



## The Light in Carol's Kitchen

*A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother.*

- Proverbs 10:1

"August" means "respected" and "impressive." Around Malibu, August means surf and sun, beach parties and barbecues, no school and as August fades into September, late summer morphs into Indian Summer - the best time of year for the last best place in Southern California.

As a California kid and a Malibu Kid I should love August, but I hate it. I have long hated the month of August. That's when Carol the Mom (CtM) passed away at the start of a new millennium. I felt sad when she died. On a dreary rainy night I went walking in the drizzling rain up and down the hills of our suburban Maryland streets. Shuffling along, mindlessly drifting by houses in the 'hood, I paused under the misty glow of a streetlamp. There by the garbage stood a soggy pile of books. Old encyclopedias left out in the rain. I reached for the top copy and gazed at the letters on the binding - Who's Who 1991 Volume P-T. Funny I thought. Turning the pages, I found the name 'RAPF' and the movie career biography for Matt the StepFather (MtSF). My parents' names stared back at me. CtM and MtSF on the same page. Their names, side by side, weeping together in the rain.



**BOOM** - there was a war (WWII). **BOOM BOOM** - My biological parents saw themselves in a mirror. And they fell in love with the mirror.

A couple of innocents. CtM was the beautiful blond-haired, first daughter of the Mayor of flipping Beverly Hills. She was popular, sociable, 'most likely to succeed:' a handsome woman of her day. Bob the Father (BtF) was an intellectual diamond, first and only son of his widowed mother Esther, who came West from New York in the early 1930s to live with her extended family of Jewish brothers, aunts and cousins. BtF soared through coursework with the wings of a legal eagle: Phi Beta Kappa (UCLA Journalism), Political Science Masters from Columbia, J.D. from USC.



My parents were august - respected and impressive. 'The Producers,' as I affectionately called my parents, spent the postwar years in London where BtF worked as an Associated Press correspondent writing wire stories for the trade. They lived in trendy Sloan Square and on some nights at a local pub they listened to Noel Coward at the piano bar, singing his brilliant and witty cabaret songs to a crowd of BOOM BOOMers.

**BOOM BOOM BOOM** – In the recombinant Jewish subculture of Southern California, our families changed partners several times. I know; I have all the pictures. Dorothy, the stepmother (DtSM) first introduced CtM to BtF. She was a bridesmaid at their wedding where, it is said that actress Jeannette McDonald sang to the newlyweds and well-wishing Weil-wedding attendees. How cool is that?



Matt the Stepmother (MtSF) preceded BtF as editor of the LA High School newspaper (1930s). MtSF was a scion of a famous Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) producer, who won the Academy Award for the first movie musical, *Broadway Melodies* (1929). MtSF was off to Dartmouth and the Navy. There is a photo of BtF and CtM, poolside with

MtSF and his wife (3 sons) and their pals, Al the Dr. (AtD) and Arlene the friend (AtF). I know, I have all the pictures.



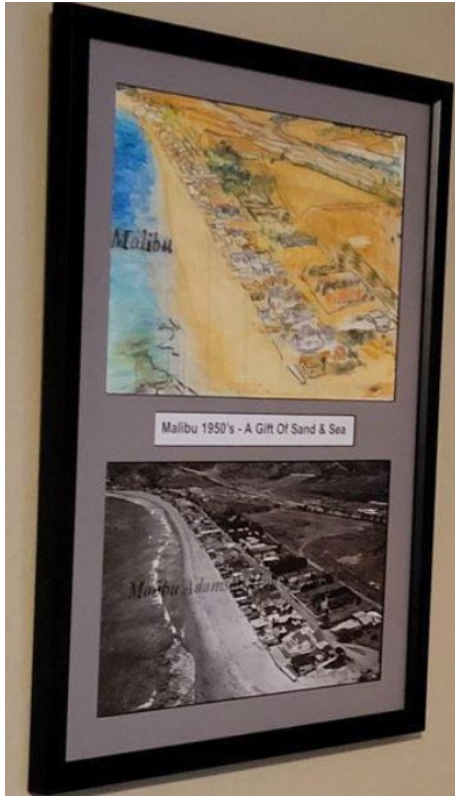
Fresh out of law school, BtF the son-in-law, landed a job in David the Grandfather's (DtGF) prestigious Beverly Hills law firm. Two sons are born to CtM and BtF - - David the Brother (DtB) and Timothy, the son (TtS).

