

SEN

A Story That Grows

A companion book to the family memorial film

“My life is a story that grows.”

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Before We Begin

When I began gathering photographs and stories about my son Ben, who came to use the name Sen, I thought I was assembling a memorial. I expected childhood pictures, some of the adventures we had together, and memories from the people who loved him. What I did not expect was how much I would learn about my own son in the process.

Some of these stories I remember because I was there. Others I have reconstructed from photographs, old correspondence, his writing, and the things his friends have shared. I want the distinction to remain visible. A father can love his son deeply and still discover entire chapters of his life only later.

The film tells the story in images and music. This book has room for the things that cannot fit into a few minutes: the little decisions, the family jokes, the broken machines, the long rides, and the ideas that began taking shape when Ben was still a boy. It is also an invitation for others to add what they remember.

Sen wrote, “My life is a story that grows.” I have come to think of that as more than a line from his writing. It is an appropriate way to approach the story we are still assembling.

1 | Beginnings



1987–early 1990s

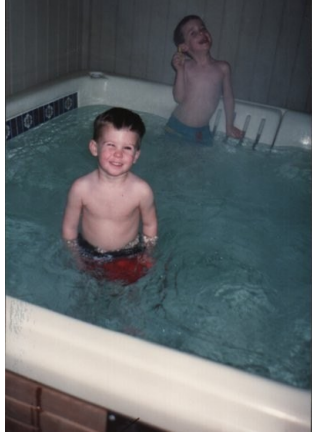
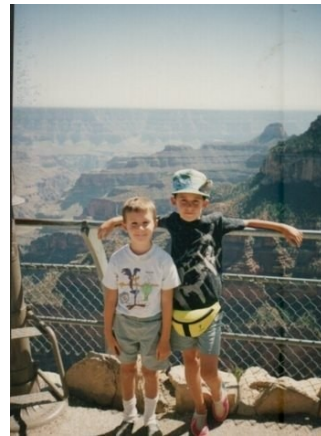




Ben arrived on November 2, 1987, and he did not keep us waiting long once we reached the hospital. Brenda and I made it there only minutes before he was born. Later that evening I brought his older brother, Phil, back so the four of us could be together. I remember that first day as the beginning of a family of four, not as the beginning of any story we could have predicted.



We were living in the Vacaville area. Looking through the early photographs now, I see the familiar landscape of family life: a baby held close, two brothers together, a visit with a grandmother, the boys in the hot tub, and the changing faces of children growing up faster than anyone realizes. None of those pictures was taken with a future memorial in mind. They were simply our life.





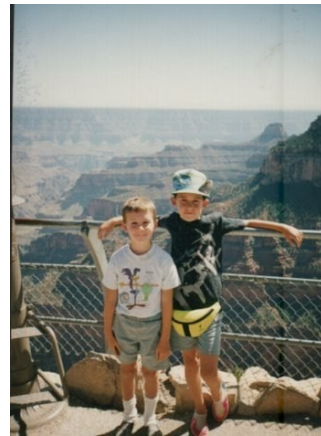
Phil was there from the start. There is a photograph of the two boys from 1988 that says more about their relationship than I can explain in a caption. Brothers share a history that belongs partly to them alone. I saw plenty of that history from the sidelines: the play, the arguments, the discoveries, and the way each one became a reference point in the other's world.

Ben could be quiet in some settings, and there is an early part of his childhood that deserves to be remembered carefully. During roughly his first five years, he had recurring ear infections. I remember school performances when the other children sang and Ben did not seem to join in, as though he could not hear well enough to follow. That is an observation from a parent, not a medical explanation for the person he became. It matters because it was part of what we experienced together.





At home there was nothing quiet about his energy. We already had a hot tub before he was born. Once he was old enough to join Phil and me, a soak could become a vigorous event. I used to compare Ben in the water to a five-horsepower outboard motor. That image still makes me smile. The same little boy who could stand apart from a school performance could fill the hot tub with movement.





Family life changed as the boys grew older. Brenda and I eventually divorced, and our family learned a different set of routines. I do not want to pretend those changes were easy or reduce them to a lesson. They were part of our shared history, and they shaped how we spent time together. Calvin and Hobbes books even found their way into the marriage counseling Brenda and I attended. Years later, a story from those books became the prologue to the memorial film. That connection is personal: the books were part of the language of a family trying to find its way.



When I look at the photographs from these first years, I do not see a future programmer, traveler, or member of an international community. I see Ben. I see Brenda and Phil. I see the small ordinary moments that made up the beginning of his life. Those moments deserve their own place in the story, before we know where any of it will lead.

