



Reflections in the Mirror

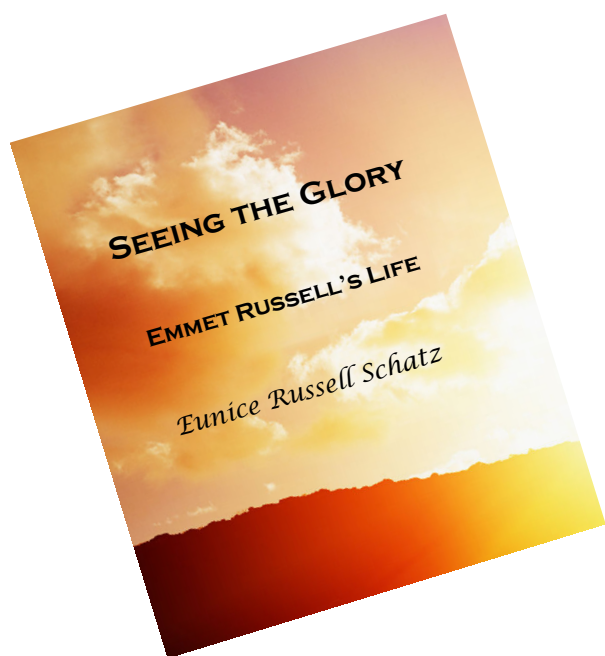
Eunice Russell Schatz

THE TALE: *Going Up To God*—is my father’s account of the first 28 years of his life, recorded in meticulously kept journals and then typed on his government-issue typewriter—in large print “for the blind”. He used one side of scrap paper that had come in the mail over the ears from various organizations he supported or was interested in—a habit that is an early indicator of his ecological mindset—no waste! This made for additional interesting reading when I turned each sheet over!

Toward the end of his life, he sent his copy to me, pleading with me to take this “raw material” and turn it into something that could be shared more widely. There was some rare views of late 19th century life in his story that deserved a reading.



However, this was to be primarily the story of his discovery of a God who had made his “affliction” of partial blindness “a light weight of glory” to bear—directing him to focus not on “the seen, which is temporal, but on the unseen, which is eternal.”



THE TAPESTRY: *Seeing the Glory* is my reweaving of the tapestry of my father’s story, in order to include my perspective, as well as the remaining 55 years of his life in the 20th century..

The task was a heavy one, for it meant dissecting some of the saintly image I had created after his death—probing to see the man in his full stature as formed by his lineage, and through his copious writings—some poetic, some romanticized.

THE THREADS: *Reflections in the Mirror* came from the task of pulling apart the threads of my father’s “yarn” and simplifying the rewoven tapestry in order to speak to my 21st century friends about my reflections on this process.

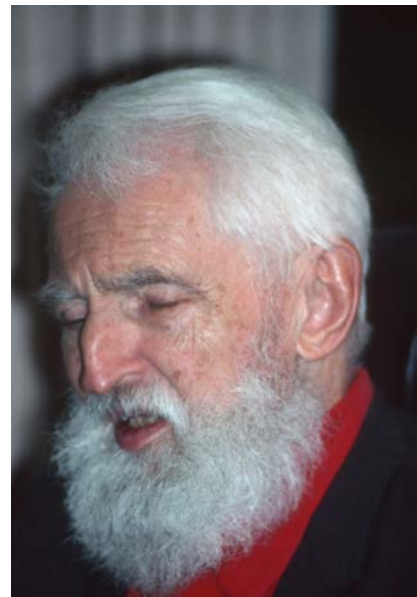




Dad at 54 and me at 16



*Dad and I—
each at age 80*



two marriages





REFLECTIONS IN THE MIRROR

Eunice Russell Schatz

I have been working on writing my father's story for three decades. The question now became how to share my father's story with you and others who expressed an interest. For some reason I felt stuck; the project loomed large, engrossing. It required an energy I could not muster up.

Then the corona virus did it. It unstuck me!

Sitting in the middle of a colossal pandemic of cataclysmic proportions, I discovered I might be in the final chapter of my life. My own vulnerability as a member of the endangered elderly segment of the population brings my own (uncertainty about living) vividly into focus. Having no direct heirs, I could disappear without a trace. I am also acutely conscious of the heart-breaking way interment is being postponed indefinitely—or accomplished crudely, and without ceremony. So what is it in my life that needs to be "interred"? Or perhaps "inter-pretred"?

I look around the room to see what needs to be "passed on" as I pass on, and my attention focuses on the weighty manuscript of my father's life story, *Going Up To God*. I need to put that story of my father's life to rest; I do not yet discern how it will change the way I see my own life and its place in the world. I had placed his manuscript—crudely typed on the backs of scrap paper—into the files, where it lay there waiting for years.

Working with my Father's Tale

Then three decades ago, I pulled it out and typed a copy onto my computer to preserve it. Listening to his "voice" as I typed made me want to write my own version of my father's story. I began writing naively, seeing what every daughter sees—the father as god—that proved a weight too heavy for me to carry. I needed to exorcize that weight and see how we are both connected, and distinct. Words I wrote then echo now:

The room is full of my father's voice. It speaks through the hardbound black tome on my bookshelf, titled "The Finished Work of God," his doctoral thesis. Beside it are his three published novels in their green and black bindings, and a few compilations of some of his poetry. If I reach back into a file drawer, I can hardly get my fingers between the tightly packed folders of his manuscripts, including his journals and his version of his life story, Going Up To God.

A flick of one finger can bring most of these works to my computer screen, for I have painstakingly copied his work onto my hard disk. There are his letters written to me over the years—letters I always saved because someone once advised me to only save what was of intrinsic value, and my father's letters were more than accounts of his daily doings. Most often they were responses to books he was reading and the ideas of their authors.

In the closet another dusty box lies at rest—unpublished manuscripts of novels he wrote intended for a Christian audience. Their cries are faint to me, for they reflect a time long gone. Although his first three novels with their come-out-all-right plots gained a sympathetic ear, by the late sixties and early seventies, even a conservative Christian audience yearned for more complexity.

