

human evolutionary theory. It is the anatomical transformation that propelled us out of the animal kingdom to eventually occupy our own solitary position of dominion over the earth. Now it remains as a limitation, no longer leading us into a fantastic future but linking us to an ancient past as the same gait of a hundred thousand or a million, or if you go with Lovejoy, three million years ago. It may have made possible the work of the hands and the expansion of the mind, but it remains as something not particularly powerful or fast. If it once separated us from the rest of the animals, it now—like sex and birth, like breathing and eating—connects us to the limits of the biological.

The morning before I left I went walking in the national park, starting out from the rocks where Pat was teaching climbing, pacing myself to stay cool and hydrated. His father had told him, and he had told me, that the landscape never looks the same coming and going, so turn around periodically and look at the view you'll see coming back. It's good advice for this confusing landscape. I started amid a big cluster of rocks, an archipelago or a neighborhood of rock piles each the size of a huge building; like buildings they cut off views, so you have to know the lay of the land and local landmarks rather than counting on distant sights to steer by as in other deserts. With the morning sun at my left, I went south along a path that crossed a road to become a fainter road itself, with tufts of grass in the center; it curved along to the southwest and ended in another, much-used road. Small lizards darted into the bushes as I went by, and a faint flush of tender green grass was everywhere in the shade, spears an inch or two high from the downpour a few weeks ago. Drifting across the vast space, silent except for wind and footsteps, I felt uncluttered and unhurried for the first time in a while, already on desert time. My road reached the dead end of a private property boundary, so I circled around, guessing I could find another path back to the rock cluster, flirting with being lost. Mountain ranges appeared and disappeared on the horizon as I rotated around the plain and returned to the rocks. Eventually I met the point where my trail crossed the disused road, found my own footprints going the other way, printed crisply atop the softer footprints of people who'd passed this way on previous days, and followed that trace of my own passing an hour or so ago back to where I started.

Handkerchiefs were quite full.—EFFIE GRAY RUSKIN      You've got to walk / that lonesome valley / Walk it

## Chapter 4

### THE UPHILL ROAD TO GRACE:

#### Some Pilgrimages

Walking came from Africa, from evolution, and from necessity, and it went everywhere, usually looking for something. The pilgrimage is one of the basic modes of walking, walking in search of something intangible, and we were on pilgrimage. The red earth between the piñon and juniper trees was covered with a shining mix of quartz pebbles, chips of mica, and the cast-off skins of cicadas who had gone underground again for another seventeen years. It was a strange pavement to be walking on, both lavish and impoverished, like much of New Mexico. We were walking to Chimayó, and it was Good Friday. I was the youngest of the six people setting out cross country for Chimayó that day, and the only nonlocal. The group had coalesced a few days before, when various characters, myself included, asked Greg if he would mind company. Two of the others were members of Greg's cancer survivors' group, a surveyor and a nurse, and my friend Meridel had brought her neighbor David, a carpenter.

Although we were on our own route—or rather Greg's route—we had joined the great annual pilgrimage to the Santuario de Chimayó and thus were walking as pilgrims. Pilgrimage is one of the fundamental structures a journey can take—the quest in search of something, if only one's own transformation, the journey toward a goal—and for pilgrims, walking is work. Secular walking is often imagined as play, however competitive and rigorous that play, and uses gear and techniques to make the body more comfortable and more efficient. Pilgrims, on the

yourself / You've gotta gotta go / By yourself / Ain't nobody else / gonna go there for you / Yea, you've gotta go



other hand, often try to make their journey harder, recalling the origin of the word travel in *travail*, which also means work, suffering, and the pangs of childbirth. Since the Middle Ages, some pilgrims have traveled barefoot or with stones in their shoes, or fasting, or in special penitential garments. Irish pilgrims at Croagh Patrick still climb that stony mountain barefoot on the last Sunday of every July, and pilgrims in other places finish the journey on their knees. An early Everest mountaineer noted a still more arduous mode of pilgrimage in Tibet. "These devout and simple people travel sometimes two thousand miles, from China and Mongolia, and cover every inch of the way by measuring their length on the ground," wrote Captain John Noel. "They prostrate themselves on their faces, marking the soil with their fingers a little beyond their heads, arise and bring their toes to the mark they have made and fall again, stretched full length on the ground, their arms extended, muttering an already million-times-repeated prayer."

In Chimayó, a few pilgrims every year come carrying crosses, from lightweight and relatively portable models to huge ones that must be dragged step by weary step. Inside the chapel that is their destination one such cross is preserved to the right of the altar, and a small metal plaque by its carrier declares, "This cross is a symbol in thanking God for the safe return of my son Ronald E. Cabrera from combat duty in Viet-Nam. I Ralph A. Cabrera promised to make a pilgrimage, which consisted of walking 150 miles from Grants New Mexico to Chimayó. This pilgrimage was finished on the 28th day of November 1986." Cabrera's plaque and knobby wooden crucifix, about six feet high with a folkloric carved Christ attached to it, make it clear that a pilgrimage is work, or rather labor in a spiritual economy in which effort and privation are rewarded. Nobody has ever quite articulated whether this economy is one in which benefits are incurred for labor expended or the self is refined into something more worthy of such benefit—and nobody needs to; pilgrimage is almost universally embedded in human culture as a literal means of spiritual journey, and asceticism and physical exertion are almost universally understood as means of spiritual development.

