The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.  

— George Bernard Shaw, *Maxims for Revolutionists*

Y ears ago, when I lived on the outskirts of Las Vegas, I used to go for rambling drives on winding back roads through the surrounding desert. There were few manmade sights to break the eerie landscape of rough brush and scorched hill, but occasionally I’d see a weathered old home, the walls often decorated with nailed-up animal bones and dirty hubcaps, with usually a bashed-up pickup truck somewhere to complete the picture. No other homes in sight, not a store within 30 miles. Just the rabbits for company. Who lived out there; what were they thinking?

Maybe something along these lines:  

“in this sunlit desolation of rock and thorn, where the sun beats down through an unending march of days and desert silence … we can spread freely the net of our minds to gather those priceless, fundamental stirrings of the infinite which are most easily come by when one is close to nature. Our thoughts are our own, to weigh, digest to evaluate … we are spared the constant thought and innate barbarians … not equal to the job of coping with modern life the South family endured while living atop Ghost Mountain."

Over a period of years, South built an adobe home and a series of outbuildings and water catchments on top of his empire. He dubbed his home “Yaquitepec,” which means “hill of the Yaqui” after the fierce Indians of Sonora, Mexico. From 1939 to 1947, he wrote a series of monthly essays—102 articles in all—for *Desert Magazine*, a popular Southern California publication. His pieces chronicled observations on the lives of ants, coyotes and lizards, how to cook tortillas on an iron roof, the discovery of archeological sites, artifacts and petroglyphs, the firing of pottery from dug clay, the search for water, fuel and food, and perhaps most interesting, his reflections on family life, for during his long sojourn on the mountain, he and his wife raised three children, home-schooling them, and even making their clothing from desert scavengings.

That is, when anyone wore any clothing. South was an enthusiastic nudist and his children followed suit, though his wife never became comfortable with the constant state of undress. In Diana Lindsay’s *Marshals South and the Ghost Mountain Chronicles*, which also contains all of the *Desert Magazine* articles and poems South wrote, there are many photographs of the children at play, and attending to their schooling or chores, all unencumbered by clothes or many “modern” possessions and conventions. Lots of us know full well that our striving is futile and the more we get the heavier the load, but convention and modern life has so cast its spell upon us that we can’t pull away from it. So we escape through Marshal South. He does the things we would like to do … he lives our dream life for us … and boy we are going to him and miss him terribly. Do try to get him back.

“Of course, I sometimes wonder if Marshal South really is a person, and if he actually does live up there on his unpronounceable mountain … But whether fictional or real, for heaven’s sake keep him going. We are going to be plumb lost without him.”

Byam, of course, had founded Airstream and been producing the silver bullets for a number of years at that point, and he had developed a pretty strong sense of himself and his own place in the world. However, materials shortages during World War II would soon force him to close down Airstream and work in the mushrooming California aircraft industry. Byam was never comfortable working for others, and his return to the helm of Airstream after war’s end must have been of considerable relief.

What’s notable about Byam’s praise of South (besides the fact that the tone and language of their writings have some parallels) is that there were a number of strong correlations in their histories and their personalities. Byam was born seven years later than South, in Baker, Oregon. (Fittingly, for the designer of an American icon, Byam was born on the Fourth of July.) Even as a youth, Byam was a published (at age 15) newspaper stories and articles, and that dodge was later employed by his entire family, who all changed names and dates—ostensibly to hide their tracks from a pursuing father—on most of the official documents signed when Richard’s mother took him away and the family from the United States, finally settling in Southern California.

Later, after a number of pen names, Richards settled on Marshal South, an appropriately Western name that suited the young man’s self-image, a kind of cowboy artist constantly reinventing himself. It was probably a combination of South’s temperament, the bleak prospects of the Depression and perhaps his reading of other natural living and lifestyle movements in the US, but South conceived that he could break his independence and his young wife Tanya and homestead on the Bureau of Land Management property that later became Arza-Borrego, land without structure or sustenance, land with no water in sight.

