

The following paragraphs are excerpts from various sources of the comparative mythologist, Joseph Campbell, reminiscing of his time spent in California and Alaska with his friend, the biologist Edward F. Ricketts.

ONE

Joe laughed "You remember the party in Cannery Row ? That was my birthday party. Even the flagpole sitter was actually there, They used to do that sort of thing back then"

"And Doc Ricketts" I asked

Joe paused. "Ed Ricketts was the heart of it all"

Excerpt from Fraser Boa (1994) *The Way of Myth: Talking with Joseph Campbell*.
Shambala: Boston and London.

TWO

"I lived in Woodstock for five years in a little shack that cost twenty dollars a year. I wasn't yet married, and so I managed to stick it out, spending all my time reading everything that was essential to the kind of thinking I was doing in those days. I had an old Model T Ford, and I decided to drive out to California, looking for work along the way. But there weren't any jobs, and I ended up in Carmel, on the California coast. That's where I spent a couple of months with John Steinbeck and his collaborator, biologist Ed Ricketts. It was Ed who was especially important to me, because he re-enforced the interest in biology that I had had as a prep school student. And from our long talks about biology, I eventually came up with one of my basic viewpoints: that myth is a function of biology. It's a manifestation of the human imagination which is stirred by the energies of the organs of the body operating against one another. In other words, myth is as fundamental to us as our capacity to speak and think and dream."

Excerpt from the Spring 1985 Issue of *Quadrant: A Conservation with Joseph Campbell*:
Jamake Highwater

THREE

Campbell believes that the turning point for him came in 1929 when, after four years' study in Europe, he returned to the U.S. just a month before the stock market crash. "There was no hope of a job or anything like that, so I rented a house in Woodstock New York that cost about \$20 a year, and spent all my time reading. I really developed a system. My idea was to read everything that an author who excited me had written, go back to see who had influenced him, and then read their stuff. Things opened up for me after I read Spengler's Decline of the West [checked out from the public library in Carmel, California]. That led me on to Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer and Kant and Thomas Mann-it was like a symphony, with everything coming from a single center that I was hearing and discovering."

Excerpt from Sally Helgesen (February 14, 1977) Harper's Bookletter: Every Day

FOUR

Ricketts was the workman, knee-deep in the tidal waters of Monterey Bay, trying to discover the universe. They would often assist at his work, and you couldn't help but be impressed with the way he went about his tasks, always the thorough and complete scientist. Perhaps the best memory of those times for Campbell was when all these young spirits- John and Carol, Ritchie and Tal, Ed and himself-found themselves above the clouds on Mt. Toro one day. There they lay on the grass, looking up at the sky, and Ritchie exclaimed, "You know, I tell you, we are all in heaven, that's why we are so happy. "Later on that year, in 1932, Campbell would join Ed Ricketts in a memorable expedition collecting specimens in Alaska. They went on a fishing boat belonging to Jack Calvin and the whole trip cost them 25 cents a day for fuel and food.

Excerpt from The meeting of 3 minds by Winston Elstob: Alta Vista Magazine, Sunday July 1, 1980

FIVE

"A beautiful time; we were all in heaven. The world had dropped out. We weren't the dropouts; the world was the dropout. We were in a halcyon situation, no movement. Just

floating. Just great... So I'm coasting along, trying to find where I am, crazy on Spengler. Ed Ricketts [made famous by Steinbeck in Cannery Row] was an intertidal biologist. We'd go out and collect hundreds of starfish, sea cucumbers, things like that, between high and low tides, furnishing animals for biology classes and schools."

Or his wondrously free Alaskan jaunt that same year:

"Ed made an arrangement to go to Alaska on a small boat. Great! What else is there to do? So we cruised up the Inside Passage from Seattle to Juneau...well, the inside passage was gorgeous. We sat on the stern as that little launch went out into the waters of Puget Sound, off for six weeks, much of which we'd spend at an absolutely uninhabited island gathering animals while Ed made notes. The cost: twenty-five cents a day for the whole crew. We would pull into port, all the canneries were closed, the fishing fleets immobilized-they'd throw salmon at us. Put your hand in the water and pull fish out. Just an idyll. And the towns were supposed to be dead and they were the most living things. There's nothing like living when you're not living with a direction but just en-joying the glory of the moment. That's what we were doing."

Excerpt from *The Hero's Adventure: A Tribute to Joseph Campbell* by Michael Toms.
New Dimensions Radio Network News. Volme 15, Number , January-February 1988,
New Dimensions Foundation, PO Box 410510, San Francisco, CA