David was born a king and Timothy was named like the Apostle, except there are no Christians in our family tree. 1952 was a Leap Year, so I jumped. When I was nine-months old, a housekeeper to BtF/CtM set me down on a kitchen counter. I jumped (fell) into the vacuum of attention that surrounded our domestic life. We all jumped.

From '54-'58, DtB and TtS lived with CtM after her divorce from BtF. I was 18 months old (with a broken leg) when they split up. After another six years of single-parenting and mental health challenges CtM married MtSF and moved to the beach



- DtB and TtS in tow. Meanwhile, BtF married Dorothy the StepMother (DtSM).



MtSF something of the Master Builder. We moved into our first beach house in '58. Over the next dozen years, TtS lived in seven houses on the same mile of beach. We were always building and moving. Into our family, Matt the half-brother (MtHB), was born and MtSF won custody of his other three sons. From '61 to '64 we were six boys growing up under one roof. Meanwhile, MtSF and CtM envisioned their dream home on the far end of the beach. By '71 the "Rapf House" was built. It is a gorgeous house, still standing today after 50 years. This showcase home was featured in the LA Times magazine back in August '72 - and more recently in the Spring 2023 issue of C Magazine: California Style and Culture - as the beloved home of the founders of Chrome Hearts.



Unfortunately for me (TtS), I was on an [Accidental Journey](#) in an era of "[Lost Parents \(Lawrence Ferlinghetti\)](#)," with a [Front Row Seat to a Three Ring Circus](#).

### Lost Parents – Lawrence Ferlinghetti (excerpt)

.... including his wife  
who also called twice  
wanting to know where he's been  
and what he's done  
with their throw-away children who  
left to their own devices  
in a beach house in Malibu  
grew up and dropped out into Nothing  
in a Jungian search  
for lost parents  
their own age

CtM was a world-class cook; she wrote a cookbook, started a restaurant business and took classes with Julia Child. Her kitchen was the 'Diamond Head' of the East Colony beach - overlooking everything and seeing all. The sun gleaming through the kitchen of this beautiful seaside house illuminated a personal California aquarium view of the Pacific; the rising and falling tides, dolphin, whales seabirds and salt spray in her own backyard. I saw the light in Carol's Kitchen. In Hebrew, the word is [Hamakom](#) (realization of divinity in place).





This presence inspired me in the creative arts, the sounds of music, the lyricism of a great poem, modern art and museum galleries, the plays we would attend, great movies from around the world, the silliness of the ‘entertainment biz.’

**Here’s one story.** In the early ‘70s I took my guitar and sat on the sand next to CtW’s Colony home. I was fingerpicking *Freight Train* (Libba Cotton), John Fahey and Doc Watson tunes. An elderly couple in beach chairs sat behind me, talking and listening while I played. When the concert ended I wiped the sand off my feet and returned to her kitchen where CtM stood smiling. Her eyes showed the glint of a mother’s intuition –

“You must have been playing well today dear.”

“Same stuff as I always play Mom, you know: Tidepool Rock”.

“Well darling, the couple behind you enjoying the show were the great violinist Jascha Heifetz and his wife. Congratulations. They didn’t get up and walk away”.

**A love of the arts defines my mother’s gift to me.** From a box of early photos, there is a picture of CtM, young society hostess, coiffed blond hair, white kid gloves and black satin dress. CtM is escorting Israeli diplomats through a museum portrait gallery and I’m on the inside, looking out, not quite born into this world to be. Over the years CtM shared with TtS a life immersed in art – *Annie Get Your Gun* (play), *Hair* (musical), *Gigi / Romeo and Juliet* (films), classical music concerts,





London theater shows and the intense silliness of the movie and TV business. After all, It was MtSF's career as a producer that brought the *Ben Casey* (doctor series) and *Kojak* (police series) to the television screen. When the house building and family circus settled down, CtM brought her talents to the restaurant business. A college drop-out at the time, I tagged along for the ride.

