TRANSFIGURATION

the union of spirit and flesh

Jack Haas

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Book I

IN AND OF

memoirs of a mystic journey

For Larry Edwards, Goetz Hanisch, and Bob Liptrot: men of the earth, upon whose soil my seed began to grow.

PART 1

The Way of Sin

"It was a phantom dance of souls, baffled by these deceptive blends, yet still seeking permanence in the midst of what was only perpetually evanescent, or eternally lost. Or it was a dance of the seeker and his goal, here pursuing still the gay colors he did not know he had assumed, there striving to identify the finer scene of which he might never realize he was already a part."

Malcolm Lowry

"The spirit-child is an unwilling adventurer into chaos and sunlight, into the dreams of the living and the dead. Things that are not ready, not willing to be born or become, things for which adequate preparations have not been made to sustain their momentous births, things that are not resolved, things bound up with failure and with fear of being, they all keep recurring, keep coming back, and in themselves partake of the spirit-child's condition. They keep coming and going till their time is right."

Ben Okri

"Separateness is the mystical event of oneness."

Matt Haas

chapter one

Once you have eaten of the flesh, so to speak, you must ride it out completely.

Of course everyone's journey is different, but if you give yourself away to life, things cannot avoid falling implausibly into place around you, and an existence you never thought possible eventually swells instinctively up from within, and devours you whole.

It's all so subtle, unexpected, absurd, and indisputable, that when an epoch ends- when the drama of 'being' comes to one of its cyclic, fabulous crescendos- and the spirit fully emerges, the whole holocaust and rapture of life dissolves back into itself, into you, and you into it, the two sides blend into one, the universe is fulfilled for an instant, time evaporates, distance vanishes, the light mingles and ...we are gone.

I am speaking of nexus points, unifications, grand synchronicities, and convergences in the hidden patterns of the cosmos, from which sublime realities become conspicuously manifest in the lives of persons chosen or willing to act out the universe's karmic evolution; momentary windows of a deeper vision, leaps of understanding, and etheric mutations in the blueprint of our chimerical beings, such that there are profound times and places in the somnambulistic imagination of the great and dancing Imaginer, when the veil of causality lifts blatantly away to reveal its eternal marriage with effect, the continuum becomes apparent, the Creator finally awakens within and as the Creation, and yet still no one, not even the Maker, can understand how the marvelous making is made.

It is all very strange, obscure and ineffable, as it were. But to be sure- it happens. Every now and then, due, as it were, to the course of our forgotten, sublime affinities, a cohesion of disparate forces fuse into One, life takes on mythical proportions, the Gods awaken from their slumber, the devil gets his due, and the lone individual, bent awkwardly upon the fulfillment of his or her impossible and unavoidable destiny, breaks loose from the world's hold, resuscitates the old breath, finds the living Life, curses the anguish, weeps for the children, drinks, dances, goes mad with love, and then vanishes into the sky with all those brave or free enough to follow.

Let me tell you, it happens. Rarely, perhaps very rarely, but by god it comes about. And when it does, the Heavens float down like a warm deluge through the frost of Hell, the veneer of our horrid separation lifts for a blessed instant, the *I* in each one of us untangles itself, and all those ready, strong, innocent, or bored enough, slip quietly away, out into the gentle flow, merging with eternity, and then drifting off into God without going anywhere; they simply float away without leaving; they stand still and fall apart into everything. That is what happens.

But perhaps I am starting off here too fast. Let me sum it all up, so as to be done with the story, and then we can get on with the meat of this text. It goes like this: when you are born you are not yet born- first you must descend, die, rise from the ashes, forget every idea of right and wrong, lose yourself completely, gain yourself again, and become the All. There you have it, in brief synoptic fashion. What follows are merely the details.

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two

I can't say precisely when understandings such as these began to smolder within me. It was sometime in my mid twenties, after I had begun to awaken to the folly and immaturity of mankind's ways; after I had finally broken free from the futility and indoctrination of the whole education fiasco; after the collapse of a corrupt business I had owned and operated with one of the devil's own minions; after I had traveled aimlessly in the world for a while, had become disillusioned and confused from the apparent meaninglessness of it all, and had moved away from Ontario, where I was raised, heading west, penniless, possessionless, notionless, and finally free to begin again on my own, to forget all that I had learned, experienced, and lost, and to start again from square one.

I needed a new beginning, a complete change, a resurrection.

Indeed there is little in life of more value to the transformation of the self than to one day uproot your whole existence, cut away the gnarled mass that has grown in and around you, scythe the wheat that has grown from your soil, and take up the rhizome of your soul, away from its homeland, away from all it has known of sunlight and season, away from the forces which watered and fed it and pruned it along, and go to another place, find another patch of earth, and then lay down your tuber in the mud and watch it blossom and grow.

To change dramatic sets is to change roles. New buds grow on old branches, but it is a different fruit which comes forth. The old skin of identity molts away, and the nouvelle vintage is poured within.

I understand now why so many ancient epics are filled with tales of exile, exploration, destiny, and destination, because the inevitable tests and trials which beset a person's existence are quickened when the flow of life bursts through the encumbering form, and the individual breaks away from their old and worn out norm.

Had Odysseus never left Ithaca, Homer would have been forced to write cookbooks. Had Moses not walked out of Egypt and wandered forty years in the desert, the reign of Babylon would never have been broken. Had Lao Tzu not turned away from his homeland in disgust and scorn, the gatekeeper would never have heard his wisdom, and the Tao would never have been born.

It is the breaking away from the confines of context which first liberate the spirit into the subtle life, where all that shifts and moves is hidden from all that stands still.

When I took up my tunic and sack, and walked into the sunset without any idea of what lay ahead, I had, without realizing it, joined in with the great dance of creation, and I was now creating what lay ahead of me.

Knowing nothing of such things back then, I ended up falling to earth on the hallowed soil of Canada's westernmost city-state, Vancouver.

Settling in British Columbia, and this gem of a west-coast city, at the age of twenty-three, was like finding a new set of lungs which I did not know I possessed, but into which I was soon inhaling a whole new type of air- an

ethereal air which, unlike the profane atmosphere of the east, I could breathe in through the subtle pores of my broken spirit, and slowly regain consciousness from years of suffocation.

To be sure, Ontario has its many charms, but at that time I was unable to see the roses through the thorns, and I needed to be hit with a monstrous blow of beauty and wonder, the magnitude of which can only be found in the grandiose brilliance of the west coast's mountains, forests, and sea, the likes of which have earned this blessed area of the earth the charmed soubriquet of Lotus-land.

Like a man awoken in an unknown flower garden, in an unknown world, for an unknown reason, at first I could do naught but inhale the intoxicating perfumes of this new life's beauty and splendor. Good god did I breathe. That's all I did. That's all I could do. Nothing more was needed.

I can still revisit the swelling sense of well being which often befell me during those first few years in the vibrant city and land which has never ceased to overwhelm and astonish me. Living in a perpetual state of daze and disbelief, I was seized often enough by an intoxicating sense of awe over what were largely overlooked trifles to the tenured residents of this Valhalla: the megalithic size of a neighbor's verdant hedge, the thickly perfumed air of the early spring blossoming season, the balmy, inviting, animated summer nights on the coast, or the sight of an eagle or heron gliding on wing across a city beach- these types of things were enough to drive me mad with joy, enough to invigorate and sustain me, because they were so unlike the experiences and settings in which I had been reared and to which I had said goodbye, heading off to my new life in a new land with new promise, new adventure, and, to be sure, new trials, upheavals, and agonies.

I had arrived to find myself ensconced within a wholly novel feeling, a new vibe, so to speak, which quickly filtered in through my skin, washing away the other life I had been living- the other life I had been dying- and began the germination and fertilization of a seed I had not imagined I was carrying.

In the beginning there were days in which I would walk around in a state of profound amazement and relief, delirious with thankfulness that I had been led to find and live in such a place. I recall riding across the Burrard Street bridge one evening, heading home after a soiree with some new friends, and all of the sudden, without any effort or expectation, I was as if lifted up by the breastbone and a wave of gratitude washed over me the likes of which I have rarely felt since. It was the type of gratitude that arises out of nowhere, for no specific reason, and goes off in no conscious direction. I have no clue to whom or for what I felt this surge of grateful acceptance, I can only say that it was directed at existence itself, and the explosion of thankfulness had arisen out from somewhere behind my mind, and it grabbed hold of me, and possessed me, and the grace of appreciation swelled and wholly consumed me for a spell; I was grabbed by a hook from the sky, lifted off of the earth for a moment, where I watched from above the glorious gift I'd been given, without purpose or reason, and was let back down to the mundane and the tolerable world. The feeling then eased away slowly, and I rode home with the scent of joy and magnanimity trailing out behind me.

It was the regular experiences of such upliftment that carried me through for a while as a citizen of this western metropolis.

And yet, not many years later, although I was still hopelessly smitten with Vancouver- with its new stage, new sights, feelings, inspirations, friends, and wonders- the exuberance and lightness which I had found would begin to dim and fade. In fact, even in this city of God, the insidious aspect of mankind *en masse* would soon turn foul within me and would drive me away from my habitation and comfort again, forcing me apart from my familiars, out into yet another world altogether- an even mightier and more magical world- a world where I would again experience wonder and gratitude for the privilege of this unimaginable earthly existence of ours. Oh and much more, much, much more. I would discover the true spirit and true earth, all feverishly served up on the wild and untamed coast of British Columbia and Alaska, and my affinity for civilization and its tortured constructs would be finished for good.

I speak of the years of departure; the times when I left my place of welcome, to wander lonely in the void without another- to lift up and stay there, to float on the splendid confusion of disorientation, far above the thorns of context; these are the chapters of life when the soul sets out on an uncharted course, perhaps never again to return- when the spirit finds again that lost fluidity, unbound nor gathered in a name, and the hard parts crumble from the eternal stream gushing free now from within. That is when the spirit relearns its passion dance, and chooses never again to tangle in the game.

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three

It's what you can't see coming that truly belongs to life. And life, if not a great adventure, is at least a fabulous misadventure.

Most things that happen are much different than they appear, existing beyond the borders of conception and reason. These are the inexplicable, the immense, the evanescent doorways and portholes into the essence; the blinding core of impossible conditions, of realms and layers stacked upon each other, within each other, through and all around each other; the convulsive pandemonium of surprise and imagination; the real and implausible, the recognizable and the nebulous; the presence and absence of the unexpected conglomerations, residues, and idiosyncrasies; the outright exquisiteness and brilliance of the whole trembling edifice, held together by nothing, heading towards nowhere, beyond meaning and purpose, out and in and tossed into a heap of wriggling preposterousnesses all oozing and biting and thrashing about in the calm and tireless ubiquity.

Given this, I was lucky during those first few years in Vancouver- a time when I was still capable of living with others, a time which did not last very long and was followed by many years in which I would either need to be out in the free and open expanse of the wilds, or furtively locked away behind four impenetrable walls in some dingy apartment, alone and in perfect silence

except for the ever present cacophony of untamed voices ringing out in grand disharmony within my perplexed cranium- but I was lucky, as I said, in the beginning, when I was still somewhat of a social creature, and not yet burdened with the solitary life, in that I took up neophytic residence with a young man who would help me break a few of the chains which bound and hindered me from expanding the dimensions of my formative self. And he would do that simply by living as an example, right before me, of a way of surviving in the world without being driven mad by it.

I was lucky- or perhaps *blessed* is a more accurate adjective- because prior to arriving in Vancouver, I had been acquainted with mostly beer-guzzling buffoons and thoughtless toadstools, and had not met a single soul who had prioritized the spirit over the world, and so I was on an uncertain path, barely caring for the way I lived, because somewhere deep inside I knew that something was wrong, horribly wrong, and yet I had no idea of another way to exist, and so I had been doing what everyone else did who was caught in a life which didn't belong to them- I drank and partied, chased women, and talked about nothing in particular. Oh, I was already irrevocably immersed in the esoteric and recondite texts of antiquity, but for all the effect these had on me I might as well have been reading fantasy novels, for what had eternal, cosmic truths to do with food, drink, and rent, anyways? I was born of substance and had no idea of how to live without it as my mainstay.

And so my new roommate shifted my paradigm, as it were, for I realized soon enough that he spoke in a language which I had never heard before, and yet one which I understood instantly upon listening to it; a language which came before mankind's superfluous conventions took charge; a language which sang in my ears of another song, another rhythm, another aspect of existence which indeed I could sense beyond the inharmonious pitch of society's discord, but which I had not isolated nor paid proper attention to until it came and laid itself before me in the living form of Glen.

Even to this day Glen has a way of standing in the midst of the tumult, like the eye of the hurricane, and being unaffected by the hysteria and chaos all around. He is a classic adept, with all the equanimity and poise of a master such as Nagarjuna or Dogen, hovering effortlessly above the mire of endless troubles and their repair. It was from his example that I realized no one need commit themselves to a lifetime of toil and struggle simply to exist; one needed merely decide to exist in the magic and beauty of the day, and the universe would take care of its own, for this is an inalienable right of ours- which is, simply *...to be*. And that means to live without the futility of the daily grind hampering our exaltations.

This was a recognition which dawned upon me slowly over the time Glen and I roomed together, during which period it was a regular occurrence for me to awaken to the insult of the clock, jam down a couple of Tylenol in an attempt to quickly counterbalance the previous night's excesses, gobble down a frantic, unsatisfying breakfast, and speed off on my bike to sell my soul in return for my humble daily keep; while Glen, on the other hand, would arise gently and only when his body was good and rested, would partake of a calm and peaceful breakfast, would go out for an easy stroll along the beaches and parks nearby, would perhaps read some poetry or a spiritual tract, and then he would sit down

to the typewriter and pour out his own voice, his own vision, his own understandings, experiences, and delights at the privileged glory of existence. He was a master, I was a slave.

Each evening I would return from work, worn and shell-shocked and a beaten man, driven mad like a whipped beast from the continued onslaught of drudgery and repetition- a yoke I had convinced myself was the necessary addendum to being alive on this earth. And there Glen would be, sitting quietly, perhaps listening to jazz or classical music, enjoying the relaxed cadence of life which comes from living at one's own pace. And I would burst into the apartment, contaminated by the disruptive vibrations of the false round to which I had been willingly shackled, and head straight for the refrigerator and crack a beer and begin anaesthetizing away the disharmony within me and the chorus of harangued and tormented ghouls which I was only able to still, at that time, with enough booze and dope to kill an elephant, pouring down draught after draught so as to forget how wrong it was for me to every morning spit at the sky and cast away the cherished gift of life I had been benevolently vouchsafed just so as to serve my wallet.

The night of drinking, accompanied by the ongoing conversations Glen and I would engage in, would be followed by another disquieting departure, and another day of tedious torture, all the while holding in the back of my mind a vision of my buddy, free and relaxing, because he had forsaken all of it, and had learned to live on little, need little, and do little, and so had beaten the world at its own game and returned himself to his own way of life and the passionate living of it.

This man's living example, during the precarious years of my so called work-ethic development, was incredibly important to me, because my whole life I had heard that one must go to school, do well, graduate with honors, strive to be somebody, and sign on for a tour of duty in the hallowed halls of money and make-believe existence which would not end until the spirit collapsed and the flesh gave it up to the wind. And I certainly was not fit for such a life.

And so Glen's presence was incredibly important for me to witness. And yet it wasn't until I myself broke away- it wasn't until I made the decision to live my own life, regardless of the status quo- that I began to cherish the gift I had been, up until that point, taking horribly for granted and abusing. As such I began to turn the tables and work far less, so as to live more fully, rather than to work hard and not live at all.

I soon recognized with the detached eye of one who has gone a certain distance away from an event in which they were once wholly bemused and ensconced, that the system had grown sick with greed and stupidity, and that it was only from myself, and for myself, that I would begin to nourish the seed within which had been lying dormant and dying and would need some tender care to get it to sprout and thrive, but which would end up growing strong and fecund and would itself choke out the weeds which had been planted in me by the collective confusion of society since day one.

And it was Glen who catalyzed this reaction within me; it was his own personal force which I recognized and which then stirred the tepid stew within me into a fomenting cauldron of intention and drive which would in the end

provide the escape-velocity necessary for me to leave the gravity of our culture's torpid conventions behind.

I would not call my life a conversion, merely a version, for there are truths I would not come to understand until after many years ahead of confused digression, false intent, debauchery, idleness, unfaith, and agony.

For me it began as a wild and manic ride of booze and anguish, dope and euphoria, destiny and freedom, psychedelia, mushrooms, madness, humility, and wonder. I would not come to the nothingness that is everything until all the blood had been letted from my putrid corpse, until I had mapped out all the blind alleys within myself, until the heavens had murdered me without pity or concern, until I loved and cursed and followed God, and then was broken from the mold of the manifest, and inhaled back to the Source, like a creature caught in the throat of a Creator who had just begun to breathe.

It was a troubling and euphoric period for me. Life was as bewildering as it was grand. I couldn't get a hold of it, and I couldn't get away. I couldn't get lost because I was always lost. I created it and was created by it. I was caught inside, and trapped outside. I was bored and amazed and worn thin by the background exaltation tapped into the electric din. I tried my best and didn't give a damn either. I piled it up, and let it crumble. It all fell away and went nowhere. It came back but never quite got to me. The mayhem and order blended in and disproved each other. My senses betrayed my mind, my mind betrayed my heart, my heart betrayed my spirit, and my spirit betrayed them all. It was a witch's brew of laughter and tears and the nonsense which excited them both. I never really started nor finished and the path went on without direction, goal, nor demand. My self both dissolved and remained, though I could never see anything but that which obstructed it. The vortex tightened, the way widened, the show of consciousness broke open, permeated, shrank and congealed, and all the while the dream-host existence ran on and on without boundary, property, method, nor time.

Had I known then what I was in for, I would perhaps never have chosen to walk down that tunnel. Or perhaps I would have had no other tunnel to choose. No matter. The best thing to do when caught in a whirlpool is to quit struggling toward the vanishing surface, to give your energy to the vortex, and to dive as deep as possible, waiting until you hit bottom and are torn away by the river, at which point you can prepare for your return to the surface.

That is when you come out of it. You come out wild and crazy. You come out hard and ambivalent, finished and yet hardly begun. You come out through the threshold of indifference, of care, of suffering, of life, of death, of meaning, of meaninglessness, of noise, and of silence. You come out from nowhere, out from a person you never were, to a person you no longer are. You run free at these moments when what always mattered finally ends, when life breaks stride with the current of its own disbelief. Out and out you come, all the while falling inward. Falling into the self beyond the self, into the centerless happening where nothing and everything occurs. You come out into it all, broken away from the tether of purpose, the chains of need, the bonds of striving, the shackles of the trapped and abandoned. You come out and the wind licks your wounds through the blood of your losses. There is no need to haunt

the world ever again, nor find yourself simple comforts or worth. You belong to no one and nothing, not even yourself. Beyond salvation and damnation, nothing can stop nor hold you now. You are free. And it doesn't matter. And that is why you are free.

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I can say now, with absolute honesty, that I did not learn a single worthwhile thing about life and living until I left school. Not one. Not unless you include the brief course I took in typing, and the one-week canoe trip I went on in a highschool outdoor-ed class, which was a singularly life-altering episode because it showed me that what I had been experiencing as a youth and young man, and calling life, had nothing to do with life at all- not compared to the beauty and silence I experienced on that trip into the austere comfort of the northern Ontario lakes, with the lonely call of the loon, and the feel of the breeze on my face as I was falling asleep outside.

I consider it an insult to my existence that I don't even recall seeing a single moon-shadow until I was twenty-two years old- and I know the exact time I saw it because I remember being shocked that I had a shadow at night, and I could not believe the moon was its cause. Not that I hadn't seen shadows at night. Oh no, every porch and every street corner in my neighborhood had a blaring light on it, making certain old Luna never got to sing her song.

That canoe trip was the beginning of the end for me, for it was then that I had begun my romance with the wilds. I had fallen in love with the earth, and it would not be long before I gave myself to that love, left humanity behind, learned to own nothing but what fit into a backpack, to care for nothing but to sit on a remote cliff and stare out to sea, and to wish for nothing but that a few other kindred souls were there beside me.

I set out to the wild lands, to the forests, and the sea, and found myself looking for a way to forget all I had been helplessly bequeathed, and to remember instead all that had been left out.

I had no real understanding of what the word 'ugly' meant until the first time I spent a couple of months in the towering forests of the west coast wilds, and then returned quickly to the land of pavement, square structures, signs, lights, idiotic haircuts, automobiles, cosmetics, and functionless clothing. Never have I forgotten the shock which these unsightly creations betrayed to my virginal sight. How my eye became so weary and sore all of the sudden, just standing on a city street, or sitting in a house, no matter how superlatively decorated. What a wound it became to my very soul to spend day after day immersed in such visual and psychic excrement.

I realized then that the natural glories and miracles which the earth has brought forth cannot help but make mankind's constructions appear like the finger paintings of blind, insecure brats. I wonder if this is why we have been so

eager to rid ourselves of the earth's great treasures- the forests and the beasts- because these make us feel so little, so unimpressive, so dumb.

That trip to the true west-coast wilderness had put a black mark on my mind, for I now had a vision of what had existed before electricity, metal, and internal combustion engines. My prize city, Vancouver, had suddenly become a sewer, and I was now swimming in shit and quickly losing the strength to tread water, though tread it I did for many years to come as I slowly learned how to live as a free person in an imprisoned world.

My life on the coast would become a series of comings and goings- a migration of sorts, from the cancerous cosmopolitan clime, to the verdant lands full of sustenance and hope. I went out, time and again, to sift away the ore and try to find the living gold scattered thinly within the limitless dross. My peregrinations most often sprang from the hub of my movements, Vancouver, and widened out, covering from Northern California, up along the west coast of Vancouver Island, to the Queen Charlotte Islands, and into the Alaskan panhandle. It was in these places, where the mighty trees meet the pounding surf, that I held communion with the land and spirits therein, with the unique individuals who willfully populate these remote and untamed places, with God, and, most importantly ...with myself.

Were it not for these stretches of awe-inspiring, deserted, primordial wilderness, untainted nor scarred by the likes of men, I would surely have passed from this earth long ago. Were it not for the sweeping cedars, the awkward croon of the ravens, the peace of the eagle, the untamable spirit of the bear, and the freedom and abundance which is a gift of the sea, I would have gone crazy amongst a society for which I had grown sour early in life, and for which I held little need, little respect, and little expectation.

To wander amongst the great forests of the Pacific Northwest- or what little is left of them- is to live and grow under the glorious canopies of ancient hemlocks, towering Sitka spruces, and gigantic redwoods; it is to have the existences of these titanic organisms implanted within your very being, so that you become like a grafted branch, no longer yourself only, but a part of the land as well. And so to return to civilization is to be like a voyager from a forgotten world, containing the old vision and the new curse for mankind. To blend in and become one with the majesty of nature, is not only to know the peace and beauty of these colossal wonders, but also to become that very peace and beauty itself, and therefore to recognize from a different perspective the horrors of mankind's rapacity. It is to be sucked into the belly of a wonderful whale and then be spat out in Nineveh with no desire to do what you cannot avoid doing.

Which is to say, I had come, over time, to certain essential, troubling realizations, and I could no longer hide the pain from myself, and my pain was the world's pain, and so I could no longer hide the world from itself. And when that happens, let me tell you, the world will take up arms against you, because you did not, or could not, lie its lie, and you now cannot help but expose its worst repressions to itself, and that means you are a monster, or worse …a man.

And so it came to be a regular pattern of my existence that I would live for a while within the structure, lights, noise, distractions, and trapped souls of civilization, and would fill my pockets with cash enough for my next journey,

and then, upon reaching my breaking point, I would realize that to stay there any longer would lead only to despair or the madhouse, and so I would break free again from the troubles, ideas, creations, and pathos of the world, and would wander up the coast somewhere, to sit in the forest or by the sea, and to lick my wounds and weep the whole damned jumble away.

The problem was not that I was inhuman and did not belong, but that I was too human. Too much pain, too much wonder, too much love, loss and sorrow. Too bloody much. In the center of it all I came to be ripped in two by the intimacy and separation I could not explain to others but with a stoic laugh and an accepting sigh.

This period of wandering and isolation did not come about because I had stopped caring for my friends and family. On the contrary, I cared very much, and yet there was a gnawing ache inside of me from which I could not get away, something which spoke in a voice I could barely hear, but which said something like, "If you really cared about them, or about yourself for that matter, you would forget life as it has been presented to you, and get to the bottom of the whole gory mess of it."

Ah yes, what a mess indeed. I couldn't continue to exist without finding out why life on this marvelous earth had become so disagreeable, because I can tell you I didn't have a single answer, and I could sense that no one else around me did either, regardless of how confidently they walked through their illusionary lives.

So I left my home and familiars like an Apache scout who sees the coming winter and the barren fields, sees the impending starvation and suffering, and wanders off to other lands in an attempt to find another place where food and shelter are plenty so as to later return for his tribe, that they might survive the long and merciless season.

And for that I became a lost and hungry man, wandering about in an empty wildland and not even knowing how to get home.

Yet it was there that I received the insights and inspirations which become possible only from taking a step away from the corporeal panoply and societal encumbrances which consume and debilitate body, mind and soul in the most subtle ways, such that one might not even feel themselves being overwhelmed until all clarity and repose are gone and no memory left of their absence. And that is an irreconcilable absence, which is why it was only at a removed distance that I could begin to understand the true nature of existence and my consecrated part within it.

And so the grand and virgin cedar forests and wild coast of British Columbia, dotted with softly tinted islands running out forever in the mist of the setting sun, would bring me to a voiceless, lonely rapture and open me up like a vacuum, sucking all of mankind's dross and memory from my core, for it was on this part of the great orb, amongst the magnificent forests, the crashing surf, and the unknowable wildness of it all, that I had become intoxicated with the earth.

I have never known such uncluttered beauty as exists out there on the coast. It must be how the soft light mingles up from the ocean and onto each successive island, until the sky is reached, and the panorama sits like a shifting

water color of gentle hues composed of no color the mind can capture, for it is not a color, it is a feel.

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I would head out into that brilliant and impossible land, losing myself in the intoxicating earth and the natural life, and then come home, over and over again; I would leave and return, repeatedly, always carrying out, and then following back in, the Ariadne's thread of the Self, back to a city changed and become less friendly towards a me who was no longer the same as the one who had set out.

And so it was always hard to find myself again, after my time away from the world- because I returned as something other than what I remembered myself to be; it was as if, because I had chosen to pendulum between opposites- diving into humanity, and then resurfacing, again and again, into the natural world- that I had to quickly learn the art of pragmatic amnesia, or else I would have spent my whole life trying to be what I no longer was; I had to forget what I had been, and be who I had become.

This is the way of perpetual transformation, the way to the eternal liquid life. Which is to say, it is the way …of Life.

The self which adheres to form or conception dies within its own rotting womb. For the inmost self can neither be captured nor named and therefore needs no permanent residence in the form. The inmost self holds to no image nor finitude, and therefore can ever change and still remain the same. And if you come to live from the inmost self rather than the outer form, you find yourself becoming fluid as the wind, and supple as the sea.

At those times when I would finally break away, leaving the vortex of society, and the identity it encumbered me with, behind, I would know somewhere deep down in the lost requiems of my soul that I had left the world only so as to experience myself again, for I knew I was not whatever I had to become so as to mingle and cavort with others in the world of separation and identity, and I was determined not to know myself as such.

And so the sojourns out into the wilderness, time and time again, to die again and again, leaving behind the self they said I was- to die away until the only thing left was whatever I truly was- were the continuing chapters of my life as a gypsy of the woods. Never have I been able to stay amongst a group of people who have a rigid concept of who they are, but that is the hard reality of learning to thrive in the living flow through the dead stasis of mankind.

I recall being out on Flores Island- one of the outer islands populating Clayoquot Sound, on the west side of Vancouver Island- in the early spring. I recall having been driven out there by a greater will than my own, forcing me out and away, to face the loneliness again, because to not face it meant to lose the beauty, the wonder, the message, the dream, and instead to face only the cold stare of concrete and plaster. And so I thumbed and bussed my way out to

Tofino, walked down to the government wharf, jumped on a water-taxi destined for the native town of Ahousat, and from there marched for two hours out to the wild coast. There, alone, I spent the next four days, walking up and down the brilliant expanse of untrammeled, driftwood-laden, wind-whipped beach, with the surf crashing, eagles soaring overhead, and not another soul in sight. No one.

Where was everyone, I wondered? In a place as incredible as this, with a brilliant break in the weather. Why am I the only one out here- one of the most peaceful and beautiful places on earth- where are you my people? my kin? my peers? my fellow wanderers, sisters, brothers, and freedom lovers of any kind, where are you? It was maddening. Everyone else was locked away in comfortable cement mausoleums, under warm duvet blankets, with toast and eggs, coffee and light conversation awaiting them in the morning, and I was out there under the moon, alone, marching up and down that glorious beach, trying to burn the madness of a world gone wrong out of me.

There was a time, apparently in the late sixties and early seventies, during the free-love and wandering hippy movement- an era which I was too tardy out of the womb to take part in, and so, like one who arrived at Woodstock the day after the concert, when everyone else was leaving and bursting with loquacious panegyrics about the incomparable affair, I was left to cuss at the dumb luck of being born in '66- there was a time when hordes of young folk lived on Longbeach, near Tofino, in squatter's huts made out of driftwood. They caught fish, played music, drank wine, made love, and lived with nature, like a long lost band of space-wanderers, finally rendezvousing in a remote area, on a remote planet, and having there a celebration for a good long while so as to get to know each other once again. In fact, this utopic lifestyle went on for almost ten years, until the mob of un-free citizens and their henchmen ran the freedom-lovers off the beach and back onto the pavement.

Seems this is always the way though. No corner of the earth is kept open for a worthwhile, carefree existence. Everything must be surveyed, stamped, ordered, ruled, legislated, registered, and paid for in the fine old feudal way. Not even a madman whose pants are full of piss and whose beard is full of snot is allowed to sip his whiskey when and where he wants, or lie down and rest where he pleases without hassle. The moment someone bucks the system and tries to live without losing their soul, innumerable trespassing signs and fences spring up all around. Every man, woman, and child must be properly dressed, indoctrinated, and carrying identification. No one shall be excluded from doing their part in the ruse. It's a game of cats and mice and the cats make all the rules, and they train the mice to obey them, and then they let the little rodents loose for a good chase and some dinner.

I have heard that without real prey around, a cat must stalk something anyway, for this behavior is built into its Mendelian code, on one of the double helixes near the food and fun section. And so you can often see cats fervently stalking stuffed animals, shoes, a dry leaf in the wind, or people's shadows. Which is the way it is with authorities; give someone a uniform and they *must* create rules and enforce them, for that is their job and their job is their identity, and soon it becomes an instinct for them such that if no one is breaking any of their other laws, then they must invent some more. More laws, more limits, more stalking, more game. These precarious effigies of their own shadowy

existences, who, in their irascible homage to progress, find no time for the alter dimensions embracing the hemorrhage of time.

I have heard- if you can believe this- of a man in a small town on the coast who is banned from laughing in public. That's right- he is given a fine every time he laughs out loud. It seems the well-groomed and respectable, established town folk couldn't bear to hear a real, spontaneous, raucous, shameless guffaw- for it must have exposed their own repressions too blatantly- so they banded together and had a writ against him enforced. The Nazis. The dimwits. The obtuse, insidious failures to exist as human beings who then turn themselves into jackals. It is to them and their likes, for whom, like the dead, there is neither sin nor rapture, that I turn aside.

But enough of this misanthropic diatribe.

On that specific trip out to Flores it was on day four, alone and walking up and down the desolate, wind-swept beach, in which the bubble finally burst for me. And by that I mean that the haze of society, the clutter of spirits, consciousnesses, and souls mixed within me, and the discord of all my own worldly thinking and ways had at last vanished, and all that remained inside ...was me. I became again a clean and polished vessel staring out from nothing at the deep blue, unvexing sea. I was as if virginal again, and inside of me were my real eyes which had for so long been closed or not allowed yet to see.

I am describing this now, though it wasn't until many years later that I would fully understand why the urge and directive came to me regularly to leave the cosmopolitan refuse heap, to go and be alone for a while in the wilds, and to let the cosmic bowel movement happen through me.

After the cleansing, when finally I was empty of the chaos and confusion I had been carrying, and could again sense my own spirit within, then I could finally feel the self behind my eyes, could rejoin the subtler rhythm, and somewhere in the hidden vestiges of my soul I could remember what it was like when we were a living part of the earth, and of God- the days of yore when life had been beautiful and without separation nor struggle.

