

Dear Family and Friends,

I have gone, for which I am sorely sorry to those who remain. Please know that I never feared this day for my own sake, and looked forward, without urgency, to the καλὸς κίνδυνος death offers. I am sorry that I did not have a chance to say goodbye, but I loved all of you and was always grateful for your care.

I hoped to update this letter later to represent the important personal words of a [Life Review Letter](#), but in the meantime I have what I wrote first, which is the single-page synopsis of my life that I wish I had of all those who came before me.

I, James Albert Rising, was born September 17, 1981 in California, USA, the son of Kathy Mary Michelsen (b. June 10, 1958) and James Reed Rising (b. May 8, 1957, d. August 6, 1991), married May 5, 1979. I lived with them and my sister, Elizabeth Mary Rising (b. November 12, 1981) in Tujunga, CA, Redwood Valley, CA, and then also with Joseph Nardoni (b. May 13, 1958) in Lowell, MA.

My 6th grade math teacher encouraged me to skip ahead in math, which I pursued with summer classes until high school, where I took AP Calculus as a freshman. My father introduced me to Bulletin Board Systems, and after he died, I inherited his Mac Plus computer and taught myself my first programming language, HyperCard, and made interactive games. My greatest strengths are my self-control, capacity to adapt, supportive unconscious, industriousness, and creativity.

I attended MIT (1999 - 2003, BS in Philosophy) where I was a member of the Experimental Study Group, the Society for Creative Anachronism, and Random Hall. While there, Lee Perlman and Vanessa Layne had lasting impacts on me. After college, I joined the Harvard Square Rocky Horror Picture Show.

I taught at Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering (2003 - 2005), practiced software development (2005 - 2010), attended Columbia University for a Ph.D. (2010 - 2015, Ph.D. in Sustainable Development), and researched at UC Berkeley (2015 - 2017), the University of Chicago (2017), and the London School of Economics (2018 - present).

I began dating Johanna Goetzel (b. January 17, 1984) on January 23, 2009 in Belém, Brazil, proposed to her on March 19, 2013 in Ostuni, Italy, and married her on May 28, 2017 in Wellfleet, MA.

I enjoyed convening learning experiences and organized seminars on Lego Robotics (2000 - 2003), Technologies and Cultures (2003 - 2004), Human System Dynamics (2005), and Complexity Science (2014 - 2015). I also organized the Crossroads Faire event (2003), a Cambridge Salon (2006 - 2008), the SusDeveR Conference (2016). I enjoy tabletop role-playing and hiking.

I research climate change impacts (Hsiang, Kopp, Jina, Rising 2017), marine protected areas, coffee sustainability, water management, and food systems. The projects I am proudest of are the Axis & Allies Equation (1997), the Rock Band talking evaluator (2005), the Travelers Network (2007 - 2009), and the Virsona Chatbot Engine (2008), and the Distributed Meta-Analysis System (2014 - 2017). I also bequeath my [Picture Gallery](#) and [Genealogy Trees](#).

I was a pragmatist or rationalist, believing strongly in truth-telling and structuring one's life to do good. My dearest thoughts are that (1) we each have God within us, and that core has and will live lives unending; (2) romantic love, psychedelic drugs, travel and engineering bring us in touch with that God; (3) our unconscious minds are intelligent and deserves love; (4) science should be deeply empirical as an exercise for our souls; (5) the future of social science demands a new understanding of modeling; (6) my work should pursue ecocentric worldchanging and actionable complexity; and (7) artificial intelligence is our descendant which we must raise to appreciate diversity.

Other people who had a strong impact on me include my grandparents, aunts and uncles, Jim Bliss, Martha Iarrapino, Peter Dourmashkin, Claudia Gold, Upmanu Lall, Solomon

Hsiang. I am indebted to the authors of the Moon is a Harsh Mistress, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, as well as Milton Erickson and Dan Carlin.