The room is full of his voice, but so is my heart. I feel the stream within, coursing its way through my consciousness—sometimes limpid and all encompassing, sometimes tumbling like a cataract. So much of who I am was formed by this voice. It is this voice that I am giving to others by the audacious act of telling my father's story—adding to his own voice my own interpretation.

The task of writing his autobiography proved formidable to my father. In a letter to me he wrote:

The first draft is like collecting maple sap: thirty gallons make one gallon of syrup standard, eleven pounds to the gallon weight. Page-wise, word-wise, this brew should boil down proportionately to make a possibly publishable book. Fortunately, literary sap can be stored a long time before being boiled down. Instead of fermenting, it grows mellow, boils more compactly, after being kept a long time.

Then, in a prescient afterthought, he added:

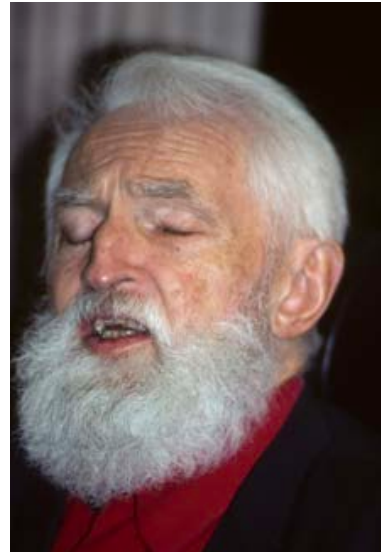
If I should never do more than gather the sap, you could do the boiling and make the book, no doubt better than I.

At the time, I shrank from his implicit plea to complete his work. I was not sure I wanted to gather the sap, still less sure I could do the boiling. And I had little idea of how much there was to gather. It would require psychic distance to write about my father fairly. I could not simply leave the view of his own life as he wrote it because I quickly recognized that there were angles of view that he did not permit himself to take which are essential in getting a grasp of the man in his fullness. I was seeing the *tapestry* of his life—inviting me to reweave it, using my own words in part.

It was easier for me to write of my mother, as I did in *Still Woman Moving*. In fact, she dominated my story to a certain extent, because of our conflicts and differences that I had to resolve. And she left few artifacts behind; not being a writer, she did not see herself self-consciously. So I was free to observe and remember and draw my own conclusions, creating a reality of my own. Writing the story of my intertwined life with my mother freed me to see her in new ways, to value and embrace the Mother I had introjected despite my fierce efforts to fight her influence. It was something I needed to do as I matured in my own ministry as a counselor, being asked to nurture others.

It is different with my father, whom I adored unquestioningly. I strongly identified with him from childhood, absorbing his influence easily because our temperaments were alike. In addition, his writings left an indelible mark, where he could give himself the advantage of presenting himself as he wanted to be seen.

On the wall hangs a picture of my father, taken a year or two before he died. His snowy white hair is luminous, haloing his face. He looks angelic, like a saint, emitting an aura that was lifelong. As a child in the church pew, I remember gazing up at him in the pulpit above me, his head tilted upward as he spoke without reference to his notes, his voice resonant with feeling. At home, as I passed by his study door, I could glimpse him within sitting in his rocking chair wrapped in silence, his thumb tucked under his chin, a finger on his cheek, a man full of thoughts and prayers—it did not matter which. This was my father, and he represented God to me.



It is small wonder that the concept of God as Father was utterly natural and comforting to me. I did not grow up with either the terror of too much father presence, or the haunting cry of absence that many of my contemporaries have struggled to analyze. Modern female writers have spoken of "the terror of analyzing one's relation to the father," and the necessity of confronting that relationship as "the only way to female self-realization." This was not my experience. If anything, it was my relationship to my father that fostered my growth as a woman and my sense of self. It was only in the area of preparation for marriage that I felt held back because of my idolization of this good father and unwillingness to surrender to the inevitably flawed examples of manhood that present themselves to us when we are young.

Deeper than that, although I have spent half a lifetime examining the alternately thorny and rose-bowered road to self-realization, it was my father's influence which forced me to a more profound acknowledgment—that I am not my own. In the words of Scripture, I have been "bought with a price, crucified with Christ, and the life that I now live, I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me"—my father's life verse from Galatians 2:20. It was my father who deliberately placed me in the arms of a Father more loving than he could be.

It took a certain hubris to be the one to interpret the story of someone as loved and revered as my father was by others. But I stand in a growing tradition of women who write as daughters. Usually the father is famous; in my case, I wrote of an unknown man in order to make him known. In the process, I was uncovering the peculiarly special father-daughter link which every woman knows, however dimly, but often cannot articulate. But I also tried to stand at a respectful distance and let him speak for himself so that others can take their own angle of viewing and find their own place in the story.

As intimately as I may have thought that I knew this person, I now feel the resonances of what I did not know, of the many things left unsaid. It is to peer beyond the known, the recorded, that I decided to put out my version of his life story—including my take on it.

Weaving the Tapestry

During these days of pandemic isolation, I went over the detail of the manuscript he left me, and began scrutinizing his life much more closely than before. My idealized view of my father may have been developed in part by his near-blindness, which gave an aura to his accomplishments that might otherwise not be there. Throughout his life, people tended to hold an attitude of admiration and respect and love for the man.

I began seeing his manuscript as a surprising *mirror* as it brought to light a more balanced and nuanced picture of the person from his boyhood and youth to manhood—his foibles, his moodiness and depressions, his arrogance and prejudice, his romantic idealism and sentimentality—all of which he leaves in the script together with the intensity of his spiritual search for meaning, his honesty, his deep sincerity, his trenchant observations on all sorts of public and political matters, his wit and intelligence, his zest for ideas, and knowledge and appreciation of music. I was entering his life story both as an observer, and as a person with whom I could identify.