### **The Nights in Carol's Kitchen**

Working with Arlene the friend (AtF), CtM set up four French bistros in LA. The concept was 'great food/decor in a sterile office building.' Their replacement of the 'sawdust sandwich' cafeteria was a hit and CtM found a job for TtS doing kitchen prep – chopping onions, dishing out chili, and laying up those awful five gallon buckets of green split-pea soup. The hit film, *The Exorcist*, was making box-office boffo business at first-run theaters. In my night-vision, the green split-pea soup matched an image of a Devil-possessed Linda Blair puking all over the screen.

As the restaurant business took off, CtM and AtF leased one location out to a famous Hollywood Jazz nightclub - Shelly's Manne Hole - where evening concerts took hold of my life. When I finished my work shifts, off came the kitchen apron and I'd grab a seat to hear the greatest jazz sounds of the day – Kenny Burrell on guitar, Les McCann's trio, Shelly Manne (drums) and his Men, The Lew Tabackin Big Band, and the trumpet sounds and voicing of Chuck Mangione / Esther Satterfield performing their 1973 hit, ['The Land of Make Believe'](#). Snippets of that verse speak back to me through time –



### **The Land of Make Believe**

*“When you're feeling down and out  
Wondering what this world's about  
I know a place that has the answer.  
It's a place where no one dies.  
It's a land where no one cries.  
And good vibrations always greet you.  
How I love when my thoughts run  
To the land of make believe.  
Where everything is fun forever.  
We are waiting to help you  
Find the dream made just for you.  
In a few words let's just say  
That in answer to your quiz  
Imagination is the secret.”*

The ‘Land of Make Believe.’ Indeed. I can still see the hands of the house manager emptying the nightly cash. Louis Ledesma the Crook (LLtC)’s third-party staffing company stole the restaurant profits and bankrupted the business. By the time it all went bust I had switched to a bartender’s gig at the Westwood location. I got this phone call on a Friday afternoon – “We’re closing up shop.” Putting down the phone I gazed out at the TGIF patron crowd and let out a yell – “Drink up everyone!!! We’re busted. The bar is open. Drinks are on the house!!!”





Carol at the FDR Memorial - <https://www.nps.gov/places/000/fdr-memorial-4th-term.htm>

Matisse Cutouts - <https://www.alejandradeargos.com/index.php/en/artp/261-henri-matisse-the-cut-outs-tate-modern-de-londres>

### **Cut Ups and Cut Outs**

When she was done with her entrepreneurial restaurant career CtM moved into the celebrity real-estate business where she thrived. Selling beach houses, interior decorating, and living the glamorous movie life made her a star in her own right. Her famous saying, after hanging up the phone one day, is a testimony to her charm:

“Mom – was that ‘The Mr. So and So’ on the phone selling their house?”

“Darling, all my clients are named ‘The’.”

So are all my characters – CtM, BtF, MtSF, DtB, MtHB, AtF, TtS

We are all named ‘the’ in my world.

I got that from my mom. The land of make-believe in myself.

Timothy the son, the foolish one.



When MtSF died in the early '90s, her career was on fire. She was 'the Queen of Malibu Real Estate' (in the Land of Make Believe). Approaching the cusp of the century CtM ran into bad luck. A bad wall, actually. On a wine tour of Tuscany her hire driver fell asleep and they crashed into a guard wall. That almost killed CtM. After a long, painful recovery she was her old self again before a fall and a stroke knocked her down a second time. That didn't stop her from visiting TtS one more time, for a performance art adventure.

When CtM last came to DC to visit TtS and Nancy the daughter-in-law (NtDiL), she flew East with her wheelchair and Ben the nurse (BtN). First she got lost, and then we found art. In her weakened mind, she was ticketed on the flight as Janet the Travel Agent (JtTA). When JtTA and BtN deplaned at Dulles Airport, they were whisked away by a medical transport team as TtS and NtDiL watched the rest of the passengers deplane. CtM was missing. Per corporate policy, airport personnel refused to review the flight manifest unless we were calling from a police station. We sorted out this missing person crisis, around midnight, from a local police office.

