

# **Rhodia Ramblings**

**Harry Kollatz and Amie Oliver  
excerpts from life between 1995 - 2011**

Went to nearly  
Nuts for  
sardines  
Stone  
Cream  
Sweet Milk  
Yellow Girls  
Home Mrs  
Café  
J

## Rhodia Ramblings

Random jottings, overheard conversations, notable utterances by friends and acquaintances from ca. 1995-2006. In no particular order.

\*WARNING If you are unaccustomed to mountain roads, do not schedule travel time by distance. The roads in good conditions are narrow and curvy and traveled by large vehicles carrying loads of gravel, cardboard boxes, stoves and other unidentifiable objects. Also, big tractors trailers routinely lumber around these roads.

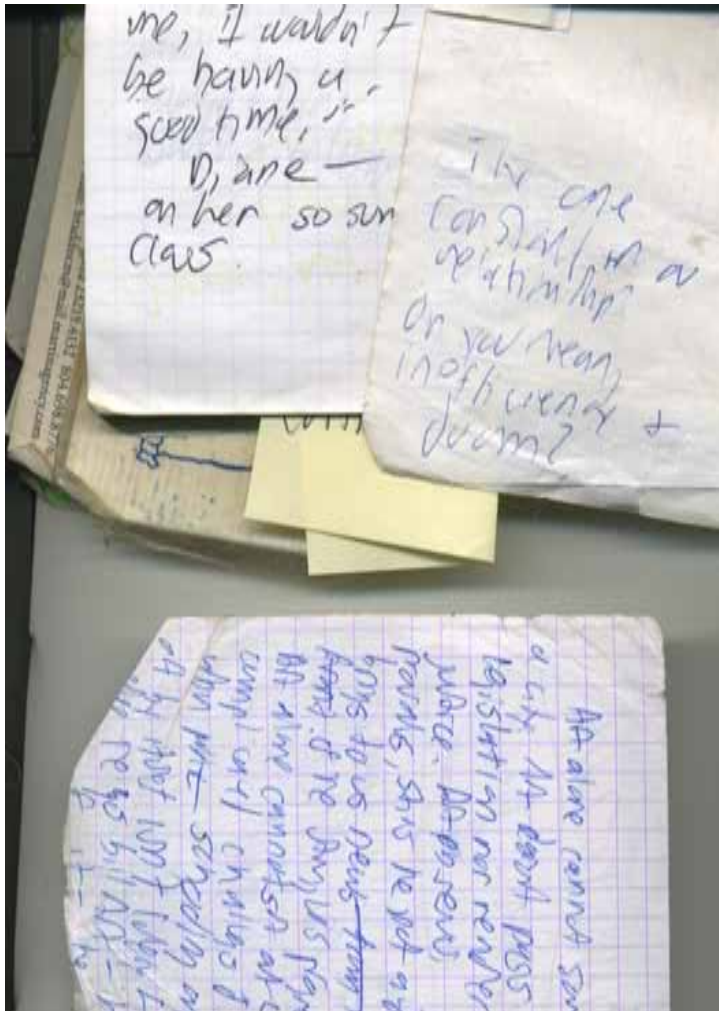
\*Stunning natural beauty all year around, [illegible] mountainsides, creeks and river, rocky faces. Chimneys from long-ago cabins and cabins listing from their age.

\*Easy to understand how the Native Americans saw this as rich land and the later settlers could plunk down in a valley in isolation. Daniel Boone country.

\*Art alone cannot save a city. Art does not pass legislation or render justice. Art stirs, provokes, and brings us news of the struggle's progress.







\*"I'm an outstanding firefighter. I stand in the street and point and yell. I'm the supervisor."

\*"If I told you everything what would be the point of you being here?"

\*"I could sit at the bar all weekend interesting anybody who showed up and put it all on my expense account."

"That's disappointing."

"Gets worse when you get to know me."

\*Public school teachers at a conference commiserating about their family's reactions to their choice of profession. One man recounting his father's reaction:

\*"Why don't want to become a doctor? You'd be helping people, you are doing good in the world and you'll be making money. No, I want to be a teacher. My father's father was a laborer, worked with his arms all his life."

\*At Bandito's, during lunch. One man speaking with his friend about a much-married sister:

"She can reel them in, that's for sure. She has a catch-and-release policy."

\*"If it wasn't for me, I wouldn't be having a good time." Diane, on her so [illegible] class.