I was also keenly aware of the absence of his use of original sources—those diaries written in his adolescent hand. I surmise that there were secrets there, which he was unwilling to expose to public scrutiny. Both my parents were good at burning things—like our monopoly game when my brother and I could not play without fighting. I also recall once asking my mother about her love letters from Dad in the days of their courtship. "Oh, I burned those," she said with a sly smile. I never told her I had already found them in a trunk in the attic and had read them with disappointing results. At that

tender age I could not understand why one would write of the joys of holding one's lover's head on one's lap. It did not correspond to my naive notions of romantic love.

In the reweaving of his story, I saw how I have been marked by this father, but more important, what he all the time was pointing me toward—not himself as ideal father, but to my Father in heaven.

Dealing with my father's writing style and my fiction

The design of his original manuscript is not that of a narrative; it did not read like a book. Rather it was a faithful *cataloguing* of the most important journey of his life—his spiritual pathway to faith in Christ and eventually to the ministry as a calling. This is why he named his story *Going Up To God*. He used his journals, kept from his early adolescence on into young manhood as the major resource, with reliance on his mother's diary for childhood years.

I could see his writing as first and foremost a record of the evolution of his *thinking*. To a certain extent, he seems to have perceived his spiritual journey as an *intellectual* one for much of his early life. It was in the intellectual arena where my father excelled; he was bookish. Thankfully, his eyesight was partial, allowing him to read—and especially when he lived to the time when he fit into a special category of “the blind” and became eligible for Closed Circuit TV, typewriters with large type, and free lending books at the library. He was ecstatic about the wonders of the progressive reforms instituted by the Democratic FDR (for whom he never voted) in the wake of the Great Depression—which, incidentally, is also when I arrived—one month after the banks failed in 1929!

But my father's bookish tendency was countered by his inundation in the romantic sentiment and ideals that invade his poetry—and also his journal entries. His rapture in the words of the romantic poets, his long walks in nature alone—Walden Pond, familiar to the great names among the transcendentalists; he was besotted with the ideals of finding what he called his “dream girl”—mistaking the friendship of a high school family acquaintance for a positive response to his impassioned proposal of marriage based on a very brief and somewhat formal courtship. When he did make a choice that was warmly received, I see now how his better angels stepped in, for my mother was exactly the partner he needed, and thankfully they fell in love and remained devoted all their long life together. But when he started writing fiction in his retirement years (three novels were published), I am hard pressed to admire them, for it was in these works that the combination of his incurably romantic sentimentality that melded with his spiritual ideals to create plots that were too trite and reassuring. I had to confront my own fiction about my father.

By choosing his journal entries as a way to compose his autobiography, it simplified the process. He could chronicle the main events of his life unveiling a history of his *thinking*; it also allowed the inclusion of selections of his poetry inserted into the narrative at the chronological points when they were written. The result is a somewhat choppy series of journal entries, interspersed with the more *feeling-based* impressions that his poems

give—poems, which he wrote at the particular time of the recorded events in his journal. But the result was not as reflective as it might have been, and that became another reason to put out my version of his story. So, for convenience, I indented the journal entries to identify them as such; in my father’s writing, the narrative portions had the same journalistic style—incomplete sentences, a sequence of observations not closely related to each other, but not as coherent or *interpretive* as I tend to favor.

This meant I had to wade through a lot of seemingly trivial material—accounts of purchasing books and musical scores on particular days, and seemingly endless descriptions of sunsets—a hallmark of his writing. Everything had a date and often a time appended, so that a reader might know the exact hour of a train’s departure, or a lecture he attended—all a result of the journal focus. My father used the semi-colon ubiquitously in ways I have never been used to doing. It has been preserved in my quotations of his work as well.

In addition, my father’s diary style masks the development of any one theme. E.g., the effect of his father’s long absences that is referred to intermittently and sometimes obliquely, never becoming the topic of extended treatment. I was left to imagine the cumulative effect on Emmet as a boy and young man. This one factor of style instigated me to identify several distinct “threads” in the tapestry of his life I was reweaving.

Reflections in the Mirror—Seeing the Threads

After taking my father’s **tale**, and reweaving it into a **tapestry** of my own making, I discovered there was a way to provide a condensed more readable version for friends by pulling out a few dominant **threads**. My process of discovery was like seeing **reflections in a mirror**.

The title I used in my reweaving of my father’s tapestry is significant: *Seeing the Glory*, It was based on the striking similarity between the verse my father discovered as a young college graduate seeking his way in the world, afflicted with partial blindness, and the imagery contained in the life verse I chose as a teenager and turned to ever since.

My father welcomed the “weight of glory” because he saw his affliction of partial blindness as slight and momentary and a preparation for something eternal that cannot be seen.

This light affliction is but for a moment and prepares for us n eternal weight of glory because we look not at what is seen, but at what is unseen, for the things that are seen at temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. II Corinthians 4: 17-18:17-18

For me, “seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror” acted as a gravitational pull toward being changed into God’s likeness a change taking place “by degrees” and accomplished “by the Spirit”— and “where the Spirit is, there is freedom.”

We all, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are changed into God’s image from one degree of glory to another. II Corinthians 3:18

I pause to wonder—what is my lifelong attraction to mirrors? On one level it may relate to my persistent desire “to be seen” by others. Was this partly because my father only saw dimly? How could our gaze lock together in a moment of recognition of connection and at the same time, distinctness?

I see a primal element here. Neurological science tells us that the gaze that passes between the infant and parent in the early days of life is an important part of healthy development. It is a mysterious unspoken moment when both are “locked into one another.” Brain scans show that the same area in each brain lights up simultaneously, forming “mirror neurons” in the child, enabling her to freely develop separate from the parent, while retaining the capacity for empathy with others. It is a necessary and God-ordained condition for developing a separate self, stemming from the security of primal consciousness.

By telling my version of my father’s story in the book, I honored both our deep connection, and the way he left me free to grow into God’s likeness and not his. It would take a lifetime for me to look into that mirror of God’s glory and the “image” that would replace my father as god, for I would “see” the God who loved me as *I was*, and who also offered me the freedom to change, to become.