2 | Raising Two Remarkable Boys



The early and middle 1990s

Looking back on those years, I also want to acknowledge something that deserves far more recognition than I have given it in this story: the extraordinary effort Brenda put into raising our two boys.

The adventures I remember so vividly—the motorcycles, the camping trips, the mechanical projects, and the miles we traveled together—were important parts of Ben's and Phil's childhoods. But those experiences were only part of their upbringing.

Brenda was there for the countless ordinary days that make up the real work of raising children. The responsibilities, the challenges, the encouragement, and the steady commitment required to help two boys grow into independent young men cannot be captured in a handful of photographs.

Our marriage didn't last, but our shared love for Ben and Phil did. Whatever difficulties we experienced along the way, I have always recognized how much Brenda gave of herself to raising them.

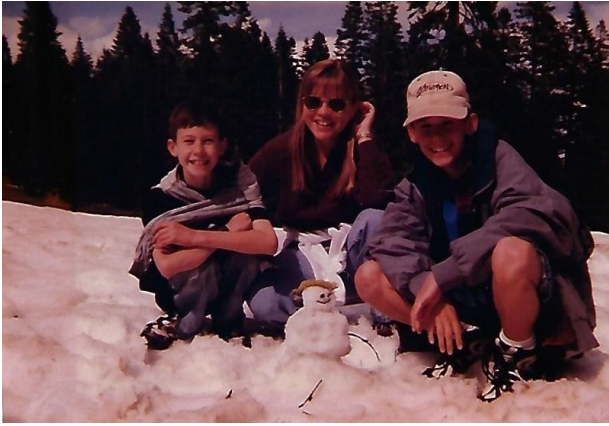
I am enormously proud of both of our sons, and I know that the men they became were shaped in no small measure by their mother's love, dedication, and sacrifices. That is an important part of Ben's story, and it deserves to be told.

After the divorce, the time Phil, Ben, and I spent together acquired a name: the Green Men's Club. It was our private joke, but it also described something real. We had time that belonged to the three of us, and we filled it with projects, machines, rides, and whatever adventure we could manage.



One of the memories that stands out is a holiday trip to Quincy, where we were visiting my mother and stepfather near Snake Lake. We ended up spending hours riding one small motorcycle together. Ben was up front on the gas tank, I steered, and Phil rode behind me. It was an unlikely arrangement, and certainly not something I would present as a model for modern motorcycle safety. But the image remains vivid. Three people on one machine, moving through the mountains, making a family memory that would stay with us.

Looking back, that trip seems like an early expression of what we were becoming. Our family circumstances had changed, but the three of us had found something we could share. The motorcycles gave us a reason to go somewhere, a problem to solve, and a way to spend time together without having to explain what that time meant.



Not long afterward, the boys came to me with an announcement: “Dad, we found a motorcycle.” It was an old Honda Trail 90 at a neighborhood garage sale, more a collection of problems than a working machine. We paid sixty dollars for it. The engine was seized, so we took it apart, worked on freeing the piston, and eventually got it running.





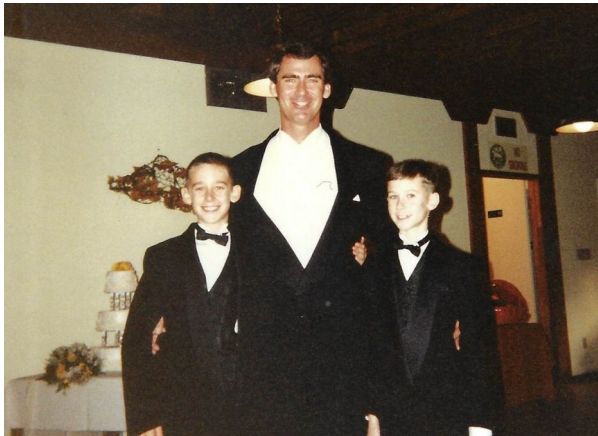
The important part of that story was not the price, or even the motorcycle. It was the process. We did not know at the beginning whether it would work. We had to look closely, take things apart, ask what was wrong, and try again. That was a recurring theme in our household. We learned by doing, sometimes by doing something twice.

Eventually we had more than one small machine. I found a used Suzuki 50cc three-wheeler for Ben and a Honda Mini Trail 50 for Phil. Later Ben moved on to a Yamaha 125 quad. We rode together and took turns leading. Those rides gave the boys room to build confidence and to make decisions of their own, while still being part of a group.



There were plenty of projects away from the trails. In the early 1990s I bought an abandoned house at auction and spent much of the following year cleaning, painting, pouring concrete, and landscaping. The boys grew up around work in progress. A broken thing was not necessarily something to throw away; sometimes it was the beginning of a Saturday project.