Some pilgrimages, such as that to Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain, are entirely on foot from beginning to end; the pilgrimage begins with the first step, and the journey itself is the most important part. Others, such as the Islamic hajj in Mecca or various denominations' visits to Jerusalem, nowadays are

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there by yourself.—TRADITIONAL GOSPEL SONG But if a man walketh in the night, he stumbleth, because there

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as likely to begin with airplanes, and the walking only begins upon arrival (though West African Muslims may spend a lifetime or generations slowly walking toward Saudi Arabia, and a whole culture of nomads has grown up whose eventual goal is Mecca). Chimayó is still a walking pilgrimage, though most walkers have a driver who dropped them off and will pick them up. It's a pilgrimage in an intensely automotive culture, alongside the highway north from Santa Fe and then on the shoulder of the smaller road northeast to Chimayó. The roadside for the last several miles is studded with cars whose drivers are keeping track of family or friends, and in town the air can be noxious with carbon monoxide from the traffic jam; from Santa Fe onward, it's also studded with signs to drive slowly and watch for pilgrims.

Greg's route began about twelve miles north of Santa Fe and cut across country to join up with the rest of the pilgrims only a few miles from Chimayó. We had arrived at eight in the morning at the land Greg and his wife MaLin had bought long ago, and for him the walk tied their land to the holy land due north some sixteen or so miles. It made sense for the rest of us too; none of us were Catholics or even Christians, and walking cross-country let us be in that nonbeliever's paradise, nature, before we arrived at this most traditional of religious destinations. I kept having to remind myself it wasn't a hike and get over my desire to move at my own speed and make good time. As it turned out, it was slowness that would make this walk hard.

Like much of northern New Mexico, the town of Chimayó exudes a sense of ancientness that sets it apart from the rest of the forgetful United States. The Indians here embedded the landscape with stone buildings, potsherds, and petroglyphs, and Pueblo, Navajo, and Hopi people have remained a very visible portion of the population. The Hispanic population is also large and old, and their ancestors established Santa Fe as the first European-inhabited town in what would become the United States. Neither of these peoples has been forgotten or eradicated as they have in other parts of the country; nobody imagines that this landscape was uninhabited wilderness before the Yankees came. And in fact the Yankees who come tend to borrow and revel in the cultures, becoming connoisseurs of adobe architecture and Indian silver work, of Pueblo dances and Hispanic crafts and everyone's customs, including the pilgrimage.

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is no light in him.—JOHN 11:10 But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto

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Before the Conquistadors came, Chimayó had been inhabited by ancestors of the contemporary Tewa Pueblo people, and they named the hill above the Santuario Tsi Mayo, "the place of good flaking stone." Records of Spanish settlement in the Chimayó valley date back to 1714, and the plaza at the north end of this narrow, well-watered agricultural valley is said to be one of the best remaining examples of colonial architecture in the region. Like much of New Mexico, it is insular; one of its children, Don Usner, says in his history of the place that those of the plaza didn't intermarry with people at the Potrero in the southern end of the valley. In colonial times the Spanish settlers were forbidden to travel without permission, and an extremely local, land-based identity evolved. In another northern New Mexico village I had lived in the year before this pilgrimage, someone once tartly remarked of a neighbor, "They're not from here. We remember when their great-grandfather moved here." The Spanish spoken here is old-fashioned, and it is often noted that the culture derives from pre-Enlightenment Spain. In its strong agricultural and local ties and traditions, its widespread poverty, its conservative social views, and its devout, magical Catholicism, this culture often seems like a last outpost of the Middle Ages.

The Santuario is in the southern end of Chimayó, on its own little unpaved plaza past a street of crumbling adobe houses and shops with hand-lettered signs and chile *ristras*. Graves fill the courtyard of this small, sturdily built adobe church. Inside it's covered in faded murals depicting the saints and Christ hung on a green cross in a style reminiscent of both Byzantine and Pennsylvania Dutch painting. The northern chapels are what make the church exceptional, though. The first is full of pictures of Jesus, Mary, and the saints brought in by devotees, and hand-painted images mingle with 3D and decoupage icons, a silver-glitter Virgin of Guadalupe, and a printed, varnished, cracked Last Supper. The outer wall of this chapel is covered with crucifixes, in front of which hang a solid row of crutches, their silvery aluminum forming a surface as regular as prison bars through which many Christs peer. Through a low doorway to the west is the most important part of the church, a little chapel where the hole in the unpaved floor yields up the dirt pilgrims take home. This year it had in it a small green plastic scoop from a detergent carton with which to take up the moistly crumbling sandy earth. People used to drink this earth dissolved in water, and they still collect it to apply to diseased and injured areas and write to the church of

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me. My foot standeth in an even place.—PSALMS 26:1–12      The farther pilgrims move from their common

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miraculous cures. The crutches here testify, as they do in many pilgrimage sites, to cures of lameness.

