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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: V. V. NALIMOV— SCIENTIST, TEACHER, FRIEND, MENTOR, PRISONER, ROPE-DANCER, MASTER OF MEANING, MYSTICAL ANARCHIST, HIGH PRIEST, APOSTLE OF SPONTANEITY, TRANSPERSONALIST.....	1
<i>T. R. Soidla, S. I. Shapiro, and Philippe L. Gross</i>	
PROFESSOR V. V. NALIMOV—DEAR FRIEND AND MENTOR.....	5
<i>Eugene Garfield</i>	
VASSILY NALIMOV—MODERN RUSSIAN HIGH PRIEST.....	6
<i>Rustum Roy</i>	
A TEACHER.....	8
<i>Alexander Zakgeim</i>	
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF V. V. NALIMOV.....	9
<i>Yu. V. Granovsky</i>	
APOSTLE OF SPONTANEITY.....	15
<i>V. Kazytinsky and Jeanna Drogalina-Nalimov</i>	
THE SELF-CONSCIOUS UNIVERSE.....	37
<i>V. V. Nalimov</i>	
A ROPE-DANCER (A WRECKAGE).....	41
<i>V. V. Nalimov</i>	
THE COMPLEXITY OF THE INITIAL CONDITION.....	51
<i>Herbert Guenther</i>	

PROFESSOR V. V. NALIMOV—DEAR FRIEND AND MENTOR

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In January, 1997, my dear friend Professor V. V. Nalimov died in Moscow. From the moment I heard from his beloved wife and colleague Jeanna Drogalina about his death, I knew that I would be called upon to comment on his life. Contemplating that task was painful, and made even more so since I could not be present in Moscow at the time of his burial. In June, a marvelous testimonial from “colleagues and friends” appeared in the journal he helped to found (Anonymous, 1997). Then in September, I visited his gravesite accompanied by Jeanna.

On February 22, 1982, I wrote a tribute to Vassily (Garfield, 1982). And on August 2, 1993 (Garfield, 1993), another short essay appeared accompanied by a reprint of a tribute by Angela Thompson.

My 1982 essay states that we met at the Moscow Book Fair in 1977, but somehow I believe we met at an earlier time in the '60s when I lectured at VINITI (All Union Institute for Scientific and Technical Information) where he was employed for a short time. We in the West certainly knew of his work in the '60s and read translations of his work on “scientometrics,” the term he invented.

Vassily's charisma and personality had a mystical quality that is difficult to capture in writing. Of the many scholars and scientists I have met in my lifetime, none touched me in the way he did. Here was a person who had survived incredible pain and suffering yet he had a child-like innocence. In spite of his terrible experiences, or perhaps because of them, his outlook on life was always positive. He was an inspiration to all those who met and experienced him. It was a great privilege to publish part of his voluminous work, but even more so to be able to call him a dear friend.

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