\*1995 – How everything has changed. Car I wrecked, cottage she left; Kitaj, Martha Mabey Gallery, Rig & Tess; Amy whom I met for the first time there & she's now gone to Yosemite; Charlie J; Abe V. Abe tapes us together, we look, well, younger – you're on crutches. We kiss. It's delightful. A tour of the Fulton School. Mummies rehearsing providing an appropriate soundtrack – The "1708 For Rent" poster. All that chipped paint. You in your colossally distressed studio telling me about the bad art show you saw at U of R.



66 The optimist  
proclaims that  
we live in the  
best of all  
possible worlds; and  
the pessimist fears  
this is true. ~

Samuel Butler (1835-1902)



\*You're gonna be in that street [illegible] God gets the news and he knows everything first.

\*"No, no, no drugs. It's old age, bad bowels and no drugs. You need to be young, stoned and have good bowels to make art." Tim at Bev's. Dec. 8, 2000 [?]

\*Why hasn't God forgiven the Devil? He has forgiven the Devil, the Devil hasn't forgiven him. The Devil hasn't forgiven [illegible] That's what keeps people from being whole.

\*How many times has history, even in the past 100 years, been altered by a nobody who wanted to be a somebody? Psycho-cultural – celebrity-obsessed. God & Man. Parallels of tragedy. Chapman & Lennon..

\*"Großstadt als Tatsache und Aufgabe"  
The metropolis as fact and program – Rudolf Schwarz, 1928. Unimaginable tedium of optimistic rationalism.

\*Ragged Edge Coffee Shop [Gettysburg, Pa.]  
"I see myself as pre-recorded episodes wearing commercials as well as any mannequin." Editing us to appease our critics. SK 6/15/01

\*From the memorial service of a noted Richmond artist:  
"My mother encouraged you to have no fear in anything." Sunflowers – Planted last year hoped she'd see them bloom. Last week I saw them, and [illegible], "She can go now. And she died an hour later."

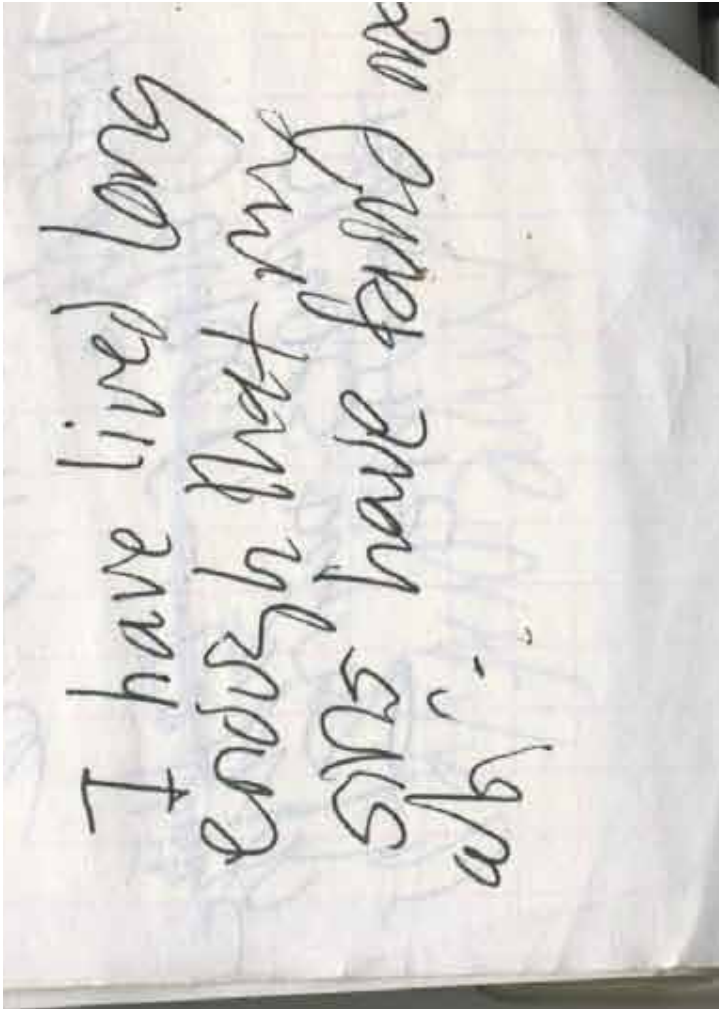
\*"There's bakery places around here but I have a more complicated hunger than that."