Our hot-tub adventures continued too. I remember one shopping trip when I invented a ridiculous story about a time loop while we were looking at new tubs. We left without buying one. Soon afterward we found a larger damaged used hot tub, made the repairs it needed, and put it into service. The story still belongs to the family's collection of jokes and improvisations. I would rather preserve it as that than make it into a grand explanation of Ben's later interests.



Over the years, our family grew and changed. Jennifer was part of some of those earlier memories; later Karon and her daughter Alexis became part of the boys' lives. The Green Men's Club name gradually became less central, but the habit of doing things together did not disappear. The adventures changed shape as the boys got older.

I remember those years not because every outing was exceptional, but because the accumulation of them mattered. There were engines that would not start, cold days outside, laughter in the hot tub, and the satisfaction of getting home after a long ride. I was their father, but I was also lucky enough to be one of the three riders.

3 | Building His Own World



The 1990s–2005

There is an early photograph of Phil and Ben with an IBM computer. I have looked at it many times while working on this book. The machine was an old dual-floppy system I brought home when the boys were small. There were no friendly screens to guide you through everything. You had to know which disk to use, how to load DOS, and what to type. They worked it out.

Ben took to the computer especially well. By the time he was eight or nine, I remember him participating in the early internet, though I still want to reconstruct exactly what he was doing. Later he built increasingly capable computers of his own. That interest was not a sudden adult career choice. It was something I could see growing, even if I did not know where it would take him.

He also enjoyed inventing names. “Neergneb” was Ben Green written backward, a playful identity that stayed with him for years. Around his early teens he adopted “Numtel,” short for “Number Teller,” with the tagline “Are you sure?” That name eventually became familiar to people who knew his software work. I am careful not to make every childhood detail into a prophecy, but there is something wonderfully recognizable about a boy who gave his projects a name and then went on building.



The physical world remained just as interesting to him as the digital one. Our family cabin near Emigrant Gap, purchased in 2002, gave us a base for mountain weekends. There were machines to maintain, trails to explore, fires to sit around, and time for conversations. Ben and Phil were growing older, more capable, and more willing to tackle projects on their own.

One of my favorite examples of their initiative involved an old Toyota four-wheel-drive truck. Ben had a good daily-driver Toyota, and I was not willing to let him cut it apart to build a dedicated off-road machine. So he and Phil found another one: a partly dismantled truck in Los Banos, with an R22 engine, offered for four hundred dollars. They brought the pieces home over a July Fourth weekend and set about rebuilding it.

I remember the moment when the work was nearly done. The engine cranked but would not start. I primed the carburetor with a little gasoline, and suddenly it came to life. After all the effort, hearing that engine run was its own reward. The boys added larger tires, Phil fabricated tube bumpers, and black zebra stripes completed the look. The Zebra Truck was not a polished showroom creation. It was theirs.

That truck marked a step toward independence. The boys were no longer simply watching me repair things. They were choosing projects, finding parts, solving problems, and deciding what to build. My role was changing, which is one of the quieter experiences of being a parent. You hope your children will become capable enough not to need you for every decision, and then you watch it happen.



In June 2004, when Ben was sixteen, we bought an old Toyota FJ40 Land Cruiser. It was red when we acquired it. Before long it was green, with a Chevrolet V8, and it became the center of a more serious period of four-wheeling. The Rubicon Trail and the Sierra Nevada were places where he could test his judgment as well as his equipment. Over time he became experienced enough to help lead others through difficult terrain.

The FJ40 was more than an engineering exercise. It brought Ben into groups of people who shared his interest in doing difficult things outdoors. I can see in those years the combination that would follow him into adulthood: machines, problem-solving, travel, and friendship. But I also know his views changed. Later he thought differently about the environmental impact of off-road recreation. I want the book to make room for that evolution, not freeze him at sixteen.

In 2005 Ben graduated from Will C. Wood High School. Soon he would leave for Chico, meet new people, and encounter ideas that took him far beyond the world we had built together. The next chapter of his life would be increasingly his own. But when I think of those teenage years, I still hear the engine finally starting in the driveway and see two brothers standing beside something they had made work.

4 | A World Beyond



2005–2009





In 2005, Ben graduated from Will C. Wood High School and headed to Chico State. It was the beginning of a larger world, one that included classrooms and new friends, but also the freedom to decide for himself what mattered. He began in Computer Science and ultimately graduated in 2009 with a degree in Political Science. I have wondered what conversations and experiences helped bring about that change. I know better than to pretend I have the whole answer.

The Ben I knew in those years was still connected to the mountains and the machines we had worked on together. His FJ40 Land Cruiser had become a remarkably capable vehicle. The Rubicon Trail was no longer simply a place to visit; he knew its challenges, its people, and the satisfaction of getting a group through a difficult passage. Our family recollection is that he made something like fifteen or twenty trips over the years. The number is less important than the fact that he grew into someone others trusted on the trail.





