

## Invocation –

Beneath the snowy Spanish Peaks  
The [Huajatolla \(Wahatoya\)](#) (in native speak)  
Our tale begins with Story Creek  
The steady flow of words we speak



On 80 acres of grassy plains  
Bluffs and hills and scrub emerge  
We scratch the land, our lives converge  
Outside the hamlet –

## Walsenburg Waltz

one, two, three  
one, two three  
waltzing thru time  
swing with the beat  
kick up your feet

one, two, three  
one, two, three  
partners in crime  
gliding in space  
running the race

Back in the day, the world was headed for hell and Marigold's group household opted out of the chaos, buying 80 acres in southern Colorado, beyond the front-range growth surge we foresaw even in 1978. Huerfano County had cheap land, so numerous hippie tribes settled there, in the footsteps of coal miners who came for the jobs and stayed to scratch out a living running cattle, selling real estate, motels and cafes catering to travelers.

Huerfano (meaning orphan) County's Spanish Peaks, neither quite a fourteener but standing out from the Front Range, wa-ha-to-ya in the native tongue, were landmarks on the Santa Fe Trail. Population centers include county seat Walsenburg, sex-change capital Trinidad, Ludlow (as in Massacre), La Veta, and a double handful of small dried-up towns scattered across the scrub oak and pinon of the hills and sagebrush of the high prairie.



Huerfano County has been home to the oldest Jewish congregation west of the Mississippi (which recently folded, selling their beloved Torah to, coincidentally, the temple Fred and Marigold joined in Denver); to Drop City, Libre, Red Rocks, Zomes, and other hippie settlements; to neo-con retirees who in 2016 turned the county Republican for the first time in its existence. There's a struggling ski resort on the west side of West Spanish Peak, an opiates problem, and history that looks a lot like poverty.

one, two, three  
one, two, three  
play the song over  
we've only begun  
and still having fun

### **Living on the land requires Construction and Manuel Labor**

15 miles up a county road, with no electricity or running water, we have a series of projects to complete. Build a cabin, string a fence, lay in a cistern. Pour concrete walls. Pour lots of concrete walls. Stand up a windmill, dig a trench, pump water up a mesa to tanks for gravity-fed irrigation systems. Fix a broken tractor. The entropy of the land: we're always building, and things are always breaking down.



Under the direction of Randall Vision, we pound posts and string barbed wire to keep out the neighbor's cattle. The small-batch cement mixer labors as we pour foundations and raise greenhouse walls. The cute little Kubota backhoe groans digging through hard dirt and harder rock on the hilltop, preparing holes for a pair of water storage tanks. On a 105-degree morning we arrive at the cement-works yard in Pueblo, where the office manager shakes her head, "In seven years we've never had a day when everything went right." But we buy two 500-gallon cisterns anyway. They'll deliver them Friday. First, they unload them fifteen miles down the road from Story Creek - how we're supposed to transport two large heavy fragile tanks from there never occurs to them. Several conversations later, they send the truck to pick them up and bring them all the way in, to the holes awaiting them.

The only way to get water from the pond to the tanks is to pump it, but we have no source of electricity. We acquire a windmill and Fred learns how to stand it up and mount the blades, standing on the tiny platform twenty feet up, wrestling slabs of sharp tin into place then tightening the bolts so they'll stay there. Once it's up and running, the windmill's a source of joy - lie in a hammock in the willows and watch it turn all afternoon. Gradually the cisterns fill, and water flows to the greenhouses.

### **Three Flat-Tire Day**

Randall drove everyone hard, including the heavy equipment vehicles. When the stubble of scrub oak punctured a tractor tire, he put on a spare. The rear tire was next to go, at which point a 15-mile trip to town was in order. At Jolly Bonacelli's tire repair store in Walsenburg, the heavy-set repairman did a belly flop onto the tire, with his tools in hand. Jolly Bonacelli and his very big belly. On the return trip to Story Creek, our pickup truck had a flat, just a tired tire. Three flats and you're out for the day.

### **Gimme Shelter**

The only structure on the property when we acquire it is a low shed used to store hay, protected from snow and wind. Raise the roof, add some walls, add more rooms - piece by piece it becomes a cabin. Fred and Marigold, dreaming of Rammed Earth, design the next addition, pouring a foundation then presenting plans to the county engineer. He never heard of rammed earth - pipe clamps secure sturdy forms aligned 15" apart, sprinkle in a moist blend of clay, sand, and portland cement, then tamp it till it rings, hard packed. Keep adding earth-mix, keep tamping, and the walls rise. With a "hat and shoes" - protective roof and foundation - a



rammed earth structure lasts centuries. Well, Frank Noga's seen plenty of hippie shelters - our architectural drawings are a step above. He stamps his approval on the plans.

