again: somebody might rob you. If you had a great big store, you had to be fearful now that there's gonna be a riot—and everything in your store would be stolen. See, money brings more fear than security.

STEVE: Fear is an emotion people don't talk about. But it's one they reflect in their lives. My parents have managed to overcome a good deal of it. When I resisted the draft, they were with me every step of the way. But at the beginning, when I was joining the demonstrations, they were afraid my father would lose his job. Fear was so obvious you could taste it. That you were going to do something which might wreck your chance of achieving the economic success they never had. I can't imagine that fear without the Depression. It shaped their lives and consciences.

I got the feeling it was a time of utter chaos, in which there were no road signs. The moral and social guideposts had been wiped out. Why wasn't there more violence in that period? What shape did that violence take? What happened? Was it government pump-priming or was it the Second World War that pulled us out of the Depression? I don't know enough of this period from the cold, printed page.

POSTSCRIPT: *Marshall committed suicide, November 1, 1969.*

Hard Travelin'

I've been doin' some hard travelin',
I thought you knowd
I've been doin' some hard ramblin'
Away down the road. . . .

. . . I've been layin' in a hard rock jail,
I thought you knowd
I've been laid out ninety days
Way down the road.
The darned old judge, he said to me,
It's ninety days for vagrancy,
And I've been doin' some hard travelin', Lord.

—Woody Guthrie*

Ed Paulsen

From 1926 on, when he was fourteen, he, himself, knocked around and about the states—"I rode the freights" across the land. "I always went back to my home in South Dakota. My sister and her husband had a little farm. It was a retreat. I played semi-pro baseball up there at one time. You know who I faced? Satchell Paige. He was pitching for Bismarck. I

* Words and Music by Woody Guthrie TRO–© Copyright 1959, 1963 by Ludlow Music, Inc. New York, N.Y. Used by permission.

worked punching cattle, $10 a month. I was never satisfied to stay there. I was always taking a pop at L.A. or San Francisco.

"Everybody talks of the Crash of '29. In small towns out West, we didn't know there was a Crash. What did the stock market mean to us? Not a dang thing. If you were in Cut Bank, Montana, who owned stock? The farmer was a ping-pong ball in a very tough game.

"I finished high school in 1930, and I walked out into this thing. . . ." He picked apples in Washington, "hustled sheets" in Los Angeles, and worked on road gangs all along the coast. "It got tougher. We didn't know how to make out in the city. It was terrifying. There were great queues of guys in soup lines. We didn't know how to join a soup line. We—my two brothers and I—didn't see ourselves that way. We had middle-class ideas without a middle-class income. (Laughs.)

"We ended up in San Francisco in 1931. I tried to get a job on the docks. I was a big husky athlete, but there just wasn't any work. Already by that time, if you were looking for a job at a Standard Oil Service Station, you had to have a college degree. It was that kind of market. . . ."

I'D GET UP at five in the morning and head for the waterfront. Outside the Spreckles Sugar Refinery, outside the gates, there would be a thousand men. You know dang well there's only three or four jobs. The guy would come out with two little Pinkerton cops: "I need two guys for the bull gang. Two guys to go into the hole." A thousand men would fight like a pack of Alaskan dogs to get through there. Only four of us would get through. I was too young a punk.

So you'd drift up to Skid Row. There'd be thousands of men there. Guys on baskets, making weird speeches, phony theories on economics. About eleven-thirty, the real leaders would take over. They'd say: O.K., we're going to City Hall. The Mayor was Angelo Rossi, a dapper little guy. He wore expensive boots and a tight vest. We'd shout around the steps. Finally, he'd come out and tell us nothing.

I remember the demands: We demand work, we demand shelter for our families, we demand groceries, this kind of thing. . . . Half the guys up there making the demands were Negroes. Now there wasn't a big black colony in San Francisco in those days. But they were pretty cagey, the leaders—they always kept a mixture of black and white.

I remember as a kid how courageous this seemed to me, the demands, because you knew that society wasn't going to give it to you. They'd demand that they open up unrented houses and give decent shelters for their families.* But you just knew society wasn't yielding. There was nothing coming.

* "Thirteen public aid families squatted in a vacant building . . . they defied the police to evict them. Most were victims of a recent fire. The others decided to abandon their sub-standard housing in favor of the three-story building. . . . 'Man, we're going to stake out those apartments just like the early settlers when they took it away from the Indians,' announced Mrs. Pearl Moore, a Tenants' Union representative." (Chicago *Daily News,* February 21, 1969).

This parade would be four blocks long, curb to curb. Nobody had a dime. There were guys on the corner trying to sell apples to this moneyless wonder. (Laughs.)

The guys'd start to yell and there come some horses. They used to have cops on horseback in those days. Then there'd be some fighting. Finally it got to killing. I think they killed three people there that day, besides the wounded. It really got rough because the guys had brought a bunch of marbles and threw them on the street, and the horses were slipping and sliding around. This made the cops mad and they got rough.