When I first came here several years before, I had heard of many holy wells of water, but I was astonished to find a holy well of dirt. The Catholic church doesn't generally consider dirt much of a medium for holiness, but the dirt well in Chimayó is exceptional. The anthropologists Victor and Edith Turner use the term "baptizing the customs" to describe how the Catholic church assimilated local practices as it spread across Europe and the Americas—which is why, for example, so many of Ireland's holy wells were holy before they were Christian. It is now thought that the Tewa considered the earth here sacred or at least of medicinal virtue before the Spanish came, and that in the smallpox plague of the 1780s the Spanish women acquired some of their customs. To consider earth holy is to connect the lowest and most material to the most high and ethereal, to close the breach between matter and spirit. It subversively suggests that the whole world might potentially be holy and that the sacred can be underfoot rather than above. On earlier visits, I was given to understand that the well was supposed to replenish itself magically, and such inexhaustibility has been the stuff of miracles since the bottomless drinking horns of Celtic literature and Jesus' own multiplying loaves and fishes. Certainly the hole in the dirt floor of the chapel is still only about the size of a bucket after nearly two centuries of devotees scooping out soil to take home. But the religious literature I bought next door made it clear that the priests add earth from elsewhere that has been blessed, and on Good Friday a large box of such earth rests on the altar.

The story goes that during Holy Week early in the nineteenth century a local landowner, Don Bernardo Abeyta, was performing the customary penances of his religious society in the hills. He saw a light shining from a hole in the ground and found in it a silver crucifix that, when brought to other churches, would be found again in the hole in Chimayó. After the crucifix returned to the hole three times, Don Bernardo understood that the miracle was tied to the site, and he built a private chapel there in 1814–16. The curative properties of the earth were already known in 1813—a pinch of it in the fire was said to abate storms. The miracle story fits the pattern for many pilgrimage sites, notably the medieval "cycle of the shepherds" in which a cowherd, shepherd, or farmer discovers a holy image in the earth or some other humble place amid miraculous light or music or homage by the beasts, an image that cannot be relocated, for the miracle and the place are

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world, the closer they come to the realm of the divine. We might mention that in Japanese the word for "walk" is the

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one. The Turners write of Christian pilgrimage, "All sites of pilgrimage have this in common: they are believed to be places where miracles once happened, still happen, and may happen again."

Pilgrimage is premised on the idea that the sacred is not entirely immaterial, but that there is a geography of spiritual power. Pilgrimage walks a delicate line between the spiritual and the material in its emphasis on the story and its setting though the search is for spirituality, it is pursued in terms of the most material details—of where the Buddha was born or where Christ died, where the relics are or the holy water flows. Or perhaps it reconciles the spiritual and the material, for to go on pilgrimage is to make the body and its actions express the desires and beliefs of the soul. Pilgrimage unites belief with action, thinking with doing, and it makes sense that this harmony is achieved when the sacred has material presence and location. Protestants, as well as the occasional Buddhist and Jew, have objected to pilgrimages as a kind of icon worship and asserted that the spiritual should be sought within as something wholly immaterial, rather than out in the world.

There is a symbiosis between journey and arrival in Christian pilgrimage, as there is in mountaineering. To travel without arriving would be as incomplete as to arrive without having traveled. To walk there is to earn it, through laboriousness and through the transformation that comes during a journey. Pilgrimages make it possible to move physically, through the exertions of one's body, step by step, toward those intangible spiritual goals that are otherwise so hard to grasp. We are eternally perplexed by how to move toward forgiveness or healing or truth, but we know how to walk from here to there, however arduous the journey. Too, we tend to imagine life as a journey, and going on an actual expedition takes hold of that image and makes it concrete, acts it out with the body and the imagination in a world whose geography has become spiritualized. The walker toiling along a road toward some distant place is one of the most compelling and universal images of what it means to be human, depicting the individual as small and solitary in a large world, reliant on the strength of body and will. In pilgrimage, the journey is radiant with hope that arrival at the tangible destination will bring spiritual benefits with it. The pilgrim has achieved a story of his or her own and in this way too becomes part of the religion made up of stories of travel and transformation.

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same word which is used to refer to Buddhist practice, the practitioner (*gyōja*) is then also the walker, one who does

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Tolstoy captures this in a longing that comes to Princess Marya in *War and Peace* as she feeds the myriad Russian pilgrims that pass by her home: "Often as she listened to the pilgrims' tales she was so fired by their simple speech, natural to them but to her full of deep meaning, that several times she was on the point of abandoning everything and running away from home. In imagination she already pictured herself dressed in coarse rags and with her wallet and staff, walking along a dusty road." She has imagined her life of genteel seclusion become clear, sparse, and intense with a purpose she can move toward. Walking expresses both the simplicity and the purposefulness of the pilgrim. As Nancy Frey writes of the long-distance pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, "When pilgrims begin to walk several things usually begin to happen to their perceptions of the world which continue over the course of the journey: they develop a changing sense of time, a heightening of the senses, and a new awareness of their bodies and the landscape. . . . A young German man expressed it this way: 'In the experience of walking, each step is a thought. You can't escape yourself.'"