\*Possibly the animated figure speaking in Laurie Anderson's voice at a New York exhibition] This is a no smoking, no whining, no complaining. It is against Federal law to disable a smoke detector in a bathroom lavatory. In other words, don't be naughty in the potty. No [illegible], no live chickens. For those of you unraveling with children, or your husband, no acting like a child.



on Carlisle when  
leaving me  
Swedish  
5 - the  
Ven of  
the new  
the Water of  
goddess is her





\*Adolph Menzel, 1815-1905 (!), "an artist of colossal energy & encyclopedic accomplishment, the indefatigable chronicler of Berlin during a career that spanned eight decades."

\*One half of Richmond is appalled, the other half absurd, and the two spend inordinate amounts of time plotting and conniving to vex and torment each other. The city is not so much cursed by this condition, as it occurs naturally, and to be annoyed by the reality of it is to also curse the dogwoods on Monument Avenue and the azaleas in Bryan Park.

\*Bus driver & minister, bus driver = St. Peter  
Bus driver gets house on the hill, minister shack in the valley. "When you preached, people fell asleep; when he drove, everybody prayed." – Rev. Smithson.

•\*Overheards in New York City:  
"Cigarettes in your fingers, poppers in the crook of thumb, shaking them out of their clothes."  
"That sounds so desperate."  
"Oh, it was. And nobody smiled."  
"How long did they party?"  
"The whole night."

\*Girl mugged. Astrologer comes to help. "If you're getting mugged yell, 'Help!' not some inarticulate, 'Ahhhh.' You must be an Aries." And she was.

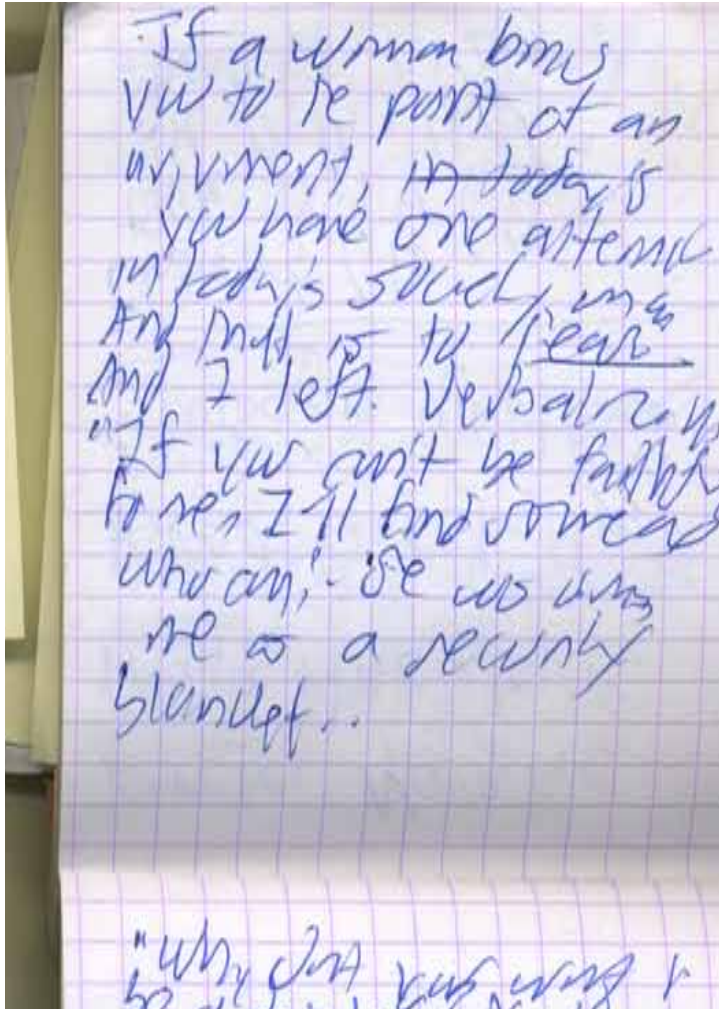
\*"I was the queen of Maybelline in junior high. Even my science teacher asked me how I did it."

\*Many are called, fewer choose to heed the call. – original Greek.

•\*An antic enjoyment of a certain despair imbued by an indefinable melancholy. This piece should be dreamy and flowing, pricked by juxtapositions, conscious of a hot, cool jazz rhythm, reflective and aware.



Ce n'est pas  
un chapeau



\*When you realize the depth of what she's missing – She wants so badly to be normal but she has no guidelines.

\*Jesus Is A Gay Boy Scout

Graffiti in three handwritings on a powerbox by a street lamp at 11th and Governor Street [Richmond]

\*Is Jesus just alright with him or is he his personal savior? I mean, it's a different distinction, "Let's make a King." Let's enjoy the innocence, exuberance, let a child lead us, or is it, "Let's kill all the Jews and Muslims."

