peter, and best friend Wayne, gently holding HESSE the hedgehog, stood next to Silas the Labrador.

When Mayor Vardon arrived with the members of the City Council, walking to a small podium, her voice, without a microphone, carried clearly. "San Francisco is a city of diversity. What has happened will give every resident an opportunity to choose, experience and practice duality over absolutes and polarity. Yesterday, a young man came to my office. He requested I ask all of you not to cause harm to any animal. His exact words were "They are here to help. There is nothing to be afraid of." I was told neither food nor water will be a concern. The airport is closed; no flights are arriving or leaving. The buses are not operating. Our priority is to help those who can't care for themselves. All government agencies are working together to assess what has happened and put essential services in place." She paused. "The unknown can be frightening and frustrating. How each of us behaves now, the choices we each make, will define who we are for the future. The community level is the best place to start. Neighborhood meetings with updates and announcements will be held every morning, Anyone who is a runner is welcome to volunteer to deliver long distance emergency messages.

I'd like to ask everyone who owns one or more guns to turn them in to a local government authority. This is voluntary and temporary. . .” Before she could continue, the sound of wings filled the plaza, thousands of hooded orioles, thrushes, grosbeaks and warblers with brilliantly colored orange plumage, flying overhead. The Golden Gate Bridge was painted International Orange.

The issue Julian had championed as a defendant in the lawsuit was global education. During the outage, honoring that commitment would be redefined. Knowing what was coming, Wayne had printed hundreds of flyers, leaving them in mailboxes (which he later found out was against the law), on car windshields, asking local store owners to post them. Everyone in the surrounding neighborhoods knew about tomorrow's meeting.

As Wayne and Silas walked with him to the Presidio, a former military base now a park with hills, wooded areas and scenic vistas overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean, Julian thought of one of the many things he and Marcus had talked about - what taking a risk entailed. Though logical thinking about making a living, preparing for a job often taught not to take risks, this was different. Marcus - “When faced with what seems like insurmountable constraints and challenges, you can do it. Stay calm. Think clearly.” The Labrador breed was known for being loyal and attached to those they love. Shilli, Emilie, Julian, Asha, and Lapis, five unique personalities, would never know how that loyalty and love would change their lives.

Chloe the sloth sat quietly in the center of the platform the mayor had arranged to be installed in neighborhoods throughout the city. Chloe - “Are you Julian? Shilli and Asha asked me to say *Hello*.” Julian Introduced Wayne and Silas. Chloe - “How nice you have a calendar with your name. Years before, Julian and Wayne had used the Julian Calendar (introduced by Julius Caesar) as a code to send secret messages to each other, “Meet me on Easter” a different date, Julian versus Gregorian. Julian's skin color had changed to blue gray in Bhutan. Chloe - “I like your skin color.” Julian - “The Council hoped it would get people's attention.”

When Chloe asked about the words on Julian's T shirt "All pity choked by custom of fell deed," he explained. "It's Shakespeare. Cat's claws grow from the bone. The inhumane amputation of a feline's claws severs the tendons, nerves and ligaments that enable the cat to function normally. Declawing is illegal in thirty five countries. We're working to have it declared illegal in the United States."

Chloe - "Would it be all right if some friends of mine say a few things at the beginning of your meeting?" Julian - "Certainly." Chloe - "May I offer a few suggestions? As people arrive, they can draw a number from a jar, two of each number in the container. After the meeting, someone will call out the numbers, beginning with #1. The two people with the same number will spend the next half hour together. What do you think?" Julian - "I like it." Chloe - "Life's challenges can be difficult. Certain things we never get over. We learn to understand, acknowledge and live with them. Cellular memory." As Chloe hopped off the stage, Julian and Wayne were both visibly affected.

One of the many things Julian, Emilie, Asha, Samuel and Shilli had learned from Marcus was teamwork. Humanity now had the choice whether or not to work with the natural world, the practicalities both noticing and listening to what Nature has to teach. Marcus often said how important it was to ask the right questions. Finding answers to the wrong questions no longer mattered.

As people began to arrive, Julian and Wayne weren't surprised at the large turnout. Julian began. "My name is Julian Emerson. What's happened isn't meant to frighten anyone. Animals and plants have the ability to change the Earth in ways we don't yet understand. The natural world has something to say and this was the only way they knew to get our attention. Over the past few years, I've experienced two other outages and will answer any questions. We'll be here every morning for anyone who needs help or would like to volunteer. Before we start, several of the animal world have asked to speak."