In going on pilgrimage, one has left behind the complications of one's place in the world—family, attachments, rank, duties—and become a walker among walkers, for there is no aristocracy among pilgrims save that of achievement and dedication. The Turners talk about pilgrimage as a liminal state—a state of being between one's past and future identities and thus outside the established order, in a state of possibility. Liminality comes from the Latin *limin*, a threshold, and a pilgrim has both symbolically and physically stepped over such a line: "Liminals are stripped of status and authority, removed from a social structure maintained and sanctioned by power and force, and leveled to a homogeneous social state through discipline and ordeal. Their secular powerlessness may be compensated for by a sacred power, however—the power of the weak, derived on the one hand from the resurgence of nature when structural power is removed, and on the other from the reception of sacred knowledge. Much of what has been bound by social structure is liberated, notably the sense of comradeship and communion, or *communitas*."

We started easily enough, on a flat wooden bridge across a stream that watered the banks around it into rare lushness, then up through Greg and MaLin's dogleg cornfield bordered by oaks. From there we went over an irrigation ditch and

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not reside anywhere, who abides in emptiness. All of this is of course related to the notion of Buddhism as a path:

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through the fence that divided their land from the Nambe reservation, the first of many fences we would crawl under, scramble over, or unlatch a wire-fastened gate and pass through. On the Nambe reservation, we passed Nambe Falls, which we could hear roaring in its gorge but not quite see. I liked its invisibility as a reminder that we were not on a scenic walk or the territory of people imbued with the mainstream European tradition of such walks. We could hear it as we approached and, by going to a promontory point and craning, could see part of it, but the only possible clear view on our route would be the quick one during the plummet from the cliff into the deep channel below. So we glimpsed the foaming white edges and lower streambed and went on. We all kept pace with each other for the first half of the expedition, and though the way utterly failed to resemble the route that had looked so coherent when Greg had shown it to us on the topographical maps, the roads and irrigation ditches and landmarks made it clear enough to him.

"Wherever you go, there you are," he said whenever someone asked him if we were lost yet. We had a cheerful morning of it. Sue said that she had expected us to proceed in somber silence, but everyone told stories and made observations. We ate a first snack under a roadside cottonwood tree past the San Juan Reservoir on the Nambe reservation, which adjoins Greg's land, then walked through the outskirts of the reservation town with its horses, fruit trees, sweat lodge, buffalo pasture, and many scattered houses. For the whole length of that road into Nambe, Meridel told us about her first New Age experience in Santa Fe, having her aura balanced in the 1970s, and we variously inquired and wisecracked about the notion. Sue taught us the acronym AFGO, "another fucking growth opportunity," for the plethora of spiritual opportunities (and opportunists) in Santa Fe. Three in our party had had Christian upbringings, and I had come out partly to help Meridel celebrate her fiftieth birthday with a revisionist Passover dinner the day after our walk (she was raised as a nonreligious Jew, and I was raised as nothing in particular by a lapsed Catholic and a nonpracticing Jew). Since the Last Supper was a Passover seder, even Good Friday and Easter are overlaid on the Jewish holiday celebrating the flight from Egypt, and this pilgrimage was built on top of all those layers of meeting, suffering, moving, dying.

We began to drift apart north of the Nambe settlement when we reached the rough sandstone expanse of the badlands, with wind-carved pillars of red stone studding a hot, airless expanse of sand and gravel and ruddy dirt stretching to the

red cliffs in the distance. The two other women began to trail, and the two men I didn't know went on ahead. We all met up at the windmill, which marked a turn in terrain and in direction, and lounged around the shade of its waterless tank. Afterward, Greg and Sue decided to go around a hill the rest of us were going to go straight over, because she was wearing out. The badlands had given way to more of that intricate terrain of hillocks so hard to navigate in, and rather than going over the single hill I had expected, we found ourselves surmounting and descending innumerable tree-studded red-soil rises. We shouted, but we couldn't find them, so we kept walking. One of the other men had gone on far ahead; the other was walking faster than Meridel could. She is an athletic woman, but she is small and had pulled something in her knee, and her steps had grown short.

This drifting apart was dispiriting. When I think about what we were doing, it seems as if it ought to have been an experience of paradise attained—dear friends and amiable new acquaintances moving across a varied landscape toward a remarkable goal under an azure sky. But, alas, we had various bodies and various styles. I had been frustrated for the last few hours by the pace. Someone would stop to pull out binoculars or to confer, and everyone would come to a halt that would grow protracted. Standing or wandering slowly makes my feet hurt; it's why museums and malls are more painful than mountains. And if the devil is in the details, mine was in the heavy-duty boots I thought I had broken in but which had begun to break my feet in all over again. So I oscillated between the man ahead and the woman behind until we finally reached the open grassland. Three of us arrived at the road on the far side of the grassland together. A steady stream of walkers and cars was going by—the former all uphill, the latter in both directions—and Meridel and I joined it. We were now part of the much larger community spread out for dozens of miles along the highway that is the main pilgrimage route. The trail of empty water bottles and orange peels bore evidence to the volunteers farther down the road, people who came every year and set up tables bearing slices of oranges, water, soft drinks, cookies, and occasionally Easter candy that everyone was welcome to take. This was one of the most moving parts of the pilgrimage to me, these people who were out not to earn their own salvation but to support others doing so.

