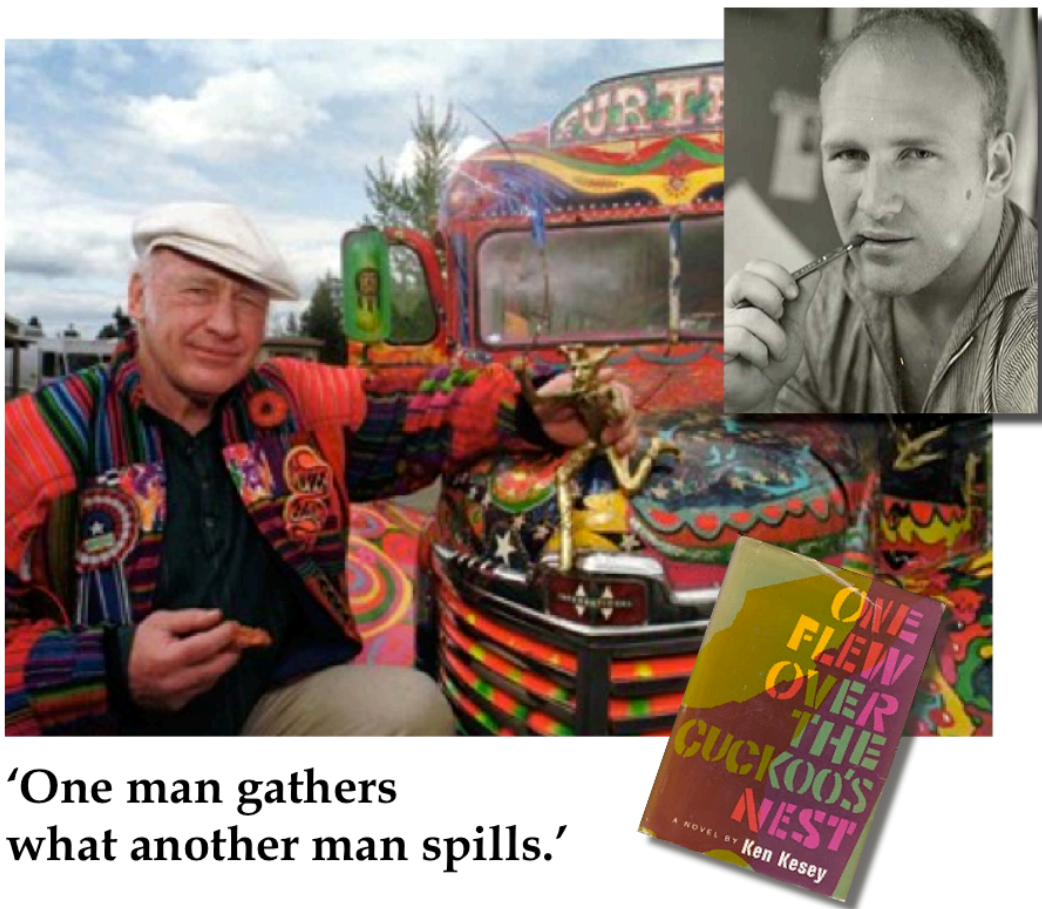


The use and misuse of emotion. Section 2: the emotional fundraising showcase.

2.8

Every parent's worst nightmare.

By Ken Kesey.



**'One man gathers
what another man spills.'**

Ken Kesey wrote *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* and drove the magic bus. This extract from a letter to friends and family was written raise funds for a memorial to his son Jed, shortly after Jed was fatally injured coming back from a sports meeting.

The phone rang in the nurses' quarters. It was the doctor, for me. He had just appraised all the latest readouts on the monitors. 'Your son is essentially dead, Mr. Kesey. I'm very sorry.'

And the sorrow rung absolutely honest. Then the doctor asked a strange thing. He wanted to know what kind of kid Jed was. Zane and I both demanded what he meant. He said he was wondering how Jed would have felt about being an organ donor. Our hearts both jumped.

"He would love it! Jed's always been as generous as they come. Take whatever you can use!"

The doctor waited for our elation to ease down, then told us that to take the kidneys they had to take them before the life support was turned off. Did we understand? After a while we told him we did.

So Faye and I had to sign five copies apiece, on a cold formica countertop, while the machine pumped out the little 'beep...beep...beep...' in the dim tangle of technology behind us. In all my life, waking and dreaming, I've never imagined anything harder.

Everybody went in and told him goodbye, kissed his broken nose, shook his hand, squeezed his big old hairy foot...headed down the corridor. ... We'd all been up for about 40 hours, either in the chapel praying like maniacs, or at his bedside talking to him. We didn't know if we could sleep.

Chuck and I walked back to the intensive care ward to ask. All the doctors were there, bent over a long list, phoning numbers, matching blood types, ordering nurses...in such a hurry they hardly had time to offer sympathy. Busy, and justly so. But the nurses, the nurses bent over their clipboards, could barely see to fill out the forms.

They phoned the hotel about an hour later to tell us it was over, and that the kidneys were in perfect shape. That was about four in the morning. They phoned again a little after six to say that the kidneys were already in two young somebodies.

What a world.

We've heard since that they used twelve things out of him, including corneas. And the redwinged blackbirds sing in the budding greengage plumtree.

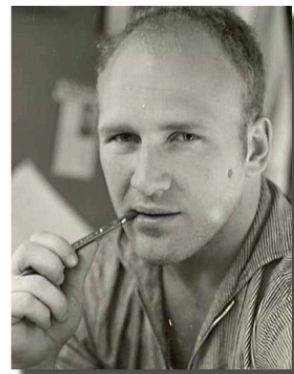
With love,

Ken

P.S. When Jed's wallet was finally sorted out of the debris and confusion of the wreck it was discovered that he had already provided for such a situation. He had signed the place on his driver's license indicating that he wanted to be an organ donor in the event of etc., etc.

One man gathers what another man spills.

Every parent's worst nightmare...



**'And the
red-winged
blackbirds sing
in the budding
greengage plum tree.'**

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With thanks to Ken Kesey. Fundraisers should make no apology for telling you such a difficult story.

Our donors can't be with us at times like these. So it's our job to take them there, in words and pictures, with power, passion and feelings to move them to action, to encourage them to believe, 'Yes, I can make a difference. I can do something to help, here, now.'

Storytelling is our job. At its very heart, fundraising is little more than storytelling. We have to do it well, with power and passion and fine writing, to move people to action.

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