In researching this book I found a detail that made me smile. In November 2006, when Ben was eighteen, his online account Numtel contributed photographs and descriptive material to Wikipedia's article about the Rubicon Trail. It was such a Ben combination: go out and do something difficult, then come home and help explain it to people who might never have been there.

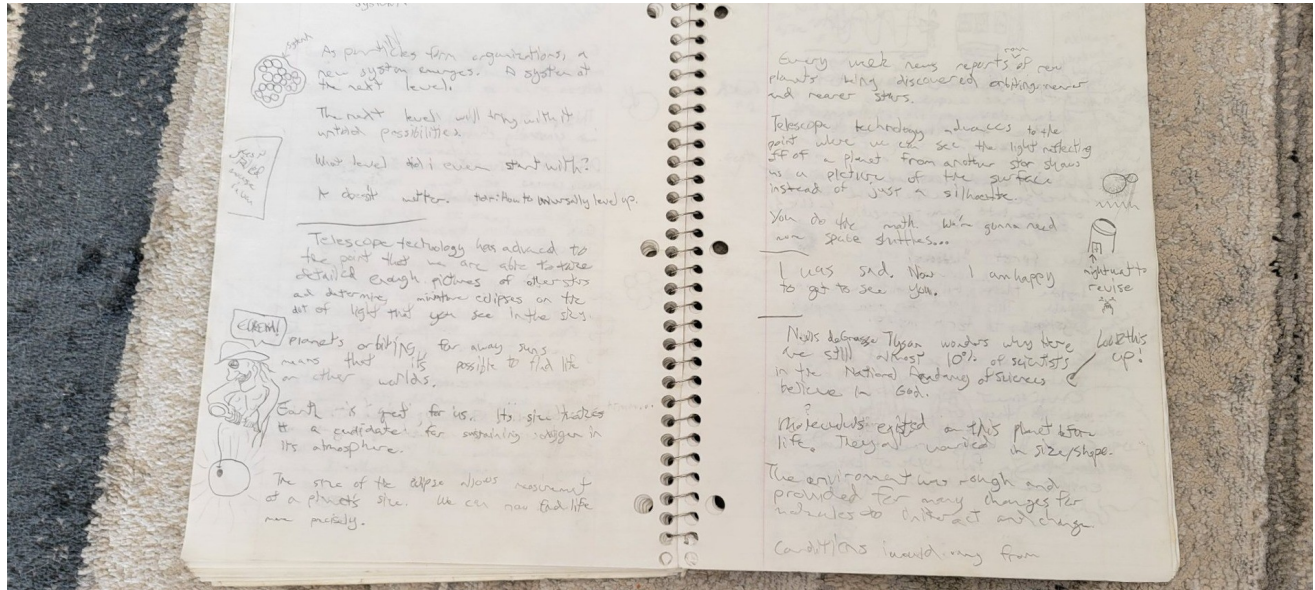


We also rediscovered his early YouTube channel. There he is in the rough and tumble of rock crawling, with footage from the Soup Bowl obstacle and Red Bluff competitions. Hearing those engines again is an entirely different experience from looking at the photographs. Ben's enthusiasm had also inspired me to design and build a motorcycle-powered rock buggy. It was my design and build, and he got to ride in it. I think we both enjoyed the way one person's enthusiasm could send the other off on a new project.

Chico was not all vehicles and outdoor adventures. His own later reflections make clear that he met people who challenged his assumptions and broadened his thinking. Some experiences were difficult, and some remain private. What matters for this chapter is that his horizons were expanding in directions I could not always see from home. He was becoming an adult, and that meant there would be parts of his story that belonged to him before they belonged to any family account.



5 | Finding His Own Way



2009–2011

After Chico, Ben seemed increasingly determined to find out what life looked like beyond the familiar roads of Northern California. In July 2009 he traveled alone in Spain. The emails from that trip are among the things I am grateful we saved. They describe museums, long walks, and climbing in Barcelona, but they also reveal that traveling alone could be expensive and lonely. He eventually asked for help changing his return flight, and I picked him up at San Francisco International Airport on July 22.

I like that story because it is not a polished travel advertisement. He went, learned something about himself, and adjusted his plans. It was a kind of practical independence: not insisting that every decision had been perfect, but making another decision when the circumstances changed.





By then Ben had his Late Night Sketches identity. I am still reconstructing when the website first took shape and what was published there at different times. Even the name suggests the way he worked: ideas arriving at odd hours, sketches and experiments that did not have to be finished before they were worth trying.