These trips of purgation would take anywhere from one day to one month, but no matter how long they took, at what expense, under what effort and duress, no matter how cold, alone, or confused I became, and no matter what I missed while I was away, they were always worth it in the end, and were the only thing which sustained me during those years in which I lived in the chaos of the city. For, after one of these trips, I would head back to Gomorrah, refreshed, renewed, re-inspired, and ready for another assault from the invasive mob.

Upon returning I always had great plans for a world which had no desire for such plans. I felt great understandings for a world which would only forcefully defend its lies. I felt great peace to bring to a world wrecked upon the reef of distraction. Like Lazarus arisen from his own ashes, I came back again and again, hollow and calm, and charged by the source I had re-found within. I had stepped back only so as to surge forward. I had gone under in order to soar. I had lost in order to gain, and had gone away, only so as to return.

Often the Tao of life became obvious to me just at the threshold, at the membrane between the two worlds, just as I was leaving the bush and heading back to town; I could see then, as I crossed over from one reality to the other,

how easy it was to flow in harmony with the spirit in all things, if all thought was allowed to dwindle softly into oblivion, and the heart regained its song. How I planned at the end of each trip to return to the world and not be drawn back into the disturbance. How I planned to maintain a profound equilibrium in the ether, and live as if in the dance of the spirit itself, never moving but to the grace of life, never wanting but for the beauty of life, never indulging but for the love of life. Ah, but then the world has its own plans, its own noise, and its own wayward course, and the spirit is at best a silent visitor, wafting around the impervious obstructions rather than hopelessly trying to tear them down.

It is both bitter and beautiful for me now to recount such things, for as I do I wonder and worry about those who are to come after me- those of a similar temperament- what will they do, and where will they go, when all the forests have been rendered to ash, and the seas lie barren, and the land is foul with the garbage of moribund societies? Where will those like myself go to find respite, to hide and breathe, and live, and learn, and be saved as I was saved?

I have no answer, but I suppose that doesn't matter, because I never had an answer for myself. I only went where I had to go in order to survive. And I survived.

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During my second year in Vancouver I had a dream in which I was being held down and helplessly pinned. I had the feeling of being absolutely immobilized by an incredibly strong weight, to the point that it felt as if I was going to be crushed and smothered.

I awoke in a panic and with a dreadful sense of being oppressed, and yet at the end of the dream, just upon awakening, I knew that the oppressor ...was God.

This ambiguity sat quite strange within me. I couldn't figure it out, because God was supposed to be a loving liberator, not an amorphous despot, and yet I could not deny what I had experienced. Nor did I know then what sort of forceful and ruthless chastening this dream actually portended. But over the next eight years or so, I was unavoidably going to find out.

I'm thinking that this visitation, so to speak, may have come about partially as a result of my time with Glen, or perhaps it was due to my own introspection and questioning and an all consuming need to come to peace or freedom somehow, which created a window for God to look in and see a little maggot writhing about with a few books in front of him and a strong desire to grow wings and fly off of the stool. And that might have been enough to set the old curmudgeon after me.

In fact, I realized only after the terrible smelling salts had been administered that in the very desire to be a worthy part of this magical thing called life, I had released an army of angels, spirits, forces, or what have you, upon my limited being and destiny, and from that point onward all I could do

was hang on and live it out, for a decision had been made, with or without my consent, I am not sure, but I am sure that life began to take on a glorious and yet arduous twist, because from then on I was never prepared for what was going to be asked of me, nor what was going to be given nor taken away.

I turn away now at times when I see others in the first throes of the ghost's descent, because it is a horrible sight to witness God's initial penetration into a person's well ordered and heavily guarded life, for the games will soon be done away with, the frivolity and entertainments are finished, and all the little hiding places are now ruthlessly exposed in the light.

It is hard for people to accept that their Good God is responsible for a great deal of their pain. Though this is not done in malice, but rather like a parent who watches their child run out into busy traffic time after time, even though the child is told continually not to do it, until finally the parent realizes that if this behavior continues, the child will eventually be hit and killed, and so it is better to take out the whip and the cane and beat them until they'll never do it again rather than let them die because you didn't care enough to hurt them.

When God comes down like this, and infiltrates into the world, and you can see God passed around like a contagious disease into all the lives of all the unsuspecting people you meet who want nothing more than to continue on with their oblivious lives, you can be sure to witness agony, because the entrance of God into one's life comes at a dear price- and that price is one's life, and the price will be paid, and the house set in order, and the goad which accomplishes this through the traumas, and trials, and troubles which come, is as certain and irrevocable as the rising sun.

Perhaps this is why the Prophets are always getting the pillory and the post, because it is they who bring the horrible consciousness of God into the unconscious lives of all others, and this begets the dreadful chastening destined to destroy a person and all they have in order to bring them into the perfection of the light. And the more a person has slept through their life- the more they have denied, repressed, hated, or caused harm- the more excruciating will be their redemption. But it will happen, to be sure. And when it does the poison of unconsciousness will be sucked out of the open wound which has been spilling forth bile onto its brethren, and the sore will be cauterized, and the unsightly scar will be the ticket to heaven.

Having said that, it would be quite a time before the long arm of the law was able to reel me in and subdue me. Oh, I put up one hell of a chase. A true bandit from the fire. I see now that often I was not trying to come to God, I was trying to get away. But I could never get away, for wherever I ran I always carried my cage.

In some ways I am still running, still being pursued, still being caught, bludgeoned, incarcerated, released, and then I'm off again, running wildly away from what I cannot get away from, but running nonetheless, away from the light, into the darkness, where none can find me, except the light, for the darkness is disintegrated by the light, and so I'm spotted again, chased again, caught again, and brought home again like the prodigal son in chains.

Oh, the ways back home are as many as there are exits, and though I have tried to flee so many times, I now look back and see a circuitous spiral

leading always back to God, a path on which I ran until exhausted in a direction which I could not avoid taking, although I avoided it all I could.

One of those directions in which I unknowingly ran came as a job, which was bestowed upon me, thankfully I may add, at a time when I both needed a thorough shift in my life, and, more practically, needed to earn some money as well.

I maintain that there are few jobs on this earth worth having, few tasks worth doing, few buildings worth entering, and few options worth seizing. And yet there are hidden designs and forces at work in the fabric of the soul's destiny which guide one, knowingly or not, into situations which, although seemingly commonplace and perhaps counter to one's own will, turn out to be cornerstones on the path which one ends up gratefully taking. The spiral always leads to the center.

Everywhere there is intention and design running invisibly through the world. To look closely into life's sublime patterns is to not need the I Ching nor the stars to tell you why life is bringing to you what it is bringing, for life carries to you what you need or deserve, or what others need or deserve from you, because nothing is arbitrary in life, not in my life anyways.

For myself such a well choreographed and serendipitous event came about, as I said, simply by landing a job in an organization which would become the epicenter of my Vancouver existence, and would provide most of the reasons for my continued coming and going from a society I had long ago forsaken. That job was at a wilderness equipment cooperative which sold outdoor gear for camping, mountaineering, kayaking, and so on; an organization devoted to help people return to the splendor of nature, and therefore to help return them to that long lost aspect of themselves- their true nature.

It was a 'good job'- as the cultural lie goes- but for me this was truly the case, for, among other things, it was one of the only places of employment where I could carry on an itinerant lifestyle and, upon returning to the city, at a moment's notice, sign on for some shifts to earn some green, instead of having to head to the welfare office, employment center, or soup kitchen, in order to get by when I had nothing to get by on.

If you must toil, a non-profit Co-op is as good a place as any to hang your hat. For a cooperative mandate instantly removes all the pernicious tricks, false smiles, and histrionic courtesies which are part and parcel of every purchase and interaction in the world of profit.

This particular Co-op specialized in, as I said, wilderness gear. Specifically hiking and camping supplies, tents, sleeping bags, backpacks, boots, rock-climbing equipment, kayaks, canoes, telemark skis, and cycling gear. It was an adult's toy store, if nothing more. And, to be sure, there was a lot more. For it was under the hallowed roof of this collective that I would find something far greater than a mere livelihood, or a niche for myself outside of the tiresome round of useless toil and fruitless labor so common in our day.

For it was here, beyond my wildest expectations, that I would meet my brothers and sisters on the Tree of Life[1]; here that I would learn the skills necessary to set me free amidst the forest and the sea; here that my soul would grow from the dark unconscious seed it was, into a plant as yet unheard of, and I

would begin to see some of the secret ways of the one great being flowing through and all around us, and I would learn to dissolve and merge into this being, and I would come to see and know the world from the center of its happenings, like the *genus loci* of old, whose ubiquitous spirit comes to encompass all and everyone, infiltrates the dreams and psyches of every soul around, quickens all, and vivifies all into the one life of which we are all a part.[2]

Never have I found in a single organization like the Co-op such a varied and eclectic array of black sheep, dark horses, white elephants, renegades, mavericks, outcasts, and free spirits. The building was a continually changing cast of eccentrics, artists, writers, pioneers, explorers, adventurers, political refugees, wanderers, scholars, nature lovers, partiers, drunks, druggies, nymphomaniacs, dancers, alpinists, mountain-bike racers, river-rafting guides, white-water and sea kayaking guides, mountaineering guides- both men and women alike- mystics, angels, craftsmen, bush women, druids, gypsies, hedonists, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, dykes, inventors, dropouts, outcasts, and all the rest of life's improbable ones, mixing together in a Pandora's box of work and play and every event in between.

It was as if this forum had been constructed specifically for these individuals, iconoclasts, and wayfarers to have a sublime convention of similar spirits, brought together to gather and commune with their brethren, under one roof, once and for all.

I could write volumes on each individual from the Co-op who crossed my path, entered my life, and changed the inner sanctum of my being forever, and barely would I scratch the surface of the lives and destinies of these unique and unheard of individuals who were drawn together for a while to grow, and learn, and heal each other. So many hearts, so many minds, so many diverse fragments of the infinite whole- it is enough to drive me into a stupor at the slightest thought of the wonder and implausibility of the remarkable sea of mankind into which I found myself gleefully bobbing about.

I could speak of a few like Dennis, for example, who was singularly the best athlete I have ever met- balanced inwardly between his male and female parts, and so balanced outwardly in the manifest- who could scale tough, expert rock-climbing crags for a lark on a weekend, could ski extreme descents in steep and wily backcountry territory, could mountain-bike down formidable problems with professional ease, and then back at home could create and construct unique pieces of equipment or gear for any need around, by refitting, redoing, or remodeling the world in any way he saw fit to better. He could take apart any piece of machinery, from diesel engines to welding torches, like a seasoned mechanic. This was a man whom I was once involved with on a one week mortise-and-tenon, timber framing course, in the interior of British Columbia, and within the first five minutes, on the first day, he was already more skilled and confident than the instructor. I kid you not.

Back at home Dennis could cook up an exquisite meal with a palate and dexterity to shame the finest French chefs in the area. Alongside this he'd be pouring out a perfect martini, regaling the crowd with subtle metaphors and artful anecdotes, and then begin a series of drunken parlour tricks which would include wrapping his ankles behind his head and standing on his hands, or crawling like a monkey through a person's legs, then up and over their torso and

then back through their legs without ever touching the ground. Or he'd be dropping beer caps from his clenched bum-cheeks into an awaiting cup below, and then uninhibitedly changing out of his clothes into a slinky set of silk lingerie and treating the astonished onlookers to a burlesque routine fit for Soho. I say, freaks as well as faeries worked at the Co-op. Dennis was a true mad genius, a master of the manifest, as I often called him.

Then there was Oscar, a poet, actor, and garrulous metaphysician all rolled into a wiry, pendulous, elf-like frame, and charged with extemporaneous loquacity and thespian showmanship. To listen to his magical and eloquent yarns was to abandon the likes of Dylan Thomas as an antiquated old fuddy-duddy forever. Oscar's words came but as prayer and poetry, or not at all.

He was also a wilderness-survival instructor and a skilled homesteader, and so he was equally at home amongst the cosmopolitan pretense of the city stage, and the raw medium of the temperate jungle. He once saved his dog from being carried off in the hungry jaws of a cougar- which is an act requiring no small amount of courage nor love. A whole man, a real man, a man who shared with me that as a youth he had fled his own existence in a wild chase across the continent of Europe, only to be finally cornered by the Spirit on a beach in the Mediterranean and then, taken by the will of the kenosis, suffered his spirit to descend like a diving falcon through the firmament and land with a thud to fit perfectly into his very flesh. And the word was with us for a while.

Then there was Sylvia, a wise and venerated, mystical Eastern European woman, and an incredible artist and writer who had spent many years living in, exploring, and paddling amongst the wilds. She had been an environmental activist in the visible realm, and in the hidden one she had taken on the torment of separation which plagues all of mankind, had sat with it, endured it, and transformed it, and had emerged out the other side like an ancient wise woman of old, toughened in the fires of the Eleusian mysteries- a wise woman who had come through effort and trial to know that in the end life is not about finding solutions, but of creating solutions; it was this stoic vision of acceptance and strength that you could feel in the august light of her youthful eyes.

So many of them. So many people. It boggles me to consider. The wilderness athletics of the group alone is enough to exasperate me. There were extreme rock-climbers who headed south every autumn and spring to climb in the American desert, or to scale the granite walls of Yosemite; there were professional mountain-bikers of national acclaim, and others who were simply unknown experts, tackling the most arduous and precipitous trails of Vancouver's infamous north shore mountains; there were white-water kayakers running class five rapids, canoeists engaged in season-long expeditions which would impress the voyageurs of old; others who would cross countries on their bicycles, or ski the steepest couloirs from Washington State to Alaska; and there were world-class alpinists ascending peaks in the Andes, Hindu Kush, and Himalayas. The skill and dedication of these people to their chosen activities was rivaled only by the forgotten yogis, locked away in caves and standing on their heads reciting the *Bhagavad-Gita* upside down for decades on end.

I could speak of another quiet and discreet young woman who, without anyone's knowing, wrote more lucid, recondite, perceptive spiritual

observations of the sublime and transparent realms than most of the so-called experts publishing their commonplace balderdash these days. She lived- and did not just seem to- half of her life in heaven and half of her life on earth, spent a great deal of time in the bush, and took young people on extended trips into the mountains and down rivers and tried, in her own way, to help them get a glimpse of what she knew but could not explain- which is to say, that ...God *is*, and that is all there is to it.

And there was the shy and brilliant German alpinist, linguist, and family man who spoke no less than six languages fluently, translated ancient Chinese texts of meditation on his own time, climbed the most arduous rock-climbing routes in the area without a word of pride or accomplishment, organized film festivals, and had soft, bewildering eyes that would stare right into you, right through you, and would leave you fighting for breath, for a place to hide, for a way of saying- "yes man, I know, I know, we're all too far apart from each other, we can't get close enough, and if I could vaporize this minute and fall into your eyes and touch your soul within, I would do it, but I can't and we'll have to live with what we've got instead, and that is- loneliness."

I could go on and on, and the list would barely grow shorter. But I'll end with a man who was, in a sense, the epitome of the west coast itself. Jim was one of the rare few, born and bred in the culture and climate of the Pacific Northwest. A true seed from the age of pioneers, mountain men, and adventurers; a great pagan man-hero. Throughout his years he had climbed the highest peaks all over British Columbia and Alaska, had spelunked in many of the caves under the vast land, and was both a recreational and professional diver, scouring the world beneath the sea. There were few places along the coast which he had not walked, climbed, swam, paddled, skied, or crawled upon.

Along with this he had designed his own alternative-energy home, was a beekeeper and researcher, raised chickens, and had a vast organic garden from which came an abundance of delectable fruits, vegetables, herbs, and giant pumpkins. He was an ex-sharpshooter, a demolitions expert, skilled woodworker, tinkerer, fly-fisherman, woodsman, wine and mead maker, and baker. It seemed that he was always doing something and yet never doing anything, for he moved with the ease and equanimity of a Taoist adept.

On top of all of this he owned a quaint log cabin, which he had beautifully refurbished, in the big woods just half an hour from Vancouver. It was here, in that little Valhalla-like enclave of ancient cabins and trees, that he claimed to have communicated with the 'little people' of the forest- the gnomes and faeries who exist as orchids on the profane plane, but are accessible as their true, living selves once a privileged person has fallen through the trap door from our world into theirs.

It was up in Jim's cabin, and its druidic vicinity, that many of us would occasionally congregate *en masse* to electrify the ether with the joy and exuberance of our collective spirits.

Indeed there was little more vivifying at that time in my life than a gathering of like-minded, reckless and restless, unrepressed individuals with bellies full of grog and psychedelic mushrooms, minds full of grass, and a growing hunger amongst the crowd to revisit the land of Pan and wash away the veil of this profane earth.

There is much to be said for those all-out, uninhibited, intense years of debauchery which we enjoyed to their fullest, with as few or as many other willing folks as we could cajole into joining us, or who could cajole us into joining them. To be out in the raw world, hyped and opened up and obliterated from the mundane plane, on a pharmacological cornucopia of narcotics, booze, and hallucinogens, and to throw yourself into that midsummer night's dream, to tear your clothes off and go running uncontrollably through the bush, to stand far off on a hill and bellow out a call of indescribable euphoria and intensity, and to hear it echoed back to you in a chorus of intoxicated and charmed hoots, howls, guffaws, and acclamations, and then to trundle back down to the focus of the crowd, all souls in invisible communion with their extra-selves, and bouncing off of each other's vibes, and to pass a bottle of whiskey around, then a joint, to devour a plate of barbecued salmon, a baked potato, a hash brownie, a chocolate mushroom, and then off again into the twilight zone, without plan or concern, always lost and always found, leaning suddenly against a giant spruce, or yellow cedar, gasping in disbelief, rolling about in the moss in blessed depravity, then sitting down in a circle of jocularity and repose, hearing the ribald laughter of another group somewhere off in the night, stopping to stare into one of your mates eyes for a brief second of siblinghood and contact, and then out and away again, another beer, another hug, or kiss, a wrestling match, more tom-foolery, singing out at the top of your lungs nothing in particular but for the inability to any longer squash the earthquake of delight and gratitude that cannot help bursting forth in your every word, move, and offering. The hallowed madness of it all.[3]

These divine gatherings and the constant influx and outflux of the community of the Co-op would come to allow me to see the subtle aspect of being which permeates all life- the spiritual archetypes, mythos, and cosmic or subterranean relationships which direct and order humanity like a living blue-print behind the scenes; the sublime, intelligent projection, recounting and reworking similar permutations and acts, at different locations around the world, yet always playing the same drama which, over time, runs on towards a further outcome and is only disguised by different stage drops, props, and costumes, while the ancient, formless characters remain the same. For if you look deep and long enough into a dynamic group of people, you will see the building blocks of performers occasionally alter and change, as is the way of the theatre, but the wholeness and combinations of the show must remain the same; and so, on the world's many subtle stages, when one character leaves the play a vacuum is created drawing another, similar type in to fill the void, so as to complete the show.[4]

Thus it was that I stayed on long enough on this one stage in the infinite puppet house of the spirit- long enough to see the changing of the guards, so to speak- one cast replaced by the next, and then the next, and so on, so that I came to understand that what we perceive as separate beings- autonomous of thought and will- are merely invisibly choreographed fragments of a gigantic hologram projected from itself, observing itself, and living within itself, and so there is no separation nor specificity, nor singular identity which can be applied to the apparent particularities of the whole- not, at least, until one of the actors wakes up in the show, abandons their role, and walks off of the

stage. But this is an understanding I would not come to realize until much further along in the ridiculous list of characters I had unwittingly chosen to play.

This is a hard point to relate, for it implies that all is reflected in all, that the 'in' *is* the 'out'; it means that no one is only who they are; that the unreal creates the real and the real creates the unreal; that the self is only one because it is many, and the many are infinite only so as to hide the mystery that they are one. It means, as I have seen, that we dream other people's dreams, live other people's lives, and think other people's thoughts; that what we appear to be doing is not really what we are doing, that what we know is not what we think we know, and what we see is the unseeable, somehow come to stasis and held in the transfixed stare of false conclusions.

We are less than we think we are, and more than we could ever imagine. The shapes and forms, abstractions and tangibilities of life are but shadows of shadows leaping about in the heightened confusion of repressed dismay.

All this I realized would be impossible to relate, as it was slowly unfolding before me, impossible to share with my fellows who saw life as the linear and material event which it isn't, and who, I thought, would never imagine nor conceive that we are caught in a crazy, tangled dreamscape of profusion, assimilation, and release, for the conventional mind would have an instantaneous meltdown were it to open-up and allow in even the most limited potentiality and significance of this vision of our beingless existences.

Bread and circuses for the masses indeed, and pizza and television, and popcorn with the movies; the ontological placebos come in the most profane forms and guises while the groaning hordes run from the slightest glimpse of the limitless pleroma interwoven into a matrix of design and undesign, reason and fantasy, magic and mayhem, all spilling out before them in a surfeit of absurd unavoidability.

I expect that the soporific entertainments of society, which numb the subtle vision, must be our unnatural way of keeping the herd grazing on life's provender, while calmly fattening the populace on their way to God's abattoir. I say this because I sense that mankind is obliviously involved in an arrangement which allows the masses to move forward, albeit with sloth and trepidation, without the slightest inclination of where we are headed. An allegorical event from the natural world occurs when Orcas are on the move; for most of the whales in the pod have been discovered to be sleeping while swimming, while the few who remain awake create a continuous projection of sonic waves into the brains of the unconscious others, thus guiding them on their course until it is time to awaken and feed and breed. This sociobiological procedure is only slightly dissimilar to the subconscious movements of mankind, whose collective will is directed by forces which no one is truly aware of, towards a destination none can imagine, for reasons which are not supplied by the architects of the dream.

Such thoughts came slow and sublimely through the staccato and formative years of my tenure at the Co-op; what would begin as a routine job would grow and become a living part of my spirit, and I would witness the magnetism of the entire scope of our community slowly congregate under one roof, and raise the angel of our communion back to the sky.

If I claimed to understand any of this at the outset, or even now as I write this, I would be confusing what I have seen with what I have known. For what I saw I still do not fully comprehend; and that is, I saw, in the years amongst my kith and kin at the wilderness Co-op, that the spirit running beneath and through all things occasionally seeks to rear its head up through the static and dark manifest of the day, to harmonize and recognize and free itself at last, in and through groups of individuals brought together for this very purpose. It had been attempted in Camelot in the middle ages, in Paris early in the 20th century, and in the hippy movement a few decades later- and it was happening on the coast, as far as I could tell, and the heart and fulcrum of its strengthening palpitations was found in the collective soul grown strong in love, sincerity, and grace floating just below the surface in the culture of the Co-op.

Life has always the element of myth buried deep in the catacombs of the wider Self, and if we dig deep enough beneath us we will find our vastness flowing out into everywhere, and our divinity dancing rapturously upon the profane plane.

From such occurrences come the fabulous accounts of spiritual upheavals over the history of mankind's yearnings, from Atlantis and Lemuria, to Sumeria, Easter Island, Machu Pichu, Eleusis, Samothrace, Jerusalem, Medieval Europe and its bandwagon of aching saints, Avalon, the Salem witch hunts, Paris in the 20's, Tibet in the 50's, and the flower children of the 60's, all of which speak of the eternal will of the spirit attempting to overtake- or perhaps confiscate, as it were- the flesh, over and over again, and then to be beaten, pillaged, punished, driven underground, again and again, only to rear its mighty head up in another place, at another time, among another ready people, in another guerrilla assault upon the dark and binding gravity of the mold.

*

seven

Looking back now I see how my patterned routine of exodus and return began on my first extended trip up the coast, riding in a rusty old pickup truck with a most beautiful and severe young blond woman named Sandy, who was a true, incarnate, spirit of the land- as some people are, who get in touch with the earth and assimilate it into their very beings[5].

At that time Sandy was in her early twenties and was already an incredibly capable naturalist who had guided both kayaks and rafts throughout a great portion of the coastal waters and rivers running through British Columbia. She was the one, chosen by the cosmos at that time, to blend her spirit into mine, thus becoming my *anima*,[6] and, as in the way of myth made manifest, she would lead me in the flesh to the Avalon of North America- the misty and mystic Queen Charlotte Islands- where I would, for the first time in my life, experience a genuine understanding of what the word 'wild' really meant. I say this with absolute sincerity, for I had been to a few of the untouched places on earth

earlier in life, but never before had I seen the staggering display of Tolkienesque landforms, forests, and people as such exist in the Charlottes. It is a land unlike any other land. A world set apart from the world. A unique, thriving, ecologically astounding archipelago often referred to as the Galapagos of the north.

I have read *The Origin of Species*, and I can assure you that had Darwin voyaged to the bountiful forests of the Queen Charlotte Islands instead of the desert landscapes of the Galapagos, he would have forgotten instantly his *ad hoc* hypothesis based on the spurious mental constructs of survival and mutation, for he would have at once fallen to his knees in awe-struck bewilderment and been forced to accept what every scientist spends their whole life attempting to disprove- their own inexorable stupefaction.

Had *The Beagle* sailed north to the Charlottes instead of southward, students of biology everywhere today would be trained in the poetics of mystery and the art of appreciation, rather than the mechanistic obscurations of statistical analysis, laboratory research, vivisection, and the laughable, fascist confines of the scientific method.

Had Darwin studied the outlandish Puffin, or the irrepressible Pigeon Guillemot, rather than the common Finch, his eyes may have been opened to the incomprehensible living spirit animating all things, instead of arriving at his inert conclusion based on the precise mathematical attrition of obsolete budgie colons.

Darwin's essentially morbid outlook, formed on the barren rocks of the Galapagos, necessarily produced a theory whose main operating factor is death, whereas, had he set his eyes upon the thriving plenitude of nature's finest, he would have instead propounded a vision based on Life, and life's inherently vital mechanisms. For a philosophy based on 'life' belongs innately to a living universe- one which is still expanding, even after eighteen billion years! After all, the *Big Bang* implies a sexual super nova, not a chaste black hole; it implies a life more abundant, not a cosmos based on scarcity and struggle.

Had Darwin not been a biologist, he would certainly have been a mortician.

When I first arrived on the blessed isles, I walked about in a sort of disbelieving stupor that such a magnitude of life actually exists on earth. I have heard tales of visitors to the islands walking into the forests and bursting into tears, because they, like I, could not believe in the beauty and majesty that the earth has brought forth, and which has been eliminated almost everywhere but for a few isolated areas on Vancouver Island and along the coast of British Columbia and Alaska.

To walk into one of these ancient forests is to be transported to another planet. It is to walk through a time warp, and enter Eden before the Fall. To stroll about on thick beds of moss, with ten-foot diameter trees running up to the sky in gothic piety, or to paddle in a kayak or canoe along the deserted shores while watching for sea-lions, Orcas, humpback whales, water foul, raptors, rainbows, and deer dancing on the shore, is to tear at your hair because you finally realize you are on the planet of the apes and you now know what the simians have done to your home.

It was partly for the power and privilege of witnessing and becoming a part of this rare and priceless world that I would return many times after my first trip to this blessed sanctuary. And yet I came back often for the island's equally wild people, including one individual whom I would encounter, on this first trip, in the life, mind, and wilderness refuge of the man who was to become my mythical *mercurius*- a man named Hans.[7]

It is strange indeed when the myths and secrets men read about and think of as fable or allegory begin to occur within your very life. It is strange when one's conventional mind begins to slowly awaken to the underlying drama of spiritual archetypes and mythic journeys in the sea of spirit in which we are eternally swimming, and strange to find that you are a player in a sublime game that the Gods may have even forgotten they were playing.

Such was my unwitting induction into the hidden folds of the universe, as I headed north that rainy afternoon with the young and inspired Sandy, driving up to Prince Rupert, ferrying across the aptly named Hecate Strait to the main town on the islands, and then onto a day-long water taxi, heading to the rustic hamlet where Hans lived- a place which would, over the years, take away and give so many things to me that, for quite a few years, whether I was there or not, I would consider it my home- Rose Bay.

Never had I met another individual so burning with their own nebulous fire as I did in Hans. I doubt that in all the epochs of all the worlds there never has been one such as he, and perhaps there never will again. You would have to merge the idiosyncratic characteristics of Nietzsche, John the Baptist, Daniel Boone, and Beethoven together to come close to the fiery stew of eccentricities this one specimen of mankind enveloped.

Having left his German homeland in his early twenties with the sole intent to become a child of the earth and to "reclaim his rightful heritage", as he put it, he bounced around Canada for a while and finally ended up the last place you'd expect to find a growling, fastidious, Teutonic intellectual- in the uncultured bush, one hundred kilometers by boat or plane from the nearest community.

It was in that remote utopia that he hacked out a life for himself, building two exquisite cabins, a massive organic garden, chicken coop, goat house, and solarium complete with grapes, figs, lemons, and other geographically inexplicable delicacies.

Over and above his carpentry and horticultural skills, he was a top-notch musician, playing every conceivable instrument with assured finesse; from raucous, Appalachian banjo tunes, to self-styled guitar solos, to Celtic recorder riffs, to piano adagios which made the Moonlight Sonata sound like a Russian fighting march.

And there he was, in all the splendor of a crackpot, genius, hermit mystic, mad and fanatic and full of a life- which is as rare on this earth as the dinosaur- as I arrived to my delight and astonishment to find that such a one as he could exist in this world, at this time, in this way. I had stepped out of the twentieth century and right into middle earth, and Gandalf and Treebeard came out to greet me, and the comparatively inexperienced hobbit that I was at the time crossed his furry little toes and prayed that he was not dreaming.

Back then I was still little more than an uncarved block- a young man who had only begun to piece his own world together, had only begun to find his own voice, had only begun to write and believe in himself- which is an essential step towards binding the disparate worlds of essence and form into a functioning whole. Yet Hans and I quickly latched onto each other like two derelict prisoners in a sea of idiots. And there we clung together, grappling through the darkness of words for ways of understanding each other and our common lot, for ways of sharing in each other's visions, for ways of saying- "Yes, brother, yes, it is all crazy and impossible, this life, and no one sees it like we see it, and you see it differently than I, and I differently than you, but damn it, not that differently, and at least we- two out of six billion- at least we know it is all mad and misunderstood and that there are realities running on behind the scene that would freeze the average man cold where he stands were he to get even the slightest glimpse of it."

Poor Hans was like a castaway who had been adrift even longer than I; a voice crying in the wilderness in a language that was no longer spoken, of a reality that had been long forgotten; a lost remnant of a lost race which was suddenly thrown upon the shore of my implausible world- a world in which I had begun to realize was far more tangled, far more psychically polluted, far more afoul with the stench of mankind's sordid history of folly and blindness, and far more enmeshed in the hidden dream of the Gods who had forgotten they were dreaming than I ever could have imagined.

But now I had met one who was calling them to account. One man, alone in the wilderness, raging like an awoken beast with the scent of divine blood on its nose. There was Hans, driven like an exiled Pharaoh, out into the bush, driven by an unknown force, with an unknown need, out into the wilds to vent and curse the heavens, and build himself a life and try to heal the rift he could no longer avoid seeing.

And we took to each other, as I said, like two beings lost in an alien world who had finally found another to whom they could communicate. Albeit we reached out to each other through naught but vulgar grunts, and howls, snorts and scratchings of all varieties, but we knew at least that we were pointing at the same wound, the same darkness, the same hidden and yet ubiquitous sea of bile and oppression which oozed out into the soul and mind of every one on earth whether they were aware of it or not.

Every year from then on I would find my way to the Charlottes, traveling by thumb, or bus, or boat- and usually an odd collection of each of these vehicles- and I would arrive in one of the island towns, fill my backpack with booze and some dope perhaps, and hire another boat or plane to whisk me away from one world and into another. And there Hans and I would sit together, machinating and articulating, from sun up to sun down, day after day, week after week, together like co-researchers, hammering out the secrets and unspoken notions of this mysterious universe, all the while conversing in esoteric yarns, metaphor, parable, and rhyme- arguing, disagreeing, commiserating, debating, propounding, relating, and coming together on occasion to formulate the new thought, the new understandings, and new intentions that would solve the conundrum of existence now and forever.

We'd run the whole gamut of thought from lost religions, to recondite metaphysics, occultism, philosophy, anthropogenesis, and the like. No topic or observation was excluded; no idea was beyond our ken, no possibility too outlandish or remote. The Gods had had their day, had messed things up royally- or so we supposed- and now we sat there, a force of two men, bantering out how to right it all, how to fix this wholly botched experiment and bring it to a rapturous finale.

To be sure, as similarly as we saw the world we also saw it completely opposed. But the flint needs steel to strike it in order to create a spark and bring the fire. And fire is what we needed, and fire is what we got. And that is what kept our cloistered, insular brotherhood burning hotter than the sun.