### **Pouring Concrete Walls –**

Friday afternoon work crew – Randall, Norm and Wiley watching the sun go down with no cement truck in sight. A race to the bottom of a Jack Daniels fifth is interrupted by the rumble of the mixer at 4pm, hours after everyone had given up on it. Oh shit! What are we going to do now? When the truck reaches our site the tipsy crew goes to work. Fresh cement is delivered one wheelbarrow at a time. Try not to spill, this stuff is really heavy.

one, two, three  
one, two, three  
Maria del oro  
Fred does his part  
stay close to the heart

### **The Great Escape (almost) –**

The Kawasaki 175 (Estrella model) is a sporty, temperamental motorcycle for riding the Story Creek back roads and making quick trips to town. One day Fred takes it out for a spin. Wearing sunglasses plus a helmet with a smoky visor, he keeps fiddling to kick this sucker into 3<sup>rd</sup> gear. As luck would have it, he notches 3<sup>rd</sup> as he comes over a rise, revving up to 30 mph about the time he sees, about 40' away, a three-strand barbed wire gate closing the road. Steve McQueen in the Great Escape would have leaped gracefully over this barrier. Instead Fred goes for Plan B, dropping the bike, sliding wheels first into the obstacle to save himself from painful lacerations. Almost. His right hand on the handlebar finds some nasty barbed wire and slices a two inch gash in his middle finger knuckle.



Resourceful to a fault, Fred wraps his wound in a bandana, opens the gate, picks up the Kawasaki, and drives 10 more miles into town seeking ER

medical relief. The nurse checks him in and parks him on a cot to wait for the doc, just about the time 2 local sheriffs bring in his new roommate, a psychobilly traumatized with a PCP psychosis, restrained by the cops and howling to beat the band. Fun is where you find it - that's Fred's for the day. The docs stitch him up, he rides back to Story Creek, and to this day keeps his middle finger scar as a reminder.

one, two, three  
one, two, three  
story creek farms  
a Walsenburg waltz  
with plenty of schmaltz

one, two, three  
verse stands aside  
here comes the chorus  
written just for us

### **Together or bust!**

Some folks can hang out for years, friendly but not too close. Not Marigold and Fred. Seven months into cohabitation, Huerfano County gives them a nudge. Four day weekend, perfect for work and fun with the household crew. Last week's snow has melted, perfect conditions for perfect mud, swallowing Fred's car to its axles. But Marigold has work the next morning, two hundred miles north. No way to tell her boss she can't make it, so she grabs her pack and hikes up the road, hitchhikes into town then thumbs her way home, and gets to work on time.

The next day, Fred wrestles his car out of the mud, driving home by way of Red Rocks, the dome his cousin shares with thirty other hippies. That cousin David eventually became a film critic for Newsweek - everybody starts somewhere.



The Fred and Marigold reunion occasions a hard look: what are we doing? Hanging out, it appears, does not equal "your problem is mine" loyalty. When opposites are in motion, they're either in mutual orbit or flying off separate directions. The Weak Force of "kinda-sorta-maybe" doesn't hold.

So our Fools must reflect, in the light of the Cosmic Beam:

“You! You! What are you doing?!”

“Who, me? Us?”

“Do it together!”

“Well.....” A party-pak of reasons not to... blows away like chaff.

So, laugh!

one, two, three  
follow the dream  
tapping our toes  
wherever it goes

one, two, three  
one, two, three  
April she comes  
brings what she will  
it's always a thrill

### **A Foolish Day at the Court House –**

April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1981

Opposites drawn like magnetic poles  
North and south at the county courthouse

Two fools collide and merge our souls -

Writing a story, we find a spouse.

Meeting Judge Murr just before nine,

We say the words and swap the rings

Figuring it will turn out fine,

Like lots of other silly things.

A dyad launched from the Alpha Motel,

Friends at our side who know us well;

A close-kept secret, intensely discussed

We tie the knot and the joke is on us.

one, two, three  
one, two, three  
you hear the tune  
laughing out loud  
away from the crowd

one, two, three  
one, two three  
waltzing thru time  
swing with the beat  
kick up your fee



## Re-invocation –

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On 80 acres of grassy plains  
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Outside the hamlet – **Waltzenburg Waltz**