A foxhound jumped onto the stage. "I am PER SE. Don't ask for what you can have or even for what you can give...ask for what else you can know. There is always more than you can know and knowing it will radically increase all you can have and all you can give." The dog jumped from the stage.

Two birds, a Willet and a Pigeon, landed on Julian's shoulders. The Willet, with a straight tail and white wing pattern communicated first. "I am TACT. Will power is like a muscle. Like any muscle, it has to be exercised." Off he flew. The pigeon looked at the crowd silently for thirty seconds before speaking.

"I am YIPPERS. Many of you make fun of someone by calling them *bird brain*. We are not mentally inferior. Quite the contrary, with complex reasoning and problem solving abilities, my friends and I could teach you a great many things. I leave you with the words of one of your own species. *In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends.*"

A butterfly and bumblebee took their place next to the pigeon on Julian's shoulder. The monarch, brilliant orange and black patterned wings not moving, began. "I am PREVAIL. I need milkweed to survive. Instead of destroying it to plant your crops, please plant it so I can live." "I am GB. Good Bee. Aerodynamically, I shouldn't be able to fly. Since no one ever told me this, I go on flying. Remember I can do what all of your computers can't. Honey heals wounds, among other things. Please ask yourselves *What is important to me.*" YIPPERS, PREVAIL AND GB left together.

Chloe jumped onto the stage holding a small beetle in her paw. I'd like to introduce you to DUNG. He is the only insect that navigates by the stars." Suddenly, Chloe jumped upside down, moved to the far corner of the platform to pick up what appeared to be two shells, a tiger striped nautilus, SYMBIOSIS, and a pink natural lip conch shell, MIRTH. SYMBIOSIS - "I used to be very shy, always choosing defense mechanism behavior when I was scared or frightened." MIRTH - "Is any one here shy?" The response was immediate. "YES!!!" SYMBIOSIS - "Watch this." As both moved out of their shells, jumping onto Chloe's back, they began turning and wiggling round and round for thirty seconds, then reentering their homes. Spontaneously, young and old started to wiggle and dance. They would never forget who had helped them come out of their shells. Symbiosis and Mirth.

His head bobbing back and forth as he walked, McCay the white crow approached the platform, Proceeding up the small stairway, he stood facing the crowd. "We're all vulnerable and have to be ready for exciting complications. The first thing we need to do is replace fear and apprehension with curiosity, enthusiasm and possibility.

An elderly white haired man walked with a cane to the platform from the back of the crowd. Yelling angrily, "Prove to us that this isn't all just some magic trick." Chloe - "You want us to show you something to illustrate the power of the natural world?" Julian interjects. "I've always wanted to be at the exact spot where the rain starts and stops." Chloe smiled, addressing the man. "Would you prefer to be where it's raining or where it's dry?" "Where it's raining!" There wasn't a cloud in the sky. After a lightening bolt, followed by roars of thunder, the rain started, stopping one foot from where he was standing. Saying nothing, the man walked away, obviously not satisfied.

McCay the white crow continued. "The earth contains *capable* compounds and materials that humans are just beginning to discover. We are each unique. What is the most outlandish idea you've had since the outage began? When there was no answer, McCay asked again. "Nonsense wakes up the brain cells. . . come on, anyone?" Someone shouted - "I don't like going to the dentist, having someone drill inside my mouth. Imagine what rocks must feel, when we drill through them to get oil, the pressure builds up until all they can do to relieve and release their stress is. . . quake. Thanks, outage. No electricity, no dentist drills!"

"Wowza. . . If humans aren't at the top of the evolutionary scale, this isn't a cultural revolution, it's a natural one." Another shout from the crowd. "People are carrying guns into schools, stores, restaurants and hotels. Can the natural world help stop our obsession with guns?" A third - "Isn't it ironic that organized religions' (*I'm right and you're wrong*) have played a part in humanity's suffering?" "Does anyone know what the word rewilding means?" "Education and profit should be contradictory."

Julian - "Though it might surprise you, in many parts of the world, communicating with animals isn't considered unusual. Acceptance is growing; all you have to do is listen. Elephants communicate over hundreds of miles in a frequency humans can't hear. Humpback whales don't just sing, they compose songs like birds, who do the same with repetitive notes in sequence. Beginning tomorrow, after the meeting different members of the natural world will meet with anyone who is interested. The class is called *Relearning Rethinking*. It will be led by FALK the Parrot and two of his friends, DAVE the squirrel and STEINEM the racoon. All three have extraordinary memories and abilities to solve complex problems, are anxious to answer questions, have much to share. Among many other things, they would like to teach you how to use essences from plants if you don't feel well.