\*Marcel Duchamp

"It is curious to note to what an extent memory is unfaithful, even for the most important part of one's life. It is this, indeed, that explains the fantasy of history."

\*Wally's Breakfast

Nutritious and Vegetarian  
Sourdough Stone Age hot cake,  
Grain Street Multi-Grain  
Yellow Grits, Eggs,  
Home Fried & Coffee

Wally Jr. multi-grain & bean Sourdough Batter made with buttermilk and cooked without oil on soup stone.

\*I have lived long enough that my sins have found me out.

\*There's the secret to the Paris police -- just be mean. --Beth

\*I'm so horny lately, it's some special cycle.

\*"Come to our Christmas party." "We're getting invited to so many parties." "Oh, you know, it happens to people like you. You're getting married but you're not married yet so you're still interesting." Kelly, Dec. 16 [no year]

\*"The one constant in our relationship."

"Oh, you mean, inefficiency and doom?"





## Excerpts From the Journals: Scotland 1996

June 15 '96 – Montrose Heights Post Office about 2:30? Waiting on Amie.

“There is some weather about.” Taxiing and lights out, Amie resting her head on my shoulder.

I don't think I've ever seen my parent's wedding pictures.

British cop show on the screen – silent –Doesn't seem worth the trouble of earphones. Amie inflates a small pillow & rests her head on my shoulder. My legs are cramped. 40 mins. Across the aisle, a Greek woman profusely thanking an officer and giving him directions to her house where he could stay for a couple of days. “The world is too small, no?”

“Ya marryin' a Scotsman. That'll get ya deported.” – customs at Heathrow.

Heathrow Duty Free. The turned up brims of the little hats British Air flight attendants wear.

Foggy, dizzy..., Amie's brow furrowed, her art mark creased. Finally, she comes over, “It's all fixed. You can sit right here.”

Three women painters carrying canvases down to First Year Stair [@Glasgow School of Art, Scotland], all young, pretty would've made a good photo. Studios, energy, inspirational. Before Diablerio's – seeking shelter from the storm at the dark and smokey student pub, Vic's, but with nothing more to eat than beer nuts. A fantastic Celtic goddess there on the phone her torso twisted in jeans and a belly baring top like some contemporary-clothed Rodin model.

“A lady of fine Scottish build & carriage, with the ample lithe figure neatly and artistically clad in a simple dress. A massive head of tawny hair crowns a fresh coloured visage w/ strong features of a visionary type. The lithe movements of her body are balanced by the display of an alert mind in those enthralling glances. There is that rhythm of mind and body blend of propriety and eagerness of Mrs. Magaret MacDonald Macintosh.” E.B. Kalas, 1901

“Look. Remember. And buy.” [Amie on no photos at a museum exhibit]

“Weapons of authority,” Ken 's critique. Amie's work needs the material authority beyond Styrofoam. “My students try using it. I hate polystyrene.”

-- Edinburgh

“It Will Grow Back” name of hair salon.

Pataphysical Probe: Ring the bell when pataphysical effects are detected.

6/15/96 Outside Dahlwinnie on A.O. slept, whiskey, dawn's early light. Bleats of sheep. Slumbering creatures. BBC chat about racism and discrimination.

A Guinness in Edinburgh, “Scruffy's”

Stained glass of Mary O' Brien

Amie goes to fetch the car while I sit at a battered table and drink my Guinness, old wood, Scottish accents.

Dahlwinnie – Rabbits – bare dark mountains, like shattered sky. Writing postcards. The vague familiarity of green country [illegible] make Virginia seem not so far away.

Inverness- Colleen in a red dress w/ a gold name badge, is a friend

Giacometti obsessed by death.

"Bit by bit the difference between seeing a skull in front of me or a living person minimized working from a living person, and this was almost frightening. One day I was drawing a young girl and it suddenly struck me that the only thing about her that was alive was her gaze."

Wearying business w/ getting money & stamps. Culloden bypassed. Irritable, changed into warm underwear at rest stop in [illegible] too hot now! Amie in search of an authentic experience? espresso? Glasgow Art School, Ken and friends, Hospitalfield House.

Real things look fake. The Scottish Crown Jewels. The Rothe Stone. Findhorn – on bicycles.