His vehicles were changing too. The Zebra Truck had led to the FJ40, and eventually the Land Cruiser gave way to a Volkswagen Westfalia camper. In October 2010 he sold the Westy for \$3,000. In an email about the sale, he described a comically difficult test drive and the van seeming to settle down once he took the wheel. The sale helped support another departure: New Zealand.



By the fall of 2010 he was arranging a room in Christchurch and explaining that he could do his work from a laptop, provided he could get an internet connection several days a week. That sounds commonplace today. At twenty-two, it was a meaningful choice about how to live. In New Zealand he climbed, built things, and continued working remotely. In January 2011 he described helping with a climbing wall and exploring routes at Payne's Ford.

I see the same boy who once helped us free a seized motorcycle piston, only now the problems were his to choose and the world had become much larger. I missed some of those adventures. But I can still hear his curiosity in the emails.

From: "Ben Green" <ben@section525.com>
To: "Brenda Fletcher" <BrendaF@fsusd.k12.ca.us>
Date: 2/29/08 1:53PM
Subject: Re: Happy Friday!!!!

My bike ride was great. I rode up to Bear hole and started reading another Kurt Vonnegut book. I can't focus on reading very well after riding though so I only made it through 30 pages before I decided to get back on the bike and ride back. The ride itself wasn't so eventful but one the way back, I couldn't stop looking at the pool at 1 mile. As I rode by all I could think of was how fun it would be to jump in. I ended up just riding by and then making the turn back towards home.

At that point I was thinking in my head of a very important quote from one of my Vonnegut books, "Do one thing everyday that scares you." I turned that bike around and rode straight over to the side of the pool. I knew that if I hesitated at all I wasn't going to be able to jump in. I ripped everything out of my pockets, threw off my shoes and jumped in. I had totally forgotten that it was only 5 feet deep. Nobody else was in the pool and I could tell that they were shocked that I had jumped in. I was only in for a very short amount of time. The current was moving so by the time I got back over to the edge, I had moved downstream about 10 feet. It was pretty much the best choice ever.

It was so good in fact that it encouraged another guy who was there to jump in. He told me that he had been walking by everyday for weeks wanting to jump in. After he saw me do it, he did a flip into the pool.

Being soaked with water made the ride home much cooler. That was nice.

Phil's birthday is next weekend? I guess so. I was talking to my dad and he was saying that there's an autocross race on Saturday. I told him that we should go down there so Phil can race his car for the first time. It's a lot of fun and I kind of want to do it too.

I don't have any plans for spring break. Everything kind of hinges on the state of my cruiser. If it's ready to wheel, I'll probably try to get a trip to the Rubicon together. If not, I'll be working on it.

Karon receives newsletters that contain ads for these internships. She has been keeping me updated with ones that she feels I may be interested in. I hope one of them works out.

Next year, I only have 5 units of Political Science classes left so I have been trying to pick a minor. Karon suggested Communications and I really thought that would be a good one after looking at the courses required. It includes classes that are related to politics and would offer good communications skills. But, in my Central American Politics class this week, some students gave a presentation on a program where you take Latin American studies classes for 10 weeks and then go down to Merida, Mexico for the last 6 weeks of the semester to stay with a family and do volunteer work at schools or at a business or whatever. It sounded really cool and they said that even if you don't speak Spanish too well you will pick it up in no time. I took one of pamphlets and I have to sign up by April 18, so I better do some more research and talk to my dad about paying for it pretty soon here.

6 | Finding His Voice

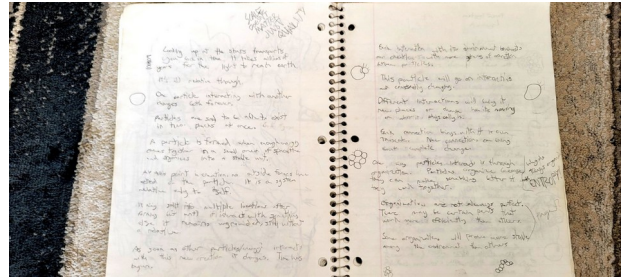
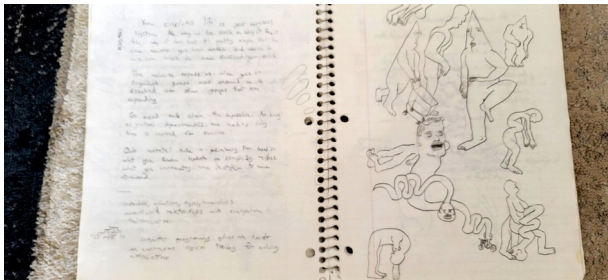


2011 and the years that followed

Ben's degree in Political Science was one sign of his interest in how people organize their lives. In 2011 that interest moved out of the classroom and into public life. He was in Washington, D.C., during the Keystone XL protests and became involved in Occupy Wall Street in New York. In his later writing he remembered discovering what it meant to speak up with other people who were questioning how power and opportunity were distributed.

