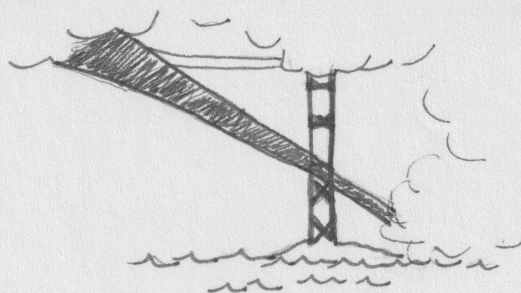


Xmas '87

(just arrived
in California)



When you're down and out,
When you're on the street
And evening falls so hard,
I will comfort you.
I'll take your part.
When darkness comes
and pain is all around,
Like a bridge over troubled waters
I will lay me down.

-- Paul Simon

On a gray and chilly Saturday in November, I wept. It was in a church on the north side of Chicago. A memorial service took place there for a young man. He was a bank teller by day and a stand-up comedian by night. He lived and died in Hollywood. When he was younger our paths crossed briefly, on stage (with the Jugglers, the theatre group at Notre Dame High School in Niles.) John was a clever and funny and caring man and now he is dead, from Aids-related disease. At the service that day a friend sang the Simon & Garfunkel song and my heart dissolved. There is a recording of the song by Roberta Flack that touches and moves me like few things can. As I've listened to it since that painful Saturday, I am reminded that there is much that is hard and painful and dark in this world: on Dempster Street in Niles, on Notre Dame Avenue in South Bend, on Polk Street in Phoenix and, as I've just learned anew, on the streets of Berkeley as well. But there is also tenderness, compassion and love and that light which still shines in the darkness and which the darkness has never managed to put out. May you be surrounded by that light -- No! May you be engulfed by that light!! -- this Christmas and through all the new year!

With love,

"And in my hour of darkness there is still a light that shines on me. Shine until tomorrow. Let it be!"