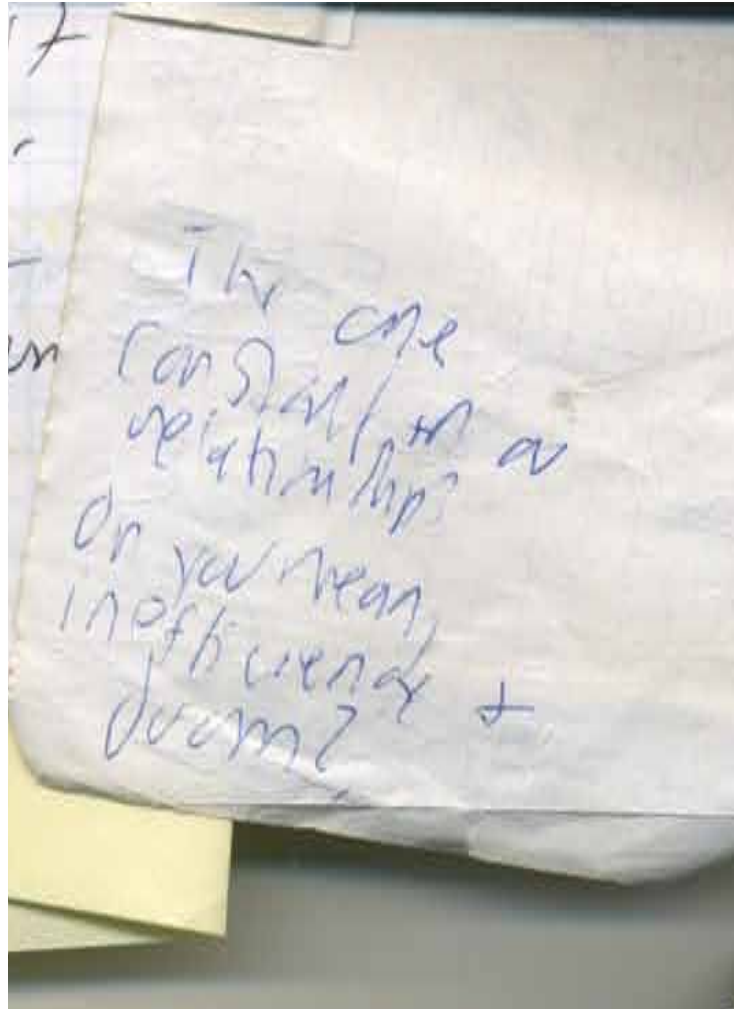
– Glen Morangie distillery. No 10 strong men of Tain, a boy on a bike with a speech impediment, and a hitchhiker.

Donloch Golspie

Carnliath Broch óbrora

The Broch, the light, a sense of ancient spaces, amazing vistas, lovemaking in the stairwell, "This is ours." The Castle Dahlwinnie, And a monument on a hillside in the distance. But this is ours here first. Go down the rocky beach, moved to tears. Two heart-shaped rocks. AO found one huge one.

In Brora, saw a man without a shirt and almost drunk with happiness, it seemed.









Jan. 6, 1998

I watch a long time as Amie's big Toyota lumbered down Carlisle Avenue into the pre-dawn mist and away; leaving me here with Miró, AOL, the Lifetime Channel's Swedish exercise instructor, and a plate-full of projects – the first for completion is "An Evening With Ms. Venus de Milo" due Feb. 1.

Amie provided me with needed insight: Aphrodite is a working girl, like the Waitron of my earlier monologue, being a goddess is her job.



Maxwell Rockham:

It is curious to note  
what extent memory  
even for  
the past  
is  
lost. It is  
a  
fact that explains  
the history

around 5:00AM, after  
cabby and out of 5  
up it all off, the girl  
at National and Ma  
I can smell it a  
to Elise." She rings  
- saying, "I thought  
the first and  
away and Abram  
nnoyed at my 100  
after I was 100  
which, he made

...Zeitgeist is on one hand, a few steps above a gay porno theatre. But it is also a place where the 1922 "Oliver Twist" can be shown.

March 18, 1998 3:10 PM Rue de la Course Coffee Shop,  
3128 Magazine Street

...The performance at Zeitgeist sparsely attended by 13 paying customers – including Jack, of MSU, who pushed to get us the very money we were able to receive. A couple of people nodded off – including Jack, despite his amusement, he'd driven a distance and had just eaten, and a woman, blond, in a pony tail. Striped shirt, jeans, but she'd been here to see the "Bicycle Thief," too.

The makeup Amie applied to Susannah's costume, I thought, looked more like a plate than statuary, it was darker than usual – garment needs to be washed, but we don't know what will happen if we clean it, and haven't resources to make another. Susannah stumbled on a few words in places, more noticeable to me I think than anyone else. Amie made the point that for N.O. & Zeitgeist this is tame stuff. Artists here don't talk much about their art, nor "what it means."