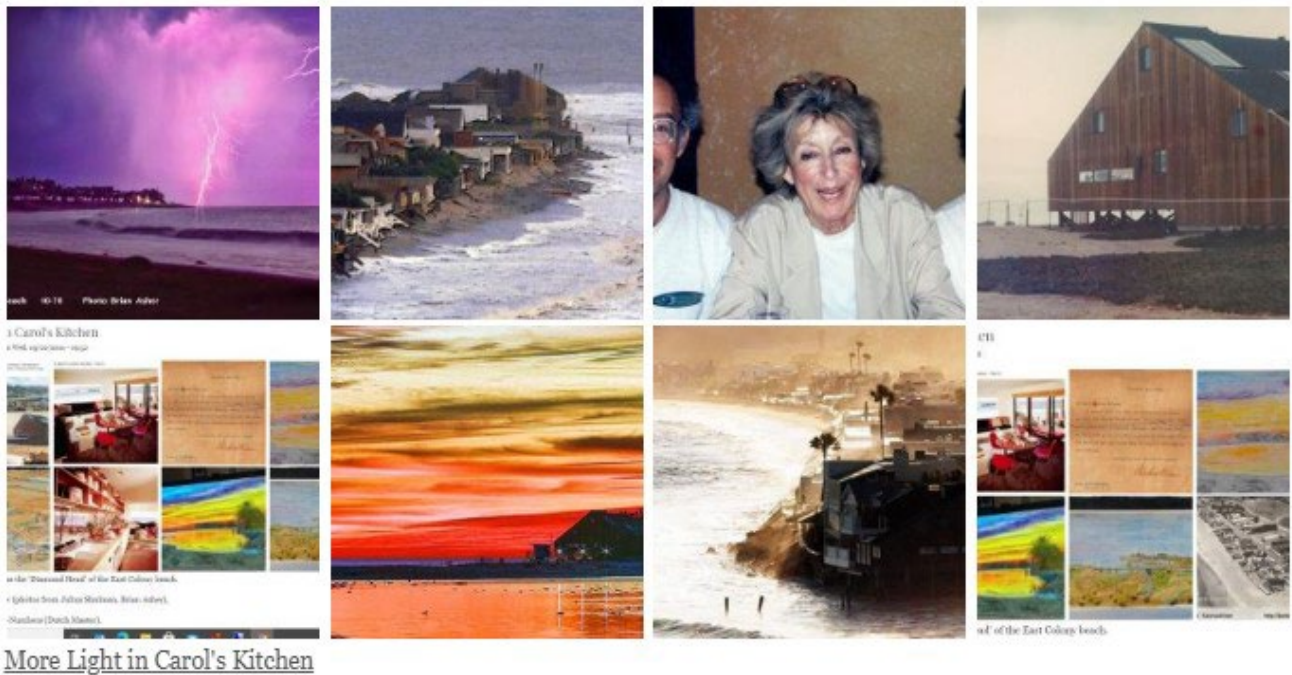
The next day TtS and NtDiL met up with BtN and CtM for a final art gallery tour. I pushed her wheelchair through the FDR Memorial, near the Tidal Basin in Washington DC, and we took photos together next to the Eleanor Roosevelt statue. She liked that. She felt dignified posing with the former first lady, social reformer and caregiver to a crippled president and a struggling nation. We pushed on. At the East Wing of the Smithsonian Museum's National Gallery we all rode the freight elevator to a fifth floor gallery where we toured the 'cut out' art of French painter Henri Matisse. At the end of



his days, Matisse was also wheelchair-bound and directed his staff in creating the oversized, colorful floral and figure patterns that filled the enormous walls on display. I felt at home with CtM that day, like the pre-natal son in the early stages of life, touring a portrait gallery with diplomats. That day we said goodbye. A few years later, the lights went out in Carol's kitchen. These are my prayers for you mom.