On Good Friday of the year before, I had been struck by how little preparation most of the pilgrims seemed to have made for a long walk. Their everyday clothes had been something of a rebuke to me that this was not a hike, and many



stout people who looked as if they never walked much otherwise persevered. This year the day was much warmer, and everything seemed different: with our aching feet and our packs, *we* looked more serious, more dogged, than the jaunty young pilgrims in their colorful shorts and jeans and T-shirts (though Meridel's husband Jerry told us when he met us in Chimayó that he had seen a woman from a very small town walking in a fancy white dress—"the kind of dress you would get married in, or buried in"—and two days earlier and thirty miles west I had seen two men in fatigues walking eastward, one of them carrying a large cross). Both times I joined this pilgrimage I had the strange sense that I was walking alongside people in another world, the world of believers, people for whom the Santuario up ahead contained a definite power in a cosmos organized around the Trinity, the mother of God, the saints, and the geography of churches, shrines, altars, and sacraments. But I had suffered like a pilgrim; my feet were killing me.

Pilgrimages are not athletic events, not only because they often punish the body but because they are so often gone on by those who are seeking the restoration of their own or a loved one's health. They are for the least equipped rather than the most. Greg told me, when I called him up to ask if I could join in, that when he had leukemia he made a deal with the gods. Framed in the same easygoing humor he brought to other subjects, the deal's terms were flexible: that if he lived, he would try to go on the pilgrimage when he could. This was his third year of walking it, and it got easier every year. Four years before, when he was deathly ill, Jerry and Meridel walked for him and brought him back some dirt from the Santuario.

This Easter week in which we were walking to Chimayó, a similar pilgrimage from Paris to Chartres would be taking place again, and far larger crowds of Christians would be gathering in Rome and Jerusalem. In the last half century or so, a wide variety of secular and nontraditional pilgrimages have evolved that extend the notion of the pilgrimage into political and economic spheres. Not long before I had set out, a march in San Francisco commemorated the farmworker organizer César Chávez's birthday with a crosstown "Walk for Justice"; and in Memphis, Tennessee, civil rights activists commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of Martin Luther King's assassination there with another march. In the

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*count inhalations and exhalations as you walk slowly around the room. Begin walking with the left foot and walk*

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southwest in April, I could have instead joined the Franciscan-led Nevada Desert Experience on their annual peace walk from Las Vegas to the Nevada Test Site (akin to another pilgrimage route from Chimayó to Los Alamos, birthplace of the atomic bomb, thirty miles west). Then there was the Muscular Dystrophy Association's annual walkathon on the first week of April and the March of Dimes's WalkAmerica the last weekend of that month. I had come across a flyer in Gallup, New Mexico, for "Native Americans for Community Action, Inc. 15th Annual Sacred Mountain 10k Prayer Run and 2k Fun Run/Walk" to be held in Flagstaff in June, which sounded like the Spirit Runs held by the five tribes fighting the proposed Ward Valley nuclear waste dump in southeastern California, and I knew that the annual breast cancer and AIDS walks were coming up in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park and other locations around the country. And no doubt somewhere somebody was walking across the continent for some other good cause. All these were outgrowths of the pilgrimage, or adaptations of its terms.

Imagine all those revisionist versions of pilgrimage as a mighty river of walkers flowing from many sources. The first small trickle comes, like March ice melt from a high glacier, from a single woman almost half a century ago. On January 1, 1953, a woman known to the world only as Peace Pilgrim set out, vowing "to remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace." She had found her vocation years before when she walked all night through the woods and felt, in her words, "a complete willingness, without any reservations, to give my life to God and to service," and she prepared for her vocation by walking 2,000 miles on the Appalachian Trail. Raised on a farm and active in peace politics before she abandoned her name and began her pilgrimage, she was a peculiarly American figure, plainspoken and confident that the simplicity of life and thought that worked for her could work for everyone. Her cheery accounts of her long years of walking the roads and talking to the people she met are unburdened by complexity, dogma, or doubt and rife with exclamation marks.

She started her pilgrimage by joining the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, and something about setting out on her long odyssey from this corny festivity recalls Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, with her own farmgirl can-do determination, starting down the Yellow Brick Road amid dancing munchkins. Peace Pilgrim kept walking for twenty-eight years through all kinds of weather and every state and Canadian province as well as parts of Mexico. An older woman at the time she

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*in such a way that the foot sinks into the floor, first the heel and then the toes. Walk calmly and steadily, with poise*

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first set out, she wore navy blue pants and shirt, tennis shoes, and a navy blue tunic whose front was stenciled with the words "Peace Pilgrim" and whose back text changed over the years from "walking coast to coast for peace" to "walking 10,000 miles for world disarmament" to "25,000 miles on foot for peace." Something of her brisk, practical piety comes across in her explanation of the choice of dark blue—"it doesn't show dirt," she wrote, and "does represent peace and spirituality." Though she attributes her extraordinary health and stamina to her spirituality, it is hard not to wonder if it was the other way around. She continued her pilgrimage in her simple outfit through snowstorms, rain, a harsh dust storm, and heat, sleeping in cemeteries, in Grand Central Station, on floors, and on an endless succession of the couches of new acquaintances.

