



# The Rainman's Third Cure: An Irregular Education

*Peter Coyote*

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"The rainman gave me two cures  
And he said, 'Just jump right in.'  
The one was Texas Medicine  
And the other was railroad gin.  
And like a fool I mixed them  
And they strangled up my mind  
Now people just get uglier  
And I have no sense of time."  
--Bob Dylan, "Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again"

The guiding metaphor in Peter Coyote's new spiritual biography is drawn from a line in an early Bob Dylan song. For Coyote, the twin forces Dylan identifies as Texas Medicine and Railroad Gin – represent the competing forces of the transcendental, inclusive, and ecstatic world of love with the competitive, status-seeking world of wealth and power. *The Rainman's Third Cure* is the tale of a young man caught between these apparently antipodal options and the journey that leads him from the privileged halls of power to Greenwich Village jazz bars, to jail, to the White House, lessons from a man who literally held the power of life and death over others, to government service and international success on stage and screen.

Expanding his frame beyond the wild ride through the 1960's counterculture that occupied so much of his lauded debut memoir, *Sleeping Where I Fall*, Coyote provides readers intimate portraits of mentors that shaped him—a violent, intimidating father, a be-bop Bass player who teaches him that life can be improvised, a Mafia consigliere, who demonstrates to him that men can be bought and manipulated, an ex game-warden who initiates him into the laws of nature, a gay dancer in Martha Graham's company who introduces him to Mexico and marijuana, beat poet Gary Snyder, who introduces him to Zen practice, and finally famed fashion designer Nino Cerruti who made the high-stakes world of haute monde Europe available to him.

What begins as a peripatetic flirtation with Zen deepens into a life-long avocation, ordination as a priest, and finally the road to Transmission---acknowledgement from his teacher that he is ready to be an independent teacher. Through Zen, Coyote discovers a third option that offers an alternative to both the worlds of Love and Power's correlatives of status seeking and material wealth. Zen was his portal, but what he discovers on the inside is actually available to all humans. In this energetic, reflective and intelligent memoir, *The Rainman's Third Cure* is the way out of the box. The way that works.

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