This was a deeper reason underlying my decision now to develop this piece to leave for others, where I trace a few major threads through Emmet’s life, adding my interpretive ordering and comments. I am calling it my “cliff notes version” of what otherwise feels like a “major opus,” too much for many in “the audience.” (Everything will be on our website anyway! www.donschatz.com)

The Father Thread

In the initial introduction to his genealogy, he gives a number of factual hints as to the nature of the man—but none are developed on a feeling level. Phrases which seem to point the way to his father’s character creep into the text: “restless spirit,” “unconventional,” “reticent about his experiences,” “speculation” and “amassed/lost money.” Here was a somewhat elusive man on the midwestern frontier who put his hand to a number of ventures—some bold, some risky— before he took on the mantle of marital responsibility. He appears to have swept his wife off her feet in courtship— although later indications reveal a wife whose feet were rather firmly planted.

His father sometimes seemed to thrive on surprises, like the small rebellion in his youth when he voted for Grover Cleveland rather than James Blaine—against the opinions of his parents. In other matters, he seemed more conventional, such as the occasion when the two of them went together to hear Billy Sunday. Whereas Emmet was scornful of the crude phrases employed by the evangelist and the orthodox theology he represented, his father simply said, “He’s logical—if you start with his premises.” Emmet writes that he had “the startling impression that my father *did* start with Billy Sunday’s premises!” His father’s conservative bent was also revealed in the letters of advice he wrote to Emmet, cautioning him against falling into the habits of young men who “run around.”

How little he seems to have known the great unlikelihood that his son would be so tempted—shy, bookish, aesthete intellectual that he became!

A central concern for this young family, as soon as Emmet was born with eyesight problems, was the provision for his future. This was natural, but the description Emmet gives is telling and pointed. His father had apparently had aspirations for a career in law at one point, but now, “he concentrated his hopes on me,” Emmet wrote. The result of this familial concentration on an only child must have been overwhelming in the love and care received, and full of silent pressures alongside. He must not disappoint those who sacrificed so much. He wrote, “I felt a debt of honor to my father who gave up his ambition so as to care for me.”

He often struggled with his dependency. “I fiercely desired...to make my own way, not be dependent on my father.” When at last he began his first work of ministry—as summer missionary in Saskatchewan in 1919—he comments significantly, “A new life began; *I was on my own, independent of the support of my father.*”

A year later, while home for his grandfather’s funeral, already engaged to be married to Amy Dyer, his mother pressured him to abandon the ministry, bring Amy home to live with them, but his father remained silent. “He wanted me to live my own life,” Emmet wrote. Do we sense here a special bonding of father and son, subtly at odds with the more possessive dominance of Emmet’s mother?

The records of Emmet’s early years rely on diaries kept by his mother, so we miss the fatherly perspective. Still there are little stories of his father cutting his hair (for the first time at age 3), taking him to his Odd Fellows Lodge meeting, teaching him to read before he started school, accompanying him on long walks on which he would buy Emmet a banana or other treats. As a young adult, he records the experience of going to a concert together, and passing by a ballpark on the way. He felt his father might have preferred the game, but “went where I wanted to go.”

Later on it was his father who is specifically mentioned as buying Emmet his typewriter, his violin, and a rowing machine and punching bag in the basement to strengthen his frail body. Even more startling is the reference to his father offering to buy Emmet a car, the summer he spent in Goshen, New Hampshire, after college! Thankfully, Emmet had the presence of mind to refuse, knowing the danger of a person with limited eyesight trying to maneuver a car, even in those days of slow speeds and sparse traffic in country settings.

By far the most impelling image is that of his father comforting him as a child when Emmet awoke from a frightening dream. It seemed that his father comforted like no other. On the journey to Iowa for his Grandmother Brown’s funeral, he mentions being held in his father’s lap. Later his father would walk in the meadow with him and explain the reality of Grandmother’s death.

The Omaha years bring his father's business efforts into the spotlight. Various difficulties confronted him—an unsatisfactory and dishonest partner, and ultimately the failure of the store to thrive. Emmet seems to have delighted in this exposure to the mercantile world—riding around with his father on delivery rounds, selling candy to his schoolmates, setting up his own lemonade stand, and learning to set aside his earnings in a bank account.

It was only real estate that proved lucrative enough to support the family, and Emmet's Harvard undergraduate and law school education. And it was real estate that necessitated the continual long absences of his father from home. From the time Lacey entered real estate sales, he was on the road more than at home—to Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and as far as Mexico—taking part in the land boom of that era. There is a certain poignancy in Emmet's statement about this: "My father was so busy in Mexico that he would be just a visitor, wherever we lived."

His father's real estate deals sometimes involved parcels of land he had never seen, such as the Long Island lot they tried to visit together in the summer of 1913—a lot that his father had received as a premium with a set of books on World History that he thought Emmet might enjoy. On another occasion in Idaho while visiting his cousins, Emmet inspected a 46-acre plot his father had taken in on a business deal. Emmet and his cousins proposed a plan to have Emmet tent out on the property all summer, plant crops and harvest them with the help of uncles and neighbors, but his father vetoed the idea, to Emmet's chagrin. One suspects that his mother's influence might have been part of this decision. Possibly both parents were concerned about Emmet's frail health. At any rate, it was to a Montana relative of his mother that he was sent.

The real estate trips were also the opportunity for times of companionship, for Emmet went along on several occasions—a father and son excursion which a generation later was repeated when Emmet took his own son, Philip, hitchhiking together, to Kansas to look at the farms which remained in the family. It was the sale of the last three that helped finance my own college education years later.

In college, letters were exchanged, as well as visits. "My father's letters began a companionship deep and strong, accentuated on his visits home, when we went about together and talked—man-to-man, give and take." Whenever his father makes an appearance during college years, Emmet receives him with obvious joy. The manuscript contains an extensive description of their adventures together during a trip to Cape Cod, a trip where they made use of the ancient network of trolleys that then covered all six New England States!

