

**FULL MANY A GLORIOUS MORNING  
DON RICARDO'S REPORT FROM THE HIGH RHINE... JULY 2013**

Full many a glorious morning have I seen burning golden in the sky... and the corn growing a foot a day. To reach high as an elephant's eye not likely—but lo, here's a sonnet and two songs jumbled together as I pedal down past the fields along the Geisbach, the little stream that feeds into the Rhine at Diessenhofen. Past the grain mill at Willisdorf, upstream along the gravel track, past the church at Basadingen, the village south of here. Crossing the busy road with an eye for traffic, I follow the stream up to the next village called Schlattingen, where I cross another road and pass under the railroad bridge. Turning left, I skirt the base of the hill called the Rodenberg and cut across to the road that parallels the river. The day grows warmer as I close the loop and turn back towards the house. With the hard pedaling behind me, I feel like I'm floating. I stop by the garden and water the tomatoes, new salad and greens.

Edith has the radio on when I get back, the station from Schaffhausen airing the Sunday morning classical program, followed by the news. A swimmer in trouble called for help down by the bridge last night. Someone from the *Konstanz*, one of the excursion boats, threw a life-ring, but the swimmer went down. We heard the ambulance, and the helicopters circling, just after sundown. A young man, eighteen years old, it's hard to say what might have happened. Hardly dangerous at first glance, there are no rapids or treacherous currents in the Rhine, and nothing to watch out for, except the boats. But the current is inexorable; you can angle across, but you cannot swim against it. For all its placid beauty, people drown every year. Sometimes accidents occur when parties floating down in rafts or canoes collide with the channel markers. It happens especially when people tie their rubber rafts together in tandem and snag one of these poles embedded in river and are thrown suddenly overboard.

Swimming is the summer's high point for me. We usually walk upstream together on my afternoon swims, and she carries my sandals back down. Back when she was working, I used to walk up alone barefoot, gingerly stepping on the gravel until my feet got tough. It's easier going now, and I bear her admonitions to be careful, mindful that as the mother of three boys, this is a role that comes naturally to her. Edith is forever urging caution. That's the woman's job, she says. Men are always rushing into things and never thinking.

Except for a few solo bookings, I haven't been gigging this summer. I seem to be in one of those bardos, in-between places where forces of destiny sort themselves out. I try to focus on core issues: exercise, creative life, our life together. This is my triad, and I know I've mentioned this before. One is simply keeping the machinery going, bike riding nearly year round, walking, and now, swimming added to the mix. The creative life involves writing and music. Lately, this last year, I've begun some tentative steps towards learning to do sketches and watercolors. I call this hobby—or therapy—activity, but it's been an eye-opener in ways I never imagined. Life with Edith is the third part of the triad, and includes all the normal things people do together. That closes the circle and keeps it simple: I try to intercept and cut out all the inessential crap, the nagging worries and fears, ego-impulses, tape-loops from years ago; all the time-wasting, energy-sucking lures and ruses that numb us and rob us of our joy.

I was sure Edith was going to urge extra caution after the swimmer disappeared. We walked upstream, threading our way through the crowded bathing area the Swiss call the *Badi*,

and on up the gravel path. “You know,” was all she said as I handed her my sandals. She was fifty yards down the path by the time I eased myself into the rushing cold water, splashed water on my chest, and plunged in. Passing her on the way down, I waved from midstream. We stopped by the garden on the way back and picked up some salad and a shiny new zucchini. We opened a bottle of wine back at the flat as the chill-down from the swim morphed into a pleasant buzz. I don’t think I even turned my computer on. I forgot all about the swimmer, still missing and presumably drowned.

Another beautiful morning—how much glory can you stand? Edith had a dentist appointment. I took the pail of kitchen scraps to compost in the garden and watered. The day was already beginning to heat up when I went back out on my bike. Figuring I would get a swim in later, I cut my ride short. Stopping at the Bahnhof kiosk for a paper, I circled back through town. I made scrambled eggs with potatoes when she came home from her dentist appointment. We didn’t have a bottle of wine upstairs, but she went down and got one. We took a nap on the sofa and later went down to the river.

Sometimes I ask Edith if she would like go in with me. We have a couple of floats back at the flat. But even though she learned to swim in the Rhine, she has a little *Angst*. She went back out to the store for a few supplies this evening, while I sat down to work on this report. The young man’s body has not yet been found.

We’re awaiting the new Brambus Records release which should be ready any day now, my first record since 2009. Produced in Nashville with my good friend and long time collaborator, Thomm Jutz, it’s called *Here in the Garden*. I’ve read reports that the days of CDs are numbered, but I’m okay with this technology. It’ll last my tour, as they used to say in the oilfields. It feels good to be alive and working; that’s enough and glory too.

Richard J. Dobson  
Diessenhofen am Rhein  
15 July 2013

[www.richard-j-dobson.ch](http://www.richard-j-dobson.ch)

[www.brambus.com](http://www.brambus.com)

[www.mytexasmusic.com](http://www.mytexasmusic.com)