SIX

But-1932 What am I going to do'! You couldn't go into anything. The world was stuck. It's impossible to imagine now. There wasn't a job in the world. I think, I'd like to go find Adelle. So I look her name up and she greets me with a couple of parties and helps me realize I'm at the bottom of a well and don't know where the hell I am. She kind of took care of me. A wonderful person, a wonderful woman. She gave me spunk-I was really depressed. I'd heard about Carmel, the artists. So driving down, I stop off in San Jose and phone Idell, the girl I'd met on the boat coming back from Hawaii, who lived in San Jose. Oh Joe ! She told me her sister Carol had married a chap who was trying to write,

too. 'Let me drive down to Carmel with you and introduce you to my sister!' Okay, in Carmel she introduces me to John and Carol Steinbeck, in Pacific Grove. I just fell in love with the pair of them." I stayed and got a little place called the Pumpkin Shell. And again here I am, trying to pass John Dewey and Bertrand Russell, Adelle bringing me vitamins and Steinbeck and I trying to write. There was a little fellow with a goatee at John and Carol's, Ed Ricketts, who was Doc in Cannery Row. His laboratory is the place Cannery Row is all about. Oh, four months of just something glorious. Wonderful people. And I was in the Carmel library-sort of, What am I gonna read now?- and my right hand went up to 'a book that was the beginning of everything. Spengler's Decline of the West. I read the first page and knew I'd found it-Dewey and Russell just blew away- I read nothing but that for two years. Two volumes. And I read it in German, too - this was it! It brought back everything I had had in Germany, and added, added, added, made sense of it, put it in play in the contemporary situation. When I finished Volume One, I gave it to Steinbeck. Well, next I see Steinbeck-he was a ponderous guy, walking around like a bear, rubbing his side thought-fully (people thought we were brothers) he's rubbing his side and I ask him, 'What's wrong, John?' 'Can't read this, can't read this.' 'Why not?' 'My art! My art! This thesis that now we're to put down the pen and paint brush and pick up the monkey wrench and the law book-technology and law!' 'John, you can't just shut your eyes to things. You gotta take it and beat it. 'So he gave me the book back and I went on in rapture. "A beautiful time; we were all in heaven. The world had dropped out. 'We weren't the dropouts; the world was the drop out. We were in a halcyon situation, no movement, just floating. Just great. "I got a little house in Pacific Grove for fifty cents a day. My money was going down. I had made enough money during my years on the saxophone at college to support me through this. In fact, I helped Dad with some of my savings. So I'm coasting along, trying to find where I am, crazy on Spengler. Ed Ricketts was an intertidal biologist. We'd go out and collect hundreds of starfish, sea cucumbers, things like that, between high and low tides, furnishing animals for biology classes and schools. Ed made an arrangement to go to Alaska on a small boat. Great! What else is there to do? So we cruised up the Inside Passage from Seattle to Juneau."

Never Work for Money.

(Meanwhile, I'd accepted a teaching post at Canterbury, my prep school.) Well, the Inside Passage was gorgeous. We sat on the stern as that little launch went out into the waters of Puget Sound, off for six weeks, much of which we'd spend at an absolutely uninhabited island gathering animals while Ed made notes. The cost: twenty-five cents a day for the whole crew. We would pull into port, all the canneries were closed, the fishing fleets immobilized-they'd throw salmon at us. Put your hand in the water and pull fish out. Just an idyll. And the towns were supposed to be dead and they were the most living things. There's nothing like living when you're not living with a direction but just enjoying the glory of the moment. That's what we were doing! {"We arrive in Sitka, Alaska. Ed has an order for fifteen hundred gonione-mus-little jellyfish. We lived in a cabin. Every morning I had to deliver our canoe to the folks on the boat, then swim back to shore stark-naked. In ice water! I'd come out congealed. "Then onto Juneau. A very exciting border town, a goldmine there and a lot of men working the goldmine, every other storefront was a bar and the alternate ones pool parlors. Alaska was first Russian, which I now spoke, and many Russians had married Indian women and were hangovers. They loved food, parties, no end of food! Many were aristocrats who had come out of Russia to escape that trap. These were an adventurous bunch of guys. Working in mines and they wanted dangerous jobs. They'd go into a mine after an explosion and see that every-thing had exploded. We'd be having a party and their time would come and they'd be wearing great coats like Kazaks-We who are about to die salute you-and off they'd go into the mine, like giants. "I'd never seen a balalaika, but it's a very easy instrument, strung in the major triad, so I learned to play the balalaika and played with their Russian groups. Ohhh!-a ball, a ball! And it came time to go home.

"So I borrowed my fare from Ed and taught at Canterbury for a year, and Alaska and California dropped like that out of my life.

Excerpt from *The Professor with a Thousand Faces*. Donald Newlove. Esquire 88.
September 1977 : 99-103

SEVEN

Finally in 1931 he traveled in the family Model A Ford to California to look for a job. Through the young nutritionist Adelle Davis, he met John Steinbeck and the biologist Ed Ricketts, who rekindled his interest in the relationship between mythology and biology. He sailed with Ricketts up the West Coast to Alaska on the Inside Passage, where they collected intertidal fauna and Campbell played the balalaika with Russian gold miners

Excerpt from *The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell on His Life and Work*. By Joseph Campbell; Phil Cousineau; Stuart L Brown (1990).. San Francisco : Harper & Row.

EIGHT

I can remember when I spent along time with an intertidal biologist, in that area [Alaska] between low tide and high tide [1931-1932]. All those strange forms, cormorants and little worms of different kinds and all. You'd hear, my gosh, this generation of life was a battle going on, life consuming life, everything learning how to eat the other, the whole mystery, and then from there they crawl on land. And also in the mythic themes generally out of the ocean, or what in India is called the milky ocean out of which the whole universe comes.

Excerpt from *The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell on His Life and Work*. By Joseph Campbell; Phil Cousineau; Stuart L Brown (1990).. San Francisco : Harper & Row.