

# **I Guess That's Me (A Reflection)**

**Lee Frank**

# **Limbo**

Copyright © Lee Frank 1998-2003  
All Rights Reserved

[Next Chapter](#)  
[Previous Chapter](#)  
[Table of Contents](#)  
[Memoir Home Page](#)

## Limbo

If these years after college sound empty, they were. The time spent waiting for the Draft was empty. The space of my life, except for Patty, was also empty. The world was empty, except for the time and space Patty and I shared. Being in love, when we were together we lived in our own world. Love was largely an otherworldly experience. The Draft had made my real world unreal. Love was real but it didn't belong in a world filled with the emptiness of the Draft.

The job my father found for me was with a consulting engineer friend. It was a one-man office which made me the Junior Engineer. On this job I learned a few interesting things, went to a number of interesting places, but what was the point? This job was not my future. I had no future. The Draft was a wall, a wall getting bigger every day. On the other side was the unknown, an evil-smelling military swamp. Could I survive passage through the swamp? Would I? The fact that most people did, did not hold any comfort for me. My simple future of college and architecture now appeared over-simplified. The real world, the world of being forced to subject yourself to the control of others, was taking over.

Toward the end of our high school years, I began hanging out with my cousin Ron. Six months younger, we

had played together as children at our parent's convenience. As young adults we rediscovered each other. The fifties were drawing to a close and he was working for IBM in the brand-new profession of computing. Despite his prompting, I wasn't interested. My perception of my future was too clouded to see anything exciting about computing. Not until 1964, and that story appears in the chapter called "Computer Me."



Posed, meaning the relationship is official

What were my interests during this void? Waiting for the Draft, I saw no reason to plan for a vocation. But this joblessness was no vacation. My seemingly empty time—when I wasn't seeing Patty—was filled with reading and writing. Seeking a profession took a back seat to studying philosophy and psychology. What was this world and who was I? Could subjects like sociology and religion reveal any answers? The subjects covered in my three and half years at Rensselaer were barely drops in the bucket I was now filling on my own.

From where I sit as I type this, I can see books on my shelves from that period (paid for by a largely out-of-

## Limbo

work me): *Story of Philosophy* by Will Durant, *History of Philosophical Systems* by Vergilius Ferm, Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*; *Symbolic Logic* and *Philosophy in a New Key* by Suzanne Langer, *Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities* and *The Meeting of East and West* by F.S.C. Northrup, and various books from authors like Beckett, Cummings, Chekov, Stindberg, Sterne, Dostoevsky, Thurber, and Benchley (Robert not his descendants). Within a year, I would buy a set of *The Great Books of the Western World*. I bought it on time, during the same two years I was to spend in the military.)

Looking over this list, I'm sorely tempted to stop writing, stop all my other activities, and spend the rest of my life rereading these wonderful books. And a few hundred on my current unread list. But back to 1959 and my cousin Ron. My study was informal and isolated. How could I know I was making any progress? One way was to test what I knew in the real world. In this case it was a party at Ron's fraternity. I'm talking to this guy who says he's a Sociology major in his junior year. So I ask him for an opinion on Sorokin's *Cultural and Social Dynamics*. Hadn't heard of it. Hadn't heard of Sorokin. I decided my curiosity had some advantages over reading lists from fixed curricula.

But was this curiosity enough? I had no direction for self-education, just a plethora of interests. And increasing interests. As each book revealed a new galaxy of knowledge, I went exploring. Not content to go forward, I returned to topics lost in the confusion of high school. Specifically, I rediscovered Shakespeare. I had the time, being without work and not looking. (I had quit the Junior Engineering job.) To use the military metaphor, I was marching in place, marking time until I was drafted.

I left the junior engineering job, I told myself, because of the verbal abuse this otherwise pleasant, to me and his clients, man hurled upon his wife. (He did this in my presence, discomforting both her and myself.)

Now what? Was I facing the oncoming imminent Draft or was it breathing down my civilian shirt collar? All I recall is confusion. And Patty. If I was in doubt about my future, Patty was downright fearful. This unknown I call my future was, at the time, our future. Patty cried a lot; I tried to reassure her. I told her as much as I hated this military imprisonment, I wouldn't do anything stupid, I would find a way.

[Next Chapter](#)  
[Previous Chapter](#)  
[Table of Contents](#)  
[Memoir Home Page](#)