

One Times One & Other Numinous Stories of Redemption and Loss

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Sort Descriptions

1. **“One Times One”**— A modern-day dragon tale in which the power of an ancient black onyx ring and an oud is passed down from a lineage of spiritual teacher to student. The story unfolds as the narrator, Penelope, recounts her relationship with her teacher in Baghdad, how she received the onyx ring and its power, how the conflict between Shi’a and Sunni in Iraq shattered their lives, how they fled to exile in Crete, and how in Crete, Penelope’s student, Caldero, discovers his dragon deep up in the gorge of the Anapodaris River. Penelope’s final dream and subsequent dark secret hint at the fearful fire their dragons breathed upon them.
2. **“Imminent Doom and His Own Demise”**— The suicide of Victor’s wife and his ensuing loneliness and guilt drive him increasingly deeper into his own fearful world of suspicion and decline. His insurance office becomes his last stand against the warfare and destruction outside where he assiduously documents and awaits the imminent doom and his own demise.
3. **“On the Stick”**— The story of a recently divorced aeronautical engineer and a university art major who meet on the desolate road to a casino in Nevada where the enigmatic and powerful craps dealer, Destiny, marshals and disposes the denizens of the casino table to their fates. It is by chance (or destiny) that the next day, as he returns from the surprise of his girlfriend’s infidelity in Salt Lake City, the student passes a burning car wreck, where his and the others’ futures are brought into shocking crystal clear focus.
4. **“I Saw a Leaf Fall”**— Eugene witnesses a leaf fall, and he embarks on a metaphorical mental journey imagining the magnificent creation that is human civilization. He begins to research and document his new understanding, but his wife, Kirra, sees him more and more as less of a man since his arborist accident and subsequent disability. Kirra continues to denigrate Eugene’s enthusiasm for life until he finally takes the responsibility to end their marriage.
5. **“Knife Skills”**— A man’s culinary skill with the Santoku knife is ironically reflected against his wife’s unwelcome breast augmentation and his daughter’s “cutting.” He seeks understanding in the circularity of the vegetables he slices, in planning the construction of a labyrinth, and in the spiraling of his focus and meditation that eventually lead him to an unexpectedly deepened and renewed passion and longing for his wife.

6. **“A Cup of Coffee”**— A healing story about a romantic weekend getaway that ends with an encounter with a mysterious homeless man in a coffee shop. There are holy people, saints, in the world, and we don’t recognize them. The husband and wife in this short tale didn’t appreciate the sanctity of this strange itinerant when she bought him a cup of coffee, left him behind in the coffee shop, and drove away. Little did they know that he would remember her with an enigmatic benediction. *This story is based on the author and his wife’s real life experience.
7. **“Token”**—Theodore Morgan wants to be a magician. He has the unique skill of being able to summon living beings to him. He practices his magical abilities at parties and local events, and people are drawn to him, especially when he calls in flocks of sparrows at the end of the show. When he begins at all hours of the night to practice strange incantations at home, he is persuaded to move out. A mysterious old crone, Zoraida, his duplex neighbor, warns Theodore not to venture into the adjoining oak thicket because of the bad spirits. He does, he is drawn to a huge oak tree in the middle of the haunted grove, and by pulling up an oak sapling to use as a wand, he inadvertently frees and becomes possessed by the spirit of a monstrous serial killer murdered and buried beneath the tree over a hundred years before. The story comes to an unexpected and ghastly end when Theodore uses his new magic wand to call in the birds at his final show.
8. **“The Faithful”**—Four enigmatic desert fighters in black camouflage capture a group of Catholics, a group of Muslims, a group of Mormons, and a group of Jews. The fighters execute the men, women, and children in each group according to the killers’ distorted idea of the nature of their religious beliefs. The mystical historical nature of the desert’s beauty and the tracks of civilization on the desert are contrasted with the brutality and insignificance of the fighters. *Warning: This story is violent and horrific.
9. **“Collections”**—Archibald Richland VanDigger parlays his family’s business in black market Asian antiquities into a position of power and influence as Head of Archaeological Collections and Archives at the National Museum of Antwerp. His family flees the fall of Saigon, they resettle in Amsterdam, and Archibald’s position at the museum becomes a front for his thriving illicit business. While planning for a major exhibition of Vietnamese treasures, he hires Wū Phuong Hung for the *feng shui*. She is in fact Master Wū, *shinobi-no-mono*, ninja, whose secret goal is to recover the stolen antiquities and return them to their homeland of Vietnam. The cat and mouse game between the two ends when the esoteric

ninja weapon of *kuji-kuri* is turned against her, and ricin becomes Archibald's gruesome checkmate.

10. **“The Seven Lights”**—Al-kaid Al-'Uqdah, volcanologist in central Mexico, chances into an unusual tiny store on his nightly walk to the neighborhood cigar shop. He meets Tepiltzin Ibarra, the dwarf proprietor, and his black preternatural cat, Miztli Itztli, both of whom direct Al-kaid to an ancient book about unusual volcanic eruptions in central Mexico in 1559. The book, a secret map of the Seven Lights volcanoes and the Big Dipper, an extraordinary extraterrestrial beacon, and Tepiltzin's story of how he obtained the book and the beacon lead Al-kaid to discover the secret of the beacon. Who knows what will happen when he activates the beacon's controls? *This story is based on personal conversations the author has had with family members who live in this area of Mexico.
11. **“Chayton's Sky”**—A reflective vignette about individual existential freedom and purpose and the generations of peoples living on the constant land as seen through the eyes of Chayton, who, while hoeing in his garden, looks up to see the clouds passing and realizes the layers of the past manifested in the present moment and in himself.
12. **“White Noise”**— Frank brings a white noise machine into his and Marcy's bedroom because of his snoring, but it can't block out the voices that portend his mental deterioration. His life at home and at Subaru of Portland gradually falls apart, and he begins to seek refuge in his car parked in his garage. He listens to the voice of his other self and follows it to his inevitable end.
13. **“Tangle”**—Macon's bluegrass group, Tie One On, plays music every night for the crowd at Pengilly's Saloon. They set up their equipment, play their hearts and souls out, break down everything again, and then return to their life of longing, loss, and love. The banjo player, Audie, tells the story of big Gordie, the bass and mandolin boss, beautiful Justine, the fiddle mistress, and Macon on the old Martin. Audie recounts how Macon turns a undeserved musical loss into a new song inspired by his musical mentor, old railroad man, Amos Early, back in Hardin Valley, Tennessee. *This story is inspired by the musical beauty and passion of Jonathan Warren and The Billy Goats.
14. **“Wilding”**—The Cosmic Sage recounts the evolution of life on earth—microbes, insects, crawling and swimming animals, large predator animals, and hominids. Trees have always offered shelter and safety to this diversity of life, and with the continued cutting, destruction, and use of trees, life has become more sterile and

clone-like. The ancient trees and the many forms of life that flourish there are replaced with successions of new temples to modern man's idea of God where the primordial myths and forms of life have no place. Moses, Buddha, Jesus, The Prophet Mohammed, Joseph Smith, Ramana Maharshi, and Richard Feynman convene and discuss the spiritual development of humanity. Their meeting ends with a shared miracle and a toast to humanity.