As were many of his friends, Julian was a gamer. Street smarts were one thing, book smarts another, gaming smarts something else entirely. Having an education and being smart did not always go hand in hand. Julian knew his skills related both to the specific controls he was using, keyboard or remote, and what game he was playing. As a male or female player proceeded up the winning ladder, (more males than females were gamers), two things changed, their image within the gaming community and their self worth. Social skills only applied to a team based game. Sixty percent of the games included violence. Games produced to target the specific gender and age of players were slowly becoming more diverse, one of the many issues currently facing the human race.

Before the outage, Julian heard that some gamers were purchasing tDCS (transcranial direct current stimulation) kits to increase their gaming skills, zapping their brains to help with memory and coordination. He was far from sure this was a good idea. Would gamers be at a loss as to how to spend their time during the outage? How could critical thinking, patience, logical problem solving and mathematical skills be best used? Julian asked any gamers in the crowd to see him at the end of the meeting.

Hearing a bell like sound, a loud baying, SILAS jumped off the platform nearly knocking Julian over. As the Labrador dashed through the crowd, PER SE the foxhound joined him rushing toward three men dressed in police uniforms. The dogs knocked the three to the ground, Silas then grabbed a small canvas bag in his mouth, running toward the bay. The foxhound stood guard as others gathered around him to help.

The sharp sounds of the explosion, the black smoke billowing into the sky shocked and frightened. As Julian ran toward the beach, no one in the crowd moved. What was minutes seemed like hours. Silas, limping, burn marks on his legs and body, walked very slowly, Julian beside him. Thanks to Silas and Per Se, criminals attempting to stop the interspecies internet, hiding behind the power of the uniform, had been stopped. A disaster had, very narrowly, been averted.

A woman waited anxiously. "I'm a veterinarian." As Wayne lifted Silas onto the platform, placing him gently on his jacket, Julian took off his shirt, tearing it into strips. After cold water was applied to the burned areas, they were wrapped and tied in place with the soft shirt material. Silas was intelligent, caring and perceptive; he knew not to lick his wounds.

No bones were broken, the burns would heal, Several people offered to make a stretcher to carry him home. Silas - "I can walk. Thank you." Nodding to the area on the sand where the home made bomb had exploded, "The starfish at the beach are dying and don't know why. Their arms are falling off, one after the other." Silas turned to walk away. "Will you help? It is the history of our kindnesses that alone makes this world tolerable."

A boy Julian's age walked up to him, singing "I have a question." Julian - "Why are you singing?" "Because I stutter, and you can't stutter when you are singing." Julian melodically sang the answer before the question was even asked. "Yes. We'll meet here again tomorrow morning."

At dinner, the conversation began with the thwarted attack at the Presidio. Who wanted to stop the interspecies internet? How would communication with non human species affect domestic and international politics? What global companies stood not only to lose profits but also be on the fast track to obsolescence? The weapons industry? International military defense spending? Julian remembered his conversations with Asha about their countries, the culture of violence and guns in the United States, India's rape culture. Would what could be learned from nature during the outage overwhelm what science had learned in the past decades from inhumane experiments on animals? Five million humans had died in four years in the first World War. What has changed since?

Love of money. The root of all evil? If alternatives were developed to aid humans in their challenges, poverty, hunger, climate, would corporate giants become involved only if convinced they would make equal (if not more) profit to what they would be giving up, oil to solar an obvious example? Could external success and internal traits not coexist? The conversation switched from causality, cause and effect, to instincts. Everyone had the choice to listen to their own gut feelings (which were sometimes incorrect) or, for fear of being wrong, follow the majority.

The rousing conversation was interrupted a knock on the door. With much to tell Julian, Jiro had bicycled from San Anselmo. The two went into the kitchen to talk. After a half hour, Jiro left to visit his Aunt and Uncle who lived nearby.

Silas had been sleeping on Julian's bed. Limping into the dining room, tipping his head, he motioned to Julian to follow him outside to the orchard. A tree had grown overnight where the seeds from Bhutan had been planted. Julian picked what appeared to be a miniature avocado, smiling when the fruit opened as if cut in half, letters appearing on the round seed. "Roller Coaster." That each message would be applicable to the person who picked the fruit went without saying.

A glass frog jumped onto the nearby patio table, turning over to show its remarkable transparent belly. Instead of the normal shape of its internal organs, two words were visible. "Seat belt." Julian understood the message. Silas and Julian walked slowly back to the house.