## More Light in Carol's Kitchen

By Tim Weil on Wed, 04/19/2023 - 07:24



[More Light in Carol's Kitchen](#)



## South Bay Saturday (for CtM)

### Bodies in Motion

Bike path peddlers  
Power walkers Volleyball spikers  
Strollers in sandals  
Babies in strollers  
Skateboarding sidewalk surfers  
Motorized mini-scooters  
Leg-pumping swing-set riders  
Swarms of strand shufflers

Leggy babes dancing with in-line skates  
Surf camp tourists doing deep-knee squats  
Joggers with headphones in loose-fitting tank tops  
Hang gliders soar over the sand dunes  
Biplane pilots pulling TV ad banners over the ocean  
Sailboat crews tacking up-channel to the sea  
Underbellies of big jet-age birds flying overhead  
A moon-walking, break-dancing legless man with a boom box  
Sunglasses talking to cell phones

### 'The man in the car'

Cops in beach cruisers with windows rolled up  
Jet skis bouncing on wind-chopped seas  
Pelicans co-mingle on a harbor rock jetty  
Pelicans flying and gliding inches above the sea

Bodies in motion, stay in motion

By the oceanBodies at Rest

My mother, Carol, sleeps the eternal rest

Lying so still, next to the man she loves

Bodies at rest

Stay at rest

Amen



The light in Carol's kitchen  
La lumière dans la cuisine de Carol

There is light in my mother's kitchen  
il y a de la lumière dans la cuisine de ma mère



Photo credit Brian Asher. Painting by TtS



[JULIUS SHULBERG Photos Jay Flood Architect - Rapf House \(Malibu, CA\).](#)





**My Malibu Corner of the World  
Stories and Songs Gallery**  
<http://stories-and-songs.us/index.php/node/135>

Pencil drawing by Barbara Steinberg. Painting by TtS

## Prelude to Amuse-meant CHARACTER GALLERY

The Hero's Journey, an archetypal human story, finds an ordinary person, gives (in this case him) a task he is not equal to and forces him to undertake it. In the course of his journey, the task becomes more difficult and the man loses every advantage and guide he started with. He must learn to rely on himself and to accept the aid of those he encounters. The essential task does not change but his means for accomplishing it are so different from when he began that it is only his loyalty to its completion that sustains him. The man able to meet the challenge is thereby transformed into a Hero. ***But for every hero, there are countless people who fail.***

I keep an index of these failed heroes in a Fools Row Lineup I'd like to share with you. Most of the usual suspects are there.

### Character List (Fools Row Lineup - partial list)

I&I (Ishmael Israel)

Standup Funny Man

Guitar Jones (voyager)

KnottingHam (jugknot)

Sensei Humor (JoKen)

Wiley Timmons

Fred

Marigold

Ralph Underwood Fit (RU Fit)

Lord of the Flies

Queen of Ice Cream

Daddy-O & Sonny Boy

Flatpicklers

Damaged Goods

Sister Artistas (jessica, joan, barbara,

cydette, toni, kathryn, fetchin' gretchen)

Lou the Hulk

Bob the Judge

Bob the Father (BtF)

Bob the Son

Heinz & Ernesto (aka Lou-Dog & Le Page)

Carol the Mom (CtM)

Meg LoMania

Darrell Licht (Homeless Joe)

Wander Woman

Boss / Otto Job

Rucksack Jack



### THE FOOL'S PRAYER

by: Edward Rowland Sill (1841-1887)

**T**HE royal feast was done; the King  
Sought some new sport to banish care,  
And to his jester cried: "Sir Fool,  
Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!"