Though most of her writings are nonpartisan, she took a strong stand on national and global politics, arguing against the Korean War, the cold war, the arms race, and war in general. The war in Korea was still going on when she set out from Pasadena, as was Senator Joe McCarthy's anticommunist intimidation. It was one of the bleakest periods in American history, with fear of nuclear war and communism driving most Americans into the bunkers of conformity and repression. Even to argue for peace took heroic courage. To set out, as Peace Pilgrim did on the first day of 1953, with nothing more than her single outfit, whose pockets contained "a comb, a folding toothbrush, a ballpoint pen, copies of her message and her current correspondence," was astonishing. While the economy was booming and capitalism was becoming enshrined as a sacrament of freedom, she had dropped out of the money economy—she never carried or used money for the rest of her life. She says of her lack of material possessions, "Think of how free I am! If I want to travel, I just stand up and walk away. There is nothing to tie me down." Though her models were largely Christian, her pilgrimage seems to have arisen from the same 1950s crisis of culture and spirituality that pushed John Cage, Gary Snyder, and many other artists and poets into investigations of Zen Buddhism and other nonwestern traditions and sent Martin Luther King to India to study Gandhi's teachings on nonviolence and *satyagraha*, or soul-force.

Most people who diverge from the mainstream withdraw from its spaces, but Peace Pilgrim had withdrawn from the former to enter the latter, where she would be most required to mediate the gap between her beliefs and national ideology—she was as much an evangelist as a pilgrim. She had set out to walk 25,000 miles for peace, and it took her nine years to do so. Afterward, she con-

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and dignity. The walking must not be done absentmindedly, and the mind must be taut as you concentrate on the

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tinued walking for peace but stopped counting the miles. As she put it, "I walk until given shelter, fast until given food. I don't ask—it's given without asking. Aren't people good! . . . I usually average twenty-five miles a day walking, depending on how many people stop to talk to me along the way. I have gone up to fifty miles in one day to keep an appointment or because there was no shelter available. On very cold nights I walk through the night to keep warm. Like the birds, I migrate north in the summer and south in the winter." Later she became a widely recognized public speaker and occasionally accepted a ride to get her to her speaking engagements. She died, ironically, in a head-on car crash in July 1981.

Like a pilgrim, she had entered the liminal condition the Turners would later describe, leaving behind an ordinary identity and the goods and circumstances that bolster such identities to achieve that state of anonymous simplicity and clear purpose Tolstoy's Princess Marya longed for. Her walking became a testament to the strength of her convictions and suggests several things. One is that the world was in such trouble that she herself had to drop her ordinary name and ordinary life to try to heal it. Another is that if she could break with the ordinary and go forth unprotected by money, by buildings, and by a place in the world, then perhaps profound change and profound trust were possible on a larger scale. A third is that of the carrier: like Christ taking on the sins of all his followers or the Hebrew scapegoat driven out into the wilderness, burdened with the sins of the community, she had taken personal responsibility for the state of the world, and her life was testimony and expiation as well as example. But what makes her unorthodox is that she adapted a religious form, the pilgrimage, to carry political content. The pilgrimage traditionally dealt with disease and healing of self or loved ones, but she had taken on war, violence, and hate as plagues ravaging the world. The political content that motivated her and the way in which she endeavored to achieve change through influencing her fellow human beings rather than through divine intervention make her the first of a horde of modern political pilgrims.

She foreshadowed this shift in the nature of the pilgrimage, from appealing for divine intervention or holy miracle to demanding political change, making the audience no longer God or the gods, but the public. Perhaps the postwar era marked the end of belief that divine intervention alone was adequate; God had failed to prevent the Jewish Holocaust, and the Jews had seized their promised

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counting.—INSTRUCTIONS ON WALKING MEDITATION IN THREE PILLARS OF ZEN Sigmund Freud believed, for

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land through political and military means. African Americans, who had long used metaphors of the Promised Land, stopped waiting too. At the height of the civil rights movement, Martin Luther King said that he was going to Birmingham to lead demonstrations until "Pharaoh lets God's people go." The collective walk brings together the iconography of the pilgrimage with that of the military march and the labor strike and demonstration: it is a show of strength as well as conviction, and an appeal to temporal rather than spiritual powers—or perhaps, in the case of the civil rights movement, both.