There is a temptation to reduce a person's political life to a label. I do not want to do that. Ben was curious about institutions, technology, money, and the possibilities of people cooperating in new ways. His ideas evolved. What I recognize is the willingness to ask why something had to be done a certain way, and whether there might be a better way.

His life in that period was also remarkably mobile. In June 2011 he wrote from Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he was staying temporarily, visiting people, and figuring out how to travel with fewer possessions. He was mailing books home because his load had become too heavy. That small detail makes me laugh. Even a young man who wanted to travel light could accumulate books and ideas faster than he could carry them.



We are mad as hell that the world is as fucked up as it is by corporations!

The few who control wealth have bought off our Democratically elected leadership, surpassing their ability to listen to us—THE PEOPLE!

We don't have money but we are strong if we join up together!

OCCUPY WALL ST

Join us in our resistance against

- Environmental Destruction
- Capitalist Greed
- Corporate Personhood



**JOIN US NOW
AT ZUCCOTTI
PARK!**

Money, it has been said, has taken over politics. In truth, we say, money has always been part of the capitalist political system. A system based on the existence of have and have nots, where inequality is inherent to the system, will inevitably lead to a situation where the haves find a way to rule, whether by the sword or by the dollar.

We need to address the core facts: these corporations, even if they were unable to compete in the electoral arena, would still retain control of money. They would retain economic control, which would allow them to retain political control. Term limits would, again, not solve this, as money in the political class already leave politics to find themselves as part of the corporate elites.

Another discovery was his early interest in Bitcoin. I knew he had become involved with it near the beginning, but the exact dates and projects deserve careful verification. What is clear is that he saw technology as more than a way to make a living. He was interested in how systems work and in what happens when people are able to participate without relying entirely on traditional gatekeepers.

I do not claim that I agreed with or understood every position Ben took. Our relationship included differences of opinion, as most relationships between fathers and adult sons do. I am grateful that we kept enough correspondence for me to return to his words now. They help me see a young man trying to make sense of the world in his own way.

7 | The Long Way South



2015–2016

One of the adventures I most enjoy revisiting is Ben’s long bicycle journey with his friend Ruby. She had begun her trip in Seattle, and Ben joined her in Northern California. Together they traveled south through Mexico and Central America and eventually reached Colombia. Even now, when I look at the map, I am struck by how much ground they covered under their own power.

The photographs show roads, towns, hills, and the ordinary arrangements of travel. The messages tell us more. In November 2015 Ben wrote about southern Mexico, the mountains and coast, and the people and places they were encountering. In December he wrote from Panama about steep climbs, mechanical problems, waterfalls, and help from strangers. A bicycle trip leaves very little distance between a traveler and the place he is traveling through. Weather, a broken part, or a generous person can change the whole day.

I had spent years exploring the Sierra with Ben in machines that could climb over rocks. Here he was using a bicycle to move through countries I had never visited. The method had changed, but I recognized the appetite for experience. He did not seem satisfied to know a place from a screen or a guidebook. He wanted to see what it felt like to be there.



The journey also included frightening events. Our family remembers an ambush in Colombia and the eventual return to California. I want to be careful with that part of the story. I will not turn it into an adventure tale at the expense of what Ben and Ruby actually experienced. Where possible, their own accounts should be allowed to speak for themselves.

What I hope readers take from these pages is not a tally of miles or countries. It is the image of Ben moving through the world with curiosity, meeting people, solving the day's problems, and learning something that could not have been learned by staying home.

8 | Building and Questioning

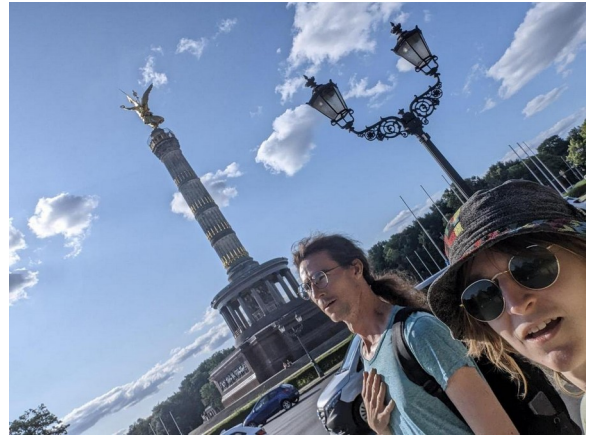


From the early internet to professional software

As we gathered material for this memorial, I kept encountering the name Numtel. I knew it was Ben's online identity. I had not understood just how long he had been using it, or how much work he had left behind under that name. One programming-forum account was registered in April 2000, when he was twelve. In a January 2002 exchange he joked about a duck avatar. It is a tiny piece of internet history, but it feels like a glimpse of the boy behind the keyboard.