What to say of Hans' metaphysical outlook? It was an idiosyncratic collage of irrefutable absurdity, acute introspection, and volatile cosmogenesis, all artfully combined and delivered in passionate, thundering filibusters by the intransigent attitude and towering intellect possessed by a man who had followed the call of his spirit fifteen years earlier, had left mankind behind, and had learned another way of seeing.

Among many of his other esoteric observations, the greatest problems besetting not only mankind, but also the heavens themselves, lay, according to Hans, in the foundation of denial and guilt, which were built into the superstructure of the cosmos from day one. He saw how these two stumbling blocks to the freedom and joy of the spirit were brought into existence at the same time as everything else- at the beginning- and that these pathologies were created by the same power as everything else- the Creator; for God was once but an insecure, guilt-ridden misfit, like the rest of us, and so God's imperfections were inexorably woven into the human experience, and thus what we were up against in attempting to solve our inborn dilemmas, was so massive, so ancient, so thickly embedded in our souls and beings that to turn the tables would require no less than a superhuman commitment and intent, because we had inherited the guilts and denials which were imprisoning and destroying us, and now no one could help us but ourselves, but we were so confused and deluded by our own distortions that rare, if at all, was there a person who could see themselves with perfect clarity, and therefore undo the knot of denial and guilt.

Adding to this impregnable obfuscation, Hans saw legions of infirm and warring angels thrown into the discord, an armada of dark seraphim, innumerable formless maleficent forces, mindless Lemurian refugees, and heartless Atlantean survivors. All of these so torn apart and removed from their true existences that they were pitted against each other without really knowing why. Hans saw an intermixed, dysfunctional, endlessly troubled spiritual milieu the likes of which even the most creative fantasy writer would consider well off of the approachable map. And yet he had convincing arguments and observable examples for everything he propounded- that is, if you could turn your mind inside out in order to re-examine life from his cosmological point of view. He was determined, resolute, indefatigable, and had a laser-like vision that I could only avert from its focused gaze with the most dexterous and delicate of jousts and swipes into the rare and almost imperceptible cracks in his conceptual armor.

It was a magical tête-à-tête for me- a young man who had for too long been cooped up in his own head and his own notions without a living sounding board, let alone a loquacious artifact from the astral plane to challenge his visions. It was a dialectic into which I tossed my own skull with burning veracity, and which would test everything I had come to believe in and felt that I knew. And though I hold Hans' exceptional mind, otherworldly philosophy, and unquestionable experience in high esteem, we eventually came to a place where our stimulating disagreements turned into a giant metaphysical chasm that neither of us could cross without throwing away his whole *Weltanschauung*. That is, Hans, no doubt having his own perfectly sound reasons, had recognized that we were all in Hell- a perspective in which I was somewhat in agreement with at the time; but for Hans, oddly enough, it was better to be in Hell than to be in Heaven. And why was that? Because, according to him, there were more 'colorful' characters down here, and Heaven was full of nothing but uptight perfectionists who flew around in boring white gowns listening to the same phlegmatic harp music all the time. In a way he had a point, though it wasn't until a few years later, when I experienced a dream-visit up to the firmament, that I could see he wasn't completely right. And besides that, there was something disagreeable in his conclusion, for, though I agreed that Hell existed on earth- that we were in Hell- I, myself, didn't like it at all, for the real truth was that I believed that we were in Hell only because Hell was in us. And not only that, but Purgatory and Heaven were also within; not the heaven which Hans found so tedious, but the true Heaven, and the true Hell; the immanent realms which are made visible and brought forth into manifestation only so as to reflect our turmoil or peace within. Yes, indeed, I was in Hell, but I had caused my own incarceration, my separation from the One, and I ...I was paying my dues and walking back out.

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eight

It is only demanding relationships- like the one I had with Hans, in Rose Bay- which have the force necessary to flip one inside-out, and bring about the great transformations needed to move a person through incarnations without having to die. For the shifts of the soul do not come easy, and they will not come when sitting around comfortable coffee tables and talking peacefully of soft and shiny things. You have to find your match in the arena of the spirit. You have to come up against your equal, and dig inside yourself for every last ounce of reserve within, if the two combatants in the verbal and psychic milieu are to both emerge stronger from the duel. You have to lock horns in a bitter and beautiful struggle to test the mettle of everything you've got in you, if you are going to attempt to build your home upon this world of sand. Because you can bet the sea will come and wash away the foundation out from under you, and it's only then that you'll know if what you perceive is real and true, or if all your realities are merely sand castles in the air.

And so I say that Hans was my *mercurius*. And I say that for both mythical and actual reasons- because this world is both mythical and actual. For the drama into which I fell exists on many planes at once, and so the story which I tell exists both in the actuality of our temporal lives, and also in the eternal myth of our spirits as well.

Only internal revelation and sublime communication from the other world will convince an individual of this reality. No one can point to it nor prove it to another. When you walk through the membrane of permanence, into the shifting twilight of the Self, only you, and you alone, are there to bear witness to it happening, for we are each given only that which we are capable of receiving, and so we must therefore learn to be capable.

During my time in Rose Bay, on any given profane day, at about four o'clock in the afternoon the worldly chores which Hans and I had abandoned while transcendentally critiquing the incomprehensible universe would catch up to us, and we'd have a frantic couple of hours tending to the animals, weeding the garden, stealing octopus from eagles or ravens who had cornered the unlucky delicacy in a tidal pool, or we would head out fishing to a nearby shoal where an abundance of black bass, lingcod, snapper, and an assortment of rockfish were available and soon epicurean victims.

One late afternoon while we were out fishing I felt a strong tug on the line which I was hand-jigging, and then a stronger tug, until I was pulled to the side of Hans' zodiac and realized I had caught me a lunker. It was a gargantuan effort to reposition myself and drag whatever leviathan had chanced to nibble upon my lure up from the depths, but eventually up came a mammoth halibut- mammoth to me, though not all that huge as these type of fish go, but a gigantic one and a great struggle to reel in on a hand-line- about one-hundred and fifty pounds. The moment Hans saw the denizen of the deep come near to the surface a burst of approval and delight escaped him and quickly he had his gaff in hand and when I had wrestled the beast nearly to the boat Hans lunged down and hooked it and with the titanic force of which he was surprisingly capable for a pint-sized man, and the supremely skilled fisherman he had become from a decade and a half of foraging on the coast, he hauled the catch into the boat and before it had a chance to thrash-about he had beaten it senseless with a hammer.

It was a victory to be sure, but one that was not long lived. On pulling in the whale, our Ahab had dragged the lure across a main tube of the zodiac, opening up a giant sucking-chest-wound which was emptying that side of the boat in deep exhalations of precious air. With no time to patch the fissure we placed a sodden piece of tape over the gash, held it there by hand as best we could, hooked the foot pump up to the valve, and Hans jumped on the wheel and headed for shore while I pumped feverishly attempting to replace the precious air as quickly as it was leaving. When I was exhausted we switched places and I took over the wheel while Hans pumped away wildly, and then we changed again, and again, and finally Poseidon had also had his chunk of flesh and was appeased with our ridiculous efforts and we made it back to shore, hung the prized halibut up by the tail and lived off of the fresh game for the next many days until the meat was about to turn, whereupon we dried the rest.

Little boats and big fish are a dangerous mix. I recall being up in Alaska, where I was working as a kayak guide one summer, and standing in the

museum in Sitka, in absolute awe as I inspected a traditional Aleutian seal-skin, bone, and driftwood kayak (there are no trees on the Aleutians, so the builder's task was further burdened by being dependent on another world's jetsam), and a sealskin dry-suit, and I could hardly imagine an intrepid Inuit hunter out on the tempestuous sea in this precarious contraption, harpoon in hand, waiting bravely for the whale to resurface. Good God, a whale! Taken in this jury-rigged mish-mash of found objects and imponderable rigging. I was set aback, for I realized right then that all true heroism had long ago vanished from our world.

There is not a man alive on this earth today who could take a whale with a harpoon from a kayak. Not one. Compared to the hunters of old, we are all faint-hearted, lily-livered, pitiful excuses for the gender. All the men are gone from earth and only little boys with toy guns and wet dreams remain.

I was satisfied with that thought as I sat eating the hotdog which I had stealthily hunted down at the local supermarket in Sitka, and began recalling the time when I was out on the sea, kayaking on that first visit to the Charlottes with Sandy and our buddy, and impressively experienced paddler, Greg- whom I would consider to be one of the few men left on earth if it weren't the case that none remained- and Greg also hooked into a halibut- which, in a kayak, is a different story altogether than in a zodiac, deflated pontoons aside- and I recall the almost manly and yet idiotic efforts we engaged in to bring the catch aboard, rafting our kayaks up together for stability, and taking turns reeling in the squirming monster. We had decided to land the beast while out at sea, despite Sandy's continuous admonition that we were fools, and the best and only possibility was to paddle to shore, towing the monster along, and then land it while standing on good ol' *terra firma*, where the odds would be more even. Sandy, my *anima* in the flesh, was right of course. And yet I was not ready then to accept the voice of my *anima*, my female side, for I had not the humility necessary to be whole and not just male, nor, I realize now, was I even prepared back then to accept …the earth.

I see now how symbolic this whole event was, displaying perfectly the polarized state of my soul at that time; I and my male buddy, Greg, a guide, happily tangling with a creature from the depths of the unconscious- a duel in which we were certain to lose, though I could not see it. And there was the one voice of wisdom amongst us- a young, beautiful blond woman, my *anima*, living on the other side of pride, on the **earth**- who was able to see the solution which our bravado precluded us from seeing. No, we were men. We would not paddle to the safety of shore, we would hover above the depths and never accept that a man needed more.

So while I was draped over Greg's kayak and holding the fishing pole and line, he, with his strong and almost manly arms, gaffed the beast and lifted it out of the water, which was a feat in its own right, and the halibut began to put up a fuss like the devil was inside of it or something, and Greg was holding it aloft, somehow, as if in the reverse iron-cross, and his body was gyrating and being whipped about in the sympathetic vibrations of our whale's mania, and I was desperately trying to keep us from capsizing, and the fish flew into a more spectacular tantrum, and Greg continued holding on I don't know how, and neither of us knew at that moment why we had ever attempted such idiocy nor how we were going to get out of the mess, for the fish was now hooked twice,

once with the line and once with the gaff, and it was in an insane mass of fury and force and certain to sink us both because we had never considered the voice of reason within or without us, and instead we had tried to be men in a world of spoilt brats, because we had heard about men but never met any, and because we had heard about heroism but never seen any, and damnit someone had to be a man and it was our chance, only we were going to have to die to receive the medal, or so it seemed, until Poseidon stepped in again and pardoned our puerile foolishness and the halibut thrashed its way off of the gaff and snapped the fishing line and in a moment the epileptic fit was over and all was calm.

We were living boys in a world without men, and we had lost our little whale and our chance at heroism, and though all we had left was laughter, boy did we howl. It was the thankful howl of two spineless white guys in kayaks loaded with bread and cheese, salami, crackers, peanut butter, German mustard, pasta, vegetables, and wine. Two anti-heroes on the slow and darkened path to wholeness, who did not have to paddle back to their village as failures, as gelded stallions.

Not us. Luckily enough we had come from the tribe of comfort and plenty, and we had only to paddle back to camp, eat and drink like emperors, forget that we had lost the battle because we had chosen it, and forget that we could have raised up the animal from the depths, from the unconscious, had one of us- namely myself- been humble and strong enough to believe in the woman within and without him, the woman who sought only to make things right by luring him down from the heights of disillusion, from the distance of mind, from the separation of the male spirit, and thus leading him back …to earth.

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nine

Soon after that episode I returned to my refuge in the sordid city once again- the blessed Co-op. It would be hard for an outsider to understand the ways in which the waves of spirit moved through the group of us co-workers who were privileged castaways in this isolated sanctuary- a single island in the great sea of Gomorrah. Indeed it was impossible even for most of those who lived and worked right within the medium of our liquid day. But that is the nature of the spirit- you have to see it working to know what it does, you have to give yourself completely to it in order to learn to love what it loves.

Since groups of people always carry a certain vibration with them, you can go from one building to the next, from one home to another, from city to city, or country to country, and each place will have a distinct feel, a distinct consciousness, and a distinct function within the evolution of the whole. As such I believe that, by whatever divine impetus, there was a time at the Co-op when a large number of us had been brought together to exchange aspects of our spirits and souls, and to grow together in ways which we could never have grown alone.

I recall one fabulous autumn, in fact, when it seemed that all the vagrant strands of our colossal plexus had finally merged at the nexus of our common substratum.

I recall how one individual after the next had their own unique, unbridled experience of the godsoul waking up within them, however apparent or obscure. I remember how one buddy of mine lost his mind for a while because he suddenly began to realize that God had, so to speak, held him for months like his own son, during the darkest darkness of his days, and, during this episode of insanity, my buddy spoke a number of prophetic things to me, about my life, which would come true only a few months later; I recall how another person revealed to me his idiosyncratic awakening- when the cosmic sound of OM resonated with such force within and about him that the splendiferous visual mandala which is said to accompany it during such mystic states of apprehension appeared to his bewildered eyes and he knew with the certainty of the inalterable Self the unequivocal realization which he could only describe as simply ...I AM; I recall another brother arriving at my hotel room at three in the morning in a fevered pitch of worry and excitement because a shift had occurred within him, an avalanche, a veil rent asunder, and now a terrifying hole loomed out before him in the ether, and he and I wandered about together all night in the chilling rain, discussing what was beyond our ability to discuss, and a few days later he was a new man, and you could not see the backs of his eyes anymore, for the space within had grown so infinite, and he walked with ease towards me that day and said he had decided to move to Europe because that's where he was supposed to go, which he did; then there was the diaphanous and charmed young woman who, during meditation one day, rose up in her light body into an astral dimension where she mingled with other light beings in a boundaryless energy orgy until she felt the horror of being pulled back away from that freedom, lightness, and love, and back into the clutches and limitations of this gross corpulescence; I recall the fabulous crescendos of the nameless visionaries amongst us, and their unlettered panegyrics of euphoria which would cascade spontaneously off of their desperate tongues; I recall the young women witches suddenly awakening to the art and wisdom of their ancient souls and taking root amongst us; I recall the flow and dance of those days in which our souls mingled into the unseparate song of the one; I recall the nebulous stare of each and every pair of incredulous eyes as it glistened back the rapture and confusion at first glimpsing the vision of the new way; and I recall standing in the middle of it all and wishing it would go on and on, grow stronger and stronger, and the focal point which had been created at, of all places, our workplace, would become the critical mass required for the spirit to finally leap up from within all peoples across the earth, surround this weary globe, and devour the forces which bind us whole.

Ah but the spirit has its own agenda, and ours is not to question, but only to find where the wave is climbing to its crest and to ride it until it smacks the shore.

I was on the wave, and I was riding in a kaleidoscopic medium that I was only beginning to be able to see.

It was beautiful, and terrible, dark and light, sublime and ridiculous. Angels were blossoming everywhere in the land around me, the underground

stream was swelling and the firmament was falling, the Spirit breached in breathless ardor, and God was returning once again as the Father and Mother of all who were free within. It was the end of the millennium, and I was back at our center. The hub was finally repaired. All that remained was to be decent, humble, and true, and through God and faith we would learn again how to fly.

About this time another episode in those tempestuous years was also playing itself out; it was a time when myself and three other energetic, unencumbered, inspired souls- an ex-minister, a musician, and a woman film maker- would come together and receive such a charge off of each other's vibrations that an evening together would grow in force from a few social drinks to a climax that you'd think would tear the roof off, and because it didn't, we tried to make it happen anyways. And so began an era of our separate and intimate lives commingling together, in which we would set the world aside for a day, or perhaps a weekend, so as to simply blend, and bond, and enjoy one another, and occasionally to tangle with the mighty mystic spore- the magic mushroom of mythic legend.

It was during these intimate soiree's, that our certain select core of individuals- our essential quaternity- would gather together at the house of Mick, the musician, on the shore of Howe Sound, to drink, smoke, ingest the soma, and unearth the glory and fury bound up so tightly within all of us that you had to smash yourself over the head with a mountain of intoxicants so as to set the beast loose and let it roam free for a while.

If you take such strides, be sure that the tsunamis and whirlwinds, the willywogs, will-o-the-wisps, specters, poltergeists, and gremlins will come bashing at your door, the fog will set in, the lights will go out, the heavy breath of a forgotten foe will resonate behind you, Mara will rear up her ugly head, the Gods will confuse you, the tricksters will dance about your stumbling form, and the only thing you can do is do nothing but let the maelstrom clammer on until it runs itself dry or devours you and moves on to its next host.

We were raising up our own angel, and we were doing it our own way, on our own time, sitting on Mick's patio overlooking the sea and watching the storms come in, and passing a bottle of hooch around, then going for a walk and losing each other, then reconnecting and sharing the universe which had befallen us in the meantime, and back to the patio to hear some music, or to sit in silent awe at the hidden majesty of the spirit-world writhing in delight before us.

It was during these events that, in the silent, wordless mixing of close friends, I would come to sense how our spirits merged into each other, blended, and communicated in ways far beyond normal understandings; how, intoxicated or not, the body is but the nucleus of our much greater self, which sublimely extends out from each of us in less dense and invisible forms, and which converges, intermingles, exchanges, and stays together for extended periods, within other people's greater self, just as waves come together, combining oscillations, and then flow apart, each still separate and yet now modified from before their intermixing.

It is these subtle bodies of ours which are the hardest to get to know, and yet the ones which have the most effect on others, and on the world around us. It is the subtle body which can sense another truly, feel what they are

carrying inside- regardless of what they are saying- and become elevated by their love and integrity, or contaminated by their hate and confusion.

This was the beginning of my understanding of how there is no separation in life, that we are all connected, and that a person's love or hate does not end inside their heads, in their thoughts, but is sent out into the world to ameliorate or exacerbate the plight of all those fortunate or unfortunate enough to be in its way.

Sometimes the nicest people have the most violent demons inside of them. Sometimes an angry man is a saint. You can't tell until you mix inside of them, for the spirit behind the flesh is oft like a wolf in sheep's clothing, and rarely like a prince within a frog. You take others on often without choice, and so your *I* gets jumbled and grafted with other *I's*, and then what you are is not what you've always been.

These are matters of the spirit which I would experience but would not come to grasp and make my own until I had left the world of drugs and psychic crutches behind, and had, with a determined leap, walked into the truth and stillness of the self with nothing but my own peace to guide me.

The mushroom had offered me the evanescent visions of an eternal place, but it could not take me there. Yet there were solo trips which I would take, ingesting the spore, and then opening up to the cosmic radiations, in which I would see the fabric of spirit behind the veil of matter and mind, and would receive many insights that were incredibly profound but which, in retrospect, were perhaps imbibed too early in my spiritual growth, and therefore, in a way, simply stunted the natural process which would have come about more smoothly anyway; I was like a youth taking a glance at a Playboy magazine, and upon seeing the full show, so to speak, destroying himself with a desire which need not have been there and would have been more rapturously fulfilled had it lay dormant until finally aroused at the time of his actual deflowering; I was no longer spiritually innocent, though neither was I mature, and that, if nothing more, merely added to the growing pains I was already being over-trodden and consumed with.

Still in all, the four of us had great times together, offering a rare episode of communal friendship the likes of which I had never encountered before, and may never again, along the solitary trail of wandering I have accepted as a large part of my self-chosen life. And yet I remain close to those dear ones and a few others who walked right inside of me back then, during our dance upon the same page of life for a while.

In fact, a year later Mick decided to join me out on Flores Island, after I had been out there alone for a few days, relinquishing my contact with the empire, and disgorging my soul as per usual. He came out and brought with him his guitar and sang sweet melodies to me for three days straight while I sat back in the sun, watching the sundog covenants emerge overhead, and soaking up his tunes in the rapture of the wilds. Nights we'd spend chomping down mouthfuls of limpets in garlic, gooseneck barnacles and fried onions, and an assortment of other epicurean delights, all washed down with litres of red wine and followed by the bliss of brotherhood and song.

It was a splendid treat to have a comrade finally out on the coast with me, walking my favorite beaches, exploring the hidden alcoves and intertidal

islands which had, over the years, grown to be my friends as well, and so it felt as if I was introducing them to Mick and enjoying the meeting of these two.

It was a heartwarming few days- the kind which almost brought me to tears at its closure- so much so that a couple of years later Mick and I planned a sequel to that trip, but unfortunately when the time came around he was unable to attend.

So what? So I'd be out there alone again, nothing new in that, I thought. I decided to go anyway and had only a short, two-week, biological contract to fulfill before leaving. I was to serve as a pack-mule and secretary for a few guys climbing old-growth trees on the coast, looking for the working nests of endangered Marbled Murrelets, so that the environmental community could use these finds as a reason to lobby the forestry industry for the preservation of those enormous and diminishing trees. We didn't find any nests, but it was a fruitful stint of employment anyway, meeting some genuinely good lads, and providing me not only with essential funds but also with the ontological data necessary to confirm another secret pattern in the universe which I was slowly awakening to, and that is, simply: a void must be filled.

What happened is that on this contract prior to my Flores trip, a young fellow from Australia was working as another of the slaves along with me; a young man who looked uncannily like Mick and played guitar brilliantly as well.

Well what do you know but after our work was finished I gave this Australian bloke directions out to the secret beach I usually camped upon- though he said he doubted if he'd make it there- and after I had been camped out there for a few days he did show up and suddenly I was on the beach Mick and I had planned to have our reunion on, listening to his look-a-like play guitar and eating limpets, and gooseneck barnacles, and drinking wine and wondering how much of this came about because a thought planted in the ether must come to fruition.

To be sure, the recognition that we are integral elements to the creation of the cosmos was becoming clearer to me. This was simply one more piece of evidence in the case I was building in my mind- the case which suggests that the drama requires certain characters at certain times for the fulfillment of its mysterious agenda, and if one character happens to leave the stage, a similar one is pulled into the vacuum.

I have seen this occurrence now time and time again. It is as if God is creating the same stew in many different parts of the earth, and each spice must be included in each separate batch, according to God's taste at the time, and the spices are the sublime archetypes carried in the spirits of subtly similar individuals.

Everywhere on earth this is attempting to happen, and a similar cast of characters is operating on different stages, in different costumes, with different scripts, and yet with one consistent intention- to complete the show.

Thus I found that there were patterns of spiritual archetypes running as threads through my life; individuals playing certain roles, in certain aspects, at certain times of my existence, and when one went off in a different direction from mine, another of their strain stepped in- another person carrying the same spirit, who was there to replace their predecessor, perhaps years or even decades

later, but sooner or later the whole must be sealed again and all the missing parts must appear. These parts are the *types* of the arche*types* from which we draw out our completeness; the separate rooms by which we build and come to live in our own illustrious castles.

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Unfortunately I wasn't living in any external castles yet. Not even close. And after a few years of hopping from one cockroach-ridden bachelor's suite to the next, then moving into my van for a while, then selling it and buying a little Honda Civic and living out of it- which, frankly, is much more comfortable than it sounds, for the front seats in a Civic lay way down and one can get a very pleasant night's sleep, and not suffer too much exertion during the night if one has to urinate, because, while lying down in the front seat of such a vehicle, one need only roll to the side, crack the door ajar slightly, and let the stream run out onto the road without ever opening one's eyes, which is at least one advantage over sleeping on a king-sized bed in a carpeted palace.

Finally, however, I parted with the Civic as well, because I was intentionally paring down my material goods so as to have nothing except what would fit into a backpack, just in case I felt the need to up and quit the world in an instant, which could have come any time, and I wanted to have everything in order so as not to leave a trail behind.

I then began a period of taking up residence on any friend's couch who would have me, though this proved to be the least amicable of all situations to my furtive soul. Not that I was ungrateful for the places I was benevolently offered to stay. The problems were far more irrevocable and subtle than that. For nothing was more annoying to me than the chronic hum of an apartment's refrigerator, which I could hear from a great distance, even if I was sleeping in the living room and the fridge was in the kitchen. Often I would have to do at a friend's home what I had done so often in my own apartments, which was to unplug the whining beast at night and replug it in the morning, hoping that my host's succulent lamb chops would make it through the night without harm. And if it wasn't the refrigerator driving me insane, it was an electric wall-clock, ticking ever so patiently and agonizingly along. There must be some masochistic strain in our culture's attitude which provides these subtle, well-disguised Chinese-water-tortures everywhere you go. But I couldn't endure it and so the clock would have to come down and I'd put it in a drawer, or another room, or outside, and try to remember to put it back up on the wall in the morning, so as not to disturb the ambience.

It was for these reasons, and because I could not bear any longer living in another person's reality- which was unavoidable while living on their couch, in the middle of their illusion- that I began fantasizing that there had to be some system set up for vagrants like myself, some gentleman's home or temporary residence which allowed a person to come and go as they pleased, and not be

bound by the overburdening restrictions of rent or leases, nor to suffer the fate of living within another person's psychic bric-a-brac.

To be sure, Vancouver and its environs was already culturally centuries ahead of Toronto and the east, from where I had originally fled, and where the slumlords make you sign a full year lease, and the employers will only take you on at forty hours per week, and fifty weeks per year, and nothing less, or not at all. The bloody insanity of it all. These poltroons had sold out long ago and were intent on making sure that everyone else got caught in the same dreary march to death as them. They had lost their lives to the dollar and the locked door and if you wanted either of these you had to lose your life as well. And that was something I could not stomach. Take your idiotic ways, and your leases, and contracts, and take your two weeks of holiday a year, and your wavers and conventions and give me back my life.

Thankfully the culture of the coast was at least a little more civil than this; here one could find acceptable seasonal work, allowing for six to eight months off per year if you knew how to handle your sheckles. And here one could have an apartment with no more investment than a two-month rental agreement, so as to have a roof over your head at night that didn't bind you for an entire year. But even two months is an outrageous impossibility when you're following your dreams, which I was, and which, on any given night might say- "OK bud, time to get up and out of here and move on, onto another task, in another place, for reasons you'll never know until you get there." There is no option when you live like this- you have to leave, instantly. And I left so often, on the turn of a dime, so to speak, that to return meant to return to an infrastructure that was becoming less and less welcoming, and less and less functional for my needs. Indeed the foxes have their lair, and the birds have their nest, but the free and reckless wanderer has no place in which to take his rest. Not, that is, until he discovers the Ivanhoe Hotel.

Ah, the Ivanhoe. No place like it on earth, not this earth anyway. The rooms of this down-and-out, wayfarer, and drunk's hotel were the cheapest in the city, and had become a sanctuary of sorts for all those who belonged nowhere else, and who had been chased to its front door by the invisible dogs barking at their heals. And the bar down below was no different. Walking into it was like entering the alien bar in *Star Wars*. Every being imaginable was there. It was a mirror for the confused and erratic, cosmic convention of lost and alien souls which populate the subconscious frontier. It was here that I would first experience the throbbing pulse of the world's underbelly- the thick Tartarian ooze of men and women, all vibrating in tune with the lesser frequency of the fallen realm, and weaned on the succulent lymph of the poisonous Kali herself; all detached and spinning wildly to and fro in the depths of the descending plane of living apparitions and unascending souls, where the minions of dark angels and their grey carnival of false delights invoked the ghoulish laughter of Hell and its ineffective respites.

It was a bar unlike any other bar, a place where all were welcome because- as Hans pointed out to me on one of his infrequent visits to Vancouver, while sitting in the Ivanhoe one evening amongst the multitude of mutants- "Everyone is welcome in Hell."

And yet it was not the Hell of eternal damnation, it was a chosen hell for most. A Hell, in fact, in which those people found their peace and acceptance, away from the other Hell, which existed everywhere else. The Ivanhoe was an oasis- absent of the real and living water perhaps- but an oasis with its own inexhaustible well of draft and rift-rafts nonetheless.

Every manner of individual would happen in at one time or another. It was a culture of captives who had lost all thought of escape or emancipation and had learned to sing and play and fight in a world which was an imperfect, despairing, disastrous world, a blissless world of exile and hopelessness, but a world after all, and, more importantly, it was *their* world. And boy would they ever whirl up a hoot and a holler and a celebration of the unavoidable Armageddon being perversely drawn out in the collective menagerie of those purgatorial homecomings brought about every day and night under the surface of a sea which none of them knew they were drowning in.

The mutant enclave from the Arnold Schwarzenegger film *Total Recall*, would be as good a visual as I could paint from this scene.

Gathered together were bums and charlatans, hippies and crack-heads, retirees, natives, travellers, businessmen, students, dropouts, homeless beggars, mystics, whores, laymen, soldiers, vagabonds, pushers, and renegades, all and everyone, no one left out, no one denied, no one judged because all were judged, no one condemned because all were condemned. A crowd of thieves dangling from their crosses and not a messiah in sight to be traded for them.

I'd often slide quietly in, sit down at a table by a window, order a beer, take out my notepad, and let the madness begin. Hardly had I written a single line when a man named Mustaf- a huge, powerful, constantly drunken Muslim man- would approach me, grab hold of my hand with his iron grip, sink to his knees, and wail out- "I know who I am, I know who I am. I am nothing!" And an authentic tear would trickle down his cheek, and he'd begin his melancholic soliloquy on his duty and reverence for all life, and how he had never wanted to kill any man, but had to, for his country and his soul, and his thick lips would suck on the ever-present cigarette dangling from his mouth, and he'd declare his oath to God and move on.

And then another pilgrim would arrive at my doorstep. This time it would be a homeless Italian barber who lived in a warehouse, begged for beer and cigarettes, and claimed to have a house in Rome with three-thousand bottles of wine in the basement. And his toothless yarns would begin and he'd sip his beer and tell me of his fishing exploits, his economic ruin, and his favourite places in Chinatown to get a two-dollar meal.

Then he'd be gone and a young junky would come along, a fellow who had been a great musician until his whole family was killed and he took to the needle and bottle to escape what he could not escape. And he would sit down and patronize me and pretend to befriend me and then try to coax a few bucks out of me for another drink- which I gave to him at first but then I realized I was only adding to his and everyone else's dumb luck by paying for another round of misery and I learned what might be the most valuable lesson I was to receive in that bar in all the days and nights I sat there- to say no.

I learned how to squash a vexing spirit from invading, cajoling or guilting me out of myself. And that is no small thing. And for me it took a bar

full of ever-invasive, determined and skilled individuals so that I might learn to see some of the ways in which others can climb inside your skin; it took this antagonizing throng of separated selves to create the fluid obstacle-course necessary in which my spirit learned to surf, to glide, and to fly free.

"No" became my battle cry and my banner- one which I would have to learn to deploy in the future, in many different places, under many different circumstances again, as the vexations of separated spirits became all to obvious and affronting to my softening shell.

Sitting there, learning how to drive away those who would steal my peace was quite an effort. Men and women of all types would come and sit or filter past, hawking their stolen goods, or their art, clothing, sausages, cheese, dope, cigarettes, or booze. It was a constant train of reprobates and street merchants, attempting to get rid of their disreputable wares. One spectre would leave and another arrive. Another story, another pint of beer, another woe-begotten song about their dance through the dark and disorienting doom they were not aware of creating for themselves.

One such middle-aged native woman who was always in the pub wearing a drunken smile sat down beside me one evening while I was having a thick and juicy metaphysical conversation with a good buddy, and I could see she was slightly intrigued as well as befuddled, and so she tried to wheedle her way in with her limited tools of ribaldry and sensuality, and we kept on talking, trying not to obviously dismiss her, but finally her digressive invasions became painfully annoying and I turned to her and coldly inquired, "What are you doing here, in the bar, you're always here, what are you doing?" She was set aback but quickly tried to counterbalance my thrust, rebutting with a coy smile, "I'm not hurting anyone", to which I quickly rejoined, "No one but yourself", at which point she burst into tears and bothered us no more.

And yet, to be sure, there was laughter as well at the Ivanhoe- uproarious, uninhibited, end-of-the-world laughter. And there was care, and joy, and pleasantness also, all a part of this burgeoning Pandora's box of disconsolate humanity.

I once saw a woman attain to a level of ecstasy which only the most purified spiritual supplicant could normally accomplish after decades of mortification and discipline, and she was only a drunk and a junky. But she made it to the stars, to that type of ecstasy which can only come about in Hell- the type of release which rockets you up into the distant sky, only so as to let you tumble down even further. But it is that twinkling instant of escape, when everything vanishes but the dream, which keeps the pendulum ever swinging.

I saw her stumbling slowly along the bar, and then she suddenly stopped in her tracks just as what must have been an old, nostalgic rock tune for her came wailing over the stereo, and it was as if she was held there in suspended animation as the tune grew and soared through her, and at the moment of the elevated chorus her head went back, genuflecting in exultation, her arms went limp beside her, and she was as if lifted off of the ground for a millisecond of Hell's ecstasy, an ecstasy caused by the remembrance of a time when life spoke of beautiful and awesome things before the collapse of reality; an ecstasy which was always available, always pretending to be worth the plunge which followed, always beckoning to be known. The ecstasy of Hell.

