#### MACON COWLES

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It is hard to write across twenty-five years and make an account of myself which stands up well to the dreams that I’ve held so close since the years I’ve spent at Yale. Somewhere between 1972 and 1975 my world became less contemplative, and I became a human doing more than a human being. Work has taken up a lot more time than I wish to admit. Life seems out of balance for that reason. At the midpoint in life, I feel the need for close friends.

I have only one close friend whom I see often—that is my wife. It is a joy to be with this woman to whom I’ve been married now for eleven years. But I would like to expand the circle of friends to match the number and diversity of my friends at Yale. Even as I write these words, it sounds farfetched—something that is not likely to happen until we are much older and have left behind the professions, the jobs, the hustling that is so much a part of midlife. Everyone I know is either in a rush or struggling or both.

Recently, life as an environmental and toxics lawyer has centered on my home. It is there that I do my work, networked with colleagues across the country over phone lines with computers as the entries and work horses. I left the law office two years ago, never to return. Case selection—choosing which clients to serve—uses more demanding criteria when there is not an army of staff to sup- port.

I love working in my organic vegetable garden. I love walking with my wife Regina and our good Dalmatian dog, Hamlet, in the plains and foothills for an hour-and-a-half each day. This is what you can do when working at an office at home. I love the very old and the very new—fountain pens with 18k nibs as well as very fast computers.

I am very good at presenting cases to juries and winning. I choose my cases carefully. I leave to others the soulless work of defending insurance companies and transnational corporations. I will have none of it, and never have. My clients are people whose lives are threatened with toxic waste and citizens groups who are trying to protect the wild places of the earth. I only wish that I were spending as much time enjoying those wild places as I spend protecting them. I think that may be the experience of the next decade.