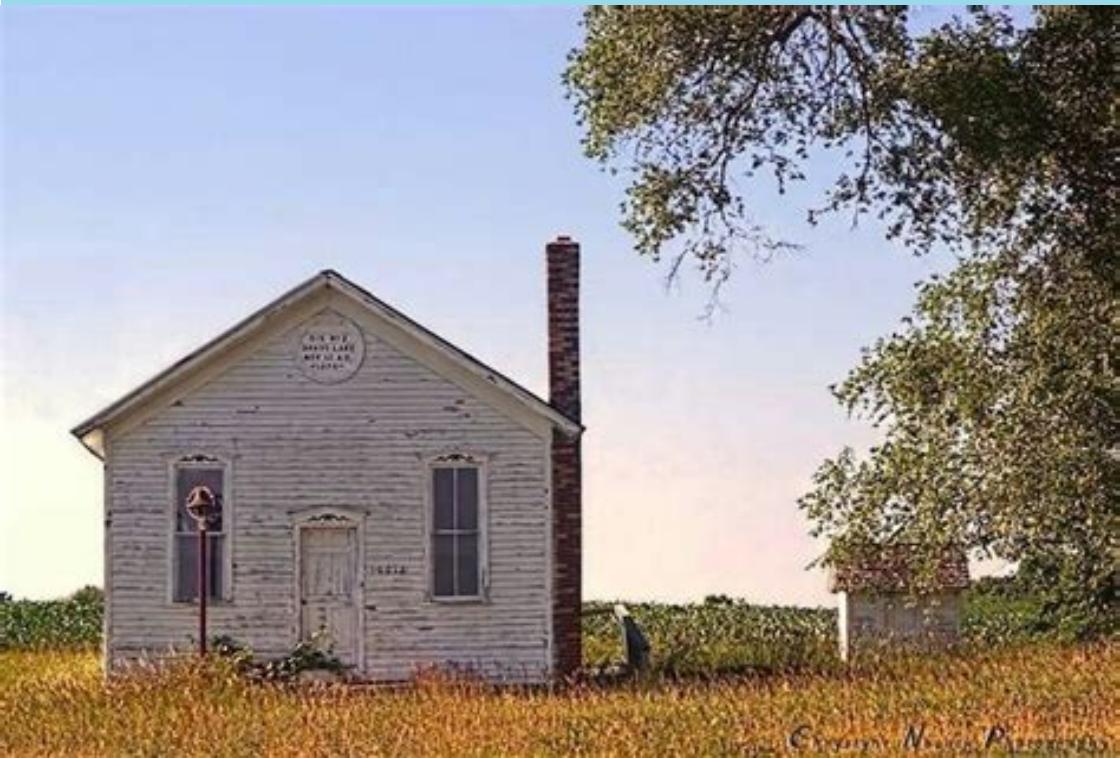


Ordinary



Cream Neck Press

an Autobiography

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Robert on the Air

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Dear Robert,

I am your inside voice - not the inside-the-house voice, but the masked voice, the one that talks and talks, the running commentary voice - speaking. I am the one you have invented as a buddy, Buster L'Orange. He, I, am not quite as much fun as Harvey but a pookah is a pookah. I (you) shall not much longer complain. It is 2:30 a.m. and there is still no sleep. I gave up the idea of dreaming and got you out of bed. I will have some of that delicious hot coffee and write awhile - about what keeps a fellow and his fellow awake.

I am nearing seventy-five years old, I am certain you are aware. A quick review of the (empirical, they say, these days) evidence points to a humbling future... in the more immediate, not the far future. I can't whine my way through this, though I might love to. What I feel about these obvious facts is to be expected, just as the facts come, packed inside our Cracker Jack box-like life as free toys. Mmmm, tasty and clever toys...

arrythmic heart, arthritis, ceramic hip joint, empty spot where once the gall bladder sat, a brand-new ear drum, and pills, pills, pills. Now, we are down to long agos and far aways, to be shared what might well be one last time. Maybe shared over the hospital bed of a friend or a lover or a stalwart family pillar. Sigh. That was quick, wasn't it?