And South never wanted it easy there: no sitting in the flats near any roads; no electricity; no hot, he had to be on the top of Ghost Mountain, up a hard, boulder-strewn, one-mile trek that climbs 1,200 feet above the nearest road. As he wrote in a *Saturday Evening Post* article in 1939, he and his family were “… temperamental misfits and innate barbarians … not equal to the job of coping with modern high power civilization.”

“All the way through my youth I was a will-o’-the-wisp in my retreat from society, yet curiously interested in the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”

— George Bernard Shaw, *Maxims for Revolutionists*

Y ears ago, when I lived on the outskirts of Las Vegas, I used to go for rambling drives on winding back roads through the surrounding desert. There were few manmade sights to break the eerie landscape of rough brush and scorched hill, but occasionally I’d see a weathered old home, the walls often decorated with nailed-up animal bones and dirty hubcaps, with usually a bashed-up pickup truck somewhere to complete the picture. No other homes in sight, not a store within 30 miles. Just the rabbits for company. Who lived out there; what were they thinking?

Maybe something along these lines:  

“in this sunlit desolation of rock and thorn, where the sun beats down through an unending march of days and desert silence … we can spread freely the net of our minds to gather those priceless, fundamental stirrings of the infinite which are most easily come by when one is close to nature. Our thoughts are our own, to weigh, digest to evaluate … we are spared the constant thought and innate barbarians … not equal to the job of coping with modern life the South family endured while living atop Ghost Mountain."

Over a period of years, South built an adobe home and a series of outbuildings and water catchments on top of his empire. He dubbed his home “Yaquitepec,” which means “hill of the Yaqui” after the fierce Indians of Sonora, Mexico. From 1939 to 1947, he wrote a series of monthly essays—102 articles in all—for *Desert Magazine*, a popular Southern California publication. His pieces chronicled observations on the lives of ants, coyotes and lizards, how to cook tortillas on an iron roof, the discovery of archeological sites, artifacts and petroglyphs, the firing of pottery from dug clay, the search for water, fuel and food, and perhaps most interesting, his reflections on family life, for during his long sojourn on the mountain, he and his wife raised three children, home-schooling them, and even making their clothing from desert scavengings.

That is, when anyone wore any clothing. South was an enthusiastic nudist and his children followed suit, though his wife never became comfortable with the constant state of undress. In Diana Lindsay’s *Marshals South and the Ghost Mountain Chronicles*, which also contains all of the *Desert Magazine* articles and poems South wrote, there are many photographs of the children at play, and attending to their schooling or chores, all unencumbered by clothes or many “modern” possessions and conventions. Lots of us know full well that our striving is futile and the more we get the heavier the load, but convention and modern life has so cast its spell upon us that we can’t pull away from it. So we escape through Marshal South. He does the things we would like to do … he lives our dream life for us … and boy we are going to him and miss him terribly. Do try to get him back.

“Of course, I sometimes wonder if Marshal South really is a person, and if he actually does live up there on his unpronounceable mountain … But whether fictional or real, for heaven’s sake keep him going. We are going to be plumb lost without him.”

Byam, of course, had founded Airstream and been producing the silver bullets for a number of years at that point, and he had developed a pretty strong sense of himself and his own place in the world. However, materials shortages during World War II would soon force him to close down Airstream and work in the mushrooming California aircraft industry. Byam was never comfortable working for others, and his return to the helm of Airstream after war’s end must have been of considerable relief.

What’s notable about Byam’s praise of South (besides the fact that the tone and language of their writings have some parallels) is that there were a number of strong correlations in their histories and their personalities. Byam was born seven years later than South, in Baker, Oregon. (Fittingly, for the designer of an American icon, Byam was born on the Fourth of July.) Even as a youth, Byam was a published (at age 15) newspaper stories and articles, and that dodge was later employed by his entire family, who all changed names and dates—ostensibly to hide their tracks from a pursuing father—on most of the official documents signed when Richard’s mother took him away and the family from the United States, finally settling in Southern California.