There'd be this kind of futile struggle, because somehow you never expected to win. We had a built-in losing complex. That's the way those crowds felt. A lot of them would drift back into the Sally.* By now it's one o'clock, and everybody's hungry. We were a gentle crowd. These were fathers, eighty percent of them. They had held jobs and didn't want to kick society to pieces. They just wanted to go to work and they just couldn't understand. There was a mysterious thing. You watched the papers, you listened to rumors, you'd get word somebody's gonna build a building.

So the next morning you get up at five o'clock and you dash over there. You got a big tip. There's three thousand men there, carpenters, cement men, guys who knew machinery and everything else. These fellas always had faith that the job was gonna mature, somehow. More and more men were after fewer and fewer jobs. So San Francisco just ground to a halt. Nothing was moving.

We were always trying to get to sea, but I didn't have any ticket. Oh, I made that waterfront a thousand times. There used to be those great old liners that sailed out to Hawaii. You could hear the band play "Aloha Away," and all the guys were standing there with tears in their eyes. As though you had somebody going some place. And you didn't know a damn soul. (Laughs.)

We weren't greatly agitated in terms of society. Ours was a bewilderment, not an anger. Not a sense of being particularly put upon. We weren't talkng revolution; we were talking jobs.

We'd grown up in small-town high schools. There wasn't much expression, in the press, of the intelligentsia. It was just a tough world, and you had been born into it. I had no great sense of fervor until I went to L.A. and ran into Upton Sinclair in 1934. If I were picking a time when I began to say, "What the hell's this all about?" it came when I wandered into a meeting one day where Upton Sinclair was talking.† This was the winter

* The Salvation Army.

† He was candidate for Governor of California. EPIC was his symbol and credo: End Poverty In California.

of '33, '34. There was this litttle pink-and-white guy up there speaking, the least likely guy ever to be a radical you ever saw. You automatically think of pince-nez glasses and a shock of white hair. His audience was made up mostly of working stiffs.

He pointed out the great piles of oranges, the piles of lumber laying there idle. . . . They'd put up a rick of oranges and apples, put gasoline over it and set fire to them. Vegetables were being destroyed and everything. Everybody who cried so much later about federal programs destroying little pigs . . . they should have seen what industry was doing at this time. To keep the price up.

Sinclair's idea was to relate the unemployed to the resources not being used. This appealed to me tremendously. It made sense to have this food eaten up by hungry people. I got a job singing with the quartet that was campaigning with him.

If I had to pick one constant enemy during this time, it was the American Legion. They were made up of home guard types. They were the most vicious enemies of this drifting, reckless, hungry crowd of people. Every place I went, Hoovervilles—they were raided. This bunch of Legionnaires with those damn caps on. Guys with baseball bats, driving them out of the jungles around the railroad grounds. Even in the little towns I lived in. I had a war with those guys by the time I was in high school. They were always the bane of my existence.

They were the Main Streeters. They were doing all right. Merchants, storekeepers, landowners. They had a fix that was just awful to live with. They were hard on the little candidate for Governor. They'd come to his meetings with baseball bats and clubs and break it up. Once, when we sang in the Valley, they attacked us and beat the hell out of us. We barely got out of there.

During the Sinclair campaign, I was going to the library, picking up books I'd never read before, books that never crossed my track. You'd go down to look for work in the morning, and then you'd give up at eleven o'clock and drift into that library. I got my education there, really.

By this time, Roosevelt was President. There was the NRA . . . mystical things were going on we didn't understand at all. People were talking price-fixing and what have you. Very, very weird world. It didn't mean a damn to us. There were three brothers of us, we got a freight and went down to Portland. They'd started to work on the Bonneville Dam. Beautiful sight down that river. On a decent day, if you set on top of a box car, it was beautiful. . . .

We drifted down to the jungle. We go into a beanery, 'cause there was no train out till eleven that night. In comes a Mexican whore and a colored whore. They order a hamburger. The proprietor says, "I don't serve niggers. Get that dame out of here." The Mexican girl comes back and orders two hamburgers. The guy grumbles, fries up a couple. The colored girl

walks in. This guy goes under the counter and comes up with a sap.* He lashes out at the girl's head, bong! Jeez, I think he's killed her. She groans and staggers back off this stool. He cuts around the corner in a wild rage. I put my foot out and trip him. He just went ass over Tecumseh. The girls get out in time. He'd a killed that girl, I believe. We lam out of there, too. We grab the midnight freight and get off at Phoenix. It's a hostile town, so we beat it.

We make an orange freight. We rode in the reefer.† Clear to Kansas City. It goes like a bat out of hell, a rough ride. We broke through the wire netting and ate the oranges. We got vitamins like mad. (Laughs.) But your mouth gets burnt by that acid juice and your teeth get so damn sore from that ride. By the time we got off at K.C., I could hardly close my mouth.

We catch a train into Kansas City, Kansas, that night. At the stops, colored people were gettin' on the trains and throwin' off coal. You could see people gatherin' the coal. You could see the railroad dicks were gettin' tough.