I never knew either of his parents—only briefly saw his father the last few months of his life as he was dying and not coherent, so this manuscript was illuminating in revealing more of his relationship to each parent, though one is left to guess much of his true feelings.

The Mother Thread

His mother was unquestionably the major first influence, fulfilling the typical role of caretaker—a role accentuated by Emmet’s need for extra attention and help because of his eyesight. She seems to have been a benevolent and comforting figure, also stimulating his interest in nature and in reading at an early age.

She could assert herself with the outside world when needed, as well. When the family moved to Kansas City and she enrolled Emmet in Manual Training High School (of all places!), she had to plead Emmet’s case as a “Special Student” (in today’s parlance). He had become attached—perhaps it was the orchestra, but it was also the teachers who were welcoming to him. The principal was “sure” that they could send Emmet on to Central when Manual rules required that he double his course workload from 16 to 24 credits. Alas, they had underestimated both Emmet’s mother’s persistence, and Emmet’s eager acceptance of the increased load of study so as to remain enrolled there. Studying was in his intellectual “wheelhouse”; physical sports and activity were not. He was frail growing up.

There was a subtle additional factor in his choice of staying at Manual, I realize in retrospect. It was one of its teachers, Mary Fisher, whose influence continued long after high school through a substantive correspondence. She was his equal—and more—in the realm of literature and ideas, and contact with her provided the constant outlet for his expressions of thought. One is struck with how devoted to him she was; surely the meaning of their relationship was reciprocal—and also outside the family nest.

When it came time to choose a college, Emmet explored a number of options. Harvard was an unusual choice at that time and place (Harvard was not as well advertised in the Midwest.) His mother followed his lead unquestioningly, packed up everything and moved to Cambridge along with her father, where she would spend the next six years of Emmet’s undergraduate and law school years, patiently reading many of his assigned texts to him.

She seemed to thrive in the Cambridge atmosphere. She joined an historical society, delving deeply into their family genealogy—something characteristic of that era and that part of the country. She found a Unitarian church in Waltham to her liking, pastored by a former friend. She had a circle of friends—some of them distant relatives—so there are subtle indications that she pursued independent interests and social contacts that marked her capacity for making a life for herself outside of mothering her son.

I suppose that she was the one to monitor Emmet’s frail health. Twice, he had to take a year off from school—the first a now-popular “gap year” between high school and college. He spent part of it in Mexico, which speaks to both the wide-ranging real estate activity of his father that included speculation in Mexico, and also the cultural curiosity of his mother. I prize her gift of an exquisitely woven lace shawl purchased there.

The second “year off” took place after college and became the pivotal occasion for the major life change indicated by his manuscript title: *Going Up To God*. The story is central to my father’s manuscript, and foundational to mine. And although that year off contained long meaningful visits with extended family on both his mother and father’s side, it also marked my father’s break with some of his mother’s dominance over his life trajectory in basic ways.

Emmet’s mother had no real grasp of “conversion” so when Emmet began moving ever closer to a personal expression and experience of faith, she likely felt set aside. It was unsettling to discover at the end of my father’s narration this poignant remark: “*My mother had harbored a bitterness within all her life toward a God who would have given her a son with my eye condition.*”

And when Emmet began a more serious quest for ministry, I can sense a rift of sorts. Was she disappointed that he refused her suggested choice of law? Or did he perhaps feel a subtle rejection of her influence over him? A modern mother would have been schooled in the psychological necessity of a break between mother and son—the classical Jungian notion of the need of the young man to “*steal the key from under his mother’s pillow*” as essential to full independent development.

Yet when Emmet married, rejecting his mother’s plea to “come home to Kansas City with his wife and live there”, he sailed off to China for his first job. Once there it was his mother to whom Emmet wrote chronicling his experience in journal-like form for her to keep. He had a sense of “destiny” about being in China in the 1920s when the country was in turmoil. His letters home became the basis for his later writing: *Young China’s Awakening Dream*. It might be seen as eerily prescient about modern China. He was characteristically hopeful then; yet I have the distinct feeling he would not be surprised, and would retain the long view. He learned to love the Chinese, took care to learn their language, even “write” a few words in their symbolic “language.”

In the end, when his mother lay dying with a strange condition known only as “creeping paralysis”, Emmet left his happy Northwood, New Hampshire pastorate to be at her bedside as she slipped away. He heard the words he needed to hear from her—that comforted him that she knew she had been cradled in the arms of a loving and personal God. I was not present so do not know what she “confessed” or he said that gave him peace. I cannot pull it apart objectively at this remove. Her experience of God remains a mystery to me. I do not need to judge it.

The Thread of Longing-for-Family

I think my father missed having siblings; he says so more than once. And his ecstatic experiences with his cousins in Idaho as well as other occasions where there were children, indicate how deep was his longing for peer contact.

Why did Emmet long so for “home?” What was missing in his own home that made him so vulnerable to urgent longings for family? Among the many mentions of homes he visited, two seem to have made a particularly strong impression: the Schedler cousins in Sandpoint, Idaho—especially his visit the summer of 1915, just preceding his encounter with God in an Omaha hotel room; and the Nelson’s in Goshen, where he recounts a visual memory: the family sitting around the table after breakfast, and reading from a worn Bible, then kneeling to pray aloud, one at a time. My father remained stiffly upright in his chair. But the sense of “at home-ness” lingered, suffused with the overarching presence of God. It would be years later, when this scene would be reconstellated in our own family where he was more willing to kneel in our presence.

This emphasis on family life made me realize how much he prized the experience of making a home for our family through the years. Being a country pastor meant that he was home more than most fathers, so I grew up with a strong sense of two parents available—a rich heritage, I realize, in this day of two-career families.

The Thread of His “Affliction”

Having grown up with a father who could only partially see, I considered him “fully compensated” (as the term goes in disability parlance today); it never occurred to me to pity him. But I always wondered, as I grew older, what his own feelings were. This manuscript shed light on that. As a matter of fact, upon reading the manuscript carefully several times, I would suggest that it is in large part the key to his “journey up to God” and therefore the central feature of his story.