Always waiting there, offering another fix, another moment of forgetting, another tranquillizer or upper to white-wash over the shit, before the deluge of remembrance came and blew it all away.

These are the false redemptions that lift your mind up and shroud your heart but take your spirit nowhere and weaken your already bleeding soul; I know of these phantom pilgrimages into delusion and its hopeless possession, where at every turn in the carnival of lights and attractions the spirit reaches out for life and receives only a picture of life, and in the peril of its anguish and confusion imagines that the image is the thing, for with the heart gone the mind can tell no difference, and so the image is what is sought after from then on, for the real is unattainable, or worse- almost impossible to attain. The fact that it lies at a great distance makes it all the more woeful than if it were gone for good. Like a lost love somewhere far across the ocean, on a different continent, which wrecks you nightly instead of having died to let you grieve and then go on.

It is a horrid difference between the artificial and the real; as if a glass wall separates the soul from its source; as if a person reaches out for what can be seen, but cannot be touched, and in that woeful distance they get only visitor's rights to see themselves, because they come nearer and nearer, only to not come near enough.

I know now of a hell where the living spirit dies in the tomb of misdeeds and misunderstandings. For the living spirit alone is what connects us to the whole, and to each other, for it is life, and everything else is hollow, separate, and dead.

The ecstasies of hell, always displaying their hollow temptations with a devil's smile and the charm of medusa before she strikes. For there is no true ecstasy based on need, because ecstasy is the absence of need, and is a fulfilment beyond need, and therefore cannot be arrived at through need.

It was a game of shadows and their many disguises at the Ivanhoe, a dance of laughter without joy, friendship without brotherhood, and beauty without beatitude.

Yet there were other types of folks there as well; many decent, thoughtful, serious folks who were not there to destroy themselves but only to sip a beer and watch the goings-on.

I fell into a conversation with a balding, fifty-year old, slightly built man one evening and found that he had been a bare-foot, wandering, Buddhist monk in India for ten years, begging for his daily rice, meditating, and following as best he could the eight-fold path of the dharma. We had a few drinks together and then went back to his low-income housing flat, where a giant, five hundred pound brass Buddha sat surveying his sacred domicile. Along with the icon, he had a wall full of sacred texts, all in Sanskrit, which he had mastered during his time in the east. He gave me a pocket-sized version of Seng Ts'an's *Poem on Trust in the Heart*, which I had read already and adored, and so it was a lovely gift and synchronicity at the same time.

This man was a gentle soul who had unfortunately lost most of his western vigour during his decade of surrender and alms-seeking, and therefore was having a tough go of it back in North America, where to be a sannyasin meant to live without an historical structure based on sadhus, monks, and holy men wandering around and bequeathing blessings onto all those who tossed

rupees into their begging bowls. No, to be a sannyasin in North America meant to be an unwelcome, misunderstood, and guilty traitor to the rule of 'money made is money paid', and you don't get nothing just by asking, you must work for it, because no one is going to believe that their karma is lessened by giving you donuts so that you can pray instead of toil.

On most nights at the pub anything could happen, and usually did. On one of these evenings I hooked up with two middle-aged dudes who came into the bar every so often for a chat and a pint. Jim was a softened veteran of the hard life. I say softened because he had lived out his fight with the world and with others, had won some battles and lost some, and had come through it as a very genuine, mellow, streetwise ex-tough guy, who had, out of benevolence that night, brought his neurotic artist friend, Stanley, to the Ivanhoe to get him out of the lonely hiding spot he called home. Stanley was impressively uncomfortable; a man with no walls and no armour around him; a mouse who was therefore incapable of defending himself from the judgements and willpower of others. And, more importantly, he was unable to recognize that he was terrified because what he sought to defend ...was a lie. A truly pitiful creature, though immensely lucid, like all true neurotics, due to the absence of protection between him and all else.

So Jim and Stanley and I ended up putting a few pints into our bellies at the Ivanhoe and then we walked a couple of blocks down the street to another bar to listen to some live music, and Jim and I got on quite well, digging deeper into each other's life, as Stanley sat fidgeting about like a mouse who had escaped his cage and then realized he was soon to get stepped upon for such a disobedient act.

Jim and I went on though, talking about what real men would talk about if there were real men to talk about real life, and I suppose I had shared some of the pieces of my own turmoil and distress with him, because after a while he turned to me with the wizened look of a true street sage- one who had gone the distance and knew that the only answer is to tough it out- and he looked at me and offered a piece of news about life which I could not apprehend from my perspective at that time, and which didn't really change anything for me, but in retrospect I can now sort of see what he was pointing at. What he said was simply: "It gets easier." That was it, and he turned to sip his beer, and I knew that he believed it because he had been through the ringer and had come out, perhaps not in the same shape as when he had first entered, but he came out nonetheless, and he spoke to me as one who had already climbed over the wall I was now desperately clinging onto.

In the next couple of years I was to meet a number of younger folks who were going through what I had been going through at that time, and this little piece of advice might have also suited our conversations well, had I ever chosen to plagiarize it, which I didn't.

But anyway, that bit of blue-collar pedagoguery finished, we toasted off a few more pints and then went outside to say our goodbyes. It was then, as I was walking away from my new chums, that I finally got an appreciation of how open Stanley really was to the cosmic precipitations.

I must relate here a note that this night came during the time in my life which I would call ‘the emergence of the shadow’. I don’t know what the Jungian analysts would say of this, but to me it appeared that over the course of a few months certain characters and occurrences were showing up in my outward life, signifying submerged pieces of my inner being which I had been slowly, arduously, raising to the surface.

Thus, as I was walking down the block away from the two of them, I heard Stanley yell out to me “Hey, what’s that behind you?” And I turned to look but didn’t see anything, and thought perhaps that he was off in his own little crumbling kingdom again, and I kept walking. Then he yelled again, “It’s your shadow.” And as I kept moving I looked back and, sure enough, I was just passing under a streetlight and my shadow was behind me. But then in a millisecond I had crossed under the light and it was gone. That’s when Stanley yelled out again, “Now it’s in front of you.” Which it now was. And so my shadow had gone from behind me to in front of me, from the unconscious into the conscious, and Stanley had heralded the movement which I had been examining but had not known for certain if its absolute translation had occurred from the dark into the light, so to speak. And so another message, pertinent to the stage of my internal course came flying at me out of the ether, this time from the puppetted mouth of one who was so transparent and willess that God apparently could make him speak whatever he wanted, and did.

Say what you will, but the messages come from anywhere, at anytime, you only have to know who’s sending them to you. The wheel keeps spinning and the patterns keep changing, but the weaver stays at his loom and never asks why you must walk with dirty feet upon his carpets.

Imponderable, disastrous, ridiculous, and grand, this life, full of fable and foolery, purpose and plan. The substratum moves and goes nowhere. The outside gnaws away at the inside which created it. The inside feeds upon the outside until it’s done. Whatever was there, becomes here. Those who were they, become we. And the wingless phoenixes look to the sky and assume without flight they’re not free.

*

eleven

I was free, and so I fled back to the Charlottes once again, back to the land of inexplicable wonders, magical vortices, and natural abundance. Back also to the land of elves, gnomes, silkies, trolls, gremlins, and smurfs. I say this because it was here that I would meet all these mythical species hidden in the disguises of the craziest litany of seekers, bush folk, renegades, musicians, anarchists, occultists, hippies, angels, demons, tree-huggers, and an implausible assortment of other fringe types who had found their way to the outer edge of the known world, and there paraded their sublime beings on the diaphanous veil of the corpulent flesh. Which is another way of saying that my frequent sojourns to the luminescent isles were regularly peopled by a plethora of colorful locals,

drifters, and eccentrics; individuals who, for one reason or another, had seen fit to step aside from the stampeding herd of manic degenerates- from civilization, that is- and venture out into the isolated and forgotten reaches where the malaise of the mob had not yet fully infiltrated.

One such self-exiled woman springs instantly to mind: a fifty-five year old American lady who had changed her name to River Eagle, had dropped out as far as one can drop out of convention, had lived the last ten years or so without a proper home, building squatter's shacks out of whatever materials were available wherever she ended up- which, previously, had been the American San Juan islands and their vicinity- and had made her way up and down the coast by trading her labor, finding odd jobs, and selling the most delightful, authentic rosaries I had ever seen, let alone smelled. As a matter of fact, before I had met her, I thought a rosary was a string of fake gem-stones strung along a cord which tired old dowagers somehow found solace in fondling after everything else worth living for had died or deserted them. River set me straight on that presumption. She had disinterred the historic art of rosary making- boiling up a large vat of fresh rose petals in a viscous, glutinous mixture of wax and oil, and then rolling this concoction into little balls the size of marbles, setting them to cool, and then stringing them into a genuine rosary, fit to lei the pope with, which smelled deliciously like newly opened roses for an inexplicably long time.

This was her main craft and venerable vocation. And yet she was an incurable gatherer, tinkerer, and artist in almost any medium available; and on the Charlottes that largely meant nature's ever-present offal.

To stroll around and watch her gathering sundry stones, shells, sticks and boughs, wild hops, berries, reeds, and flowers, and to see nothing but an armful of compost of it, and then to view, a few hours later, the outcome of her free inspirations and imaginings, blending these disparate items into an incredibly unique work of art and beauty was to witness a lost way of being- a way in which the earth and humanity melded together from different directions and out of which the spirit was made visible. She was a Renaissance sculptor carving out the essence of existence in the wilds of the twentieth century, an animated sprite come to life on the living canvas of Bosch's Garden of Earthly Delights.

In her early years River had done many things in many different places around the world. She had lived in Europe for a while, had been a surrealist painter, an actress in New York, a seeker of the mystical arts all over the globe, and had spent time studying the esoteric likes of Gurdgieff and his inverted universe. And then one day it seems she just sort of floated away from it all without even trying, and began her new life of mendicant homelessness, gathering, wandering, and living in a way that had become her own. She would even smoke dope in a way I had never seen anyone do it before, or since- carving out a thin tunnel through the center of an apple, and then, at one end, creating a little bowl to put some marijuana in, then smoking it through the tunnel, and passing it around, and when it was finished she'd claim the pipe and consume the apple. Then she'd be off again, meandering on her easeful way, taking facile observation of this or that, then turning away, taking hold of something else, and letting go of another. I understand now why she had

changed her name to a most fitting label- River Eagle; because she had learned to flow on her own course with life, to not obstruct the gifts of the Giver, and to take and cherish and modify the beauty she alone could see with her subtle, artist's keen vision.

She was a delightful breath of fresh air which I inhaled insatiably during the few days we spent together; a stray flower floating about in the wind and loving life for its own sake, without needing everything else that most of us need without loving any of it at all.

Another time on the islands I was to meet two memorable fellows, each named Grant, each a recluse and dropout from society, each a brilliant and capable person in many ways, one of them living on the north island, one on the south island, one an ex-Freemason of the twenty-eighth degree, the other an ex-Templar who had, by then, given up the dangerous ways of magic and all the karmic pitfalls incantation unavoidably contains. Two Grants, each one a glowing ball of fire in his own right, and yet in the small circle of crazy misfits who inhabited the islands, neither of them, to my knowledge, had ever heard of the other.

Grant number one, a huge, imposing, long-bearded, beer guzzling, red head, lived on a ramshackle houseboat, and moved about in the little bays which populate the east side of the south island. He had been immersed in the culture of the occult before his self-imposed exile, and considered Aleister Crowley to have been the voice of truth and keeper of the Law. But nowadays Grant was simply staying away from it all, brewing his own grog, chasing down the occasional bush hussy, making flint knives the old Indian way, and making enemies the old fashioned way- by looking out for no one but himself- which was perhaps his greatest talent while waiting for the day when his pride would call him back into the dark and imperfect ways of gesticulation and sorcery.

The other Grant- a wiry framed, scowling, long-haired son of the islands, had, as a young man, fathered a handful of children with two native Haida women, and then had set off on his own around the world to discover the secrets calling and waiting for him. I suppose he must have found some because he certainly carried one of the most burning, passionate minds I have ever come upon.

I met up with him a few years after his return to the islands, when he had come across on the ferry with only a few bucks in his pocket, and had lived from that point onward largely off the land- or so he said. He had a wise and penetrating distaste for all authority and stomped around in knee-high moccasins claiming to be able to speak with the animals, specifically a few of the rare 'warrior bears', as he called them, who unanimously considered most humans to be absolute idiots and wastrels.

As I said, this Grant had a blazing fire inside of him which he regularly aimed at anyone in uniform, or anyone claiming even the smallest power or authority over the island- his island. He was incredibly entertaining to listen to as he brandished his recalcitrant, truculent, voluble sword against all that stank of prestige and politics- the cloaks of assumed position draped over the infantile minds of those who parade themselves as leaders.

He had an eye from which no corruption nor deceit could escape, and he suffered the inevitable blackballing by the authorities, which comes to any jester who turns his keen wit and acumen against the King.

It was from him that I heard about another man, one whom had been perhaps the most notorious resident to ever inhabit the islands- Jerry the Bear man.

Grant had lived with Jerry for a year and a half, had been a good friend, and had quite a story to tell about this iconoclastic comrade of his.

Seems Jerry was a different sort of man altogether, which is to say, he was a *gentle*man. Apparently he had always been set apart from the average bloke on the streets. As an adult he had gone off and spent eight years in meditation in one of the remote valleys on the island, and when he emerged from his hermitage the animals had grown to trust and love him and followed him back to town. It was there, at his house overlooking the town, that all sorts of beasts would gather, hang about, and play as if they had returned to the Garden of Eden and no one had ever heard of the Fall.

Grant showed me pictures of crows doing antics on his porch, dear grazing in the backyard, raccoons sauntering about as if they were card-carrying citizens of the state, and, of course, bears- all living within Jerry's home. The bears were the most astonishing. Coming and going as they pleased, eating breakfast at his kitchen table- sitting up, holding cornbread like proper Victorian ladies- and sleeping on his couch.

Grant told me that though the bears were absolutely wild, they accepted anyone whom Jerry accepted- which was everyone- and had never shown any sign of fear or hostility.

The Queen Charlotte Islands are home to the largest black bears in the world, so we're not talking here about any scrawny, goat-sized Himalayan dancing bears- we're talking about the big boys.

At one point there were as many as six bears coming and going as adopted members of Jerry's household, and never a problem, never an attack, never any aggression of any type. And yet this was too much for the authorities to assimilate into their neolithic heads. No one should be allowed to love and harbor such unpredictable and terrifying beasts. It was unheard of. And the uncreative, imprisoned, confounded consciousness of the cops could, in the end, no longer tolerate such a preposterous, unprecedented, and potentially dangerous event. And so one day the thick skulled gendarmes entered Jerry's house while he was away and gunned down all the bears that were peacefully hanging about in what they had come to know as their home.

And that was too much for Jerry. The story goes that, soon after the genocide, Jerry set his house ablaze to release the massacred spirits of the bears, and a rainbow could be seen coming out of the inferno. A few days later Jerry's vehicle was found on a logging road off in the hills, destroyed as well by fire, and with a mess of what were assumed to be Jerry's bones amongst the ashes. To the authorities it was an obvious suicide, but Grant claimed Jerry was a different kind of man than that, and though the murders of his friends had been horribly grievous to him, he was still alive somewhere, and had simply gone away to where he would not have to endure the violence, brutality, and stupidity of humankind ever again.

twelve

Back I went again to humankind, back again to Vancouver, to the land of karma and cage, fornication and foolery, benedictions and balderdash. By this time in my life I was often drunk, and aloft, and writhing about in a stupor of myth and mayhem, surrounded on all sides, my bullets quickly dwindling, and still holed up in the last Monastery of Capitulation on earth- the Ivanhoe Hotel.

In the few years that I came to inhabit the Hotel, I often found myself locked away in my cell in that moribund cloister, as I had done in my apartments years earlier, though now my room was amidst a condemned fraternity of other men, most of whom were twice my age- in wearied appearance if not in years- most of whom who had fallen away from life, who were unemployed, divorced or never married, drunks and junkies, oddballs, idlers, morons, and thieves, and also a large number who simply had no desire for the troubles of respectability and success required in the showboat world; such outward ostentations were superfluous divergences for which they had no need and yet which the world still proceeded to hold up to them as mirrors of condemnation and judgment everyday.

It was a domesticated pack of lone wolves in the Hotel, all seeking shelter from the unendurable rain, all under the same sorrowful roof, in rooms stained with a hundred years of blood, semen, urine, wine, and tears. A prideless pack of ugly ducklings, runts, scapegoats, hobbled stallions, and flightless eagles cursed to the ignominy of the crumbling perch.

All that most of these men wanted- and all they got, for that matter- was a cold beer before noon, a cigarette every hour, a hot meal at night, and the deathly silence of the halls and rooms of this outcast's priory, in which each in his own solitude could slowly, methodically recount, contemplate, and admit to the broken steps which they had chosen and which had led to their troubled and valueless lives.

The whole place was like a living morgue, where the undead cadavers moved about in sloth and melancholy, haunting their own rooms with a sentence placed upon them by no one but themselves.

Thus the many rooms I came to inhabit over the next few years became my inner-city castle and keep. It was within the protected confines of these cells that, locked away in the inner altar of the soul, the images and tribulations within me would ferment up and boil over, spilling out onto page after page as manic notes, taken like an incarcerated secretary receiving dictation from a verbose and brutal master. In short, I was becoming a writer, which is a simple way of saying- all hope was lost.

I say this because I was not born blessed with an affinity for the artist's finesse in life, but rather for its rough and wild side, and so instead of effortlessly penning artful sentences, eloquently delineating the subtler aspects

of life, I had to learn to write as one with only a battleaxe for a quill, and his own blood for the ink.

As such, in the ominous bloodletting now underway, notebook after notebook was soon filled with the flotsam crashing onto the shores of my consciousness- a detritus which was more than likely exhumed, in part, because of the innumerable texts and treatises I was omnivorously devouring at the time, for I consumed anything and everything to fuel the fire: mystical Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Zen, abstract secularism, literary exegesis, poetry, psychoanalysis, philosophy, alchemy, esotericism, and all the rest of the extant tomes to be found by the perplexed and uncomfortable mind. I would devour one book and instantly be ravenous for another. Nothing could fill the void nor satisfy my hunger. As soon as I came to one realization- or what I erroneously thought at the time was a realization- I was instantly ready for another. The movement had to keep going, to wherever, and however, it didn't matter, as long as it didn't stop. I had forsaken the world, and it was only in between the covers of books where I sought comfort, company and inspiration, and the delirious effulgence's awaiting therein.

I was so easily transported into exalted contemplation during those days, insatiably attempting to gobble down the entire breadth of numinous writings from the past. It seemed that whatever I picked up at the library, or bought, or was loaned from a friend, inevitably contained precise and timely import into the current riddle I was facing inwardly. And if not, at least the book spawned another, deeper, more all-encompassing riddle which would swallow up its predecessor, as if saying- "Look here, you're not a bloody mystery, you're nothing but a puzzle waiting to be solved. Stand aside, for I come as a true enigma." And generally it was. As such I can honestly say, in all those years of reading and research, that instead of getting closer to understanding, I fell farther and farther away from it. And what a glorious and unexpected delight this turned out to be.

Early in the week I'd put on a large batch of homemade beer, wine, or port, buy a small supply of dope, and cook up a huge pot of curry, or chilli, or some such muck that would stick to the ribcage, and would last me the week, so that I could get on with the rest of it. Whatever that rest of it was.

I'd lock the door to my phrontistery, close the curtains, sit down, and begin the incessant reading, writing, drinking, smoking, thinking, eating, sleeping, wondering, going nuts, entering into euphoria, then meaninglessness, then bliss, on and on, as these multifarious aspects of my now wholly self-contained existence filled one singularly consecrated purpose- to figure things out. For months and then years on end I, in my own very imperfect way, chased down the disorienting conglomeration of antiquated, conceptual tunnels to which we are both the heirs and prisoners.

It was as if I was engaged in an internal inquisition, in which I was both prosecutor and defendant, where I sought and exposed the renegade phantoms, mute wise men, cowards, shadows, heroes, madmen, rebels, harlots, hags, and cherubim which populated my subconscious. I was unearthing myself with nothing but a pen to gouge out and excavate my insides, but I was doing it. Word by word, sentence-by-sentence, notebook-by-notebook, the endless array

of thoughts and images came streaming out of me to expose the hobgoblins and therefore liberate them onto the page.

There is nothing so painfully delightful as being seized and overtaken by an art form when attempting to cleanse, divulge, and purify one's chaotic insides. Oh, perhaps art is merely a crude, and obsolete method, one which a little prayer and some sound humility might not accomplish in a tenth the time, and yet perhaps not, for when you get right down to the cesspool of the soul you find that you're dealing not only with your own imponderable universe, but with the entirety of history and humanity, perhaps even the interminable cosmos itself, and so to take the irreversible plunge within is not so simple after all.

The only person I saw during this time was a brilliant, lachrymose woman about my age who had recently lost the last member of her family, and therefore was floating unanchored, as far off of the earth as I was and not binding me in any way to the ground. We were quite a pair, a regular couple of disembodied phantoms with barely enough flesh between us to make a baloney sandwich. We were so far away from life that we could only meet in the unproblematic stratosphere where touching and sensuality have no jurisdiction. It was a purgatorial dimension up to which we effortlessly arose and commingled; an abstractedness from existence which felt not unlike a careless Nirvana compared to the complications of life we had both, in our own ways, fallen away from.

We would rejoice in a passionate, grace-filled, fleshless and platonic communion over a few joints and some wine and allow ourselves to forget all that had come before and all that was to follow, for there was little more either of us cared for, or could accommodate, than that.

Oh, to be sure, life was no torture chamber, and there was always a bevy of young strumpets flitting about in my wayward existence. The Vancouver area, in fact, is a romantic fool's playground- what with the surfeit of idyllic hot springs, out-of-the-way cabins, choice little valleys and alpine meadows, and the earth's ever-present sex scent to get the juices flowing. For the lonely hound there were always enough uninhibited, bright, and talented wood nymphs roaming about who were often more than pleased to tangle in the pleasures of the flesh just for the freedom and joy of it.

The city seemed to attract these fresh, adventurous, west-coast vixens who just loved to coax you down to the sea with their clothes off, splash about, and then share a bed under the starry sky.

And to be sure, there is nothing like coupling with a most willing, sensual, free-spirited woman, on the wild coast, under the greatest cedars the earth has ever produced, amongst all the glory of mother nature's finest. The two go hand in hand. For in the heart of every woman, just as in every man, is the unquenchable love of being naked with the earth.

The Gods tossed us out of Eden, but they couldn't toss Eden out of us. It's as simple as that. At the center of every human being is the desire- the need- to be unclothed and frolicking, untamed through the untamed wilds with desire and passion in their souls.

This understanding was well hidden from me in the puritanical denials of the east where I grew up. But not on the coast. It must be the salt air that loosens up the loins and sets us free to enjoy the more rudimentary pleasures.

I remember driving out to Bamfield, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, with three young women one summer, then hiking out along Barkley Sound until we arrived at the beach where we planned to camp. I had not even time to put my pack down before not one of them had a stitch of clothing left on and they were suddenly splashing and swimming about and then taking photos of each other and I was watching the whole innocent burlesque show in disbelief.

It was a similar experience the first time I went with a couple of buddies and a car load of women to one of the many geothermal pools which dot the coast, and I was joyously astounded to see how they, like we, couldn't wait to get to the tubs, strip down, and prance about in natural glee.

I must have been cornered as a youngster by a demented Calvinist or something, because I had no clue that this kind of thing went on. But soon enough I had assimilated this delight into my working reality, and it was a solid fact that if you took a bottle of wine and one or more of the hussies out into the wilderness, all of the sudden you were Krishna with the gopis and the pastures were limitless.

To take your lover from behind, doggy-style, on a big, flat rock overlooking the sea, is to inscribe the Kamasutra on the trade winds, and send your liberating incontinence across the entire frigid land.

I was gaining some notoriety with my colleagues at work who saw my occasional parleyances into the vulvic playground, which caused them to gossip a little flame into a wildfire of licentiousness. Little did they know that I spent most of my time alone, staring off away from the fleshy forum and its contextual limitations. Little did they know how nothing in my seemingly free-spirited and bountiful life had sufficed to quench even a fragment of the eructating miasma welling up within me. Little did they know that I was riding on a conveyor belt through a chasm whose walls were a thousand feet high, and within which, as I was going along, I would come irregularly upon one of these delightful female companions for a brief encounter, only to find that they were not on the same conveyor belt as myself, and I couldn't get off of mine, though I tried desperately often enough. And so the tryst or friendship would soon become a memory full of longing and loss as I watched one after the other drift away and out of sight while I turned another bend in my unassailable canyon.

This observation I wouldn't fully understand until I was living in that loveless dorm, and had fallen so far away that I couldn't even remember from where. And so there was nothing to do but dig my heels in and take the labour on, for there was no other option, because to not take it on meant to freeze in front of the monsters, and then be devoured and shot back out like a disfigured piece of excrement.

I was in the pit of lions, and there was no denying it nor was there escape. The only thing to do was to forget everything else, take up arms, and learn to survive down there, inside myself; learn to sit deathly quiet and listen as the mongrels roamed about, and then learn to leap out and bludgeon them before they could attack or fight. I had to enter the eternal night of the self with my senses heightened and guns blazing. The creatures and bugbears were waiting for their game, and to avoid their cunning I had to go after them and meet them in their own lair. I had to become a hunter, then a cave man, then a Neanderthal,

a Homo erectus, Homo habilus, a prosimian, a dog, then a bear, and then the lion itself. I had to go all the way back, back into the dark and unknown, back to where it all began, if I was to make it through the dungeon of the underself.

I am certain that the Bardos[8] which we encounter during life are as weird and fantastic as those after death.

As the ground-water tide within suddenly surged up, breaking the surface, and the rigid life of pattern and habit began to sink and dissolve below the surface, I had to learn to breathe with another set of lungs, and to look out through another set of eyes, beneath this thick, primordial soup waiting to engulf and ensnare me. To survive the descent I had to learn to stand and face the darkness, and to become not only the hunter, but the prey as well. I had to forget the eagle nature of my highest self, and become a common gull, an ignoble scavenger, if I was to survive the dereliction of the soul, and the chaos of the night. I had to become low, and stay low, so as not to be shot out of the sky, skinned, stuffed, stuck upon a wall, and forgotten.

There are caverns and caves of lost and unknown universes within us. There are inexplicable domains, unheard of beasts, incomprehensible, infinite labyrinths, and armies of bandits, forces, and fiends. To dive within yourself with reckless abandon is to enter a netherworld divorced of logic, rules, succor, and comfort.

The chthonic realm took me in, spun me around, twisted itself about, contorted and confused me, spat me back out and hauled me back again; it let me think that I knew where I was, who I was, and what I was, and then it inverted everything, converted everything, crammed the cosmos through a meat grinder, changed the pattern and the context, distorted the form, brought me to peace in its prison, and when I thought it was all over and I had escaped, it exposed the endless chains and walls around me, laughing at me, torturing me, feeding upon me, and making me wish I had never looked in, nor entered, nor awoken in the inescapable, phantasmagoric, underworld within.

And yet it was there I had to go to conquer the anarchic forces which possessed and controlled me from below. It was into this abyss of fantasy and non-meaning which I had to plunge without hope or promise of a way back. And I could neither grieve nor petition, but had to stay down there and fight until all of the dragons had fled or been slain. And that, it seemed, was a greater task than building a hundred pyramids with a butter knife, or flying to the moon on a kite.

The distance became infinite before I knew what was happening. I was swept down the river and out to sea without saying goodbye, nor taking care of my things, nor grabbing onto a life preserver. At first I swam against the unbeatable current, then capitulatively treaded water for a brief period until I was utterly exhausted, and that was when I was forced into the survival position-head down in the depths as long as I could bear it, and then up for a quick breath and a peak around at the unrelenting ocean, all the while being taken farther out, and losing all hope of ever being found, and my head would have to go down again, holding my breath under the surface of life until I would almost explode, then up for a second and back down before I sank, trying desperately to live beyond my ability to live.

I existed for a great duration like a gypsy of the mind; within the infinite, boundlessness of being did I wander aimlessly from one inhospitable region to the next, never finding my home without nor within me. For the limitless Self is a strange, atopic land, at times indifferent to our changing whereabouts.

I sought myself so far within that I held no sincere hope of ever returning.

Like a camel did I drink insatiably of life before leaving, but I went too far; on the desert journey of becoming I had consumed a vast portion of my rations in order to get away, but I could see no welcoming oasis. I ran blindly, without direction, and charged recklessly into lostness.

Nothing, nothing, nothing, so much of nothing. To walk and walk, down the empty streets inside oneself, past empty houses, amongst empty people, while nothing matters except to keep walking, because to stop means to succumb to the madness, futility, boredom, fear, weakness, or shame.

I became accustomed to the loss of everything, to dying in life, as they say, and to having no function, no responsibility, no place, nor role in life. This was the loam upon which the seed of my spirit had sprouted and taken root. There was no turning back, I had already come to that dreadful conclusion. I was outside of life, a foreigner to all that is.

I had come fully undone; whatever had mattered no longer mattered. It was a time when I was allowed neither God nor the world; a time when I was on the outside completely, and a place from which it seemed I could not get back.

But if I pursued what the world considered impossible, if I desired what the world proclaimed could not be had, if I required what mankind could not offer, and demanded that which no one could give, it was because I knew one thing, and it was that I had to go for it with everything I had.

I had to take my failures, doubts, and discouragements, and either cut them loose or carry them on my back up the hill.

To walk away was easy. But where then to go? God knows? Just away. I had left no marking by which to find my way back, for I was never returning. I had to forge ahead without thought of right or wrong. If it was God's need to strike me dead for some unavoidable error, so be it. That was God's need. I had to move forward. The further I went, the further I had to go. I had to look ahead without any memory or regret.

I saw clearly then that the point of no return *is* the starting point; if you can go back ...you have not yet begun.

It was one of those events which went on for so long that I forgot to think that it may ever come to an end; I forgot the possibility that something or someone might come along to scoop me up and take me to shore- and so I came to live only in the reality of the survival mode, forgetting that peace may exist because I forgot that I was not at peace, forgetting that suffering may be lessened because I forgot that I was suffering, and the days and nights came and went without a change because this, I thought, was what life is, and this was all it is, and so I looked for no land ahead, did not wave at passing boats, nor did I think to beg for relief from God, because there was only myself and the endless deep which held me until I was beyond holding, and from which I came up for a breath only to quickly return to the depths.

At these times I beheld consciousness in the grip of the hallucination which invented it. I fought like a Titan wrestling with his own powerless shadow. I drank up an ocean, and pissed out a world. The planets swarmed to knock me down. The winds howled to defeat me. The moon cast thunder down upon me. The sun went dark. But I kept on going, moving on, or something, to somewhere. I was walking through the Self. I was going. Didn't know where. No one came with me. Still I kept going. On and on I say. I kept going on, on and on. Lonely as the wind, strong as the tree which withstands it. I kept going and going, on.

It seemed as if from the outset I was set adrift and my whole life was a journey back home, a home which did not exist because ...I was supposed to be adrift. And it was this alienship to all being which was in fact my true birthright, my inheritance, my blessed freedom from all that dies. And the momentous movements out and away were the caustic baths of purification, the baptisms by fire, the parched and deserted lands the spirit is left to eternally roam.

I had to go on ...because I could only go on; because once you have gone a certain distance, even if it be digression (or perhaps especially if it be digression) you cannot return from such remoteness, you cannot find your way back, ever; you have scurried about in the labyrinth's dark expanse an irreconcilable distance. Once you are away, you just keep going.

While everyone else had been carving out a niche for themselves in this life, I was filling mine in. While everyone else sought to be found, I inherently sought lostness; and by this I inexorably betrayed the continuity of the manifest, and fell in amongst the chaotic, foreign beyond. The sun set, the moon rose, and the night became my homeland.

I became a refugee from being- I came to exist on the periphery of everything ...that is.

It was a fine, horrid enterprise that branched and widened, flooding out into my dreams.

In the vestiges of that engulfing miasma, dizzy in the peaceless calm, I flailed against life in a merriment of fears, and shivered around the lost fire.

I sang though I was mute, jumped though I was lame, and loved though my heart was hard as Hades'.

Cold in the stupor of reason, life bled listlessly from my soul.

Hardened in the chaos, I listened without hearing, touched without feeling, and changed without becoming myself.

