The Mushroom Cloud

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table. Then he told us to roll our eyeballs upward and backward—“the position of death and peace.” Then, while maintaining this, to close our eyelids over the eyeballs and to exhale just a bit further than usual, then to end the exhalation with a tiny silent sigh. Over and over again he trained us until we could follow the sequence at will. Finally he was satisfied with our performance.

“Now,” said Kima, “I will divulge to you the heart secret of relaxation. The eyeballs backward, the long breathe out, these are essential, but there is this also: You must come to see life as a whole. In my Yoga, the whole is the circle. In my body the circle is my navel. You must then also see life as a whole. Meditate upon your navel.”

Not a damned one of us ever learned to relax the Yoga way. Every time we thought of our navels our eyeballs went down. Kima went back to India. Sometimes I ring the gong for him.

The Mushroom Cloud

One day while walking up the stairs,
By chance I sighted Bart.
With stethoscope in hand and ears
He listened to his heart.

“What kind of music can it be
That holds you so attentively
To this constancy of throbs?”

“You see,” said he
Impatiently,
“I must know if it stops.”

H. DON PHILLIPS