Silas - "Humans are understandably concerned about viruses and infections in their bodies. . ." Julian - "And in their electronic devices." Silas - "How many are concerned with how they are destroying their own habitat?" Julian - "Culture shifts are slow. The consumer society, normal for everyone, will not be anxious to change." Silas - "I love you Julian. Marcus plays a part in everything that's happening. Thinking about him helps me to focus. Shilli, Emilie, Asha, Lapis and Samuel, you and me, all our destinies are inextricably interwoven with what he stood for, what he died for. Character, courage, integrity, honesty, love, kindness, endurance, empathy, resilience, perseverance and compassion. Putting his bandaged paw on Julian's leg, Silas communicated. "Whatever happens, please know I'll always do my best." Julian lay down on the kitchen floor next to the yellow Labrador. Both quickly fell asleep.

How long would it take to get used to doing with less, in some cases, doing without? Different ages would react differently. In the thirty two days since the outage began, with no electricity, computers, electronic devices, tablets, smart phones or social media, food and shelter and health were the primary concern. What had changed? Rain fell for a few hours every other day. Young people collected the rainwater which was safe to drink, no need to boil or filter. Though not understanding how harvested crops were reappearing every three days, no one questioned but, instead, enjoyed shopping daily in local markets. Banks closed. Barter and compassion were the only currency needed.

With humans depending on technology to be "connected," many were concerned the outage would increase loneliness. The opposite happened.

People who'd lived in the same location for years were, for the first time, getting to know their neighbors, an unexpected cultural exchange. Had the dependency on technology reached the medical definition of an addiction? Would the use of drugs and alcohol increase? The opposite. Connectivity was the word used as an explanation for any and all breaches in technology systems. Now it was human to human connectivity, non electronic communication, that could save the species. Rather than using technology negatively, to shame others, choosing anger and violence to end personal arguments and conflicts, as each day passed more and more people took the time to listen to and learn about beliefs different than their own. Minds were changing. "My" was starting to be replaced by "Our"

Old and young alike crossed the Golden Gate bridge in horse drawn wagons to learn what they had only before read about, milking cows and goats, churning, making butter. Rather than humans taking animals on walks, animals took older humans on daily walks. Service dogs instructed service humans, how to help those their species had harmed. School aged children said they'd learned more in four weeks than in the previous year.

Since the outage began, no one had become ill. Doctors and pharmacies weren't necessary. Beginning to communicate telepathically with animals, people, unconsciously, began to eat less meat. No one had to be taught telepathy, it accompanied the practice of "listening." Street dancers and face painting were thriving. Youngsters playing marbles was a common sight on sidewalks.

Gamers meeting regularly with prisoners to share and exchange ideas was revelatory. Each person was asked to discuss something they had done to help or harm another, their greatest success and failure, joy and sorrow. What everyone had in common was evident. In the days that followed, several gamers and prisoners expressed their feelings of isolation and loneliness. The innovative ideas for change that were born were written down and presented to the Mayor, school principals, prison authorities and the local police.

Julian had constructed a musical instrument which he played at the start of every morning's meeting. The small wooden box, filled with tiny pellets, had five small cymbals attached to the bottom. The top layer had three openings which, when the box was turned over would engage the cymbals, making a unique and beautiful sound. Music was a major contribution both in the building of community and of trust. Every evening there was a performance at the Presidio.

As Julian and Wayne walked home from the meeting the following afternoon, a river otter, his grey white pelt glistening, stood in their path. “I am ALEX. Did you know I can stay underwater for several minutes, closing my ears and nose to keep the water out? His playful demeanor was engaging. “It won’t take long for your species to find a rediscovered purpose. The *verify you are human* process on your electronic devices has already been altered to *verify what kind of human you are*. As ALEX turned to leave - “I like your T-shirts. How about *Quiddity*, *Model System* or *Ineradicable*? A few years before, Julian and Wayne had started a T shirt business, a word on the back, its definition on the front. Today, Julian’s shirt had *Conronym*, Wayne’s *Reversification*. Neither Julian nor Wayne had ever heard the word *Quiddity*. They didn’t know the definition of a Model System. They did know what ineradicable meant.

Two days before Christmas, tables were set up in neighborhood parks, all ages enjoying making pomander balls. Placing cloves in oranges, letting the smell escape as they dried, was a long held tradition of the holiday season.

As twilight turned to darkness, in a moonless night, fireflies or lightening bugs as they were incorrectly called, (being neither flies nor bugs but beetles), swarmed across the sky in an recognizable image, the same appearing in clouds, contrails, rainbows and meteor showers worldwide. JASLEMS.