

Chapter 18 ☞ The Joy of Music

JUNE 1980: After only six months in Baltimore it seemed all our old New York haunts were unrecognizable, replaced or demolished. Unable to contact friends, Mohawk Dave and I wandered the Upper West Side, moving from Central Park to bar to diner, looking for any familiar place or friendly face.

The Hunan Balcony (“Human Baloney”) was still there



on 98th and Broadway, so we went in to take refuge. Somehow, mistakenly, I ordered a whole fish entire on a bed of lettuce. I tried eating of the belly, but I just couldn't push my fork to within a few inches of its unblinking eyeball. After that miserable meal we stumbled outside, adrift, our day nearly ruined; not knowing what else to do, we bought tickets for the new John Belushi-Dan Akroyd film, *The Blues Brothers*.

I had run-into Belushi at the Bitter End, a Village club with wide, adjoining picnic tables. The performance hadn't begun, the club was mostly empty, the house lights were still on. I was sitting at one long table, waiting for the food I ordered, when Belushi sat down across from me, immediately engaging me in conversation. "Hey, what's going on here?" I suppose he was considering my suitability as a partner in mayhem for the evening, but I wasn't that guy and he soon departed. The impression I got was that his public persona wasn't that different from his true self. Belushi was definitely in touch with his hairy Wild Man (*Chapter 65*).

His film did save my life, or at least it saved my day. It grabbed me by the balls and wrenched me back out of that slumber of dejection into which we former residents of Manhattan had sunk, back into the flow of life.



Dave (left), KZ (resting on a stack of books)

photo: Refaela