Because of the involvement of so many ministers, the practice of nonviolence, and the language of religious redemption and, occasionally, martyrdom, the civil rights movement was more saturated with the temperament and imagery of pilgrimage than most struggles. It was in large part about the rights of access of black people, and it was first fought on the contested sites: sitting down in and then boycotting buses, bringing children into schools, sitting in at lunch counters. But it found its momentum in events that united the protest or the strike with the pilgrimage: the march from Selma to Montgomery to petition for voting rights, the many marches in Birmingham and throughout the country, the culminating March on Washington. In fact, the first major event organized by the newly founded Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was the "prayer pilgrimage" at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., on May 17, 1957, the third anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling in favor of desegregating schools. It was so called to make it sound less threatening; a pilgrimage makes an appeal while a march makes a demand. King was profoundly influenced by the writings and actions of Mahatma Gandhi, and he adapted from Gandhi both the general principle of nonviolence and the specifics of marches and boycotts that had hastened India's liberation from British rule. Perhaps Gandhi was the founder of the political pilgrimage with his famous 200-mile-long Salt March in 1930, in which he and many people living inland walked to the sea to make their own salt in violation of British law and British taxes. Nonviolence means that activists are asking their oppressors for change rather than forcing it, and it can be an extraordinary tool for the less powerful to wring change out of the more powerful.

Six years after the founding of the SCLC, Martin Luther King decided that nonviolent resistance by itself was inadequate, and the violence the southern segregationists inflicted on blacks should be made as public as possible. The audience would no longer be merely the oppressors, but the world. This was the

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*example, that the psychical foundation of all travel was the first separation and the various other departures from*

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strategy of the Birmingham struggle, perhaps the central episode of the civil rights movement, which began on Good Friday of 1963 with the first of many marches, or processions. It is from these protests that the most famous images come, of people being blasted by high-pressure fire hoses and savaged by police dogs, images that provoked worldwide indignation. King and hundreds of others were arrested for marching in Birmingham, and after the supply of willing adults began to run out, high school students were recruited, and their younger siblings volunteered. They marched for freedom with bold jubilation, and on May 2 of that year 900 of these children were arrested. To go out onto the streets knowing they risked attack, injury, arrest, and death took an extraordinary resolve, and the religious ardor of Southern Baptists as well as the Christian iconography of martyrdom seems to have strengthened them. A month after the Birmingham campaign had begun, writes one of King's biographers, "Reverend Charles Billups and other Birmingham ministers led more than 3,000 young people on a prayer pilgrimage to Birmingham jail singing 'I Want Jesus to Walk with Me' as they moved."

A photograph of the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery march has been on my refrigerator for months, and it speaks of this inspired walking. Taken by Matt Heron, it shows a steady stream of marchers three or four wide moving from right to left across the photograph. He must have lain low to take it, for it raises its subjects up high against a pale, clouded sky. They seem to know they are walking toward transformation and into history, and their wide steps, upraised hands, the confidence of their posture, express the will with which they go to meet it. They have found in this walk a way to make their history rather than suffer it, to measure their strength and test their freedom, and their movement expresses the same sense of destiny and meaning that resonates in King's deep-voiced, indomitable oratory.

In 1970 the form of the pilgrimage was moved yet further from its origins when the first Walkathon was held by the March of Dimes. Tony Choppa, who has been working on these walks since 1975 and is their unofficial historian, says it was risky at the time, since walking the streets en masse was associated with more radical demonstrations. The first walkers were high school students in San Antonio, Texas, and Columbus, Ohio, and this first "walkathon" was modeled af-

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*one's mother, including the final journey into death. Journeying is therefore an activity related to a larger feminine*

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ter a fund-raiser for a hospital in Canada. It rained on both walks, he says, and there was "no money but great potential. People did actually come out and walk." Over the years the route was trimmed from the initial twenty-five miles to ten kilometers, and participation mushroomed. The year we walked to Chimayó from Greg's land, nearly a million people were expected to join what the March of Dimes now calls WalkAmerica, and they would raise about \$74 million for infant and prenatal health care and supporting research. The walk was cosponsored by K-Mart and Kellogg's, among others. This walkathon structure, with corporations sponsoring the event in return for promotional opportunities and walkers raising the money for the charity, has been adopted by hundreds of organizations, the great majority of them dealing with disease and health care.

The summer before I had accidentally run into the eleventh annual AIDS Walk San Francisco in Golden Gate Park. A huge throng of people in shorts and caps milled around the starting area that sunny day, holding various free beverages, advertisements, and product samples. The hundred-page booklet for the walk consisted almost entirely of advertisements for the dozens of corporate sponsors—clothing companies, brokerage houses—who also had tables set up around the lawn. It was a strange atmosphere, a cross between a gym and a convention, crawling with logos and ads. Yet it must have been profound for some of its participants. The next day the paper said 25,000 walkers had raised \$3.5 million for local AIDS organizations and described a walker who wore a T-shirt printed with photographs of his two sons who had died of AIDS and said, "You never get over it. The walk is a way to cope with it."

These fund-raising walks have become the mainstream American version of the pilgrimage. In many ways they have traveled far from its original nature, notably in the evolution from devoutly appealing for divine intervention to pragmatically asking friends and family for money. And yet, however banal these walks are, they retain much of the content of the pilgrimage: the subject of health and healing, the community of pilgrims, and the earning through suffering or at least exertion. Walking is crucial to these events, or at least it has been. Bikeathons have come into being, and the last indignity dealt to this highly mutated form of pilgrimage came with the virtual walk, including the San Francisco Art Institute's "nonwalk," in which people were asked to give money and were given a T-shirt but weren't obliged to show up, and AIDS Action's "Until It's Over

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realm, so that it is not surprising that Freud himself was ambivalent about it. Of the landscape he said, "All of these

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March," which proposed that participants electronically sign their names to a letter on the Internet as a substitute for marching or walking.

