Afterword: Gretta’s
Alternative Twelve Steps to Sobriety

1. I conceded that I had long entertained the power of alcohol to console myself of the fact that life is by nature unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that this power of alcohol was not enough to restore me to sanity, or, alternatively, to suspend my concern about my sanity, or my doubt in that rhetorical category, sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn my will into knowledge as I felt compelled to pursue it, since I understood that I understand little and have an insatiable need to understand all.

4. Made a searching (if fearful and incomplete) inventory of questions about who and what the fuck my “self” might be.

5. Admitted in a drunken stupor at the company Christmas party the inexact nature of my many shortfallings, including a short holiday fall off the wagon. Hopped back on the next day; apologized for telling a coworker his tie was too short.

6. Was entirely unconvinced that a deity—if one existed—could or would be interested in removing any of my defects of character. Decided I didn’t need convincing.

7. Humbly admitted I would have to remedy some or all of my defects my own damned self, and quick.

8. Made a list of all of the times I had put myself and my kids at risk and admitted to my shrink that I could have opted not to.

9. Amends: to put right; especially: to make emendations in (as a text); to change or modify for the better: IMPROVE <amend
the situation>; to alter, especially: to alter formally by modification, deletion, or addition <amend a constitution>; intransitive verb: to reform oneself.

10. Continued to warehouse an inventory of mostly irrelevant questions about the self, and when I deluded myself into answers, promptly admitted I was, in fact, delusional.

11. Sought through pottery classes and picnics and even dreaded play dates to remain willfully conscious despite an urge to step in front of a truck.

12. Having posted these steps on my bedroom mirror, I was able to get through the day. And the day after that. And the day after that. And so on.

And I will get through the day—until I don’t.