Later, after a number of pen names, Richards settled on Marshal South, an appropriately Western name that suited the young man’s self-image, a kind of cowboy artist constantly reinventing himself. It was probably a combination of South’s temperament, the bleak prospects of the Depression and perhaps his reading of other natural living and lifestyle movements in the US, but South conceived that he could break his independence and his young wife Tanya and homestead on the Bureau of Land Management property that later became Arza-Borrego, land without structure or sustenance, land with no water in sight.

And South never wanted it easy there: no sitting in the flats near any roads; no electricity; no hot, he had to be on the top of Ghost Mountain, up a hard, boulder-strewn, one-mile trek that climbs 1,200 feet above the nearest road. As he wrote in a *Saturday Evening Post* article in 1939, he and his family were “… temperamental misfits and innate barbarians … not equal to the job of coping with modern high power civilization.”

“All the way through my youth I was a will-o’-the-wisp in my retreat from society, yet curiously interested in the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”

— George Bernard Shaw, *Maxims for Revolutionists*
traveler, moving through the countryside with his grandfather’s mule train; later, still an adolescent, he was a shepherd, roughing it with only his flock and his sleeping mat for company—strong hints that perhaps the wanderer’s lifestyle was a natural one for him. Consider also, the matter of shifting identities. Byam’s mother was separated early on from her husband, remarrying a man named Dale Davis. During his high school and Stanford University years, he was known as Wallace Davis, graduating from Stanford in 1921 under that name. During his early business years, he was Wallace M. Byam; he adopted the less intimidating “Wally Byam” later on.

As he wrote in a Saturday Evening Post article in 1939, he and his family were “...temperamental misfits and innate barbarians ... not equal to the job of coping with modern high power civilization.”

Mountain was not the central story. The divorce and separation from his children was said to have dramatically affected him, and he died of a heart condition in October of 1948. Tanya lived nearly 50 years longer, dying in 1997. Her few public declarations about the life on Ghost Mountain were very bitter, and she destroyed a manuscript she wrote about the experience after her daughter told her to soften its harshness.

After South’s death, Randall Henderson, the editor of Desert Magazine wrote:

“He was a dreamer—an impractical visionary according to the standards of our time, but what a drab world it would be without the dreamers. Marshall’s tragedy was that he tried too hard to fulfill his dream. He would not compromise. And that is fatal in a civilization where life is a never-ending new struggle.”

While Airstreams became one of the most recognizable products in the world, South’s writings and handiworks went out of print, or were destroyed, some deliberately, some by accidental fire. South said he went to the desert “… to break the mould, ... not only freeing myself from the shackles of a system of existence which is drugged and paralysed with error and convention, but to give opportunity to several other souls to grow up in an atmosphere and environment in which they would not be afraid to think for themselves.” Indeed, much of his time on the mountain was a rich experience, and indeed he achieved many of his goals of self-subistence and communion with the wilder side of life. But many of his dreams were unfulfilled, or actualized only within the very narrow sphere of his remote life. Two uncommon men, whose times and thoughts overlapped in significant ways. Byam’s dreams had a public scale, and as Airstream itself says of him in their website bio, “Wally Byam’s meticulous attention to quality would prove crucial.” South’s artistry was expressed in hand-hewn pottery, paintings and poetic language that he released in little drifts on prevailing winds—he probably abandoned more dreams than he shared. Byam’s artistry was expressed in design excellence and direct exchanges—and exhilarating journeys—with the customers of that design excellence. For lovers of the Airstream, Wally Byam’s ability to deliver what his customers wanted has made all the difference.

As the沙漠的居民,他们过着一种与世隔绝的生活。南和他的家人说：“……情绪化和不和谐的天性与我们的时代不相符合。”山并不是故事的中心。离婚和与孩子们的分离据说对他产生了影响，他于1948年10月死于心脏病。Tanya活了将近50年，1997年去世。她最公开的声明关于在鬼山的生活是痛苦的，她毁掉了写关于经历的书，告诉女儿要软化内容来避免伤害。