Softened in the realm between victory and defeat, the Great Play consumed the player, but all that remained was the spent, broken shells of yesterday's home.

And yet exiled from the continuum, I performed intangible duties, healed secret ills, and reckoned with imperfect eyes.

Oh yes, here and there I grasped and held onto things, to thoughts, and to lies. Later or soon I was forced to let go.

When predicament ensconced the days, oblivion forsook them.

Resignation became my fountain and my thirst, while misery tangled about in the lyre.

Fear crept in through the fissures of my nothingness. Sadness purged it out. A hollow conduit of incompleteness was all that remained. Through this the Source oozed rapture and healing into my unclosable wounds.

It was never enough. The distance itself was damnation. I was alone, absolutely alone, and only the pit of my troubled guts had the honest strength left to grieve it. There you have it.

Still it was all a miracle, of that there is no dispute.

How I saw it is all that can be said, not what it was I saw.

Aglow and wandering, free of context and meaning, writhing unkempt in the dark, terminal madness of becoming, it was the decadent insomnia of consciousness that held me gripped and staring. I was an unclosable Eye, casting about hither and yon, hunting frantically for a mirror to find itself within. To look, to see, to comprehend.

New Eden, old crime.

*

thirteen

This was how I found myself, years down the road- somehow alone and distant from everyone I had been close to and I couldn't even try to swim back to them because when I entered into the survival position I did it because I was thoroughly exhausted, and it was the last resort, the last act of which I was capable, and nothing was left in me to attempt another option.

I was alone in the subconscious and conscious alike, listening to a voice I alone could hear, following a star I alone could see, and chomping on a bit I alone could bite into.

It was a path which I chose without knowing what was coming, which was impossible. I only came to a fork in the road, made my decision, and never looked back. There was no point in this. I had to keep my eyes straight ahead, my ears cocked, alert and prepared for anything which might come at me. But I was never alert nor prepared when something did come, and usually I was knocked flat on my back and held down to the ground and gnawed upon by the hyenas of the mind until they had had their fill and let me back up to lick my wounds and debrief myself on the terrible lesson.

Oh there were inwardly magical times as well. Often there was nothing more delightful, in fact, than sitting down in the afternoon, having finished typing into the computer the notes I had taken the night before- one of the only disciplined acts I maintained in my runaway life, but one which I took seriously, and rarely made excuses to avoid- and after eating lunch and having put what few tasks I allowed to invade my researches in order, I'd uncork a bottle of homemade hooch, light up a cigarette, and sit back, relaxing into the aimless mental space which would be the open window allowing the inspirations to blow in, lift me out of myself, out of context, and out of the ideas which bind and constrict the work, and then do my best to pen a sentence or two describing what

I could hardly describe, and then I'd fall back into the space and the oblivion, openly awaiting another dispensation.

I was a willing and excitable, cheap-as-they-come harlot; a regular whore of the Muses during those years. The little morsels they'd fling down to me sent me fluttering about inside and hankering for more of those the crystalline moments in which everything would stop without ceasing, and the non-movement which exists prior to being would flood in and couple with the ebbing movement of life, as the substance and shadow converged in an orgiastic, contiguous array.

Were a sentence to emerge out of the clatter and clang, and end up on the page in some agreeable, unique, or odd manner, I'd have a fit of satisfaction and exuberance, and then I'd ease back into the space, and wait for the next installment.

There I would sit. Alone. Silent. Waiting. Willing. And in that space I would also occasionally come upon the place where words could neither come nor go- the place where all ideas ended, where the mind gave up, and where the full complexity, marvelous absurdity, and stupefying profundity of existence would descend upon and consume me, and I would be held there, gripped in the claws of mystery again, a thankful and delighted victim, never wanting to be released and given back to the vulgar and profane world of concept and false light.

Ah, how the paradoxes of life exist to deny and also fulfill us, as I found while hovering in suspended animation all those years. What I found is that the self behind the self cares little to be assuaged, or entertained, or encumbered by the exigencies of participating in the manifest; I found that there is a livingness which is made obvious only when the subject falls ambivalently away from the object, and behind that screen of boredom the witness, which refuses to be enticed into, or amused by, the passing artifice, becomes obvious. And so the ego must abate and lay down like a beast of burden confined to its squalid little pen, and the self behind the self must become the focus of consciousness if the wheel of samsara is to be ground to an effortless halt.

In a way one must be tired of life in order to find Life, for the never ending round of creation and destruction is only stopped when the vehicle runs out of gas. And so the stimulations and distractions of modern life only come to create a riot of digression in which the captivated soul flits about like a pinball, hither and thither, and never comes to settle in the ambitionless lethargy of the unbothered and purposeless self behind the self.

It is only through this lack of outreaching, lack of attainment, and lack of care that the undamned flood of gyrating, antecedent energy pours into the awaiting absence of the impoverished, open being; it is through this living, womb-like abyss that the universe spins itself out, funneling into its own spacious accelerator, mixing, swirling, fermenting, and exploding out of both ends of the antipodal cylinder. And so it is through the positionless, directionless, unaspiring host that the influx and outflux intermingle and give balance to each other, while the acolyte of apathy hangs precariously between the two worlds, hovering at the estuary of being and non-being, where only those who have evolved in both the salt and the sulphur can survive. Here the creator and created dissolve from their differences, pattern is shifted, form

mutates, and the infinite essence betrays its hidden laughing volition. And this is the shift which turns the soul toward home.

When you have learned to endure this reality, that is when you fall in step- you stop walking in the maelstrom of the mind's apologies, you spit for the last time on the ground, halt short in your tracks, forget the reason you were moving, forget where you were headed, why you were going there, where you are now, and who you are. The earthquake of your life ends softly, and you realize nothing of what you were is you. The mad movements are merely over, the interference has cleared, and the blessed congress of perverse redemption forces you out of the storm. The clouds blow away. The birds begin to sing again. The children come out to play. But nothing really changes. The clarity of your absence negates nothing. You still sleep, and wash, and hope, and wait like before. And yet ...and yet, something has changed. Everything has changed. And that war is over.

It was from that estranged position of absent presence I was chronically basking in while living in the desperate melancholy of the loveless Ivanhoe, that I had an experience which would provide a clear and indisputable sense of a form of love which would make relationship love- although blessed, and beautiful, and one of the most precious gifts we have in life- seem like a surrogate revelation given to us before we are capable of being bequeathed our fullest reward.

What happened was a far stranger event than I had ever imagined. I was in my room, sitting alone on a decrepit mattress, in that sorrow-soaked building, listening to the mad shouts and grunts of patrons entering and exiting the bar below, and at some point during the evening I must have totally switched off, that is about all I can say- I left, and in walked God's love, filling an absence I did not even know I had. It was as if there existed a tunnel running through me all of the sudden; in fact, there was no me, only the tunnel, and the incredible, healing, accepting, connecting, and redemptive flow of divine love was rushing through me and emanating out onto earth, and I knew without a doubt- in the unquestionable clarity of such a blessing- that this was a miracle that could heal the agony of loneliness and separation which was so prevalent in the substratum of every human life.

There was an immense feeling of ease and tranquility accompanying this love, and I saw that if I could continue allowing this to happen through me, I could then walk through the world casting the grace of God's love wherever I pointed my hollow attention. All the while this was happening I was doing nothing, it was just happening, and I couldn't understand how; I had no idea of the way in which it came about, nor how to prolong it. It was beyond my reason, and filling the room, and I was mentally trying to understand the process- how was I, who had never felt such transcendental power from this type of divine union, and who, without choice, had become an empty channel through which this love was now pouring into my vacant room- how was this benediction possible, and how was I to further its happening?

The love went on for quite a while, and I contemplated and received it, and my brain could make no headway as to what I was doing, or what I had to do, to allow this love to wash through me perpetually. And then, as the

wonderful feeling of the invasion of God's love was fading out, an answer came to me about how it would come again, if ever it did- an answer which made no logical sense but which I knew was *the* answer- the only way in which it was possible for me to become an empty conduit of divine love; and that answer, which spoke unequivocally to me back then, was simply: "Be yourself!"

Ah, but of course, it suddenly made sense. All I had to do was deny nothing, repress nothing, be ashamed of nothing, and the clog in the conduit would be washed away and nothing would remain to block the flow.

Looking back I get the sense that I was being given a lesson at this time- a brief experience of what I was not at that period of my formative existence capable of fully attaining, but what was certainly a goal worth striving towards.

I see now that Divine Love was visited unto me back then, at a time when I felt as far away from it as ever I have been. It was as if I had to get to the furthest end of the anode in order for the cathode to discharge its load and force me back into equilibrium.

And now all that was required of me was to actualize the divine fiat- to be *myself*. Ah but what a task this would turn out to be.

*

fourteen

As a young man my mother told me that a mother's job was to give her children "roots and wings", which I suppose it is, although, unfortunately, as hard as she tried, for the most part I had neither roots nor wings, but was more like a dandelion seed blown about in the air, and so I flew, but not by my own power, and was part of the earth, but rarely grounded.

My father once declared "We are spirits having a human experience, rather than humans having a spiritual one", which is true, although, again, I was often neither spirit nor human, but only an amorphous mass of energy and form, unable to live in the world, and unable to escape beyond it.

My mother's second husband, however, said perhaps the most pertinent thing of all to me when I was young; after he had finished expounding about one of the world's scientific understandings, he turned to me and confessed, "But we really don't know anything. We don't know anything at all."

It was this Socratic disclosure which was perhaps a prophecy describing my awaiting confrontation with conceptual lostness, or mystic ignorance, as it were. And by that I mean that during the years to follow, of struggle and disorientation, while attempting to 'be myself', another psychological valve eventually broke within me, and this new rupture became a massive turning point, because it shattered my novice reality and sent me out into the same old world, but as if I had never truly seen it before.

This event I have called, in retrospect, my hallowed unawakening. It was an experience that has colored the rest of my days ever since, for better or worse, of that I am not certain. It came upon me one evening in Vancouver, as I

was strolling leisurely home from a friend's house, after a night of revelry and merriment. I had fallen into that controlled and somnambulistic gait which comes upon an individual traversing the same path which they have walked back and forth many times before, and therefore they can drift off onto auto-pilot, as it were, and let their legs alone ferry them home.

And so I was ambling along, most likely deeply invested in one or more of the many questions that chronically plagued me at the time- the whys? and whats? and so ons of our existence- questions for which no one has of yet provided any reasonable answers. And I suppose that I had chased these fantastic conundrums down to the furthest reaches of which I was capable of attaining at the time, and from which, like a fool, I had expected to return to the surface with a proper answer and so be done with the business of thinking then and there, and then get on with the rest of my awaiting life. Boy was I in for a turn of events, for the exact opposite of my expectations happened; which is to say, at the height of my questioning I was suddenly and inexorably struck dumb with the very fact of existence itself, and, more specifically- *my* existence. What I mean is that I came to an abrupt halt in my peripatetic speculations, my mouth slid helplessly open, I clenched at my forehead and froze- I had become immobilized by the implausibility ...of being, and, more specifically- of my being. And yet this barely describes the state of mystic exasperation into which I had fallen.

I was in the mystery, and □*I* was the Mystery. Finally I had forgotten everything. Everything. Nothing but a blank, brilliant slate remained. Even that nebulous, impossible word 'God'- even that- I forgot what it means, and, more importantly ...what it does not mean.

Everything came unglued. Everything melted away from probability, imaginability, and conceivability. It was as if my own *I* had suddenly seen the unlikelihood, absurdity, and inexplicability of being such a thing as *I*- of a self who, moments before, knew what a self was, and was nicely contained in names and ideas and the soft numbness of little understandings. But now that very self was the disbelieving center of its own incredulity. That self, which had been nonchalantly pondering over the hidden secrets of existence- that self was suddenly struck and amazed and shocked and stupefied by ...itself; as if the whole universe had inverted, and only mystery remained, and at the core of that mystery stood an *I* which did not know what *I* was, and was now so utterly flabbergasted that all the walls of meaning came shattering down and there was nothing this *I* could do to recreate, or define itself because what was this *I* and what could or would it do if it knew what it was. I was back again at the center, and the *I* alone was there; only the *I*, peering in and astonished that it *existed*, finally uncovered, finally cast back upon itself with no foundation to support it, rapt and stupefied, wondering and gasping for a way out but there was no way out and the awe turned into exaltation and something fell away from me at that moment which has never again re-grown. And thank God for that I say.

As I stood there in the middle of the night, holding my forehead, I slowly regained some of my faculties and walked on further, but then the whole mad show came tumbling down again, and again I stopped without intending and grabbed at my head and my mouth drew open, and again I was caught at the center of the fabulous miracle of self. The surging wonder and questioning went

on and on right to the hub of the wheel, so to speak, stopping all and everything in its tracks. This happened a number of times and my life was inextricably altered forever.

Oh, nothing was solved in the maelstrom of my new, immanent ignorance, but, let me tell you, life became a mystery again.

The marvelous magnitude of being had suddenly swelled ferociously up and consumed me whole. Nothing was left which was able to obstruct it; no walls, no thought, no intention, no me. There was neither curse nor praise, but only a transparent, sober nothingness. I was the dumbest man alive. *I was free*.

I have often said that in that single instant of absolute wonder- when suddenly I forgot everything I had been told from day one- I lost my life completely. That is, I lost my life, yes, but not Life; I lost only the blind, heartless wombat I had been made into by others, and by my own spiritless cowardice and sloth.

But after it all came together, or perhaps fell apart, in that one irrevocable, passionate invasion- I was emancipated of all thought, and when it was over I was as if embalmed in a viscous mix of incapacity and exaltation. I was baptized in disbelief.

As if caught in a blessed vacuum of incomprehension, I had fallen helplessly into the infinite mystery where even God did not know himself. I was cleansed in a deluge of hallowed disremembrance, and had the stupor of Noah after the flood; the world was swept pure and clean of taint. Every last speck of the man I was, or had been, was no longer; every idea of truth, every reason, want and torture- everything was done. I was done. But that's what death is anyways- you begin again. What's gone is gone.

I finally recovered enough of my senses to return to the functional delirium of facts and figures, and as such I made my way home that evening. And I slept that night like a new man who didn't know what it meant to be new, nor what it meant to be a man, nor what it meant to *be*, and when I awoke the next morning all I could think of was returning to the splendid magnitude of that wonder.

I now return as often as possible to that zone of unbound grandeur, to the foundation of this exasperating, inexplicable world. Sometimes I can forget entirely where I was, where I am, where I am headed, and forget everything that has gone before me, everyone I have ever met, and even myself. I forget it all and float off into the reverie of the untethered spirit, with neither anchor nor meaning to hold me to the ground.

And yet I have never fully returned to the height of that initial insurrection. I have never since that evening been allotted the power of that staggering vision of the immanent mystery which we are. To be sure, at quiet times, when I am oblivious and empty and have settled back into the source of my soul, I can still walk part of the way back down that blessed tunnel; I can, for brief moments, re-experience the benediction of that bewildering night when divine ignorance swept me clean of all that was and is and gave me wings to forge on through the densely knotted morass of mankind's misconceptions, but I have never come undone like I came undone that night. I suppose that this is the way it must be, for were I to have continued in that state of rapture and idiocy and not come out of it, I would surely be locked up in a loony-bin and eating

baby food through a straw. I say this without exaggeration; for the human life, the way we live it, cannot sustain these types of ecstasies for any great duration; not, that is, until we are done with our work on this tepid and sluggardly plane, and have returned again to the liquid fire and bounty of our ethereal homes, which is a dream I carry with me- that when I am done with the labors of this life I may be privileged and capable enough to fall away from all of it again and to return without ending to the living core of the eternal, implausible, wonderful, mysterious self.

Until then, however, I have no reasonable explanation why life is the way it is. I know only that in that inaugural, tempestuous night of absolute astonishment- when suddenly I could not believe that I existed- I know that this event was God's first conscious glimpse of being incarnated as …me. Who? Me? Who is this me? How could this be? What is this that I am? I do not know and yet I know it was God struggling to believe within me.

Writing all this down reminds me of a dream I had when I was eight years old in which I fell out of a boat into the water and the Devil grabbed my foot and pulled me under so as to capture me. But as I was descending I suddenly transformed into a little infant, and the Devil looked at me, and because I was only a child, he had to release me.

I suppose that my later experience of profound wonder and of childlike innocence of mind, as it were, some twenty years further on, was the fulfillment of that dream, for I was made free from being held captive in the manifest the moment I became ignorant and did not understand what this life is about, why it is, or what I am which is *it*.

I have related these events quite a few times to others, in an effort to share the effect of these experiences upon me. But then I wonder, why am I trying to convince others of the profound lostness of incomprehension that is so debilitating within me? Am I suggesting that one ought to willingly learn how to not know? Should I seek to condemn others to these outlandish confines I must exist within simply to experience myself? Do I seek simply to establish a city-state of wonder, inside an oligarchy of despotic facts? What is to be accomplished by confronting such debilitating unfathomableness? Have I, because of its mildly euphoric qualities, forever banished myself into my own polished stupidity? What is the use if I am merely claiming, vehemently, to not know what is not knowable? Have I been hyperventilating petty truisms? Flatulating ontologies? Have I sought only to parade the mind's inadequacies? Am I merely claiming all others truant from the gymnasium of contemplation? Am I but a weak man flagrantly bragging about having found the strength to bear weakness? Or am I the only fool who sees through unmystery into mystery? Have I legitimately witnessed the unimaginable event of being? Or have I been deceived by the intensity of a false experience? Was I simply soaring over a great abyss and mistaking it for height? Am I but a dwindling salmon, instinctually bursting with its own continuance, yet tragically fighting its way up the wrong river? Must one simply be cured of the mind? A spider extricated from its own binding web? And do I attempt to continue not-knowing because of such pleasant, profound absorption? Have I set myself adrift on the dubious raft of doubt so as to escape an inhospitable certitude? Have I simply exaggerated my confusion by assuming a possibility of clarity? Have I

improvised a certainty out of everything that I am claiming to doubt? Have I embraced nothing from this world except the disorienting effects of my own confusion? Has the ability to enter into a perspective which cannot conceive itself become my way of avoiding knowing, however erroneous? Am I more comfortable being thoroughly baffled than being wrong? Has not-knowing become my latest justification for the anguish associated with interpretation? Why is it that I struggle towards the intense lucidity of nescience? Have I invented my own ignorance to cloud over an unbearable event- being? Do I merely hope to consecrate these unavoidable misunderstandings into a more practical, soothing obliviousness? Have I concluded it all unfathomable, rather than it being quite fathomable, and I am simply unable to fathom it? Has the incredible impact of not knowing deceived me into abandoning myself to it and it alone, and then never seeking a possible knowing? Has ignorance become my latest defense, absolving me from confronting unavoidable perspectives? Have I been deliberately confusing myself, intentionally focusing upon what I am definitely not capable of perceiving, so that I would not have to acknowledge what I can see? Is non-understanding an honest outcome of contemplation, or merely a defendable subterfuge- a hideout from the known? Should one cease to be astounded by the astounding? Should one go further than astoundedness? Should one even lose lostness? Does wonderment itself eventually stand in the way, and it too must be cast aside? Is rapture the wet nurse of a growing temerity? Has awe become my latest addiction? Have I been forever trying to feel at home in this world, most recently within the foreignness of incomprehension? Must I abort everything; capitulate into total, irredeemable possibility? And ...and will that be faith?

*

fifteen

Soon after that thorough cognitive emancipation I was back again in the torment of context, back in the created torrent and foam of urbanity. I was on the diastole of my ventricular cycle- living in the city so as to gather some dollars, as they say, and return again to the bush.

Now, however, I was certainly done with the Ivanhoe and all the ills and glories which came with it, for, along with all the other infirmities of the city, I was also helplessly stricken with unrelenting insomnia, which I had endured for much of my time in the urbane blender but which had reached its peak in the stale air of that loveless mortuary, and which had left me, at the end of my last stay, often walking about in a wearied delirium.

Many people offered their amateur advice on how to get rid of the sleeplessness- none of which I took, because I don't take other people's advice, which is a policy of mine that I cannot remember ever breaking since I recognized its necessity- though in the back of my flustered mind I knew my sleeplessness had nothing to do with the drinking, improper eating habits, or lack of exercise; it had to do explicitly with the false light and false noise of the

city. I had become too open and sensitive towards these poisonous intrusions to find rest within their artificial spheres. The tireless internal combustion engine and glowing streetlights became hated enemies of mine. Nowhere could I find peace from the ongoing hum and drone of man's imbecilic rushing about here, there, and everywhere. And the offensive light, oozing into every crevice of even a well-curtained room, would pour in and never let me into the deep tranquility so necessary for body and soul alike. I know this now, because the instant I returned to the wilderness, with its gentle, hushed sounds, lack of obstreperous tintinnabulations, and dark nights- no matter what Luna was up to at the time- I would sleep in dead calm from the moment I closed my eyes until Sol began to peak his head above the horizon. And this without ever changing a single habit: I drank no less, ate no differently, and exercised no more.

This made me wonder if most of the cures and medicines available today are not simply synthetic counterbalances to allow people to continue living unnatural lives, in unnatural settings.

Unfortunately I was now in the unnatural city, and wondering where I would turn to find rest and dream when all options had been exhausted?

Ah, but another simple question merely preceded another simple answer- one which came to me as I was looking towards the north shore mountains from the pit of the tangled and tortured east-side of the city, and I suddenly realized how much wilderness lay just beyond Vancouver itself. I had lived clandestinely in the forest while I was working in Alaska, surely it was possible to find a place to hide somewhere in the vast expanse of woods near the city; a little piece of flat ground to build a small shanty and live like one who exists in two worlds for a while again.

I was no Jerry the Bear man, but I had fallen in love with the earth with such intensity that men and their ways came to take on ever darker and darker shades to me. My eyes came to need the gnarled and inexplicable trunks of ancient cedars, my feet the soft and unpredictable step of futon-thick moss underneath, my ears the play of the wind and the songs of the birds, and my lungs the crisp moist tickle of the west coast air. How soothing the true wilderness was to my soul compared to the riot of mankind's ubiquitous pandemonium and all the noise which came with it.

And so I stepped onto a city bus that day, headed out of town, and got off at the last stop on the line- as far as the public transit would take me. Off I went with sledge and saw, rope and tarp, ardor and victory, and thundered up the nearest trail a short way, then turned off of it, through the bush, up a ridge, over a rise, and onto a small level area where, instantly, I knew I had found my home- a place to be near and not near the city, in and not in the wilderness, alone and not alone, a part of the world and yet apart from the world. It was quiet, beautiful, soothing and ...free.

And so I hacked out a little area near a bluff overlooking Howe Sound and the Georgia Strait, built a small pole-frame, hung a tarp over it, built a bed out of some twine and six-foot cut branches, created a stone and mud fireplace, hauled up a sleeping bag, some candles, and a water jug, and within half a day I had a hidden hut with a million dollar view, no rent, and, more importantly ...no noise.

This little hermitage would come to serve me well over the next few years as I came and went from the city. It became my Thoreau's cabin, nicely tucked away from society, convention, money, and all the ills these are kin to.

When people eventually heard about this and about my regular pilgrimages out into the bush alone, occasionally a friend or acquaintance would offer their admiration that I had developed the skills necessary to be so self-sufficient, and then they would go on to generally bemoan their own incompetence which kept them from such liberties. This type of comment I would quickly rebut, declaring that the only skill necessary to survive in the wilderness alone was the ability to endure oneself, everything else one could learn in a minute, for wilderness living required nothing more than a tent or tarp, sleeping bag, lighter, compass, and a bag of granola and raisins. Because to be in the wilderness meant to *be* in the wilderness. There was no need to go on an extended hike or paddling trip; the shortest distance required to get away from the hubbub was all that was necessary, it was far too simple.

I reckon this observation of mine- that the only talent one needs to be in the wilderness is the ability to be alone- and that means lonely- is why a certain well known wilderness school ends each of its courses with a three-day solo session, in which each person must not only apply the practical skills they have acquired during the course, but must also be wholly *alone*, which is a different type of aloneness altogether, out in the bush, instead of in the city where, devoid of company, one still has books, radio, television, newspapers and all the rest of the cosmopolitan clutter which never allows one to fall back into the abyss within themselves.

It was that abyss I would enter, up in my hut, sitting alone, watching the glorious sunsets over the strait, sipping port or whiskey, occasionally lighting up the pot-pipe, and wondering, as I always wondered, where everyone else was; wondering why the million and a half other souls down there in the city were content to sweat their lives away only so as to own or rent a crumbling piece of the tormented ant's nest? Where were the others- and there must have been others- who also had been driven like spiritual lepers from the herd? Was I the last man alive from a lost tribe destined to wander unbelonging amongst the children of men? Forever banished, forever outside, forever longing for a world in which our spirits mingled in a singular dance? Where was my tribe, my people, my peerage? Where were the ones who, like myself, belonged to another life altogether?

I was determined never to be harnessed, nor blend-in, nor lose myself in the traps of mankind's errors. I would only dissolve, and live, and become whole in the remaining untouched wilds of our sick and agonizing earth.

I had no home, no responsibility, no bills, no future. I lived in the cold and rainy forest, ate beans and bread, drank cheap wine, made love to wise and beautiful women, learned my own lessons from my own heart, and spoke with God occasionally. I would not trade that period of my life for the whole world.

Despite the love and spirit at the Co-op, I had no real desire to work at all. I was chronically well below the poverty line, and yet I always lived well, traveled many places, drank my share of hooch, and ate plenty of good food. Which makes me wonder if the poverty-line should actually be called the distraction-line, for when you fall below it you have not the disposable income

necessary to disguise your true lostness and confusion, and therefore when you fall below it you truly are poor, because you are faced with nothing but yourself, and when you face yourself long enough you begin to see that you are impoverished inwardly as well, and then you're done for.

I say that back then I was effervescent, insouciant, and unknown as the hard and calculating establishment set in to divert and impede me. I say that I was mad and driven to the center as the sides wound to bind me further. I say I was wild and wounded but strong and indefatigable as the whole collapsed inexorably in upon me, and yet I leapt up, dissolved into myself before I was doomed, and the All fell right through itself. Then the winds shifted, the spirits rose, and I flew off without a thought, a regret, or a failure.

I had realized what it means to be a master- to be the master of one's self rather than a slave to the manifest. And that means to live on one's own terms, and to never bend nor be tricked by fear, guilt, or false ambition. It means holding your own chosen course in the sea of mankind's effluvium and disordered consciousness. It means not so much of finding out who you are, but in choosing who you are, and then in being that completely, without a doubt, a worry, or a shudder.

To live purposelessly on this earth for a while is a true stunt and a valuable asset to the rounding off of one's character. To step out on the limb where meaning can't follow, where the world sheds it's linear veneer, and the self sheds all definition, is to walk on thin ice over a bottomless ocean. But at times there is nothing like it. Once you get a taste and a liking for it there is little in life to compare.

The world's grey and banal ways become hideous intrusions into the electrifying and vertiginous heights one can soar up to when the mind is finally addled and the new eyes opened.

To exist in that simple state of disorientation, to desire it, and to need it, is to detest the world of action, purpose, and reason, for these add nothing to the glorious endowment but only obstruct the joy of the glide.

I wanted only to continue not belonging, not understanding, not trying, nor seeking; I wanted to learn to hover in the full-blown magic of life and to fall away without caring. I wanted to desist without conviction, to melt into the mystery laughing and aghast and to be done with mankind's useless games forever.

Oh indeed, the gentle rhythm of the spirit is all but wholly extinguished in these days of unnatural lives and vain actions, and I cared for none of it. Think of what it is to be natural, and you will understand how far astray mankind has gone. Nothing but clothing, clocks, fences, signs, pavement, television, telephones, engines, school, weapons, banks, business, bureaucracy, politics, borders, rules, passports, paper, condoms, surgery, pills, walls, wire, forks, knives, cans, haircuts, makeup, shoes, sports, shovels, stores, diplomas, titles, careers, money, rent, hospitals, hotels, holidays, furniture, wheels, churches, names, dams, factories, fools, failures, fanatics, and so on. The whole mess of it one great, terrible lie. A pandemonium of pernicious delusion. All of it. Everything we have created we have done at our own peril. We have walked away from the beauty, and joy, and the miracle of living. We have made heaven into hell. And there is no way most people will change until God lines them up

and puts a bullet through the back of their heads. And who can wait for that? The only option left is to steal as much of heaven back as possible; to work little, need little, spend little, to live and dance and hold your brothers and sisters in your arms with one eye pointed to heaven and one eye keeping a watch on mankind, and never to deny your heart its inmost yearning.

It is the spiritless fears of society which have led to our current destruction. That is why we live in little boxes which block out the light and silence the wind. That is why we live with blind eyes that can hardly see, and with hearts that barely feel. That is what they have done to us.

And though it is easy to accuse the world of the contorted conditions of the day- for certainly therein lies no innocence, and I will never forget the perpetual atrocities committed by mankind which succeed only to further lead the individual away from their true self- in the end it was not the world which bound me into the prison of the false life, but my own trespasses therein, and eventually I recognized that it is up to each of us to stay or to leave, forgive or hate, to doubt or to believe, and until a person comes humbly to that arduous understanding, all their little games of emancipation will merely build more solid walls.

Oh, but how strenuous it is to live free in a world which honors the hard parts; to be on your own, completely and only dependent upon yourself, where no institution, nor church, nor school knows or is inclined to empathize or assist you. To live as a spirit is to be outcast and dishonored among men, because to live as such means you must break their rules, scorn their taboos, and destroy the lie they've come to believe in, for they know not yet that God is insane, and that all who run with God must be mad as well. God exists beyond reason, beyond meaning, beyond right or wrong, even beyond hope. To be with God means you are done for; you are now vermin, now a fool, now a traitor, now an eyesore, now a useless and incapable, worthless specimen of mankind. That is what it takes, that is what God requires. The only question remaining is- are you up for it?

To live as a spirit is to feel and follow the true pulse of the true heart of the true life and to live from that core and that core alone. It is to ascend to the level of the living dream, to enter the portal of sublimity, to exist on the diaphanous plane of passion and piety. To live on this tired earth as a spirit is to enter the stream and get lost in the current, it is to ride the wave that never crashes, and to slip through the walls of false being, false meaning, false worth. But you must live it. You cannot read about it, talk about it, or understand it. The only thing to do is to let go of the world and grab hold of the sky. To embrace the wild fecundity of the soft reality. To banish all fear, expectation, comfort, and worry. To find your essence, grow your essence, be your essence. To live as a spirit is to never set down, to never alight, to never get caught. It is to give way to the Juggernaut of mankind, but to not give yourself away. It is to look to the birds for example, to the trees for love, and to the great soul for communion. To live as a spirit in this spiritless world is to enter a realm which no one else belongs in nor understands; it is to break the veil and dance along the membrane; it is to punch a hole in the heavens and send a flood of life down through yourself to a world of disbelief and anguish. It is to relearn a way of being which will mesmerize and horrify your fellows, and in which you find a

new set of ups and downs, losses and victories, sorrows and joys to which the world is wholly blind. To live on this earth as a spirit is to become a spirit, and that means- if you are strong and sedulous enough to maintain it- to break the chain of causality, leap off the wheel, and to leave this hardened world for good.

I had tried long enough to devour our ancient, dyspeptic ambrosia, our emetic soma, and our indigestible manna. But I had come with an insatiable hunger which the world could not satisfy. I was hungry for Life, and I began to eat and never have I stopped.

Perhaps two years into this way of life I was to have a dream in which Death came for me, and in the dream I expected that this was the end, that I was done for, but then suddenly I grew strong and sure, and turned upon Death, and in a furious attack I slew the Death which had come for me, and it was done. And I awoke and knew I had conquered the great foe of this world, that I had chosen and become Life, and that Death had no power over me any more.

And so I say, the hero of today must go beyond heroism, because heroism requires a victim who needs rescuing, but Life requires no victim. And so the real hero saves nothing and no one but lets each and everyone rise and crumble of their own accord and volition.

The hero today is simply the one who finds that part of life which is not a tragedy- which is to say, the hero finds *Life*- and then lives life for its own sake, no matter the direction nor meanness of the day.

To live life is to bring your death back to Life, and then to bring Life back to mankind- back to this mummified race, caught in an endless cycle of delusion and imagination. To live life is to take Life down into the lair of Death, and to dance upon the tombstones.

To live life is to tune into the music of the spheres, to open up and give your whole soul to it so that it will get inside and move you. And when it seeps in and grabs you- grabs you like a wave in a waterless ocean- then you must dance like hell, and never stop dancing. You must rise to the rhythm and song, touch the earth beneath you, kick off your shoes and forget. You must hold your curses, and pocket your blame, because, Spirit, you're only here to dance.