That boy had started with an old IBM computer in our house, learning to load programs from floppy disks. Years later he was publishing tools for other programmers. His npm developer profile listed twenty-eight JavaScript packages when we examined it for this project. His portfolio records web applications, database tools, and presentations. I have spent time trying to understand what some of those projects do. I am not a software engineer, and some of the terminology is unfamiliar, but the pattern is familiar: Ben saw a problem and wanted to build something that addressed it.

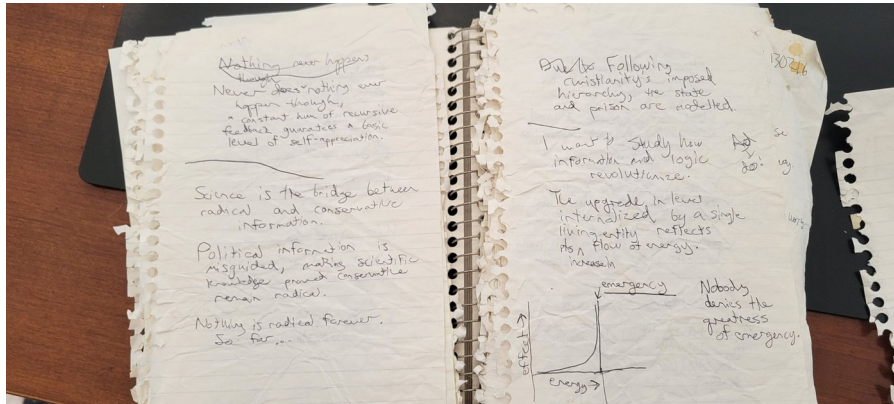
His notebooks show a similar habit outside programming. Pages from around 2010 contain diagrams and questions about energy, science, living systems, and information. They are not finished papers, and I do not want to present them as if they were. They are the work of someone thinking on paper, following one possibility into another.



In 2023, a Hacker News post under his developer identity described interests in Ethereum-compatible applications, proof of personhood, and ways to prevent one person from creating many false online identities. I had to look up some of those terms. That is one of the unexpected gifts of making this book: I am still learning from my son.

I hope we can preserve some of his technical presentations as videos on the memorial website. A paragraph I write about his work will never be the same as hearing him explain a project himself. The code, the recordings, the sketches, and the jokes all belong in the archive. Together they show the person who made them.

9 | Connections



2022–2025

The more I learn about Ben's later work, the more I understand that technology was also a way he found people. His interest in Bitcoin and decentralized systems led him toward communities of developers, researchers, and people who were trying to imagine different ways of organizing trust and cooperation. He attended hackathons, traveled to gatherings, and contributed to conversations that crossed national borders.



I have been piecing this period together from emails, online work, and messages from friends. There were projects and collaborations I had never heard of, and people who knew him through a particular idea or event rather than through his family history. Each new account adds another angle to the picture.

In 2024, he was involved in the DWeb community, a gathering of people interested in a more open and decentralized internet. He also moved among technical communities in Europe and elsewhere. His travels took him to places such as Brussels, Thailand, and New York, although I am still sorting out the dates and the particular people in each photograph.

I have learned not to assume that the people in a photograph were simply traveling companions. Some were collaborators. Some were friends who shared a particular interest. Some were people who made him feel welcome in a new city. I want their memories in this book where they are willing to share them, because they knew parts of Ben that I did not.



It is easy to think of a programmer as someone sitting alone in front of a screen. The record Ben left behind suggests something more social. He built software, but he also built connections. He was drawn to people who were excited about ideas, and he seemed willing to go a long way to join a conversation that interested him.

10 | Infinite Possibilities

2024–2025

By 2024 and 2025, Ben’s life stretched across places and communities that would once have seemed very far from our family home. There were photographs from European cities, time in Thailand, friendships formed through technology, and new interests that had little to do with computers. He was climbing, traveling, cooking, learning, and making connections.



Some of the photographs I find most moving are the ordinary ones: a smile in front of a landmark, a meal, a group of friends, or Ben looking at the camera without trying to make anything of the moment. We have pictures from Berlin and elsewhere that still need accurate dates and identifications. I would rather wait for the right caption than guess.

He also came to use the name Sen. I want to respect that choice and the person he was becoming. In the early chapters of this book I call him Ben, because that is how I knew him as a child and how the family stories were told. In these later chapters I use Sen where it reflects the name he chose. Both names are part of the history we are preserving.