This point was enhanced in a post-show soup, shower and conversation with Mary Jane and her partner, artist and educator Gary,... Our Aphrodite isn't nude, or bare-breasted, (as Amie had originally wanted, but modified with paint – (Susannah didn't want her physical attributes detracting from her words, but, I understandable self-consciousness about exposing her considerable [...] cleavage, or that my words are so sterling she doesn't want to upstage them). And no live sex goes on. Not even much cursing. She does say "bitch."

Amie still thinks its too long and has to be edited, not a great deal, but manicured. I tend to agree, but where or how at this moment I am not at all clear. But it doesn't seem that I'll get much in the way of criticism here, which is what this piece needs.







- watch a long time as Ann  
Carlisle Avenue into the pr  
ing me here with Mira; A  
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d to top it all off, the  
house at National and  
house 2

Last night at conclusion I made a terrible gaffe in thanking everybody and trying to solicit comments, and while remembering to thank even Jack, I neglected Amie, but René bless him, spoke up, and tonight I may just stand out the stair and shake hands and see if anybody says anything.

...So here we are at Zeitgeist, and if we get 20 people, we should be happy. Well, naturally, this doesn't please me in the least. Art, and art-making, is an act of faith; we cannot reliably ascertain affects or results. But I wonder now, with all the trouble, hassle and disturbance, if this wasn't a miscalculation. Still, I got to New Orleans, and Amie and art brought me here, and that's about all I should endeavor to read in it for now.

...7:45 PM – Backstage, of sorts, in the swirling mass wreck-of-the-Hesperus projection booth and crash pad office at Zeitgeist. Amie transforming Susannah; Kathy curled up on the bed reading Japanese short stories; a tired white houndish or Siberian huskyish dog named Lex laying on its side and occasionally hacking. “The Bicycle Thief” unspooling and I guess John is out front watching it. Like refugees, or arts guerillas, we evacuated the Cowarts lovely home as they prepared for their excursion to Ocean Springs, Miss., where they will set up a home and office and regretfully sell their New Orleans home with its great porch and swing.

...Tonight we have plans to go have drinks and cigars at The Columns Hotel, but Susannah has a friend of long standing whom she's not seen in some time staying at the Omni, Raquel.

I'm unshaven. I feel like a bum.

The projector runs out. "The Bicycle Thief" audience begins stomping its feet. John is summoned. The last reel is cranked. This is after all The City That Care Forgot.

They also forgot to come see Aphrodite.

Arms & limbs  
limbs of talent -  
doors bigger than  
ability - a strange  
WBC

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1995 - How  
evening has changed -  
Car & Wrecked  
At the end left,





Jan. 6 1978 - I watch a long time as Amie's big Toyota lumbered down Caliste Avenue into the pre-dawn mist and away, leaving me here with Alida, the Lifetime Channel's Swedish exercise instructor, and a plate full of projects - the first for completion is "An Evening With Ms. Venus de Milo" due Feb. 1. Amie provided me with the needed insight Aphrodite as a working girl, like the Waitress of my earlier monologue, being a goddess is her job.

I saw her off around 5:00 AM, after arising at 4:15, and both of us cabbied and all of socks and stressed. And to top it all off, the girl who owns that brick house at National and Montgomery - "A substance abuser, I can smell it a mile away. She even sounds like Elise." She lings us at this pre-representing hour - saying, "I thought you'd be up" - weird, weird! And she Amie first asks me to get the girl's lawyer and Abraham Vandover. Then Don, then annoyed at my irritability says forget it. This after I was describing the cooking pan in which she made eggs, and she demonstrated me for using an abrasive scrubber that ran chip the bottom and I had a snit and walked out. This after, I took a shower while she was cooking and waiting to go. Just a thorough-going mess.

Sanny Bano has died in a skiing accident - the second such celebrity death in a week. Michael Kennedy of the Dynasty killed himself playing football with a frozen water bottle.

Not one person turned out to see the show. I'm sitting right now in the stairwell. We couldn't persuade Susannah to go out and help us raise a crowd in costume - She at this point in her life doesn't have the necessarychutzpah for such demonstration. I feel down, as though somehow we should've inspired her.