*

sixteen

It was from my humble hermitage that I would engage in attack-and-retreat missions into the center of the cosmopolitan cyclone. These sorties were largely necessary due to my primary addiction- writing and research- which was not easily carried out in the bush, for I regularly required new books, a reference library, and also electricity and a computer plugged into it for my daily inputting and editing of the disgorged muck I had scribbled down the day before.

I was lucky enough to find a couple of drop-in centers for street folk- of which there are aplenty in this maritime city- each with computer facilities available for all the aspiring down-and-out poets who populate the dark district

and its muses. And so I'd saunter down from my hill in the morning, leap on a bus into town, grab a bite to eat, and then jump on the keys and start hammering.

After a couple of hours of typing and editing, however, I'd be bug-eyed and ready to disengage from the screen. And this was the moment when the main problem of street life would become uncomfortably obvious to me: where to go to get some peace and quiet when you have nowhere to go to get it.

Of course, back up to my shack is the obvious thought. But if I had plans in the city later that day and the weather was foul there were only a couple of indoor options available- the pub, the library, or a church. Lord knows that the pub was most often my venue of choice, but when I needed real peace, and real quiet, neither the most deserted bar nor even the isolated catacombs of the library would do. So off to church I went.

In Vancouver there are a handful of quiet, large old stone churches in the inner city, and I'd make my way into one of them, find an out-of-the-way pew, sit down, cross my hands, close my eyes, and let the calm wash away the belligerence of the streets and the unavoidable visual pollution which is everywhere and so destructive to the innocent eye.

On one of these occasions, when I was seeking refuge from the outer torrent and sitting peacefully in a church, recovering my inner poise, all of the sudden the lunch crowd came hustling in, a priest arrived at the pulpit, and a Mass began.

Just my luck, trying to duck out of the ever-present hubbub and I couldn't get away from it, even in God's own house. I was just about to split, expecting the whole affair to be mentally excruciating, and make my way instead to the library or a bar, when it dawned on me that I had never witnessed a Mass before, and why not stick it out and see what all the excitement's about. So I sat back down and didn't get up again, despite the regular up and down robotics of the sinners all around me, and surprisingly I even entered back into the calm which had just been stolen from me moments earlier.

It was in this calm that I began recognizing an aura-type glow emanating from the top of a table behind the priest. I had seen auras before, but never one coming from an inanimate object. This caught my interest, though I questioned whether I was seeing just a beam of light refracted through one of the many stained-glass windows nearby.

Well I kept watching and the priest droned on with the Mass and I continued to struggle to make out what the object with the aura was. It seemed, from that distance, to perhaps be an urn, which I concluded was a likely object in a church, and there was no reason why a person's cremated ashes didn't emanate an aura after the bonfire. I had been contented with this erroneous conclusion for only a short while, however, when people began filing up the aisles for communion, and the sexton grabbed the object- which was no urn after all- and placed it in front of the priest. Then I saw that it was in fact the chalice holding the communion wafers, and the aura was all around it.

Well, that was certainly something unique, and it was enough proof for me to instantly decide that whatever kind of Ritz Cracker they had in that cup was soon going to be in my belly. And so up I got from my pew, strolled down the aisle, kneeled down, and received my first communion.

Then I got up, left the church, and headed for the pub.

I would come to tell this story of the chalice with the aura a number of times over the next many months to some of my disbelieving friends, most of whom looked at me askance, as if they suspected that the last chugging synapse in my overwrought cranium had finally stopped firing and now I was truly coocoo. However, I maintained the authenticity of my vision- as I always did, regarding every odd or peculiar event I witnessed or experienced, despite the predictable onslaught of doubt and chastisement from the earthbound rabble- and perhaps two years later I was informed, by my *soror*[9] no less, that Carl Jung had written, in his essay on the Mass, that the vessel for communion wafers, blessed by the proper individual, can in fact contain the body of Christ as a reality.

I was vindicated again. And not only that, I had consumed the world's most energized biscuit- the body- into me, and had washed it down a few heretical minutes later with the city's cheapest beer- the blood. And who wouldn't shout out a hosanna and raise a cheer to that?

So street life had its fortunate side at times. But if the days are tough to endure for the homeless, the nights are even harder. And if, instead of returning to my hut, I had to find a place in which to lie down within the city limits, which occasionally I had to do- if I was working at the time and had an early shift and no bus was running from my hill at that time, or if I had been out carousing too late and had missed the last run home- I'd have to seek slumber elsewhere.

At one point, for about a two-week period, I stayed in a Catholic Men's Mission downtown, at a time when I was so broke that even bus fare to my shack was an economic burden. And so I was given a bed and some meal tickets for a while and it was a tolerable enough set-up, filled mostly with downtrodden and fringe types, some of whom were seemingly just out of prison, and others on their way in. I did, however, meet one unique fellow who slept on the bunk beside me for a while. He was staying there for a different reason than most; he said that he had been living in the east up until a month earlier and then one night he felt a powerful pressure and force in his stomach area- which, as he's describing this, I'm thinking it's a *hara* awakening for sure- and then scenes of mountains and the ocean flashed before his eyes and he suddenly knew, with an inexplicable certainty, that he had to go west. So he dropped everything and took off with the little money he had, and there he was.

He was a good connection for me, for it was nice to meet another soul who was in the state I was in- that is, penniless and living on charity- and not because he had rejected life, but because he had affirmed the spirit. I expect that he was supposed to meet me as well. In fact, I can say that many times over the years I have ended up in places I never would have expected, only to meet someone who had ended up there as well, without intent or expectation either, and I came to understand that things like this were sublimely directed so that meetings like this one at the Mission could occur, and so myself and the other could exchange thoughts and connect our spirits through the eyes, and then part without ever being apart again.

Occasionally I'd have a dream of a person before meeting them, and in the dream there might be intimations regarding the reason behind, or nature of our time together. For the Body, like Osiris, was scattered all over the earth, and I, like Isis, was laboriously finding and rebuilding it.

When the last dawn breaks overhead, I will herald the day and kiss this plane farewell. When the last sun sets I will raise a cheer and toast to our redemption. When the glory-bell gongs for the final hour, I will go down on my knees and thank the one who knew me. When the divine dream is done, I will awaken and claim my own. When the last wound has healed I will throw away my sutures and take up my lyre. When the last foe is felled I will toss away my sword and return to my song. When the final child is born, I will fight with death no more. When all the angels have again their wings, I will fly in merriment amongst their flock. When the light comes down from the sky to take us up, I will go home.

But, back then, it was to the homeless streets I returned. There were many times when benevolent friends had given me the key to their apartment or sailboat, to house-sit while they were away on a trip- which happened often enough amongst the group of outdoor fanatics I was enmeshed with- but if that option had run dry, I would sometimes head down to the beach to find a place to crash.

As such, one evening I was out late and wandered down to a beach where I had slept before, expecting to lay down behind a log and drift off into dream, but there was unfortunately a party full of young degenerates going on, and they looked as if they were going to be there for a while, so I cleared out and went to find another spot. That night the hidden powers must have been toying with me though, because everywhere I went somebody showed up to disturb me, or the lights were too blaringly bright, or the traffic was still too loud, until finally I found a small parkette tucked away from the night crowd and noises, and lay down ready for slumber. As I was about to doze off, however, I heard an odd hissing noise and the sound of rain, but the sky was clear and I was wondering what was up, and then I realized that the park's sprinkler system had just come on- a sprinkler system in a rainforest, what a joke; I knew instantly that it was there simply to chase away any would-be idlers and layabouts like myself, a thought which irked me and made me want to see Sodom sink to hell- but I had no time for such justice as I had to quickly gather up my sleeping bag and backpack and dart away just as the shower came down right where I had been laying. The nitwits. The insolent jerks who hide away in their overpriced sepulchres and plot continually on how to wreck life for those who are still living.

Anyways, now it was about four o'clock in the morning and I hadn't slept yet and I had to work early, so I decided, in a bewildered state of desperation, that the roof of the building in which I was employed was the best option for me to catch a few precious winks without hassle, for then I could just wake up and be where I needed to be anyway.

So I got up on the roof, and was slowly losing the need to be comfortable on my new cement bed, and I had just caught the first little glimpse of the welcoming netherworld, when a flashlight was suddenly beaming in my face, and the security guard for the Co-op, my Co-op, was all a fluster and he'd already called the cops to come and carry off the threatening drifter. So I had to come fully awake and explain to the plastic policeman that I was an employee, and explain why I was up there, show him my company card, and finally he

radioed the comptroller and called off the flatfeet. Then he left me alone to watch the sun come up and then I trundled downstairs to work without a second of sleep that night. But that's life on the streets.

You've got to live it to understand it. You learn quickly what it's like to exist in the feral domain of one who owns nothing in a world where everything is owned; where fences and rules exist without limit, and you end up walking around in an inhospitable labyrinth in which you must keep moving, because to stop is against the rules, and so you keep going, past the shops and buildings and houses, through the corridors of the maze of private ownership and the well-policed commons, around and around you go, with nowhere to lie down, or sleep, only the chronic goad of signs, laws, walls, and roads. A dog's life indeed; a third world, haunted, homeless, beaten and kicked mongrel's life.

Urban society is designed solely around making it so uncomfortable to be poor that one is driven to succumb to the pointless and soul destroying activity of passionless work in order for each individual to simply have enough roubles in their pocket to rent a little cage and hide away from everyone else who is hiding away in their own little cages.

*

seventeen

We were born to be naked, and dancing, and kissing each other. We were born to be changeless and changing, mortal and immortal, formed and yet free. We were born to be the stillness inside the fabulous change.

The self is a perpetual baptism, wherein one moves, and moves, and never stops moving; it is the relentless, uncatchable, spectacular, dynamic of the soul that demands to be free.

We each belong to the energy of the moment. In the wildness beyond anarchy, where the individual, rampant from the mean, will accept no compromise, no help, no advice, no method, no limit- that is the point where the spirit breaks free of its mold, flies beyond itself, and dwells in the infinite expanse of the unimaginable, untethered new. To soar where no archetype can follow, that is to be new, and to be true.

Anyone who breaks free of the imposed structure, who lives life for life itself, with no worry or expectation of reward or praise, develops their own individual force, unknown to the greater part of mankind. We all have it, but most of us give it away to convention, or cowardice.

We were not born to follow others, to learn what they say we should learn, to go where others wander, nor to deny the smallest part of our own force for comfort or acceptance.

We are not alive to toil, to lie, to impress people, or to suffer. We are alive to be life- to be the great mystery endlessly awakening to itself. We are all God becoming infinitely godlike. And each of us must live it through. Alone.

God sits in a different seat in each person's auditorium. If we rely on anyone but ourselves, we are doomed; every time we deny the reality that we

alone can come upon, we deny reality. And so it is the harsh but essential cosmic law that one who has no acceptance of their own vision ...shall see nothing.

Ah, to be sure, before you can blend into the One, you must stand out conspicuously, as that precarious, uncamouflaged happening so visibly bent, blotched, or broken. For in order to be chosen, you must first become a choice.

And so, within the suffocating alienship of society, we must begin the long and forgotten route through strangeness towards home; we are our own gates, our own judges, our own redeemers, and redeemed.

Indeed each of us is alone to hack out our own cramped, ponderous tunnel, towards or away from God knows what, for no imaginable reason.

The way piles up in fragments behind us, and as endless walls ahead, while we flail and flail and perhaps find nothing but the hollow ring of movement through the moldless form of unknowable truth. So be it. The bearings may be on the outside, but the compass lies within.

A spiritual anarchy of biblical proportions is now thoroughly under way. Each person must sedulously mine their own dark, mysterious life.

I came to accept that to get back to myself I could not depend on another. I could not care about what I had, what I didn't have, what I had been, what I might be, where I was going, or when I would get there. I could not care. I could only try to live completely, without imagining what that meant.

There were many times when tempting options would emerge before me and attempt to divert my way- small or trifling amusements of one sort or another, suggested under the pretext of one reason or another, offering the benefit or pleasure of one desire or another. And though I often stopped to look around and see what all the commotion was about, perhaps even striking up a short conversation or taking part for a brief spell, sooner than later I had to be on my way. Thanks, but no thanks- this became my unspoken motto. Enjoy your reality, have your laughs, and comforts, and distractions. I must keep going, keep flowing, keep moving on to where I don't know but if I stop here and enjoy the delay I'll end here, barren, confused, and out of steam for the next hill.

Just as a person falls over when they stop completely on a bicycle, I had to keep moving, keep going forward, keep pushing towards what comes and goes and flows on forever. I had to learn to be my own current, to cascade over and past all that had stopped moving and was clogging or jamming the river's way. I had to recognize and feel the stasis and fear people allow inside of them and in which the spirit condenses, solidifies, and moves no further.

I had to keep losing myself in order to find another me, keep letting life change and include me in that newness. I had to die over and over again so that ...I could live.

And now I count my grey hairs as one for each time I denied life and blocked the flow through fear, sorrow, preconception, or sloth. These are badges I wear not proudly, but am glad for their reminder of the perilous halts I put in my own way. For it was only after I had realized that all I had been taught was merely a perilous mishmash of rubbish and lies, that the teachers and leaders had misled me unavoidably, and the masters and madmen had delivered to me their

flightless swan songs, so that I was on my own again, as I had been so often before- it was then, in the stillness of my heart, that I began again to listen.

I had dreamed alone, thought alone, and walked alone, and I was through with the others. Better to cast my own light into my own darkness, I thought, for then I'd be certain of what I couldn't see. And because I couldn't see, I stood dead still and …I listened.

I listened, because all the pointless words and actions had gone right through me, and nothing remained but the inviolable hollow. I listened to the hollow of my own being, because that was the only place left which had not been desecrated. I listened, and in that eternal void alone did I hear the echo of my own Great Dream.

Oh, it is a wild and crazy untraveled road we're on. You find your way, you lose your way, you find another, and lose that one, and then another, and they keep coming and going and you keep stumbling along imagining you're going someplace, though the Self never goes anywhere, but only the form and identity find and lose themselves in the flux and flare of the ephemeral.

I say these things not out of any presumption of expertise- there are no experts in the world- but because I have never found a description or inference regarding the experiences which I have had, and so I bring forth my own fruit, and my Promethean sin is complete, and I am released and at peace with my own conscience for having spoken about what I did see.

Through all the reading I had done regarding the many differing philosophies, spiritual accomplishments, and unique realities others have experienced, all of which inspired me to tear down the walls confining me and pursue greater truths, in the end I was thrown back upon myself and had to abandon all I had learned and heard about from others.

I see now that this is an essential step- to understand and accept that no matter what anyone else has experienced, or perceives as reality, that we are each born unto this earth to discover our own beliefs, our own truths, and to live out our own lives. And that these truths and realities may differ immensely from one person to another is a hard piece of news for the mind to accept, but I had to accept it in order to believe in my own vision. I had to become an individual.

To be an individual means to exist without pride nor shame, nor yardstick between yourself and all others, but instead to live out your own life, without a thought that it might be different, or wrong, or right, because that is who you are, and there is no option, decision, nor guise. In this way does a person arrive at eternity, having been born out from under the great sea of undifferentiated souls.

If I had only blended in with the world, only operated within the confines of convention, I would have offered no increase to the dimensions of the whole. But that I extended myself out, the whole had to grow with me, since everything is a reflection of everything else.

I found that to be a part of the whole I had to also, paradoxically, be apart from the whole. For there is no symphony without separate instruments, no harmony without distinct notes, and no whole without separate parts. And this, my friend, is what is called …the way of sin.

To sin, to be single, to dare to believe in your own vision, and to give God the greatest gift imaginable- something new, something unique, something called …you. To honour the splendour of being by furthering creation with what has not yet ever been- your self. To dance your own dance, and sing your own song in the middle of the writhing and maddening *prima materia*.

I say there are possibilities for the modern individual which never existed before in the history of any peoples, or, if they did, these possibilities were found and exercised only by the rare few who were driven by some inward daemon to lift themselves out of context and convention and set themselves adrift above the congealing, slothful evolution of the rest of the world; but the modern individual may more easily rip through the snares which previously held history to the ground; the modern individual has the privileged chance to re-write the rules, to cast the nets of presumption and the bars of tradition aside and to face him or herself, as he or she is, alone, in the cold, naked reality of the unbound self. The modern individual, more than any before, has all the tools necessary to forsake the world and its spiritless ways, and to listen once and for all to the only voice in the cosmos which matters- his or her own.

Oh, there are plenty of excuses which the least creative person can dream up who has not the gusto nor desire to free themselves from the fold. There is a cornucopia of ways to lie away the duty of the self, and to quietly rejoin the legion of lemmings on their march to the sea. But the fact remains that anyone who truly wants to heave it all overboard and start again can do it in the twinkling of an eye.

To do this, not just outwardly, but at the absolute inner essence of all that you are, is to turn yourself upside-down, let your pockets empty themselves of all you have ever been or wanted to be, and then stand back up and walk on without a clue of who you are or where you're going. And that takes a type of courage which no one applauds, and no movie actor portrays, and no women sing songs of praise and worship about. But it is the only type of courage which will invigorate and grow the mercurial aspect of the soul; it is the only type of courage which will serve the light-body within; it is the only type of courage which matters in the end when all human roads lead to dead ends.

Such individualism is a stage of preparation, where the soul is tried and tempered, made whole, and utilized in the microcosmic realm before its final turning away from the profane world completely and its ascension into the conscious redemption of heavenly union.

And so our greatest service may be the act of spiritual violence, of disobedient novelty, which rends the fabric and sets us apart from the rest of humanity for a while, until the whole has shifted- as it must- and reassimilated our new reality into its necessarily new position. Thus we have helped evolve the universe. This is why the word 'eccentric' means: to come close to the center.

And so, I say, in the act of choosing myself, I chose God, and thus unseparated the division between us. The moment I accepted myself, I accepted the God within myself. And in that liberating, destructive instant everything joined sublimely together to become the One and Living Spirit, and my God fell from otherness into me and …I was saved.

I ask not that you sanction what I have said. I'm not asking you to agree. I'm not expecting you to understand. I have only my own life, and my own answers. A man must stand up for the vision inside of him, especially if he is the only one who has seen it.

What is real for me must be real for me alone, or what am I calling me? I have no reason, no need, no desire to embrace another person's reality, for mine is much more real for me than any other's ever could be.

The fact that no one else corroborates my reality guarantees that it is true. *Each man, his own messiah*.

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PART 2

In, and Of

"Each spark descended into this world- indeed a profound descent and a state of true exile- to be clothed in a body and vital soul ...so as to join and unite them with the Light."

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liady

"Man as he now is has ceased to be the All. But when he ceases to be a separate individual, he raises himself again and permeates the universe."

Plotinus

"Be- and at the same time know the condition of not-being, the infinite ground of your deep vibration, that you may fully fulfill it this single time."

Rainer Maria Rilke

one

I had become epistemologically emancipated earlier on, during my experience of irrevocable wonder and the absolute mystery upon which our existence is founded, and yet that event was the disintegration of only one of the walls separating who I wasn't from who I truly was, for the false ego still remained somehow, and continued to inflate, confuse, and degrade me.

It is all well and good and necessary to seek and become an individual, but it is an outright travesty to then define oneself within the limitations of such an existence. And by that I mean that the cultivation of individuality is an essential aspect of perfecting the whole, but it must never be confused with the whole, or the part will become a limiting factor and not an uplifting one.

Ah, the mighty ego, the arrogating hubris, the inimical pride; these tenacious lampreys ride along beside their victim, parasitically sucking out the energy of the host. The untethered ego will betray the spirit and imprison it in the context of the world, because the ego wants to be imprisoned there, for that is where it receives affirmation, which is the only thing the ego wants. Pride will run the spirit around and around as the donkey chases after the carrot, and the only way this will change is if you ask for the spankings which correct it.

I asked, and that meant I was in for it.

The ego is a wise and cunning sleuth, always creeping in and messing up a good thing, and so the overself, when called in to correct it, must take on the roll of the punishing parent and grief giver, if the wild child is to be reeled in.

One such spanking came to me in Alaska, when I had taken ten days or so off of work so as to ferry northward and meet up with a young Parisian tart whom I had been lucky enough to trade caresses in the wilderness with some weeks earlier in Sitka. We rendezvoused again a brief while later up in Haines, gathered together some food and supplies, and hiked half a day down the coast to the end of a peninsula, arriving at a wonderful bit of paradise called, interestingly enough, Seduction Point.

There we stayed for a number of days, cooing and whinnying, drinking red wine, and watching humpback whales feed and play in the bay. On or about the third day I, the great white hunter, thought it would be both delicious and impressive to my European mistress if I was to gather some sustenance from the land for our dinner, and so I went down into the inter-tidal zone and plundered a handful of baby blue mussels from the rocks, knowing full well the whole time that during the summer months there is a coast-wide red-tide alert, and that it's best to stick to an austere diet of brie, patē, olives, and French loaf. But an oaf is an oaf and the great white hunter scoffed at the ridiculous warning, cooked up the bounty, and polished the entire plate off, while the unimpressed maiden chose, as it were, to decline the knight's offering and stick to her vegetarian fare.

So it goes that sometime in the middle of the night I awoke and my hands, feet, and face were as numb as if a troupe of maleficent dentists had snuck down to our camp and injected me all over with heaping doses of Novocain. Only it wasn't Novocain, it was PSP- paralytic shellfish poisoning. Not such a good thing to have happen to you when you're a five hour hike from

the nearest town, a hike which could only be done at low tide and I had no idea when that was, and so I lay there totally deflated and not so full of gusto and heroism anymore- just a wiry white-man who'd found a way to humiliate himself while falling to his doom.

Paralytic shellfish poisoning kills you by eventually paralyzing your whole body, including your lungs, and therefore suffocating you, and there were areas of the Alaskan panhandle which were renowned for the numbers of natives who had suffered this horrible fate. Place names like Poison Cove came to mind as I lay there wondering how much further the process of immobilization would go.

Well, as I said, the ego gets knocked down if we invite the flagellator- whom I had invited, sometime back, when I was full of oomph and piety- and I was shrunk down to my appropriate size that night with a little bit of distress and worry, but after my humbling was complete the flogging was called off and I didn't die nor suffer too grievously, and most of the toxin left my body within forty-eight hours. I recall one finger remaining completely numb for a couple of weeks after that episode as a gentle reminder of my infantility.

Things of this nature occurred often and in many different ways to me whenever my puny ego started thinking it was in possession of its own universe and had full boasting privileges. These little spankings were there to subdue any swelling sense of power within me, always pointing back at me and saying- "Look here you little worm, quit pretending you're so big, so competent, you can't even control your own pitiful life."

Oh, but how many times would I have to come to that same broken place within myself, so as to learn the same lesson, over and over again. Too many times. Or maybe only as many as I needed, until I got it right. But then, even when I eventually did get it right, and was finally through that test, another challenge suddenly reared up and stood right in front of me.

Thus I was confronted regularly with seeming contradictions; which is to say that a liberating experience, high-point, or staggering realization, which I assumed would carry me through the rest of life on a silvery cloud of bliss, was often soon followed by another descent, trial, and further struggle. But it seems to me that this is the way it goes in life. You pass one exam and you walk out the door and into another room, where another challenge lies waiting. Hercules had his twelve labors, each of which was distinct and unavoidable, and so it is with all of us. There is no single realization or experience which is the key to our fulfillment. The locks are many and the keys are many and to get through one door and to think you are free is to be blind to the new walls around you.

When one battle is over another naturally begins. And to be sure the assault does come. For just when I'd think I was in the clear, and the peace of fulfilment was oozing out of the ether from the purposeless great Self into the core of my absence, the ever enduring ego would return again, like athlete's foot, halitosis, or dandelions, ever ready to spring up and blemish the fallow ground of my godsoul, and then the patient tutor within me would turn his numinous pedagoguery to red-alert, and again calmly beat the fight and fever out of me, for the crucifixion of the ego must take place over and over again, until the re-ascent to the godself is complete.

I was slowly getting the picture, however, and learning how to stay low, so low that there were times when I would finally rid myself of my possessor, and would sink down beneath all pride and ownership, and would fall right into the lap of the master of ceremonies.

It was a parade of events like these which eventually brought about even a greater, more humbling fulfillment. This was, in fact, the experience of *my*self- the true self who had felt God's love back in the Ivanhoe.

This came about in the healing of the greater part of my personal pride and neurosis, which had seized hold of me as a young man- a young man who had built up an image of himself based upon what others had told him he was, but not what he really was, and therefore a young man who had grown up defending a mask he didn't know he was wearing but only knew the trauma of being identified improperly and who did not have the consciousness nor strength to correct the rampant error- so the neurosis had taken root and had created many an uncomfortable moment in my life and I had grown to believe it was something which must simply be endured, like chronic back pain, while one continued to shoulder the burdens of their imperfect existence.

The truth, however, would make itself clear to me one rainy autumn day as I was wandering through the forest, back in the recuperative lap of the Charlottes, with the horde of inextinguishable monkeys still on my back and howling in delight at their impenetrable hold upon my flimsy countenance.

On this trip I had been for weeks on end wrapped up in a tight ball inside, trying to figure out how to come to grips with myself, with life in the world, so as to make my peace, be myself, and get on with it. And so, as with all internal processes, the ugly sore would have to come to the surface and discharge its noxious puss eventually, as long as I was sedulous enough in my introverted gaze.

What happened this time came decidedly and unexpectedly, out of left-field as it were, because I had thought, for some unknown reason, that the issue- of how to be myself- would be sorted out by my finally having a clear vision of who I was, and fully accepting it, and then marching back into the world with a new found confidence and aplomb the likes of which would be instantly recognized and revered by all those who had known me as the skulking worm I had occasionally been in the past. Oddly enough, however, the exact opposite happened. And lucky I was for that.

What I mean is that instead of recognizing the exact somebody who had been living hidden and scared within me for the last many years, I recognized instead that ...I was nobody; I saw without a hint of doubt that I was not the identity or personality which I had been confused into believing I was- which was a somebody whom I had defended and acted as if it was me. I was not that personality. As a matter of fact, I was not a personality at all; not a unique, discernible package stuffed inside a figure of clay and then forced to justify itself to all the other clay figures who peered out through squirrelly eyes and into each other with judgement and condemnation. There was no such thing. I was the nobody self in the body of no one. It was unbelievably freeing. The walls which had never really existed, except in the distorted imagination of my mind, evaporated away and the self which was nobody within me leapt about like a bird who had just flown from its cage, for I, who had always been bound

and determined to stay and defend myself at all costs ...I became nothing. No thing. And when that happens let me tell you- you're in for one hell of a ride.

My whole life I had forgotten to just be nothing and nobody but beingness itself. And it was only the journey out to the raw and notionless church of the spirit which healed me back to Being. And a wave of peace and understanding washed over me, for I could see what I had lost by my struggles in the world, and, more importantly, in myself. And I could see that I had been lifted out again, out to regain myself, my nobodiness, my soul, my me. My journey had been fortuitous; that specific war going on inside of me was over. The fight had ended, and it had ended because ...I had no fight left, no struggle, no panic, no thoughts. I had surrendered without trying. Nothing was left, and yet the whole realm of *being* remained. Not my being, although somehow I was still a part of it, because I hadn't gone anywhere, I had only worn myself out shadowboxing alone or sparring with God, and when I had no strength left in me, the effort to defend or attack was over, the battle turned into a game, the gladiator's sword into a fencing stick, the opponents became an audience, and there I was in the middle of a circus ring and waiting for the next stuffed lion to be let out of its cage.

In the hollow reaches of no thought, where the form is released from the will of the Law ...I stopped. Everything else continued. Only I stopped. I did not become, I unbecame.

Perhaps it is symbolic that I was horizontal when I hit this ground state of being; I lay there sensing existence all around me- an existence I had somehow, for some reason, been opposed to, or it had been opposed to me, but now it was over, I was finished, and that same existence suddenly took on an unaffecting, benign quality which I had never expected. I lay there in a state of immense tranquility, as if the seven demons within me had just been exorcised, and all that remained was the almost dead and yet living, emaciated carcass of the host. As if someone had come along to finally unlock the cage I was in, but I continued to sit there, because now the cage did not hold me, now it was nothing but a harmless object of interest which I had no reason to be in a panic to leave. And so I lay there, and the existence which had tortured and racked me, and which I had struggled to avoid, or take part in, or modify, or destroy, was still there, the exact same existence, only I had stopped struggling, had stopped completely, and in that total lack I was emancipated from the chains I had bound about myself. I was free because there was nothing left to bind.

Never had I understood what the word which I had read perhaps ten thousand times in my life- and attempted to accomplish but never succeeded- meant: *surrender*. And now I knew why I had not accomplished it, because surrender cannot be accomplished, because surrender is the absence of the struggle to accomplish anything; it is the end of all trying or attempting to conquer or understand life.

I had finally gone still inside the limitless reaches of meaning and mystery, where the atom consumes the universe, and the self devours the whole.

It's a bloody crazy mess to relate, but things change instantly when you're finished with life and yet living. Let me tell you, as I became emptied of the last vestige of recognition, purpose, or need- suddenly I ...I ceased without

ending, and remained while still going on. I don't know how to say it better. It cannot be said. It's, like I said- it's crazy.

When the world you have loved, and lived, and laughed in, eventually crumbles helplessly about you- as it is certain to do with all of us sooner or later- and you stand humbly in the harmony of your song's last note, and the light's last flicker- it may happen that you will flinch for an anxious moment as if to right it all again, but if you're quick enough (and at times I was quick, and ruthless, and wild from the passion of my spiritual dismemberment, and wholly determined, if nothing more, to find and be myself, and only myself, through to the bloody bitter end) ...you let it go.

For it is in that moment- as the chastening reaches its cold zenith, and the degradation its dark nadir- when it all comes down, when you've lost everything you ever had- the hopes, promises, truths, pleasures, and words are all gone- and you're alone somewhere in the darkness- dead and yet living- and none of your life makes any sense, none of it, because all of your caring has only led to loss, that is when, as I said, the best thing to do is ...to let it go.

In the wash and fire of the spirit's healing, in the sacrificial disembowelment of the mind, in the fiery assumption of the grosser self, when you know you're done for, because the Word itself hovers hopelessly above the willess flesh- when the shit has hit the fan, so to speak, you let it go.

I let it go. I let go. And that was the finish and start of me.

I had been trying to accomplish what I could not accomplish, but which was accomplished the instant I stopped trying.

It had to become hopeless for me, without a light at the end of the tunnel, nor a happy ending around the bend. Everything had to crumble and be thoroughly destroyed. I had to be wiped out completely before the battle was done.

As truth faltered, as the lies melted from my self's fluidity, and the soul shed its worn out old mind, I was undone, absolutely disassembled. Let me tell you, I did not attain, I unattained. What else can be said? I had come apart at the seams in the midst of life, and walked about in tatters, tripping over them until I was nude.

To stand in the center of it all- without a thought, direction, or meaning, is to fall into the still point of living, and to live beyond the hollow of life.

It did not matter at that point anyway, because there was by then no such me to stop me now. There was no such me; there was only the great complexity, and the not-me not navigating within it.

I had dug myself all the way towards the center of life's tune, found nothing, then dug beyond to the other side. The other side, yes, but not 'other', since by then there was no center, only a tunnel ...no me. Which is to say, I disappeared in the act of trying to find myself.

Ah, to perish, to truly perish, to die while being lives on; to deplete oneself of all intent, understanding, and fear; to eviscerate the soul, to shed oneself, and to not be what remains in the ruins.

I saw then that when finally a person becomes nobody, they become a hole through which the universe can enter and become whole. It matters little whether the cup is half-full or half-empty, you drink it. The point of interiorization becomes the point of exteriorization, so they are the same.

All the things I thought and tried, convincing myself that they were necessary, only to find out that nothing was necessary but this: to cease trying to *be something*, and to dissolve into Being. For only the everlasting non-being can dissipate as such without ceasing, for it alone is the self not trapped in the form.

In those northern, coastal wild lands, where the sea and sky beat the hell out of my memory, and the birds called me by a name I had long forgotten, where the beasts and trees flipped me inside out, and the self that remained was no longer mine, I had learned to become nobody; the little man inside of me had been dragged out of the house, whipped and lynched by the delivering mob, and all that remained was a corpse now living and never again to die. I had entered the infinity of nothingness. And that made me everybody. I had become but an empty stage upon which God did everything and everyone was what was done.

When I became nobody everything inside me was gone, and the identityless nobody self within me was emancipated beyond the structure of people and things. It is hard to relate what happens when whatever you thought you were is totally cast away and all that remains is a presence behind your eyes looking out at the world. But it occurs, to be sure. To continually die into the abyss of impersonhood; to dissolve and not vanish- this is the sublime expanse of essence, anchored to the coagulated form.