Fortunately, walkathons are not the end of the story. Though mutant forms of the pilgrimage keep springing up, the older ones thrive, from religious pilgrimages to long political walks. A month after 25,000 people walked ten kilometers to raise money for AIDS organizations in San Francisco, gang counselor Jim Hernandez and antiviolence organizer Heather Taekman finished a 500-mile walk from East Los Angeles to Richmond, California, carrying more than 150 photographs of young murder victims and meeting with teenagers along the way. In 1986 hundreds of people joined together to form the Great Peace March. They walked across the United States together to ask for disarmament in a mass pilgrimage that created its own culture and support structure and had a large impact in some of the small towns through which they trekked. The walk began as a sort of publicity event, but somewhere along the long way the walking itself took over, and the walkers became less concerned with media and message and more with what was happening within themselves. In 1992 two more cross-continental peace walks did much the same thing, and like the walkers of the Great Peace March they drew inspiration from Peace Pilgrim. Similar walks went across the Soviet Union and Europe during the early 1990s, and in 1993 strawberry pickers and other United Farm Workers (UFW) supporters reenacted the great three-hundred-mile Delano-to-Sacramento march César Chávez had organized in 1966 and called a pilgrimage.

Even the most sophisticated yield to the pilgrim's impulse, and even without the superstructure of religion, the ordeal of walking makes sense. The filmmaker Werner Herzog writes, "At the end of November, 1974, a friend from Paris called and told me that Lotte Eisner [a film historian] was seriously ill and would probably die. I said that this must not be, not at this time, German cinema could not do without her now, we would not permit her death. I took a jacket, a compass and a duffel bag with the necessities. My boots were so solid and new that I had confidence in them. I set off on the most direct route to Paris, in full faith, believing that she would stay alive if I came on foot. Besides, I wanted to be alone with myself." He walked the several hundred miles from Munich in winter weather, often wet, often smelly, often thirsty, and usually suffering from great pain in some part of his feet and legs.

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dark woods, narrow defiles, high grounds and deep penetrations are unconscious sexual imagery, and we are

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Herzog, as anyone who has seen his films knows, is fond of deep passions and extreme behavior, however obtuse, and in his journals of his long walk to Paris he took on the qualities of one of the obsessives in his films. He walked in all weather, though he occasionally accepted a lift, and he slept in barns and a display mobile home he broke into as well as in strangers' homes and inns. The sparse prose describes walking, suffering, minor encounters, and fragments of scenery. Elaborate fantasies that themselves sound like outlines for Herzog movies are woven into the description of his ordeal. On the fourth day, he writes, "While I was taking a shit, a hare came by at arm's length without noticing me. Pale brandy on my left thigh which hurts from my groin downwards with every step. Why is walking so full of woe?" On the twenty-first day, he put his feet up in Eisner's room, and she smiled at him. "For one splendid fleeting moment something mellow flowed through my dead tired body. I said to her, open the window, from these last days onward I can fly."

We had arrived too, along the curving road into Chimayó. Sal and I sat down and waited for Meridel on a sidewalk. Cars, policemen, and children carrying Sno-Cones passed by in front of us; behind us bloomed a few stunted fruit trees in a knobby pasture. Afterward, Sal went to stand in the long line in front of the Santuario, and I went off to buy us some lemonade at a little mobile food-stand around the corner, near the Santo Niño Chapel, where people used to offer up children's shoes because the Santo Niño, a version of the Christ child, is said to have worn out his own running errands of mercy around the countryside at night. It was nice to be back on familiar ground. I knew what was inside the Santuario and thought of the thousands of crosses woven into the cyclone fence behind the outdoor chapel below, crosses made of grapevine and cottonwood twigs and larger sticks, and then of the irrigation ditch that flowed just the other side of the fence, of the swift shallow river that runs through the town, of the burrito stand that sold meatless alternatives for Lent, of the old adobe houses and the trailer homes that are beginning to look old, and of the many unwelcoming signs: "Notice: Please Don't Leave Your Belongings Unattended at Any Time," "Not Responsible for Theft," "Beware of Dog." Chimayó is a desperately poor town, known for drugs, violence, and crime as well as for sanctity. Jerry West was waiting for his wife, Meridel, in front of that chapel, and I made my last foot journey

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exploring a woman's body."—PAUL SHEPARD, *NATURE AND MADNESS*      The geographical pilgrimage is the

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back with the lemonade, bade Sal farewell, and went off to my own culminating destination. About ten thousand pilgrims would come into town and stand in line to go into the chapel that day, and Jerry found Greg and Sue standing in line to go in too. When we left after the moon had risen, there were still more figures walking along the narrow shoulder of the road in the night, shadowy groups that no longer looked festive, but dedicated and fragile in the dark.

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symbolic acting out of an inner journey. The inner journey is the interpolation of the meanings and signs of the

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