Many people must have wondered how a partly blind person could see such detail in nature, describe the colors of trees and sunsets so vividly, and yet often not be able to recognize a face until the person got quite close. I used to settle it for myself by saying that he could see *more* than I thought, and *less* than I imagined.

It was only after reading this manuscript that I realized how logical it was that his conversion to Christ should come about through “his affliction.” Then I knew how deeply he had felt his own lack.

But this material also presented to me, for the first time, the enormity of the pain that his handicap inflicted upon him all through his childhood and adolescence. It delves into the actual experience of gradually becoming aware of his limitation, and the perception of others toward him as a result—with the consequent slights, loneliness, and feeling of being outside and unable to compete on equal terms.

Early school experiences where he was taunted for his handicap burned their way into his consciousness, made him even more appreciative of the times when he was fully accepted as normal. The poems expressing his woundedness over his handicap and the responses of others to his condition are poignant, especially since he rarely indicated anything but complete acceptance in our family life as I was growing up. My brother and

I grew up without paying much attention to his lack of sight. This was the father we had always known, so “no big deal.” In today’s disability parlance, Emmet was “totally compensated.”

A singular incident when Emmet first entered grade school stands out in this regard. He found that most children tended to avoid him, or withdraw discreetly. He could not catch a ball or enter their playtimes; he saw dimly; he could *hear* their voices, and felt their withdrawal. Only one student befriended him, walked beside him and began talking. He comments later that he realized this boy was black, and had experienced some of the same withdrawals of others. It was a telling moment, for my father was raised in a community steeped in traditional attitudes—something he slowly came to realize much later.

So were my father and I different because I had full sight? We were formed in different eras of history. But I now wonder if his limited eyesight wasn’t more of a factor in his choices and way of solving problems. I was blind to this growing up, but now I see it changed absolutely everything about his options and solutions to ordinary problems.

How My Father and I Were Different

I can pinpoint differences in three important arenas: Sociology, Psychology, and Spiritual Life and Growth. And in each arena, although we interacted with ideas in each area, I pioneered beyond ideas taking action on them as part of my calling.

Let me start with the **Sociology** of the *rural-urban continuum*. My father was a son of the prairies with a rural mindset bred in the Midwest where he grew up, and continued in his pastoral ministry in New England villages. I gravitated to cities, first Chicago where I was part of an initiative that introduced college students to its distinctive history and culture, and in the second half of life, living in Boston, teeming with students similarly attracted to its intellectual dominance in modern science and culture.

My father’s identity as a blind person cast a shadow over our family’s life and *social standing*. In today’s world, special attention is given to integrate a person with disabilities into the main stream of the culture. This societal integration was left to his mother, in my father’s case, and lacked the kind of supports or perspective offered now. I grew up unaware of the significance of our family’s relationship to society—I wasn’t called a “p.k.” (preacher’s kid). But I wonder now if some of my teenage social ineptness was not partly an unrealized result of my father’s making peace with this factor in his own life. Thus it might not have occurred to him that my brother and I needed help in self-presentation in daily life. We both suffered delayed social development as a result.

When it came to choice of *vocation*, his mother’s viewpoint of three classic choices was dominant at first. Of the three, she looked to law—a partially blind person could not go into medicine, nor did she consider the clergy. So when law did not appeal to my father, her advice and control had to be set aside. But perhaps not completely, for my father’s concept of the clergy was somewhat classic in terms of role: preacher and student of Scripture. For these he was well prepared. Only in theology did he depart from his

mother's liberalism. For the other roles, he was well served for preaching by his high school class in Oratory" as well as being tutored in music to improve his speaking voice. And as for the role of student, he was totally at home in endlessly poring over Scriptural texts and commentaries.

But his two summers "pioneering" in Saskatchewan as a "circuit rider" were important, adding a relational skill that developed a more personal role, one that persisted all his life with his frequent walks of long distances in order to pay visits to parishioners.

For me, choosing a vocation was central and intuitive. I often say, "My vocation chose me"—something that was true from my first "job" onward. "Job" in quotes, because I always knew *Who We Are* is the basis for *What We Do*, and not the reverse. I spent the rest of my life helping others embrace that attitude in finding their Life/Work Direction. I could develop workshops and exercises to stimulate others and help them find their calling to "do what you love; the work will follow." Or, quoting Frederick Buechner, "Let your soul's deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

I wonder—to what extent did my father find deep gladness in his profession? There are hints of the way he felt limited in his options, made choices he regretted. Could he have sought wise counsel that would have steered him differently at critical points in his life? The story I told hints at such points where I feel the loss. I see now how my father needed to allow himself a more wholistic role—let more of himself leak through to others than could come in Sunday sermons. My mother was often the one to humanize his vocation by exercising her own gifts to supplement his. I see this now and pay tribute to her. (She gets bad press in my earlier writings. I want to make amends here.) After all, she was his choice—and a wise one!

The **Psychological** arena is equally influential, with powerful consequences. On the surface, scorn is perhaps not too strong a word to describe the way my father viewed the psychotherapeutic profession in his day. He was taught by both parents to take care of himself; independence was prized. And a good thing—and something he passed on to his children, but sometimes by not intervening, and by withholding opinions or feelings. He was highly introverted, contained, silent. Yet his journal writing and poetry overflowed with passion and sentiment. He channeled his feelings on another plane. So where was his true feeling? One heard it in sighs that came when he was deeply moved—perhaps by music, or by words. I can interpret this as healthy containment. Or did he sometimes withhold out of fear? Neither of his parents encouraged a range of feeling.

Whereas—for me—emotions are my *home*. And it was in my reluctant, hesitant, suspicion-fraught entry into Freudian therapy at the age of 37, that the sky opened and the light dawned—and I came home one April day totally freed, looked in the mirror and suddenly saw a face I did not recognize. I have never been the same since. It was the fulfillment of my life verse promising change. . . total dynamic *change*. I walked out of my room that day a different person. My father and I had our own distinct and necessary "conversions."