At the moment I ceased struggling, and ceased needing the world to supply me with love or comfort, I began creating my own world, and my immanent universe was born. I had surrendered and become nothing, and yet that nothing was everything and was wholly alive, wholly a part of life- a fleshy, warm, wondrous, and yet insubstantial thing. That is when I began to build again the structure of the self, and to raise my own golden city to the sky.

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two

I consider a certain friend of mine to be a fully realized master of the type of ancient surrender about which I was just speaking.

He is a brilliant, caustic, invective critic named Rick, who poses as a professional astrophysicist during the day, but at night and on weekends he removes his ivory-tower spectacles and returns to the glossy gazed outlook of one who couldn't care less about anything, and wouldn't budge an inch were the whole show to either vanish away before him, or keep chugging along on its merry and despairing way. It's all one and the same to him or any other person who has learned that there is no difference, and so has become freed by indifference.

I suppose this noble acquiescence came about for Rick from all those years of investigating and contemplating the bewildering expanse of the nebulae, the magnitude of which must have placed mankind's comparatively minuscule concerns and accomplishments into their proper station in his mind. When you're dealing in angstroms and light-years, the relative dimensions of humanity's efforts and ways tend quickly to fall between the cracks.

One time when I was visiting him at a telescope, on an observing run, this awful and emancipating reality came plummeting home to me, and, in a way, put me also in my proper place. It was when Rick pointed out a tiny speck of light on the enlarged observing screen used by professional astronomers to magnify the telescope's image- a speck of light that was so infinitesimal it had to be amplified thousands of times for the human eye to even perceive its presence. And yet, as Rick nonchalantly pointed out to me, this was not a single star, but a cluster of over a million stars. That staggered me. That disintegrated me.

I have always loved the belittling feeling of lying on my back and staring up into the night sky, attempting to envision the enormity of the cosmos, but rarely have I felt the full-blown awareness of its imponderable immensity as profoundly as that evening when Rick pointed out that singular, trivial speck- one amongst trillions, one which I could not have even seen with my own eye on the blackest of nights. And it was only a tiny cluster- a mere million stars or so. And there I was, sitting on earth- a little satellite chunk of limestone with a few buckets of water sloshing about on it, which was imperfectly orbiting a small to medium sized star, one star, which we had decided to isolate from all others and call it a sun, our sun. In that moment I became a speck of dust.

No wonder then that life for Rick had become but a trifle at best avoided- an unfortunate bagatelle, which could hardly be tolerated by one who had long ago assimilated this humbling reality into his head.

I say Rick is arguably the most intellectually capable, and cognitively incomparable person I have ever met. A walking supercomputer who can ingest, digest, and regurgitate a limitless amount of data and information about all and everything, and then instantly flash on his mental screensaver which in bold italics declares- "*Who Cares!*"

I recall my personal astonishment and respect for the level of passionless attainment he had arrived at when one day, years earlier, he and I were out and about together, walking around town for no better reason than we were in town and we were walking about, and suddenly a thought came to me of something we could do, some action we could undertake or partake in to enliven the day and bring us some stimulation or other. And so I turned to Rick and presented my inspired option, expecting that he would appreciatively accept the possibility of engaging in life in some way or other. Boy was I in for a teaching. Upon hearing my puerile solicitation, Rick turned to me and, with the surrendered ambivalence of only the most advanced adept, he looked within me but for a brief, disconcerned instant, and then rhetorically remarked, "Why not?"

Two simple words, but let me tell you it was not your average "Why not?" It was a "Why not?" that came from nowhere and went nowhere; a "Why not?" that resounded out of a mind vacant of expectation of succor or release; a "Why not?" that was without hope, and yet beyond the childishness of hope; a "Why not?" that can only come from one who knows that all is lost and nothing ever was ours to be lost; a "Why not?" owned by no one, presented to nobody; a weather-beaten wanderer's "Why not?" which comes from the stolidity of enduring endless days and nights in the over-conscious perception of life's failings and limitations; a "Why not?" that came from one who had arrived at the lucid and immoveable acceptance that there is no solution, no way out, no

solace or reprieve, no grand hurrah! waiting up ahead; it was a "Why not?" that implied no "Why?" for it was obvious that whatever must be done would be done *because* it didn't matter whether we did it or not; a "Why not?" so profoundly at peace and unconcerned that I was set aback and shaken to realize that compared to him ...I still cared. And yet I cared in the wrong way, for, compared to Rick, I was like a little puppy, agog in the world, sucking pathetically away upon the dry tit of the dead bitch who had recently spawned me, and wagging my tail in expectant glee. And Rick was my stoic elder sibling, come out of the desiccated womb just moments before me and yet years ahead in reality- light years- and he stood aside, gazing off into the distance, and waiting for me to come to the painful and necessary recognition that the milk of life wasn't gushing out, and that we were in for a great duration of waiting and hunger.

Back then I was still a somebody attempting to placate the gnawing hollow within me, but Rick had come to know that no earthly food could fill the pangs of absence we were destined to live and grow with, and in the end to learn to thrive upon.

I suppose that it was the presence of his acquiescent psychic atmosphere and aura which would, a while after that day, provide a most startling revelation for me- one which would come to modify the entire structure of my outlook on life and its inexplicable occurrence.

It was a springtime venture which found Rick and I escaping the cosmopolitan sewer for a few days and driving out to the south-west coast of Vancouver Island, where another acquaintance of mine had constructed a wonderful little squatter's cabin by the sea, complete with solarium, bunk beds, and wood stove. This little hide-away was a remarkable feat of energy in its own right- it was a structure which had required no less than one hundred arduous trips upon the half-mile of precipitous embankment along a hidden path leading to his building site, down which the fellow who had constructed the hut had carried all the materials and tools necessary to complete this splendid little chalet on government land along the coast.

Anyway, the owner was away for a while, and so Rick and I made our way down to the hut and settled in for a few days of beer and gooseneck barnacles, wine and philosophizing, idleness and the ingestion of some of mother nature's psychedelia- the magic mushroom; a combination of which would send me out into the ether on the mind of God, and bring God back home as me.

I say this with absolute candor and humility. I say that it was under the bewildering influence of the intoxicants, and perhaps the proximity of Rick's previously mentioned psychic predisposition, that I found myself one night sitting back with my eyes closed and witnessing what I could never truly describe but what I can best suggest as the dynamic, uncreated, convulsing, primordial energy of the universe; the fiery, orgiastic rippling cauldron of molten *prima materia*, cascading about within me, and then pouring out into the world as form[10]; and it was upon opening my eyes that I recognized what I had never conceived as plausible- that I was carrying within myself this living, undulating, cosmic clay which I was projecting out and thus manufacturing the

world; which is to say, I knew then that ...I was God, and that we are all God, effortlessly producing a world yet without a clue of how we are doing it. I was making everything that night. The whole thing. That is, *I* was making the world, but not the I who the world thought I was, not even the nobody who I was, but the *I* which lives before the me in all of us; the original self, casting out the glowing, red, swirling energy of creation, out of the core, out of the mind of God, out into the realm of form, figure, and content.

And let me tell you I was laughing. I was laughing a laugh I had never laughed before in my life. I was laughing God's laugh- the God-laugh which has never known care, nor worry, nor entrapment; the God-laugh which sprays out the universe from the immanent, infinite, incomprehensible bliss of formless consciousness; the great, emancipating God-laugh of hilarious nonexpectation, disbelief, and ambitionless wonder at the impossibility and unavoidable realization that I, God, was creating the miracle of creation.

I had come to exist in the non-existent space. An infinite bridge across a finite chasm. A flame within an inferno. A drop inside the storm.

I was in the storm. I was the storm. And everything else sped up and catapulted through the living stasis of my soul. It was an exhilarating, innocent act of creation; I gave ground in the hollow of my wonder and the world grew through that infinite hole. The unworldly, horrible stillness in which I basked seemed impossibly to produce the song of everything else. How is that possible I haven't a clue. Not one.

I can only presume that the whole shmeer about becoming what you are, or what you could be- but as yet you never have been- eventually comes right back to where it started- to you. But when it gets there- and let me tell you it gets there, with all the fire and brimstone of your day- there is no 'you' left to conceive of it. Because, instead, you conceive it, immaculately conceive it.

That night the prisoner and the warden had changed places. Good and Evil fused into one. And God leapt up for joy inside of me.

The primitive understandings which had so embalmed me all my terrible and fabulous life instantly vaporized away, and the Creator's eyes ...looked through me. The pulsing, primal, fluid medium flowed out of me, I did not know what I was making, nor how I was doing it, but to be sure it was me.

When finally you encounter the Great Soul, you will not hesitate to call it *I*. You are the source of all things. All of it. Like the root-stock of a great underground rhizome, when you stick your head finally out of the ether, whoever is around you ...is you.

That night the hut and the intoxicants had provided a vision of our most true, inward nature for me. And though the experience wore off, the underlying belief in our divinity and creatorship remained with me, and was to be confirmed in many much more sober ways in the years to come; in future years, I was to experience the infinite vastness within, out of which the motion-picture of life is projected; through the great, vast, dark space, the light shines onto a blue-screen within us, and that image is what we assume is the 'out'. Yet there is no out, there is only the Self, God, I, spinning out the universe from the measureless dark space concealed behind the blinding white light.

That evening had provided a unique shamanic experience, yet the mushroom is but a window, it is not a way in; it lets you see the manifold realm

of spirit, but won't let you enter. Its effect is like winning the opportunity to be Mayor for a day; you may sit in the mayor's chair, eat lunch with the secretaries, attend a board meeting, and cut a ribbon or two, but you're not really the mayor, could never run the celestial city, and you wouldn't stand a chance of getting voted into power. The only thing you get out of the experience is a newfound desire to become a Mayor. And that road is long and hard if you choose to take it.

After that trip with Rick the profound implausibility of our integral creatorship would occasionally congeal in my disordered thoughts, and the true gist of what I had come to see would make everything, including myself, take on a different appearance, a new and awkward slant, and with a sort of incredulous acceptance I'd look around at everything and softly declare- "So this is God."

To this day, however, years after that initiatory experience, I still do not understand how it is that this could be, but I know, for many other reasons now, that it is- that we are all God making this absurd, awful, agonizing, and perverse world, and somehow, somewhere deep inside, we are enjoying it with the delight of a child with a magic wand, and we are laughing a laugh that will never end, nor understand, nor care that the joy will go on and on and on.

When the creator wakes up as the created, it is astonishing. When the created wakes up as the creator, it is unbelievable, for God cannot believe that he or she could be the person that they are. And not only that, even if God could believe it God cannot understand it. And that is a hard thing for God to accept.

The closer you get to truth, the less it makes sense, for truth is created and not absolute, and therefore when you get to truth you have to go past it, to the absolute, which is beyond all reason and measure. If a single truth existed other than God the world would come to an end, for that truth would have harnessed the unapproachable absolute which emanates its formlessness without being capturable, and so to trap it in a truth would be like putting wind in a jar and then closing the lid. No more wind. So what we condense down and imprison with our systematized, conceptual effronteries simply creates a windless world of closed jars and everybody pointing at their own hermetically sealed insults and calling these reality.

But now God had unfolded before me, and I before God. The all had become nothing, the nothing had become the all. As I faded away, God remained. As God left, I returned. The God which broke me, also built me up. Through rack and ruin the ship I have sailed glides from unknown sea to unknown sea, is sunk and raised up within each ocean, the wind blows, the shore fades, and ...I accept.

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three

I had now realized I was God while still I was not yet a man; to be God was easy- there was no sorrow, no effort, no confusion, no care, no duress- but

to be a man was a much harder, much more heroic task, for that meant I, the creator, had to accept all that I had created, whether I remembered doing it, comprehended it, or not. Because of this I couldn't really *be* God until I had really become a man, which was my ticket into the true heaven, and one for which I would have to walk the whole way on my own and mature in the crucible of experience and assimilation. And walking the whole way meant to become so small from the gigantic effort, so hollow, so supple, and absent that, in the end, I, a man, could walk through the doorless god-membrane like a ghost through a brick wall. Which is to say, I couldn't cross over into creatorness until I had become my creation. And no drug, nor mushroom, nor meditation, nor shortcut could help me do that. For though the windows of heaven be polished clean from time to time, so that any by-passer can look within and view the delights therein, there is an intransigent gatekeeper standing on guard, and no one is getting in until they've been given the key to the invisible door.

Soon after that experience, and the defragmentary healing into nobodiness which had occurred on the Charlottes, I would return again to Vancouver, and for the first time in my life, I was to stand amongst my colleagues and mates as if I was looking out through a hollow tube into a display of animated wax figures, each imagining that they were a thing inside a body which they called ...me. And I knew they were only trapped inside the form which they were not, but to get out would mean having to relinquish their 'me'- it would mean having to become nobody, and I assumed few, if any, were up for the humiliating mortifications required to undo their somebodiness delusions into the purity of the great absence.

And so, as in each of my previous descents into the steaming pit of stool, it wasn't long after my return this time that the empty, peaceful, defenceless nobody I had won- even more spectacularly this time around- began to accumulate the taint of separation all over again, and to take on the ghastly garment of identity- of creation separated from the creator.

To come back as a nobody to a city of somebodies is a difficult, if not impossible, task. I have heard of established yogis and saints who have the matured presence of nobodiness within them which cannot be moved nor destroyed by the assault of the separated somebodies, but I was not one of them, and I had to accept this limitation.

In returning to the metropolis I could feel the pyramid of my macrosoul shrink and be compressed as I encroached upon the city limits, bombarding my emptiness as soon as I re-entered the world of pavement, pollution, square corners, and signs. I could feel my soul shriveling, my vision narrowing, my breath growing shorter, and my heart slowly pumping less and less blood to my over-stimulated head.

The openness I had attained meant that my shields were all gone- that anyone's repressions or dark energy could enter at will and deposit their fetid load. I had become like a karmic garbage-dump which could only get so big, and so, as I said, had to be incinerated every so often so as to return me to the purity of emptiness.

And the only way for me to do that was to leave it all behind and find a way to purge it out. And so the wilderness became my sanctuary and

sanatorium, for there is no stillness in the city- it is not intended for such. The city is where one goes to accomplish great things and become somebody. The city is no place for a nobody, and if you go there as a nobody you soon become a somebody unless you sit in your bedroom with your door locked, your eyes closed, and your ears plugged, and, frankly, what's the use of being in the city if you're gonna live like that. So I found myself launched in the gurgling stream of humanity again, back in a body, and an identity, and answering to a name that made me into a person, who existed on earth, and had desires, and needs, and hopes, and dreams, and friends, and foes, and in an instant the emptiness was gone and I couldn't imagine where it went, nor could I even remember it at all because as soon as I was full to the brim the amnesia set in and I'd forget what it felt like to be free.

And yet I could never forget, because there was a part of me which would not let me, the part of me that remained out on the coast, that never came back with me, and therefore would gnaw away at my broken spirit until I realized I had been caught again with my nose to the grindstone, cramped within the walls and rules and laws of the concentration camp again, and the lightness of my being had been turned into a knotted bolus of indigestible compost, and another war inside of me had to come to an end. Or I had to come to an end.

Life in the city was beginning to feel nothing like Life at all. As such, back at my own primordial, fenceless hide-away on the hill, one night, on one of my solo ventures, so to speak, I had another of my most profound experiences, which would corroborate my subtle sense that something was wholly amiss with life as I knew it; a feeling which had been smouldering within me, and the flame of which would suddenly be blown into an all consuming inferno of undelight.

The horrible episode of which I speak came about the evening after a day in which I had stumbled upon the Apocryphal account of what had happened to Adam and Eve after their exile; what happened to creation after the creator was forgotten. I say this with absolute, undogmatic, unorthodox candour; I say that this one book is perhaps the most important, and heart-wrenching books so thoughtlessly- or perhaps strategically- excluded from the Old Testament by its ancient, God-fearing editors. This short work is the unexpurgated exposition of the horrors and troubles which transpired in the hearts, minds, and lives, of our- symbolic or real, as you will- historic ancestors.

I sat there reading it in the library, astounded, aghast, empathetic, disturbed, and distraught, for there it all was, finally, in unabashed black and white, an almost exact description of what I had known and felt all along and which the world of the lie had chosen to effectively deny and bury; there it was- the great division, the exile from unity, the confusion, the agony, the contrition, petition, and ...the irreversible sentence. Out went the Old Adam and Eve, out from the fabulous union and love of the Godhead, out into the guile and distortion of manifestation, into the struggle and loss, and, most disastrously- the separation. There it was, what I had known and felt but could not relate to anyone who did not feel it as well- which was nobody around me- and that is: a separation had occurred which was calamitous to our spirits, and which we now longed to correct, somewhere deep inside, and though the despair had, over the centuries, been pragmatically repressed, each of us darkly remembered that intimacy and warm union with each other and the heavens which we had

enjoyed once, and we remembered also the sentence and the separation which would bring about a life of toil, loneliness, and death.

I knew that somewhere long ago that horrible chasm had indeed occurred- a division of what was not intended to be divided. To remember the Fall is to remember when we could fly. To taste freedom just makes unfreedom that much more punishing. Life is an odd requiem for anyone who has the remembrance of heaven, however subtle or obscure. Why we lose ourselves at every moment to the lie, and do not flow in laughing rhythm to the eternal tune cascading through all of life and all of time is not a mystery to me anymore. I have seen clearly what the brotherhood of men have wasted in their useless, spiritless, and abject pursuits. I have seen how ninety-nine percent of life is but a tragic interruption from the moments of ecstasy and freedom which are our birthrights, our privilege, our true life.

And the sentence was irreversible, the covenant could not be broken, not yet anyways- not until God took on the same bitter medicine which had been handed out and finally descended back into the separation which each one of us endured; not until the God within each one of us descended out of the garden and into the mire, so as to return that part of ourselves we had so long ago abandoned back to the peace of the One. But perhaps I am looking ahead too far.

Oh, there will be many who read what I say and see it as nothing but pure bombast, poppycock, and fairy-tale. That is no concern of mine. Until an individual comes to see, feel, and know the separation of the Self, for themselves, that person will continue to live life and assume that misery and loneliness are a necessary quality of the show. The problem for me was that somewhere, barely below the surface, I remembered what it was like ...before the Fall. And *that* is what had made life unbearable. That is why I had cared for nothing but to wake and live through the day, to love the sun, the moon, the birds, and the trees. And that was hardly enough and far too much.

I was wild and I was listening. Listening to the song of the wildness running free and through me. I was hearing the old music that no longer flowed with the discordant ways we were dancing together. I was trying to dance to the old tune of the new heart, the heart buried and bound by the mind for so long that to finally unleash it was to explode in euphoria and anguish; it was to stand in the morgue of life, and swirl and be taken by a fiddler no one else could hear.

And so back up I went to my little hermitage on the hill that night after reading that account of the exile, and I sat up on a clear bluff overlooking the Georgia Strait, and I indulged in the body and the blood, so to speak, and then waited for the serum to soak in and the ethereal transmission to begin.

Perhaps an hour later I was on my knees, bawling like I had never bawled before, weeping Adam's weep, and crying Eve's tears, because I was living what they had lived, and I knew it now, without a shadow of a doubt. And I looked back from my *dominus flevit*[11] at Gomorrah and could see the electric lights shining shamefully in the distance, and all I could sense was the misery, separation, pavement, deceit, noise, pollution, confusion, and loneliness, and I howled with agony and wept on and on and saw no hope, no possibility for mankind, only the endless pain, conflict, and damning oblivion which would never allow an end or healing to it all.

It is as if I had tapped into God's own repressed anguish. And when that happens it takes you under, it takes you way down, and wrecks you on the bottom. And even if you can rise up from that, and make it back to the surface, a little piece of you will be left in the depths of agony with the others.

What a night of grief indeed. The grief of the entire world, built upon eons of isolation and sorrow, a grief that oozed out and consumed everything, and would not abate because we were together once, and now we were in fragments and the fragments were against each other and how on earth to make it through.

How on earth, indeed. For little did I know that the Earth was part of the answer. Little did I expect that at the height of my hopelessness I would be drawn to lift my head, and look across the bluff upon which I was writhing, and to see a giant, bowled, moss covered boulder with a splendid old pine behind it, gnarled and weathered, and bent cascading down over the rock. And with absolute certainty I knew at that moment that the earth was hearing my woe, and beckoning me, and offering to hold me. I knew at that moment that the Earth was the Mother, that She was everywhere, and right now She was in that tree and boulder, and She sought to hold me. And I stood up, walked over, climbed up, and laid down in the hollow, under the tree, in Her arms, and as I lay recovering and dozing off I felt a warm, loving, living form all around me, coddling me and caressing me, and the agony disappeared, and an inexplicable comfort came over me, and I fell asleep in Her arms, and slept the night through like a babe, and when I awoke I knew that I loved Her.

Soon after that reunion, on another night, in a dream I would be climbing around what appeared to be a soft mound of earth, but when I climbed on top of it I realized it was a huge breast, and a feeling of great peace and comfort came over me, and then in love and adoration I exuberantly exclaimed- "Mother!", at which point I began to awake, and in the groggy haze between the unconscious and conscious I could feel the subterranean, all encompassing heartbeat of the world Mother, in which all of our lives are loved and pulsing.

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four

It was not long after that horrible and healing night at my shack on the mountain that I again left Vancouver, heading north to the Charlottes, to Her. But this time when I left I spat on the ground and said I was never returning. I had had enough. Goodbye to the pavement, the clock, the noise, the insomnia, the haste, anger, distraction, signs, rules, streetlights, and all the rest of it which stank of mankind's putrid indigestion. Goodbye to the lunacy, the psychic warfare, the evil eye, the spiritual smog, and desecration of all things alive and beautiful. Goodbye, I'm going to live with the Mother.

I walked back into Her. And oh what a sweet beauty She is on the coast of British Columbia. Like nowhere else I've ever been on the planet. Where the remaining giant stands of cedar and spruce have grown into a magnificent,

other-worldly, thriving organism of tangled and intertwined biotica and biomass unequalled anywhere; all one great life, seething all about and in and through itself. Where the gothic giants are carpeted down below by a generous layer of the most verdant green moss the eye can take in. Where the ocean offers up its delicious gifts and abundance, pelagic monstrosities play about in the depths, a limitless swarm of sea-birds float and swim about, and there is always enough driftwood to cook your bounty and hang your tarp over; where the rainbow is more common than the moon, and where, one night, I was to witness the odd benediction of Luna's Sol-like majesty, as I stepped out into the evening to release my bladder, and turned my head upward, and there, hanging by the light of a full moon, was a perfect rainbow, cut in crystalline clarity and singing out the Mother's covenant with me.

I had witnessed many rainbows in this land of plenty, many of which had come down from the firmament at auspicious moments, communicating to me that the cosmic eye was watching me and occasionally pleased. But never had I seen one at night, and never had I imagined that it would come, if it ever did, under the glow of a full moon. And yet the universe, as I have come to recognize it, is wholly intelligent, and the wonders and weather and natural occurrences I would come to witness would, with categorical regularity, make it obvious to me that the cosmos is more alive, more conscious, and more aware of us than we are even of ourselves.[12]

Nothing is accidental nor arbitrary in life. Nothing. No tornado touches down, no numberless wave laps the shore, no hurricane rises or falls, and no wind even slightly blows without perfect intention and purpose. Everything is alive with consciousness and meaning. And the beasts that run about, or swim, or fly are no different. Consciousnesses within consciousnesses within consciousnesses. If a message doesn't come to you one way it will come another, and when you live in the wilds, and with the wilds, the symbols of our mythic beings often come through the wilds. Omens are alive and well in the wilderness, to be sure. You only have to tune into the other way of seeing.

For instance, it happened one summer that, twice within a month or so, an eagle dropped a salmon head from up on high, down to land right nearby me. Had I been alert and sensitive enough the first time, I would have gotten the message and been done with it. But repetition is often a necessity in the sublime schoolroom where our dull and torpid minds fail class after class and often never even graduate from first grade. So we repeat, and repetition occurs, and the second time something unique like this, or anything else, happens it is time to wake up and take note, which I did. And the message, which I heard, and the lesson which I got the second time around, was that my Piscean era was finished, and a new way of being was well under way.

It is these rites-of-passage which help the stages between transformations go much smoother; otherwise we're likely to hang on to old ideas and ways, and so inhibit the evolving movement within us.

Another message from the sky, at another time, came repeatedly to me, again as a shift within me had occurred, or was about to occur.

This one came from the Ravens- those wise and wily tricksters of legend who speak out in tongues with their ancient knowledge and forethought. Ah, the garrulous raven, which is said to have no less than one hundred and

thirty-seven different sounds within its repertoire, which is a might larger than our twenty-six letters, only six of which are vowels and therefore true sounds. To sit in between two ravens having a little chat over god knows what in the middle of the wilderness is to understand how limited is our perspectives on the intelligence of the beasts. It is we who are unevolved, we who are far from Heaven, we who are the parasites on a planet made for living and loving.

Though it was not a raven's voice which would call to me this time, but rather it was their aerial acrobatics which spoke out their message, as I was walking along a pebble beach outside of one of the towns on the blessed isles, and my inner world had been in a bit of confusion and turmoil, as per usual, and then one of the dark bandits flew overhead, let out a gargle to grab my attention, and then turned upside down, coasting that way for a while, then flipping back over, flapping a few times, then over again and gliding upside down, laughing at the fool human below, and then upright again, a few flaps, then back over and out into the distance, harbinging the overturning my life was about to take in the next couple of weeks.

It was a magical sight to witness, that stunt pilot showing off and carving words of wonder in the air. Upside-down was the perfect metaphor for me back then, though I was hardly gliding peacefully nor loving the ride. Life was all flipping over upon me, as it has always been trying to do, but I hadn't yet got my wings and so I stayed on the ground and somehow managed to stay upright.

Oh it's a crazy life at times. It's a marvelous ride on a mysterious train through a stupefying madhouse. A ride unlike any other ride, in which you can neither hold on nor fall off, and so you are tossed about in the blender, and whirled about on a string, and you're always falling and always caught.

When the Mother had caught me in her arms a few months back, that night on the apocryphal hill, something had changed which would turn me upside down and would complete my ground-school training, for no longer was I just a child of the heavens, I was also now a child of the earth, and with that new found lower communion came a critical wholeness that would mend an open wound which had been bleeding in me since Old Adam's mortal transgression.

Not that this solved the struggles I would still encounter while making my way through the pitfalls of society, but a re-union had happened which brought me- a male spirit, born, and bred, and a card-carrying citizen of the sky and of non-being- into *being*. I had finally landed.

The divorced spiritual Parents of my separated Self had come back together within me, had rejoined forces, and could work together again, and that meant that *non-being* and *being* were no longer on their own, no longer opposed, and so the mind and the heart were intimate, and therefore, in cosmological terms, conception could be conceived into the Mater by Dad.

It is a process that we all must go through, I expect- a reunion of our divided selves- one half which is strung high up in the heavens, timid to venture down, the other, wriggling beneath the surface, unable to leave the ground; a reunion which does not occur until the Spirit consummates into the Soul, and the livingness of the cosmos is won. Is One.

Once you have eaten of the flesh, so to speak, you must ride it out completely.

You must ride it out with one leg on a white Pegasus flying towards the sky, and the other on a black Nightmare, fleeing away in the night. And yet how to hold it all together? How to get away and remain? How to be and not-be, and, making the two into one, going nowhere, be free?

Another glaring synchronicity based on animals which comes to mind occurred while I was working in Sitka, Alaska, and a few of us had gathered on a buddy's sailboat for a couple of drinks, and we were passing a bottle of the German bitter, *Jaegermeister*, around which has on its label the picture of an eight or ten-point buck, with a glowing crucifix between its antlers. Amongst our party was a man who was at that time writing a book about deer hunting, and his keen interest in the emblem brought about a lengthy conversation regarding its possible meaning. We tossed about all sorts of hypotheses and then forgot about it and went on with the evening. The next day, however, I was rummaging through a thrift shop in the town and a certain book on one of the used-book shelves seemed to grab my attention for no particular reason. I picked it up and it was all about the sacred link between man and animals, and not only that, it contained an exact description of the insignia which we had been discussing the night before: it related the story of St. Eustacius, and how one day while out hunting he had chased, on horseback, after a large buck, and when he had finally gotten within his arrow's reach, the buck turned around and between its antlers there shone a glowing cross. At that moment St. Eustacius was converted and spent the rest of his fairly trying days spreading the good news, only to wind up being roasted in a hollow iron bull by the heathens of the day, though when they opened it up afterward he was found with a bewildering smile on his face.

This episode carried other synchronicities as well, for, not long after finding that book an acquaintance of mine suggested that I read Voltaire's *Candide*, which I did, and which described incredibly similar events to the story of St. Eustacius that had transpired in Candide's life, and so I figured the universe was trying to tell me something, which it was, because perhaps a year later another friend of mine wrote me a letter and, for no specific reason, chose to address it to St. Eustace. I understood then the message I was receiving at that time, but I will leave it to the curiosity of the reader to consider or disregard what that message was, however they choose.

Occasionally the messages from the wilds are neither symbolic nor abstract. Sometimes the warm-blooded beasts simply want to send out some love.

For me this type of event came about on a paddling trip I undertook with a very brilliant young man who had camped beside me at our illegal bush-camp in the forest, just behind the town of Sitka. He had never sea-kayaked before but decided to come along anyway. And so we each took a few days off of work and paddled across a channel of water to a nearby island with a large, extinct volcano on it. There we set up camp, slept the night, and the next morning paddled out to another island renowned for its puffin and auklet colonies.

The puffin is a beautiful and laughable creature, appearing like the clown of the Pacific, and we spent the whole day circumnavigating the outer island, bird watching, and then paddled back to the camp we had set up the evening before. The next morning when we awoke the weather was foul, with a strong southerly crossing over large swells from the west, making for a chaotic blender of spray, swell, and chop, which was a messy soup for small craft. Normally I would have waited it out and hoped for better weather the next day, but my buddy had a flight to catch and we had to get back. Always there is a good reason for making a bad decision.

We got halfway across the strait we were crossing to return to Sitka and the weather system picked up and shifted to an easterly, and suddenly we were paddling into a strong headwind, making no headway, and being lashed from the side by blowing swell and chop. My companion's lower back had seized up and he was having a very tough go of it. I was beginning to worry that we had screwed-up badly, because I knew that in these conditions if he tipped over I'd have a hell of a time rescuing him, and if I went over I'd most likely fail at the Eskimo roll- a technique which I was no expert at even in calm and tepid water, let alone in raging, icy seas- and he wouldn't stand a chance of helping me. Things were looking grim. Real grim. I was trying to support him, but what could I do? We were in separate kayaks, and I had to keep my own head forward, conscious of every incoming wave, and paddle fiercely just to keep from going backward. It had become an epic, and was bound to get worse, but just as I was thinking these thoughts, and sensing that we were in true danger, a massive humpback whale surfaced right beside me, and blew out a huge cloud of spume- which, on every other occasion that I have caught an unlucky whiff of the spray, smelled as bad as the most horrid halitosis a festering, never-brushed mouth could have, with a nauseating stench that stuck to your clothes and all, but this time it was the sweet perfume of love and support- and I knew the blessed beast was saying- "Come on man, dig in brother, you can make it, I am with you!" And I let out a joyful yell of gratitude and victory, and my mate must have seen and felt the same thing because we did dig in, and did make ground, and finally crossed the channel, coming to shore soaked and exhausted, but we were alive, and we were alive perhaps only because of the visit from the whale which had spurred us on. And the lousy American beer we toasted to that living gift tasted wonderful that night.

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As well as the little hut I built on the hill near Vancouver, on all of my past travels up and down the coast I always kept an eye out for a more permanent, more remote spot to exist- away from the ubiquitous mental detritus found any place man had scattered his limited theories into form. I would consider the farthest cliffs, the steepest mountains, the most isolated valleys, or islands in the roaring sea, anywhere to build a hidden shack, a fort, a cabin, or

what have you, and to one day step off of the last street I would ever set my feet upon, and walk away calmly into the bush. I dreamed of finding my spot, of constructing a humble lean-to, of sitting down beneath it, forgetting the likes of men, and of never getting up.

I sought to be in unpeopled wilderness, and live like old Enoch, away from the temptations of the dancing, song, and sin of the sons and daughters of men, except that, unlike that ancient forefather, I planned to take one of their daughters with me. Why be totally alone in the great outdoors, I thought, when you can have some lovin' with you?

If you like nature and don't mind a bit of hard work and a lot of isolation, British Columbia and Alaska are the best places on earth to be a guerrilla homesteader. The choices of where to camp or build a little shanty are never ending, as long as you're far enough away from the authorities and the concerned citizens who will get into a righteous fuss and fright every time they see something going on which is not tightly wrapped in codes and restrictions. The great, law abiding, sniveling bourgeoisie rabble will get you every time.

