

## *Writing about my Reading on a Rainy September Day*

### A VIEW FROM MY CABIN OFFICE

My usual view has been from the far deck, now over 100 feet away. I'm in my corner of the main cabin, "The Big A", overlooking our compound. Jean has a blaze going in the fire-pit. It's raining pretty hard

Maybe I can get a belated page out today. I would like to report on a book or two I've been reading.

One is by Oliver Sacks, the last he had a hand in just before he died: "*The River of Consciousness*." He was a neurologist who explored the nature of consciousness. I have read some of his other books like "*Musicology*," and "*Hallucinations*."

Another of his books is on my table, "*Everything in its Place*," with chapters on the aging brain.

These are books I would like to have had much earlier in my career. We need to know how the brain works. We need to know how memory works (or doesn't). We need to know the sources of all those biblical reports of people who "hear" voices and angels, who experience "visions," who "receive revelations," who claim authority from invisible sources and who tell us about the God who never speaks out loud, nor appears in any physical way, and cannot be proven to exist.

How do "moments" of wonder, and awe, and inspiration enter our personal awareness?

Oliver Sacks says:

*"I rejoice in the knowledge  
of my biological uniqueness  
and my biological antiquity  
and my biological kinship with all other forms of life."* p. 25-26

(I'd like to try that as a sort of creedal statement in some kind of service.)

A later chapter is called "*The Mental Lives of Worms and Plants*." I've suspected that truth. Each life has a computer system of its own, a basic nerve tissue system found in *a jelly-fish, an oyster, an insect, a bird, or a man.*" p. 64.

I rejoice!

I'm especially glad he included the oyster. Because I once wrote a chapter edited by Hap Lyda on the "*Meaning of Life*." I begged off, telling him that I never thought about such big subjects without talking with my oysters. He told me to write it anyway. I am glad to have Oliver Sacks affirm a connection of some sort between the oyster and me.

Christianity has created a different reality that seems to see humans as exceptional...not like...nature. I think the humble Jesus of Nazareth never claimed himself to be all the things the Gospels and Creeds believed about him many years after his death.

Oliver Sacks celebrates human life as part of the everlasting stream of consciousness. He rejoices at having been part of this stream. Or, as a Christian mystic I knew would say, WOW!

*Art Morgan, September 10, 2019*