Hal and I are ridin' on the top of the boxcar, it's a fairly nice night. All of a sudden, there's a railroad dick with a flashlight that reaches a thousand miles. Bam! Bam! He starts shooting. We hear the bullets hitting the cars, bam! like that. I throw my hands up and start walking towards that light. Hal's behind me. The guy says, "Get off." I said, "Christ, I can't." This thing's rollin' fifty miles an hour or more. He says, "Jump." I says, "I can't." He says, "Turn around and march ahead." He marches us over the top. There's a gondola, about eight feet down. He says, "Jump." So I jumped and landed in wet sand, up to my knees.

We come to a little town in Nebraska, Beatrice. It's morning. I'm chilled to the bone. We crawl into a railroad sandbox, almost frozen to death. We dry out, get warmed up, and make the train again. We pull into Omaha. It's night. All of a sudden, the train is surrounded by deputies, with pistols. The guy says, "Get in those trucks." I said, "What for? We haven't done anything." He said, "You're not going to jail. You're going to the Transient Camp."

They drive us up to an old army warehouse. They check you in, take off your clothes, run them through a de-louser, and you take a bath. It's midnight. We come out, and here's a spread with scrambled eggs, bacon, bread, coffee and toast. We ate a great meal. It was wonderful. We go upstairs to bed. Here's a double-decker, sheets, toothbrush, towels, everything. I sat down on this damn bed, I can't tell you, full of wonderment. We thought we'd gone to heaven. Hal's a young punk, he's seventeen. He said, "What the hell kind of a place is this?" I said, "I don't know, but it's sure somethin' different."

* A blackjack.
† The refrigerator car.

The next morning, they called us up to a social worker. By this time, there's a thousand guys in there. They're playing baseball, some guys are washing down walls—bums, bindlestiffs, cynical rough guys who've been on the road for years. It's kind of like a playhouse. It's unbelievable.

Through a social worker, he is assigned to a job with the National Youth Administration, at "a little cold-water college" in Aberdeen, South Dakota. "And then the good life began for me.

"Before Roosevelt, the Federal Government hardly touched your life. Outside of the postmaster, there was little local representation. Now people you knew were appointed to government jobs. Joe Blow or some guy from the corner.

"It came right down to Main Street. Half of them loved it, half of them hated it. There was the immediacy of its effect on you. In Aberdeen, Main Street was against it. But they were delighted to have those green relief checks cashed in their cash registers. They'd have been out of business had it not been for them. It was a split thing. They were cursing Roosevelt for the intrusion into their lives. At the same time, they were living off it. Main Street still has this fix."

The NYA was my salvation. I could just as easily have been in Sing Sing as with the UN.* Just every bit a chance. Hell, yes. Everybody was a criminal. You stole, you cheated through. You were getting by, survival. Stole clothes off lines, stole milk off back porches, you stole bread. I remember going through Tucumcari, New Mexico, on a freight. We made a brief stop. There was a grocery store, a supermarket kind of thing for those days. I beat it off the train and came back with rolls and crackers. This guy is standing in the window shaking his fist at you.

It wasn't a big thing, but it created a coyote mentality. You were a predator. You had to be. The coyote is crafty. He can be fantastically courageous and a coward at the same time. He'll run, but when he's cornered, he'll fight. I grew up where they were hated, 'cause they'd kill sheep. They'll kill a calf, get in the chicken pen. They're mean. But how else does a coyote stay alive? He's not as powerful as a wolf. He has a small body. He's in such bad condition, a dog can run him down. He's not like a fox. A coyote is nature's victim as well as man's. We were coyotes in the Thirties, the jobless.

No, I don't see the Depression as an ennobling experience. Survivors are still ridin' with the ghost—the ghost of those days when things came hard.

* He has an administrative job with UNICEF.

Pauline Kael

Film critic, The New Yorker.

THE FIRST VIOLENCE I had ever seen was along the Embarcadero. The anger of the men. I never saw it again until recently in Philadelphia—between cops and little Negro kids.

Angry men were yelling. They had weapons and were angry at other men. I was in a car with my father. I had seen passive bread lines. But this was different. Girls don't usually see this, particularly if you're a bookish girl from a bookish family.

It may have been a prelude to the San Francisco General Strike. I'm not sure. That was almost like a blackout. It had a sense of paralysis.

The kids with lots of money had actually been moved to the peninsula out of harm's way. The rich people thought there was going to be a revolution, and they moved out of town.

My neighbors were angry with my mother, because she fed hungry men at the back door. They said it would bring others, and then what would she do? She said, "I'll feed them till the food runs out." It wasn't until years later, I realized the fear people had of these men. We didn't have it in our house.

I understand why these neighbors were afraid. They had lived with domestic violence all their lives. They were beaten up by their husbands every Saturday night. You could hear them screaming. So their fear of men was generalized. I'm sure my father never hit my mother. Ours was a nonviolent family, so we weren't particularly scared of these strange men.

Frank Czerwonka

"I'm a garbage man. Work for the city. I have a steady income, twice a month. My wife has an independent income—me.

"I mean, there's a conditioning here by the Depression. I'm what I call a security cat. I don't like the job I have, but I don't dare switch. 'Cause I got too much whiskers on it, seniority.

"I won't hang around with failures. When you hang around with successful people, it rubs off on ya. When you hang around with failures, it may rub off on ya, too. So I'm a snob, so do me somethin'."