March 19, 1998 10:40 AM

....So they show up at the stroke of midnight while Amie is in the bathroom. Funny as I was thinking, "John will show up right now; He is here." And as if summoning him from the air, John appeared, followed by a smiling Susannah and a tentative, intellectual Kathy with her, as she calls them, "Gustav Mahler" glasses

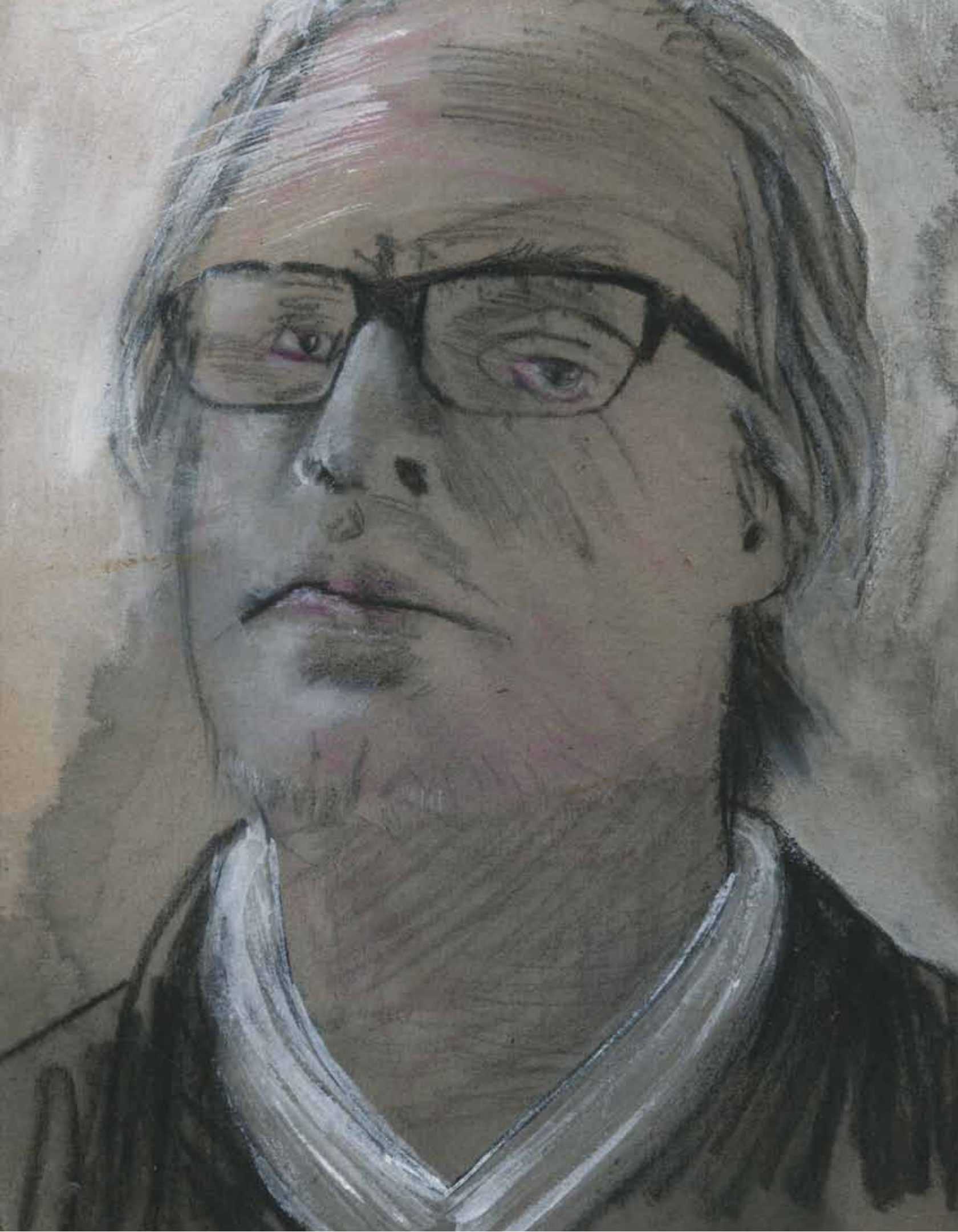
Amie returned surprised to see us all sitting on the big kushy, ottoman. Out of money, (and time) Amie asked the clerk what was open and he said the Red Room – the Red Room is the restaurant in the top of the Eiffel Tower imported here for the disastrous World's Fair. Kitsch with a capital K, or surreal, entirely dislocating; a dance and dining place tricked out entirely in red with panoramic views that looked down upon Paris, but now, at a height of about 60 or so feet, allow you to see New Orleans office buildings, parking lots, the street outside, and the most convincing, an old church. This was the very street and three blocks up from Amie's old place. We smoked cigars. We had one round of drinks, \$7.00 a pop (!) and Amie paid for them .. Latin samba & salsa music ..And we tried to make merry. But after we were done, and headed to Mary Jane and Gary's, we turned sullen and argumentative and it wasn't helped by Amie walking into the yard of the splendid place in which she stayed. The day ended without loss of life, ours or anybody else's, with the only injury done to to our egos, pride; and a sense of our own age, physical and epochal.