The jester doffed his cap and bells,  
And stood the mocking court before;  
They could not see the bitter smile  
Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee  
Upon the Monarch's silken stool;

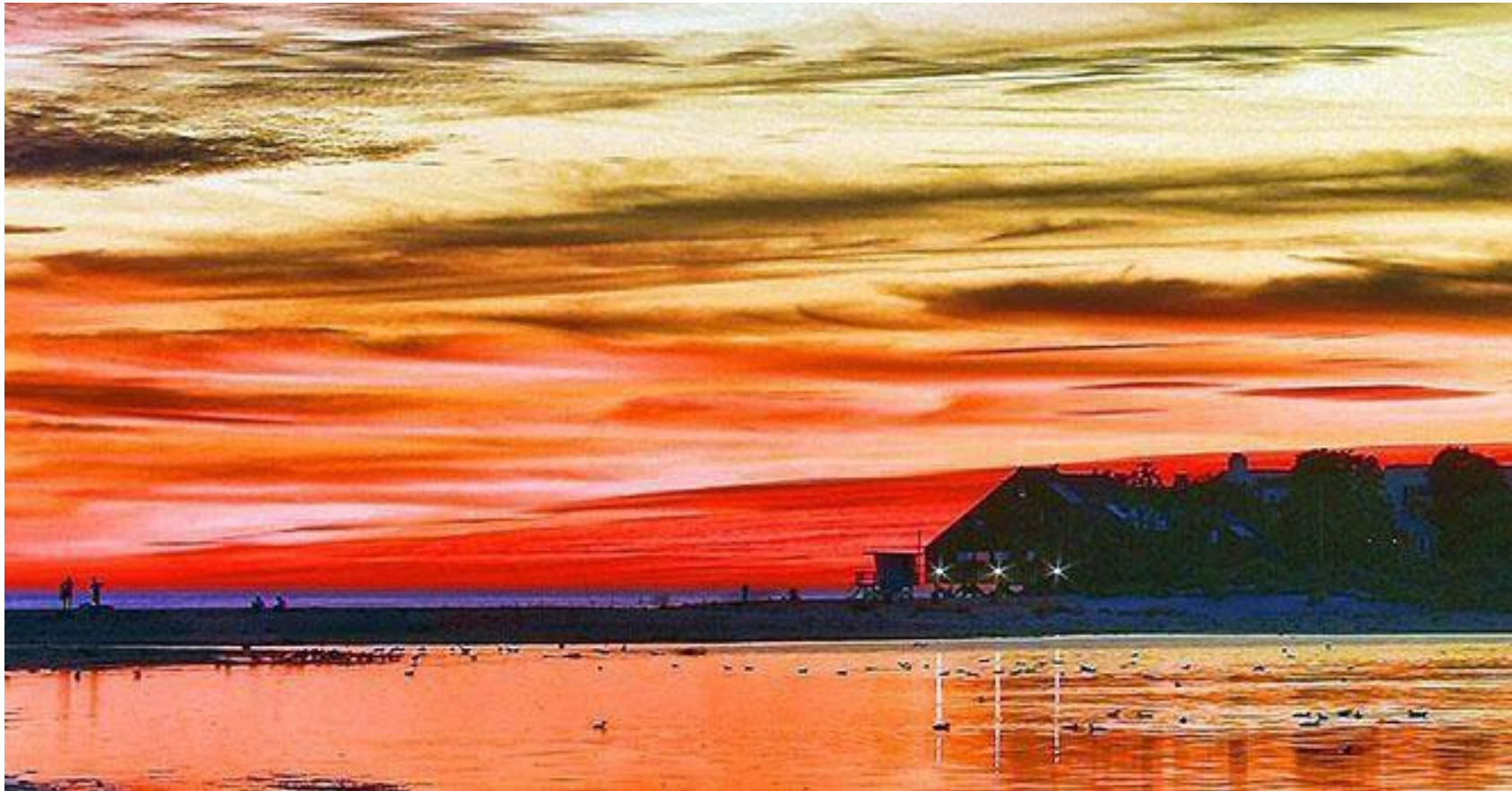
"These clumsy feet, still in the mire,  
Go crushing blossoms without end;  
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust  
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept--  
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?  
The word we had not sense to say--  
Who knows how grandly it had rung!

"Our faults no tenderness should ask.  
The chastening stripes must cleanse them all;



Group Photo – back row MtSF, BtF, Al the Dr. (AtD) front row Margaret, CtM, AtF



The Light in Carol's Kitchen