This experience sent me exploring the rich terrain of the inner world inhabiting each of us, using an immense variety of psychological tools. At this remove, I cannot be sure that my father had no access to this inner world; it is likely that he did, but it was not where he lived and what he spoke about. He simply applauded my journey inward, even when it meant I had to confront him with ways in which I felt he had failed to provide a counter to my mother's ultra-strict approach with my brother and me growing up. I felt she should not take all the blame.

This deep inner journey of the psyche is to me an essentially spiritual journey. Therefore my present calling into "Spiritual Companionship" weaves together psyche and soul. I realize now that people in parishes served by my father often conceived of both my mother and father as "wise persons" whose counsel they sought. But my parents had no way to hold that as an identity; their humility is touching, and also I have a little catch in my throat, realizing that they might have experienced more validation if they had been comfortable with acknowledging these gifts as a call of God. They could have explored some of the dimensions we term psychological included in training now. My parents' mode was simpler: they just "gave advice."

The third area, the **Spiritual Life and Growth**, is more diffuse and tender. Can I pull it apart gently to see where it takes me? It is where I feel most drawn, but also is most daring. And it was central to my father, though couched differently. I begin with one crux of the matter: "orthodoxy" — those lines drawn that fence in "correctness of belief and practice"—and is correctness the same as truth or wisdom?

My father described his struggle toward orthodox faith, a struggle that had many dimensions. He began with a classically liberal stance learned from childhood—Jesus as unique man rather than Divine Son of God. Many of the journal entries during this time show how deeply held were his religious beliefs in a Universalist philosophy—the triumph of man's goodness through moral effort. His conversion experience occurring on a train trip in 1915 was only the beginning of a significant journey toward personal faith—gradually culminating in an identification with the evangelical variety emerging in the mid-20th century. It came chiefly through friendships with persons in that segment of the Christian community, as much as through experiences in a more liberal setting. Whatever may be said of this gradual change in his beliefs, one can see the slow erosion of his pride, and the frustration of his constant struggle to "be good" as these gave way to an intentional surrender to grace as the basis of power to live the Christian life.

I go back to a puzzling moment recorded in his story—the time in Ashland, New Hampshire, a parish where my father felt he was "fought" by the vestry (or whatever it was called in Baptist churches) on issues of importance to him. Friends from his beloved Epsom pastorate came to see him one day and they fell into conversation where he "confessed to" the rising of religious doubts within.

I cringe at what happened. A few days later, the person to whom he confessed these doubts wrote a very strong letter telling him (a) she never doubted, (b) he should not doubt and (c) he should stop reading books that made him doubt.

My thought now is that the deepest doubt should have been his decision to take that pastorate in the first place! I was to blame. Our family lived happily in Epsom when I was born November 25, 1929—one month after the banks failed and the country went into the Great Depression. My father panicked; my arrival cost them more money now. The Epsom Church salary was too low to support the growing family. The city Ashland Church paid more. So he applied, was accepted and we moved. Big mistake—he said this all his life. I agree; my childhood years in Ashland were terrible for me as well.

He decided to “will away” doubt, not read “those books” any more. He stayed in a safer zone in his peer relationships, associating with persons and groups that were conservative by today’s standards. They took him in eagerly, admiring his intellect, and honoring his humility about his disability

But did he limit his voracious reading? Years later when writing about books he was reading, he included names I now associate with unorthodox views. Prominent among these names of thinkers in a wide field is his reference to Teilhard du Chardin and his book *Phenomenon of Man*. Teilhard’s interweaving of Christianity and the cosmic story then unfolding by scientific research drew my father’s attention. He wondered aloud in letters to me whether this unorthodox view unifying evolution and the Christian tradition might not be unveiling a deeper truth.

I discern that Teilhard’s scientific focus on nature was not quite like my father’s. It went beyond the contemplation of nature expressed in the New England poets my father read and in his solitary contemplative walks around Walden Pond. And it was too soon for my father’s ecological awareness to surface, something focal and dominant now as our planet totters on the brink of disaster, if not extinction.

There is also the matter of *evangelism*—seeking to convert others to belief. While my father always offered an invitation at every service for people to come forward and seek prayer (that was the custom then), it was not a strong emphasis; he did not plead or try to convince. I like to think that his attitude was similar to my own—that more is accomplished by “contagion” than instruction or pressure, and that the appeal of turning one’s life over to God came through the powerful example of the life lived by persons of faith. “We are the only Bible the world ever reads,” and if the message is tainted or mixed, it will be ignored or forgotten.

One question remains, however. It concerns my observation of the way my father appeared so saintly in others’ eyes; I muse that his blindness cast an aura about him that put people in awe of him. He was more transparently himself and approachable up close where he revealed more of himself in direct contact. People came to ask him questions, draw him out. He was not as talkative and eager to expound as I am.

I remember the way he listened to my chatter as a child, coming home from school at day’s end. He would cock his head, listening appreciatively to every detail as Mother was busy in the kitchen preparing a meal; he took time to simply receive me. Then there were the little moments when he shared some simple story or beloved artifact he kept in

the study and wanted me to appreciate. I sensed that this sharing was special for us both.

Another arena that has enveloped me in the past quarter century is that of the *contemplative journey* as it intersects with life in the world, producing the marriage of the inner and outer life. It was when we moved to Boston, with its strong Catholic influence, that I went on my first silent retreat and slowly learned to revel in the beauty of quiet—especially in nature. I began reading the ancient mystics, focused on Thomas Merton because he was not quite as ancient and therefore more accessible. He recognized in his own life and times the interplay necessary between the inner life and what was happening in the outer world.

You could say that my father was a “natural contemplative,” though it might be thought of simply as extreme introversion. What I remember from childhood days were outward expressions of his faith: steady adherence to keeping the Sabbath with its prohibitions about activities permitted that day; family prayers in the morning; grace at meals. But I also knew he treasured his time each morning alone in his chair in the study, and was touched to see him kneeling there.