His interest in climbing became an important part of his life in London. We have photographs of him with friends at the climbing gym and messages about the people he met there. It is a reminder that even a life filled with digital work is lived through bodies, places, and shared experiences. You can see the pleasure of belonging in some of those photographs.



I have been surprised by how much of Sen's adult life I am still discovering. That is not a reason to fill the blanks with my own explanations. It is a reason to ask questions, listen to his friends, and preserve what they can tell us. He was not finished exploring who he wanted to be. The title of this chapter reflects that openness.

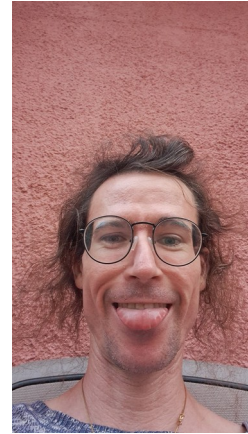
11 | The Life He Was Building



2025–2026

When I think about Sen's final year, I try not to view it only through the knowledge that he died in April 2026. That knowledge changes the way every photograph looks, but it does not change what the photograph meant when it was taken. He was living his life. He had people he cared about, projects he was considering, and places he still wanted to go.

In the months before his death, our family experienced moments of reconnection. There were messages and conversations that meant a great deal to us. I am grateful for them, and I also want to respect their privacy. Some of the most important things between people do not need to be reproduced word for word to be acknowledged.



His writing from early 2026 shows him reflecting on the experiences that shaped him, including Chico and the friendships and ideas that came into his life there. He was still thinking about cities, technology, community, and the ways people can make a meaningful life together. He had plans and possibilities ahead of him. I do not want to turn those into promises about what would have happened, but I do want readers to know that his story was still moving forward.

Sen died in London at thirty-eight. Nothing I write will make that fact less painful. But I have come to believe that the ending of his life should not become the center of the story we tell about him. The center is the boy who could not leave a machine alone, the brother who shared so many adventures with Phil, the young man who went looking for the world, and the adult whose work and friendships reached farther than I understood.



After his death, people began sending us stories from places I had never visited. At DWeb Camp in 2026, friends made room for his memory in their gathering. His photograph was carried to a closing fire, and people spoke, played music, and remembered him. I was moved to learn that the communities he had joined were finding their own ways to honor him.

We cannot know what he would have built next. We can preserve what he did build, listen to the people who knew him, and leave room for the parts of the story that are still coming to light.

Epilogue | A Story That Grows



What remains, and what continues

When I began collecting photographs for this memorial, I thought I knew most of my son's story. I had been his dad for thirty-eight years. I knew the little boy in the hot tub, the brother who rode motorcycles with Phil, the teenager building trucks, and the man who sometimes sent a message from a city halfway around the world. But every week seemed to bring something I had not known.

There were old videos of him driving the Rubicon. There were pages of code and recordings of presentations. There were photographs of friends whose names I was only beginning to learn, and stories from people whose lives had intersected with his for an afternoon or for years.

None of those discoveries replaces my memories of Ben. They make the picture larger. The film we have assembled gives our family a way to sit together and remember. This book gives us room to tell the stories behind those images. The website can hold the videos, the writings, and the memories that arrive after these pages are printed.

I hope this is a book people can return to, not because it has the last word about Sen, but because it offers a beginning. I hope Phil, Brenda, Karon, and the people who loved him will recognize the Ben they knew, and perhaps learn something about the Sen others knew.

He left us a sentence that has become the center of this project: "My life is a story that grows." The story is still growing, in every person who remembers him.

Appendix | Following Ben's Digital Trail

A short guide for family readers

Ben used the name Numtel online for many years. His surviving public portfolio, programming profiles, archived discussions, and video recordings provide a remarkable record of what he was learning and building. They also help explain why so many of his friendships grew out of technical communities.

Bitcoin is a digital currency and payment network that does not depend on a single central operator to keep its ledger. A blockchain is one way of maintaining a shared record among participants. Ethereum and related systems extend those ideas to programs that can run on shared networks. These are simplified descriptions, but they provide a starting point for readers unfamiliar with the field.

Some of Ben's later interests involved privacy, identity, and the question of how people can cooperate online without giving up unnecessary control over their personal information. Terms such as "proof of personhood" and "zero-knowledge proofs" arise in this work. The first concerns ways to establish that a participant is a real, distinct person; the second concerns proving a fact without disclosing all the underlying information.

This appendix is not a technical biography and should not be taken as a list of everything Sen believed or created. It is a reading guide. For the fuller record, the memorial website will link to his original work where it remains available and appropriate to share.