Gary, ironing his lecture shirt, handsome grey- pony tailed hair and his amazing, soothing southern tintured voice tells us that it occurred to him that the one thing which bothered him was that Susannah's torso was covered. What was the reason for the leotard?" he asked. He cited a performance art piece at Zeitgeist done by our own Vanessa about the work of A[ntonin] Artaud – and she went nude in part of it. The show was at first poorly attended, but once people saw the T & A, the run had to be extended. "Nobody knew what the hell she was talking about, but they all wanted to see." Gary tempering everything with high praise, said it reminded him of high school. We explained Susannah's reticence and how, last night, she simply told Amie, "It just isn't me. I'm from Richmond."

Canal St. "The Thrill Is Gone" playing 3:30 PM.

Amie gave me, while sitting on Gary and Mary's front porch, a beautiful speech on how in art one should not have to compromise since in life we are forced to compromise almost everything else. Thus because she wants her upcoming show in the fall to kick ass, knock off socks, she'd prefer to have Venus done at the Firehouse. I'd considered doing it there anyway, & Bill was interested, too.





Abraham Vandover,  
my irritability says  
is scrubbing the  
he made eggs, and  
using an abrasive  
the toilet and I had  
his after, I took  
poking, and wanting  
going mess.  
ed in a skid, accident  
death in a weed,  
mash, killed himself  
200 waterbottle.

March 25, 1998, 11:17

Oh God, it seems almost a month ago that we did that last show in New Orleans at Zeitgeist when a disciple of Aphrodite, one Paul Rucker, a pretty dark-haired young man with a hearing aide in either ear. He sat on the rock and introduced himself as Neo-Pagan, originally from Minneapolis. He was sorry we'd not had more advanced billing because he knew plenty of people who would've come. He addressed how difficult it is nowadays to appreciate Aphrodite since all of her poses have been co-opted by pornography. That she should be represented as a mature woman in her late 20s early 30s. He talked of trying to paint her, seated at a pond, her labia exposed, and Susannah sitting there nodding, next to her friend Raquel.

He complimented the writing and thoroughness in understanding Aphrodite's story. He related a story of how a group of men participated in a dance ritual with a former exotic dancer. And he joked about how funny it would've been for a bunch of guys in colored robes to go down to Buns & Roses with incense and candles to resanctify the strip joint.

Fri. Nov. 18

Venus closed with a big house, nearly 80 people, and taping by Tim I. Much easier with Amie running the box office. Tim got the art and the performance part. Cathey G. was moved. Georgianne and Frank, who saw the show, then volunteered to tend bar during a performance, fell for each other as Aphrodite spoke. Should've had Amie come up and take a bow, too, people would've been less confused and Amie would've received acknowledgement as her work received not a syllable of review. Even Cheryl Pallant's overview of the piece was pulled by "Style" due to space.



I have lived long  
enough that my  
sins have been  
atoned for.







Summer Solstice, 1996

On my way back from the flower shop, fellows in the doorway of the pub cried out, 'Buchanan, where ya goin in such a hurry?' – 'I'm getting married' – 'Ya need to come back for a pint, then. Maybe two.'



"Rhodia Ramblings" presents a collection of words and images that document and explore the creative life of artist Amie Oliver and writer Harry Kollatz, Jr for the exhibition Artists and Writers II at the Flippo Gallery at Randolph Macon College in Ashland, Va.

Harry and I tossed around a number of collaborative possibilities after we accepted Katie Shaw's invitation to participate.

History is fluid and we revisit it often when determining how to proceed. In doing so, I realized that our shared habit of maintaining journals and agendas would be the purest format to explore for this exhibition.

I brought home a bag full of Rhodia pads sometime in the late 90's. Harry's pockets have never been the same. He now has a box full of orange pads with notes that often transcend translation. His transcriptions of these notations provided a valuable record of our past collaborative work, on-going dialogue and life together.

The book and the accompanying drawings are an attempt to interweave the words and images that are the evidence of our creative, chaotic world.

The drawings are charcoal, ink, acrylic and graphite on 11 x 8 inch panels. Harry's notations often interwoven within these images and in many, in his own hand.

This presentation would not be possible without the support of Katie Shaw, Randolph Macon College and Sue Vowell Oliver, who has supported my creative endeavors since I could hold a crayon in my hand. Harry, Miro and Flannery each share a role in the process now...

Amie Oliver  
February 2011