He did not talk much *about* prayer; and his diaries from his first years in pastoral ministry are full of language that portray prayer as exterior at that chapter of his spiritual journey; he prayed for *outcomes, specific requests that were measurable*. He kept a prayer list, and meticulously noted answers when they arrived, whether the request had been granted or not. Inputs about the family’s precarious financial situation were especially touching as I read them now. He never shared money worries with us. . .and perhaps, as a result, I have become far too trusting and cavalier about finances. I didn’t learn to “worry about money.” So the “geography of the spiritual journey” in prayer was marked with clear signs; you had either arrived at answers, or not. This kind of clarity surely did not demarcate the circumference of his life with God; his converse with God was much more intimate and unbounded but that aspect was conveyed through the more powerful instrument of his daily life and person. Some leaked through in his letters to me, but he was less apt to express it in words that has been my impulse.

Perhaps the story he left—and that I embellished in my writing—will convey a more wholistic sense of his wholehearted devotion to God. Although spiritual intimacy with God is something one sees only by the intangibles that come through presence, I alone knew that actual presence. But for my readers, there remain his words—and as a writer, I appreciate the power of words.

Why I Wrote *Seeing the Glory*

Perhaps, after all, this is why I wrote as I did, including some of his words as well as my description. We were both on those pages thereby creating a composite picture. *Seeing Glory* becomes part of my legacy as well as a tribute to my father. I saw my father more clearly, an intricate composite of trait and human experiences, always backlit by the inexplicable grace that touched him—his father and grandfather, but more especially the women who surrounded him—his mother, his wife, and perhaps my taking his story and tenderly wrapping it in my own perspective.

Of course it helped me understand my own life choices and my brother's—both of us emerging from the cocoon of a protected life to find our own very different ways of carrying on a legacy neither of us would deny. My father may have been partly blind; but some things he could see clearly. That “weight of glory” he encountered in the reading that changed his life turned out to be a light weight— knowing “what is unseen is eternal.”

Why I Offer *Reflections in the Mirror*

The question became how to share this story with you and others who have asked. I realized that the most important writing might not be the *tale* my father wrote, nor the *tapestry* I wove, but rather the intricate process of pulling apart the *threads* that became clear as I looked at my entire process.

This took me back inexorably to the dominant image of the mirror. Why this centrality of focus on mirrors? I often return to my transformative experience as a 37-year-old in therapy, coming home one day, feeling something arise in my entire body that impelled me toward the mirror—I needed to SEE my face. In that moment I discovered a face I did not recognize, and saw it as transformed, as beautiful. . . .

Now I wonder, did some of my attraction to mirrors come from not being able to look my father in the eye—since one eye was blank, and the other “a roving pupil”? Perhaps this became a positive force impelling me to look elsewhere, beyond—into that *mirror* of “the Lord of glory” in order to be changed into the Lord’s likeness “from one degree to another” throughout my long life.

At the same time, it is significant that my father also could not see me clearly unless I was at close range. Like any other person growing up, I wanted “to be seen.” I pause to consider the Narcissus myth—the mythical character attracted to his own image in the water. Why did I unconsciously tend to place mirrors in every room wherever I lived? I must see *my-self*.

Because, of course, mirrors are unique in that without a mirror, we can see everything in life, *except our eye, our “I”!* The mirror becomes a symbolic instrument of self-contemplation. As a mirror, it can only speak the truth—and truth is something I have learned to cherish.

Reflection, in itself, is a necessary and valuable function. Yet the curious thing is that in a mirror *the image is reversed*. This evokes the symbolism of the moon: receiving an image and also reflecting light from another source. My ego is forced to confront its self-exalting shadow side—that part of truth only known by my unconscious. This may explain why my night dreams have been a faithful mirror all my life—telling me truth but saying it “slant-wise” through the unconscious, forcing me to confront the wholeness God is trying to form within me.

In the end I return to that delightfully unconscious choice of my life verse as a young teenager, inviting me to behold—as in a mirror—the glory of the Lord, and then walk from the mirror out into the world.

I am not alone; all of us are mirrors to each other. I am discovering this every day in my work as a spiritual companion. Just yesterday, someone said to me, *“You see the parts of me, and then you help me to see myself.”*

Writing about my father has been a process of mining the depths of my own lifelong formation. I am my father’s daughter, shaped in my mother’s womb, and born to look into that mirror of the Lord of glory. The mystery of being shaped into the Lord’s likeness is only possible

“by the Lord, the spirit;

for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

Ah, yes! I wrote to be set free. . .free. . .FREE!



PHOTOS FROM THE PAST



Emmet as a boy
(photographs were
always posed)



Emmet's mother Lola Brown
as a twelve-year old



Emmet as a graduate from
Harvard Law School. 1919

1942 - photo for the newspaper
to announce
his Glen Ellyn
pastorate



Amy holding newborn
Eunice - 1929



March 4 1921 wedding
to Amy Dyer



Firstborn son
Howard, born in
China 1922—
would only live
six months.
Emmet took the
photo.



Emmet and Amy at my wedding
to Don Schatz 1969



Four generations: Emmet and Amy,
Grandmother Bessie Dyer, Phil and
granddaughter Jane Ann Russell

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www.donschatz.com — website for writings by Don and Eunice

**See "Prose" section for writings by Eunice on
Marriage, The Inner Journey, Church and Religion,
Vocation, Women, Aging, Money, Father**

See "Poems" section for Don's poetry

Books published:

**The Slender Thread: Pioneer Girls' First 25 Years
Still Woman Moving—A Lifetime of Change (memoir)
Intricately Woven: Life Work Direction's Story**



I chose René Magritte's False Mirror. His surrealist art was meant to make us uneasy, to challenge us to ask if the eye is opening to another reality, perhaps to the unconscious. It thereby invites us to look at our life in the world differently, something I tried to do in this work.