On one reconnaissance trip, far away from the rabble, looking for a remote building site, a couple of buddies and I took a floatplane into the mouth of one of the long, fingerlike inlets which carve up the BC coast, where we hiked up the river ten miles or so, firstly along an abandoned logging road, then onto an overgrown path, and finally we were meandering through grizzly trails which, in the thick knot of the rainforest's salal and brambles, were only as high as a bear walks, and therefore you had to crouch right over to use such paths, so these weren't the most physically- not to mention psychologically- comfortable thoroughfares to negotiate.

I remember reading the Alaska State Park's pamphlet on grizzly attacks the first summer I had gone up there. It stated, in perfect, bureaucratic, now-you-can't-sue-us-jargon, that if a grizzly charges you, you should not run but only look away from it, wave your arms about, and slowly back away; if it continued to charge, and attacked you, you should not fight back but instead play dead; and if now it persisted to maul you, you should consider it as a 'predatory' attack, and fight back with all of your might. I finished reading the pamphlet and was thinking- isn't this a wonderful piece of perfectly American advice- wait until you're damned and then try to save yourself.

During a large part of that first summer in Alaska, I was camped alone under a tarp in grizzly territory, and was piss-scared half the time and would be startled into anxious alertness at the slightest noise in the forest- of which there was an endless supply. And what with the short, northern nights- about three hours of partial darkness at best- and the perpetual rain pounding down, I didn't rest very well at the outset of that summer. But something happened after a while which allowed me to sleep comfortably; I suppose I just inductively grew weary of leaping up whenever a branch snapped or some other sound startled me but did not produce the *ursus major* I had expected, nor any other frightening beast for that matter. And so eventually I just stopped reacting to the ever-present, benign noises of the forest and forgot that these might signify a bear. I got so used to sleeping out in the open like this that I remember finding fresh cougar tracks near my camp in British Columbia one time, and as I was dozing off that night I suddenly questioned myself as to whether I should be worried or

not, and I remember only the slightest response inwardly, lackadaisically negating the necessity of fear, and then I must have fallen into dream because I awoke the next morning fully intact.

Occasionally a friend would confess to me that their fear of bears and cougars prevented them from going into the wilderness alone- which, being alone in the wilds, was a rewarding experience that I had declared was singularly important and a life altering necessity. And then the friend would inquire whether I was still afraid of such animals or not. My answer was, "Yes, of course I'm afraid of them." But then I'd explain an important change which had happened to me, and apparently not to them as yet, which was this- I was not afraid of *potentially* meeting a bear or cougar, for I had learned that at every moment there is a false alarm if you're willing to allow fear to give you one. However, were I to actually come upon one of the carnivores, of course I was scared, but the difference between useless fear and jungle sense was what gave me, a coward, the opportunity to bask in the glorious outdoors, and stole the same experience from those others. And that is a terrible tragedy.

I recognize this dichotomy- this liberating or imprisoning nuance of fear- in many aspects of my life now: fear of potential harm, potential loss, or potential sorrow, all of which are limiting to life, as opposed to honest-to-goodness self-preservation fear, which is life affirming.

I had come to accept that life is not complete without some fear, and that trying to avoid what I feared was impossible without concomitantly building up walls which would bury me, because to avoid fear was to avoid life. I had to learn to discern between true response to a true situation, and false response to an imagined one.

I can say these things with great humility, for I was a born and bred, hopeless neurotic- a living authority on the crippling effect of the mind. I once had a dream in which it was shown to me that there was an incurable, pathological coward within me, discoloring everything I did, and everything I thought, and I awoke knowing that I could not get rid of him, for he was a part of *me*. I could only take into consideration the fact that his voice was a part of the chorus of voices motivating either my fulfillment or abandonment of life, and I had to make sure that he didn't win, because to him even the clerk at the convenience store was a grizzly, and the world was a terrifying, dark woods within which he sat cowering while the rest of me wanted to sing out and dance.

The first book I ever thought of writing was solely about fear, though luckily the coward was too afraid to write it, and so the rest of me won the pen. And soon I'll take another hill and become a ballerina.

And yet it had taken me many bewildering years of painful confusion and struggle to finally understand and overcome the useless fears that had been driven into my innocent life from day one. The endless, justified, irrational, irrevocable, cultural fears: fear of being lost in the world, of being different, of believing in nothing but yourself, of having no job (let alone a career), of having little or no money, no home, of living illegally wherever you chose to squat. Fear of existing in squalor amongst the pimps, and prostitutes, the heroin addicts, thieves, drunks, mutants and beggars, fear of being dirty, of neither caring for, nor needing anything created by mankind, fear of owning nothing, of thinking your own thoughts, of dreaming your own dreams, of being idle, of

being nobody. Fear of death, fear of life, fear of disappointing your friends and family, of being disowned or of disowning, of offending another irreparably. Fear of being absolutely alone, fear of standing your own ground while the cyclone of madness spins relentlessly about you, fear of believing in and following your own reality, fear of being wrong, of never finding truth. Fear of the wildlands, of snakes, of cold and rain, of darkness and discomfort, of wiping your ass with your own hand, of where you'd lay your head that night, of what you'd eat tomorrow, of where you'd wash, and what you'd do when you woke in the sun with nothing to do but sit in the sun. Fear, fear, fear, and more fear, all ensconcing, all pervasive, encumbering, deceiving, disfiguring fear. All of it.

Many people talked as if they understood life and knew how to properly live it, but once you sat down and got inside of them, once they opened up the can of worms contained within and came forth with candor to expose themselves truly, it was always the same thing- uncertainty, hesitation, disquiet, boredom, anger, worry, envy, disease, and panic. There it was, in all and everyone, lying buried just beneath the shining veneer of their own private lie, which itself was haplessly buried deep inside the greater lie- the lie into which they were born and because they had no imagination, no intent, and no energy to extricate themselves, it was the same lie into which they would eventually grow sick, and old, and die.

They would die in fear when they could instead have lived in faith. In faith- not in a dogmatic, religious form- but faith in nothing knowable- faith for faith's sake, because it was the only way out of fear and death and sorrow.

But they had no faith; no faith in themselves, in God, in Creation, in Destruction, in death, or in Life. No faith, only fear. As simple and difficult as that.

*

six

After hiking in through those grizzly trails to inspect a potential homesteading site with some buddies, the valley we explored was absolutely beautiful, despite having been almost completely logged-out decades earlier, but it turned out that the land was owned by a complete buffoon- one who would have caused us no end of troubles- so we flew out a few days later without a further thought about it.

That trip, however, made me look even farther afield. I began obsessively pouring over maps and marine charts, like a prisoner who had come upon the blueprint to the prison, and who sees in it his hope for escape. Wherever I went, by boat, plane, car, or bus, I'd be staring out the window, seeking the Shambhala awaiting me, devoid of any rules or humans.

Finally, though, it was not a map which helped me decide where to go, it was my own heart; I simply looked within and asked- where did I want to go to *be*. The answer came quick and unequivocally- on the far, outside west coast, amongst the giant trees and crashing surf, where no on lived and few ever came.

Luckily enough, however, I would not have to go alone, for by then the universal drama had been kind enough to bestow upon me a *soror*- a woman whom I had been directed to be with through many dreams and sublime messages- and who was now thankfully a living part of my soul. We were on the same conveyor belt, and the conveyor belt was headed for the west coast of the Charlottes.

En route we gathered up all necessary supplies for our initial visit: a bag of cement, a sheet of half-inch aluminum, and some stove pipe to build a fireplace, a couple of tarps, an axe, chisel, saw, some blankets and sleeping bags, and a few buckets of food.

These supplies we loaded onto a floatplane and flew to a remote, west coast cove. There we unloaded, asked the pilot to pick us up in ten days- as there was no radio contact in the area- and watched him take off again.

The first thing to do was to scout out the area, and it didn't take long, perhaps one or two minutes, before we were standing under one of the most beautiful, anthropomorphic, giant cedars I had ever seen. A titan, a grandfather, with a horizontal limb about eight feet up its massive trunk, and the limb itself was about five feet in diameter and which, over the next week and a half, provided a wonderful canopy under which we cooked our meals during the regular rainstorms on the coast.

Very soon after our discovery and exaltation over the tree, we found nearby an abandoned old Fisheries cabin, which was about ten feet by ten feet in dimensions, and full of refuse, but still standing square and otherwise in good fettle. We knew then that we had been guided to the place we were supposed to be, for now we didn't have to build anything, we simply cleaned all the debris out of the cabin, tarped the leaking roof, put the windows back in place, built a very rough stone and cement fire place, with the aluminum sheet on top for cooking, cut a hole in the wall and put the stove-pipe through, and we were home.

Later that evening we hiked up one of the rivers in the area and there were so many eagles about that the sky was literally snowing eagle-down, and I ran about in an ecstatic trance of disbelief with my hat out in my hand, catching those feathery pieces of grace floating all around and never having touched the ground.

I suppose this was the universe's answer to my often visualized fantasy of running along a beach and diving to catch an eagle feather, fallen from a passing raptor, before it touched the earth. I reckon that this was the type of waking dream which symbolized my inner spiritual disposition back then: I had not wanted to come down, ever. But as I found out, and described earlier, despite my revulsion to the flesh's confines, the spirit has not come into life to avoid life, but to partake of it as fully and perfectly as one's nature allows, and so to stay aloft and soar around in the distances without ever entering the body and touching the earth may be painless, but, in the end, it is also pointless.

Anyway, the *soror* and I stayed for our ten days in the beautiful cove, where a few sailboats ended up anchoring out a storm, and a crab-fisherman dropped his traps and gave us some of the catch, but other than that it was just the birds, the beasts, and the trees to keep us company. Thus, like all of our subsequent trips together, away from the throngs, it was a good chance for her

and I to be alone together, without distraction, which is really the only time the two partners in the work can get inside each other, dig into the piles of rubble, root around for hidden goblins and magic rings, and then mirror back to each other what they have found. It was always challenging, and always worth it, such trips of ours, for without this type of cooperative archaeology there is little value but entertainment in a relationship.

More than being an important time for our inner work, it was recuperative and inspiring to live for a while amongst such virgin forest and untouched earth, and I was thinking that this is what the earth must have been like before the hordes invaded and pillaged everywhere else. But one night I was to experience a strange energy and visitation during sleep, and then a disturbing and eerie sort of requiem began playing in the ether, and I was given a dream which showed the entire area in which we were camped, in all its beauty and diversity, and then a somber voice spoke and said- "But something is missing." And a terrible sense of unnatural absence occurred and I awoke and knew what was missing- the natives.

Never before had I understood, in this way, the tragedy of the de-population which the North American Natives suffered upon the entry of the white man. Over ninety percent of the Queen Charlotte Haidas died from smallpox or the common flu, and the rest were removed from their happy hunting grounds and placed in two villages where most of them remain today.

So now the earth was incomplete, and barren of an essential component of the ecosystem and spirit of the land. It was a funereal presence which I felt then- a loss that the earth itself had not forgotten, and continued to mourn. I know now that the world-soul still seethes with an agony as hard to approach as it is to endure.

For the rest of our time in that cove the forest felt like a home to which a parent returns after finding out that all their children had been killed in an accident; a deathly, sickening, horrible emptiness. And the Mother had shared her grief with me. And all I could do was sigh, and shrug my shoulders. That's all I could do.

The *soror* and I flew out again, ten days later, but, as always, a part of us remained there, with the grandfather tree, the little cabin kept all those years for us, the flocks of eagles, and the Mother with her unrequited woe.

How, when you have gone away from it all, have seen it from a different angle, watched as the futility of mankind consumes itself insatiably, and have suffered because you can no longer allow yourself to take any part in the delirium- how then do you take life up again? How do you play a role in a drama you have scorned and walked out on?

In the years past, if I wasn't thinking of a wilderness hideout, I would be considering other types of escape, and would be researching Trappist monasteries in France, or Orthodox monasteries in Greece- the kind of places where it's all or nothing, where one day you simply toss everything away, put on the dark robes, and spend your life drinking port and praying in obeisance to the Lord.

Or I'd imagine myself stoically self-exiled to an exotic land of peasants and simplicity, where I'd wait out my existence spurning all that I had been born into and could not stand.

And if these two regular fantasies became old, I thought perhaps I would just move down to San Francisco, or Santa Fe, or some such neo-bohemian place, and be a drunken poet. Or I'd decide that it was better in the end to fly out to a remote island in the Aleutian archipelago and build a stone shack and learn on my own the way of the Athabascan shaman. I was always trying to think of how I could survive, somehow survive in this world.

I was continually pouring over the classified adds, looking for an old Winnebago to drive away in and keep on going, or a plot of useless land out in the middle of nowhere, a place to go and plant a garden and commune with the soil, and not come back.

I bought myself an inflatable kayak, and then an inflatable raft, and I imagined myself paddling to some offshore islet, and waiting stoically for others to realize I had made the right decision, and then deciding to join me there. Whatever it took to get away, I was taking it. But I never got away.

Perhaps the closest I ever came to feeling the freedom and flow of the untrammeled spirit on earth were times I spent kayaking the outer coast, where the lift and drop of the endless swell raises you up and takes you down in a gentle, soothing motion; where you can sit in your boat within this calming medium, out as far as the furthest reefs, where the ocean pounds against the enduring loneliness of these last and isolate members of the continent, away from it all and sitting unscathed by the crashing waves, wrapped in a timeless stillness that will gather you up and remove you forever from the distant shore if you open up and tap into its remoteness.

Out there, alone but for the sea and sky and nothing to scar the infinite expanse which swallows you up and makes you a part of it. Out there, where only the occasional puffin or albatross comes around to remind you that other life still exists, that you have not paddled through a door in the void nor come into that place of forgetfulness and absence to which the weary soul so longs to go.

Out there, where the cadence of the paddle hauls you in and you lose yourself in the act, and the paddle takes over while you merely hold on and wonder where you've gone.

The sea is a lonely place, almost as lonely as God. Perhaps that is why we are drawn to sit beside it and look out to nowhere, so as to feel the type of absence which the spirit calls home. A home which is far from all else, and that is why we fear to go there, for it is a home where no one else lives, no one visits, and only the wind comes by occasionally to remind us of its kinship. A home without rooms, or walls, or furniture. An emptiness to which we are all drawn like Icarus to the sun. Only we do not melt and crash, but instead we dissipate and rise, forever after inhabiting only the remote and untouched areas of the earth, if indeed we come down at all.

There is foreign lostness to the outer coast, which sings softly to the tune of our alien existences, to our eternal wanderings in the oceanic self. You can go out there only once and get caught out there forever, and even if your body returns to the world and to work, and continues to love, and eat, and sleep,

and lives out the rest of your life, you will remain out in the swells and the space, out in the lost reaches of the heart, where neither hurt nor love has ever gone. And you stay out there because of this, because to come back means to love and die all over again, because that is what happens when you cannot control your care.

And so your body returns to your friends and family who know not that you have buried yourself at sea, have set your spirit adrift into the warm abyss where nothing matters and you can breathe again and let the world go on its melancholic way.

What I found out there was the part of me which could not endure life- the part which wanted to fix it all and knew it was not fixable, the part of me that wanted to heal the endless agony, the part which could not accept the world for what it was and therefore had to die or leave it.

Out there I found myself smiling a soft smile I had never experienced before, a smile which came neither from joy, nor victory, nor laughter, but which came from the end of struggle, and the end of pain; it was the subtle and almost imperceptible smile of a soldier after the battle is over, a battle in which neither side has gained any ground, but only slaughtered each other until the few remaining troops had to stop and sign a truce; it was a smile that no longer needed to be aroused by anything, because it came after everything else had been removed, and therefore would never again leave; it was a smile that did not belong to the body, nor the mind, nor the earth, nor even the heavens, it was a smile that belonged to no one but ...me.

What I found out there was a place where it all fell away and only a huge, cathartic sigh remained, a sigh which would go on forever because the world would go on forever, and there was nothing that could be done, and that part of me I found out there was courageous enough to finally accept this, to sigh, and to look out away into the untroubled distance and to never look back. And that is why I am always out there. No matter where my body is, or what I am doing, that part of me is still out there, sitting in the slowly rocking swells, out past the anguish of the furthest reef, with my bow pointed west, towards nothing, and I look without seeing, listen without hearing, and feel without joy, need, nor pain.

I have seen this distance in others who have been away from the shore of life too long, and who now look about the world with that thousand-yard stare, which seeks for nothing, and attaches to nothing, because nothing is what it is after.

When you drift away like this it is almost impossible to get back, for your spirit leaves the earth and hangs like a kite above the clouds, waiting for the body to die and release it.

I have heard of astronauts, hovering out in space- far from the ensconcing psychic dome of anger and confusion around the earth- who find themselves immersed in an inexplicable ocean of love and peace impossible to reach in the dark spiritual atmosphere of humanity. And I have heard of their painful return back to earth, and how everything seems so grey, groaning with anguish, and useless.

Were it not for the greater will, driving me back down, flogging me against my own desires, forcing me to turn around and venture back to earth, I certainly never would have returned.

But the microcosm is an instrument of the macrocosm, the self is the vehicle of the Self, and service and duty come in many ways, and if you're called you follow, and if you don't follow you're dragged, and I was dragged along until I realized I was beaten and so I got up and walked back on my own.

And during that long march back I realized that once you have died out there and then been resurrected, there is no longer a place for you in the scheme of things, no longer a role for you in the external drama; that you no longer belong to the great show; you are lost and autonomous, and for the first time ...you are necessary. Now you are a stranger from another world, come to share their strangeness, or take no part. No matter, you do not fill a void, you create one. That is all. But that is everything.

The spirit lives in all things, and is all things, manifest and unmanifest, formed and formless, absolute and fleeting. It moves at a different rhythm without betraying the torpor of the profane. It swirls through the linear, prosaic, and mean presences of the dream, vivifying and animating all. It belongs where it is welcomed, and is imprisoned where it is denied. It has no borders, no identity, and no characteristics. It has no need, no doubt, no unstillness, and moves without effort and effort cannot move it. If you look for it you cannot see it, but if you become it, it will be free.

*

seven

Most of the trouble comes when you forget who's looking out for you, who's running the show, and who has seen, like a champion chess player, the next hundred moves ahead, while you're mentally fumbling about and wondering whose turn it is to move next.

Every action, thought, intention, or desire one succumbs to within a specific paradigm wholly supports and reinforces the authenticity of that graven perspective. Habit and belief then become the cement which binds the brick-walls of the paradigm together. One must then act counter to the paradigm in order to test its reality. If it stands it belongs to life, if it falls, it never really existed.

Doubt will castrate the flow out of life. Doubt in God, doubt in yourself, doubt in the magic and miracle of all that is, is not, was, or never will be. Doesn't matter which. The trick is to believe in life- your life- and don't give a hoot if it all doesn't fit together nice and reasonably. Nothing is reasonable. Nothing is expectable, imaginable, or proper. We're inside a mad dance of homeless spirits, and no one is going to give a hot damn if you stand up and make it obvious. I couldn't help myself, because I didn't know why life is the way it is, and I could do nothing at the time but shout at the heavens and try to go the distance and back again.

One August, some years back, while still living in the world, I dreamt a dream suggesting that I go on an overseas trip later that year, and when I awoke there was no question within me as to whether I would choose to go or not. I would go, of course; I had been following my dreams for quite a while by then, ever since I first realized that they were communicating important things to me, and they always led me to where I should be, to the people I should meet and share with, and to the experiences I would need to serve my vision, or to fill out the missing aspects of my growing being. The question remaining after this dream, however, was how I would acquire the thousands of dollars necessary to take the directed journey. My penury had reached a pauper's level, and I knew it would be tough to save enough dough for the trip by working in the city, with its never ending expenses, but still the first thought that crossed my mind was to head back into Gomorrah and work at the Co-op and scrimp and save, and beyond that I thought no further. The next night, however, another dream came with the message that edible, wild mushroom-picking would be the most promising route to take that autumn, if I were to bank the coin required. So that was that and again there was no question about what avenue I would choose. The last issue remaining, however, was how to get up to the Charlottes- where a great deal of the wild, commercially viable Chanterelle mushrooms grow- as cheaply as possible, so as not to cut into my earnings before I earned them.

Whenever I had owned a vehicle in the past I would generally take a few extra days to travel up to the islands in a round-about route northward, visiting friends at certain points along my human 'trap-line', as a perspicacious acquaintance once referred to my incremental visitations of dear ones located in sporadic communities along the way. But at this moment I had neither car nor time to make my rounds, so the only answer left, of course, was hitchhiking. This was a method of travel I had used to move about quite regularly in the past, although I always did it begrudgingly, disdainfully standing like a contemptful beggar beside the road, as the affronting legions of motorists sped past me in polished and sealed comfort and indifference. And yet I had nonetheless gotten around all over the world this way, and so I accepted my fate that what must be done must be done and the less whining the better.

So early that September I found myself on the outskirts of Vancouver with my thumb out, and my impatience tucked under, anticipating the long and agonizing process of waiting, then receiving a ride a certain distance up the road, then waiting again, then another ride, and so on, slowly leap-frogging the sixteen-hundred kilometres northward to my distant goal.

And to be sure the same pattern as all other times began unfolding on this trip- there were periods of extended waiting, periods of futility and despair as I weighed the disastrous possibility that the next ride would never come. But what happened this time was that the rides which did come, and they did, somehow seemed to apply to my very existence; that is, it seemed that everyone who picked me up had something to say uniquely relating to me, that there was a common ground of experience or understanding which brought us together in a form of transient communion very quickly, and we'd have our pleasant dialogue over whatever it was that we had instantly ascertained was our point of contact, and then we'd come to a fork in our road and I'd be dropped off to stand and idle, and then a similar event would happen, in that the next ride I got was

seemingly the ride I was supposed to get- it was the ride designed for me, by The chess player.

This went on all day long until sometime around sunset I was left off in William's Lake where I decided to call it a day, and walked into a nearby park, put my sleeping bag down and eased off into the joy of slumber. It was during that night that something must have clicked within me- some recognition bubbled up from the omniscient subconscious into the density of my consciousness, awakening a smouldering realization within me- because the next morning, bright and early, I was out on the road and a young man stopped to pick me up who said he was only going about fifteen minutes out of town, but did I want a lift anyway. Normally I would be loath to accept a ride which terminated out in the middle of nowhere, out where you could get caught for days without getting picked up, and where the alternative possibility of hopping on a Greyhound, when the waiting had finally become intolerable, didn't exist, because there was no bus stop, and so being stranded for an indefinite duration was a real possibility, which I avoided at all costs, often turning down rides that were not going on to at least the next small town. But as I said, something had clicked inside of me that night, because of the chain of seemingly destined rides which had brought me that far the day before, something which whispered- "The ride you are supposed to have *will* stop and pick you up, you need not worry but only have patience, and confidence, and ...faith, because God is directing the show and what should be, is what will be." And so I took the ride, was dropped off in the middle of nowhere, as the young man headed down a side-road, and then stood there, thumb out, as per usual. But before I could fall into the state of impatience which I habitually came to at such times, a voice came to me again which said- "God is choosing your rides." And so I relaxed, and stopped caring if the cars whizzed inhumanely past me, and I eased into the fabulous acceptance of ...faith. And not five minutes later an eighteen-wheeler flew past me, jammed on its breaks and came to a halt fifty metres or so up the road, and I ran up and climbed on and we were off, and the three-hundred pound trucker began inquisitively interrogating me for the first few minutes and then turned his head to me, looked me right in the eyes, and said: "I picked you up because God told me to." And I said, "I know." And this trucker, George I believe was his name, went on for the next two hours with stories and anecdotes about how and when God had entered his life, how he listened for and heard God's directives, and what was to become of the world during and after the apocalypse. And I shared my own views on all of it, and we had some good old biblical style communion, and then he let me off in the middle of nowhere, again. And not but a few minutes of faithful waiting later did I get a ride from a wonderful, long-haired Christian fellow who was homesteading in the area and who took me to his favourite restaurant for breakfast so as to introduce me to his wife. And when he and I were done eating and conversing, we said our goodbyes, and I walked out onto the highway and was soon picked up by a man headed to my final destination, and who was a professional mushroom picker with all sorts of advice for me, to boot. Check mate.

The world becomes a different place when you realize God pervades the whole flippin' shmeer, that there is divine design throughout, and that nothing is made that is not made by the Maker.

God does it all, both inside and out. What the ego assumes it is feeling, or thinking, or doing, is being done *to* it. Make no mistake about it. No one is immune from the divine monopoly.

This makes it tough to keep on striving, or writing, for example, because everything ever written or waiting to be written is summed up in one word- God. There it is. There is no more

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the* Word was God. Contra*diction* exists only in those parts which are seemingly separated from the whole; once the part is re-assimilated into the rest, and the self dissolves in the Self, all duality and strife are over.

As I said, this complicates the task for the writer, because instead of describing the world or an experience, you now realize that all you're doing is describing a compartmentalized aspect of the uncompartmentalizeable, indescribable God. And yet God hides within God's own creation, as the story goes, and books are one of the multifarious, mischievous ways God goes about in concealment, by inventing a hiding place and then hiding in you while you're searching through it. It's one hell of a good trick, to be sure.

To continue though. People who pick mushrooms are of a very interesting type generally. There are those who, out of interest, go north and try their luck for one or two seasons of crashing through the muck and occasionally stumbling upon a sizeable patch of the hunted spore; there are other folks who live in the vicinity of the areas which bring forth the Pine, Morrel, Boletus, and Chanterelle mushrooms- which are the most common commercial varieties picked- and so these folks make some, or all, of their living off of the milk and honey coming from their own land; and then there are the true mushroom gypsies, who follow the seasons, migrating here, there, and wherever the picking is good that year.

The common denominator among all the types, however, is their self-chosen fringe existence, and the life of chronic or occasional indigence which accompanies such a decision. Some of the freest and poorest folks I have ever met were mushroom pickers.

I'm thinking of one young lad who made it across to the Charlottes without enough money to buy a return ticket, even if he wanted to- the cost of which was a mere twenty dollars, so he wasn't carrying much green, to be sure. Yet he simply expected that things would work out, and they did.

And a young couple who camped near me one year were waiting for the picking season to start with a half a tank of gas in their vehicle, a box of canned-goods, and a buck-fifty between them. But it didn't faze them a bit.

A fellow in his late teens, who was my picking-partner for a while, had been penniless for the last six months; he had left his father's home because he couldn't stand the man, and had wandered about until he ended up on the Charlottes where, for some reason or other, he wasn't granted welfare, and so he had to live without a nickel for half a year, being given food and shelter by some good citizens in the area, until the shrooms started sprouting.

Another man, a father with two small daughters, had come for a month or so, hoping to pick enough for his car insurance, food, and some nights out at the pub for himself. Small dreams perhaps, but when you're sitting around a

campfire out in the bush, and no boss has been standing over you all day, and no alarm clock goes off in the morning, and a guitar is being played while you sip a beer and look up at the night sky, they are some very beautiful small dreams.

The population of the pickers is riddled with this kind of poverty, this kind of faith, this kind of liberation from the excessive tyranny of money, for they have found a form of freedom that money cannot buy. If a professional, workingman's gold-card was delayed for a week in the mail he'd have a cardiac arrest wondering how he was going to survive. But not these folks. Live with what you've got and what you need will show up, it's a law of the universe that they're well acquainted with.

Existence brings you everything you need, as long as you are earnest enough to need it. If you need nothing, nothing will come. But if you give a damn, if you are crazy with life and wonder, and possessed by the miracle of being, ardently digging it up, uncovering the immensity of this unbelievable creation, sedulously seeking to find out what it truly is ...to be, then life will hand itself over to you, it can do no other. That is life. That is what it demands, and what it gives. To float along, comfortable in the tepid roles of man, is to never uncover yourself, to never know who or why it is you are, and that is the greatest sin, and the greatest crime an individual can ever commit.

Without the slightest hint of proselytising, orthodoxy, or cowardice, I concur that God works in many mysterious ways, as the saying goes, and it is only for us to give up our limited views and expectations and our distorted ways of understanding and to allow that hallowed enigma to work its sublime magic upon us.

Anyways, the hitchhiking over, I was now on the Charlottes and earning a fine coin crashing through the bush, picking Chanterelle mushrooms that autumn, and after about ten days of this I was having dinner with Greg, the buddy of mine whom I had kayaked with on my inaugural visit to the islands, and he asked me if I would like to care-take a million-dollar fishing lodge for a month or so, which was closed for the season, and was nestled down in a quiet cove in the southern wilderness.

I accepted, and this turned out to be one of the most pleasant jobs I have ever taken and which mysteriously provided just enough money for me to undertake the journey overseas which had been the seminal cause producing all that followed.

This caretaking position- the first of many I was to have in different areas of the world over the next few years- was a spectacular opportunity, for not only was I suddenly the master of a mansion in the wilderness, I was also paid well, fed well, and the owners went so far as to boat my *soror* in for a couple of weeks of hot and heavy respite from the type of magnified solitude you can only attain in the distant wilderness which lies at the outer limits of the earth and mind.

And, by the way, don't let the pedants and rule-mongers tell you that you must maintain a Platonic relationship with your *soror*, which is a load of antiquated, uptight bunk. Me and mine, we made love like wild bunnies regularly.

Rainbows filled the sky for us during that time, Orcas cruised the bay, and bear and deer paraded about the grounds as we feasted upon fresh salmon, mussels, clams, and venison, and all these accoutrements only crystallized my recognition of the gift I had received simply because I had listened to my dreams, had followed the unspoken directives, and ...had faith.

Life is the thing dreams are made of indeed. I have often said that I have learned more from dreams than from anything else. I was regularly educated in the school of the subconscious, and instructional sentences were uttered to me. Axioms like: “Awareness requires no effort”, “The manifest is the outcome of the sublime”, “When you have stripped yourself of yourself, then shall you be whole”, “Don’t be afraid, because you’re not really there”, “Whatever overly concerns us outwardly, destroys us”, “Surrender fulfils the whole because it completes it without doing anything”, “Everything is consciousness.”, “Everything is light”, “For the knight to embrace truth, he must realize that there is only one truth for him to embrace”, “God is truth”, and so on.

But much more than just being educated and guided happened to me in dreams: All the subconscious characters creating havoc in my life were exposed in my dreams- the madman, rebel, coward, lone wolf, the alchemist called Valerian, and so on. And more, much, much more: I was absolved of my sins, finished with my karma, confronted Mara, found out why I had come to earth, found out who was for me, and who was against me; The Father aspect of God showed up symbolized as my physical father, and The Mother as my physical mother; I learned other people’s thoughts, dreamt other people’s dreams, had preconceptions, was destroyed by Christ coming after me with a shotgun, was baptised, resurrected, transfigured, and hallowed; I met aliens, Princess Diana, Mother Theresa, and St. Paul, all long deceased; I kissed the Mother Mary, and once ate a chocolate Virgin, all in my dreams.

It was during sleep that I also began to receive and experience the incredible power of divine energy which can be sent down from on high into the prepared body. I suppose this was a likely outcome of the path I had already been on for years, but I had never felt this type of intense energy- like being hit with a thousand volts of pulsating God essence, cast down upon me, for whatever reason I am not sure, but when it happened all doubt within me ended regarding the true force of the universe which gives but the smallest fraction of its limitless potential because ...that is all we can handle.

Many mysterious ways. And they have remained mysteries to me, and I understand nothing, but I am alive and looked after and held afloat in an inexplicable ocean of some genius and unfathomable design, which, thriving and fully cognizant, exists above all dimension, manifestation, and despair.

So many obscure, remote, and unique tunnels to run down and explore in the labyrinth of this godworld; so many options, investigations, contemplations, and asseverations to undertake- the infinity of possibilities is mind boggling: abstract nuclear mathematics and its relation to the orgasms of bivalves, the metaphoric sociobiology of Amazonian tribal ants, the mitotic inspirations of anaerobic bacteria living in the intestines of a parasite living in

the intestines of a dying zebra subspecies, the ancient solar mysteries and the Eleusian charade, black holes and why we are in one, blue gnomes, the aliens within us, the psychosis of want, dreamtime and a strict diet of lymph, molecular abnormalities, the aggressive desire of grandmothers watching a young baboon masturbate onto its food at the zoo, the etheric osmosis of our spiritual effluvium, transgression therapy, the anxiety found in trees, elliptical resurgences, advancing partitional phenomenal, mitigative discontinuities, innocent blasphemies, how the workers know when the queen should be killed, errors in the akashic record, the absence of death, the hilarity of grief, the batesian mimicry of humans in the inhumans that live as they, the whole biological and living realm of this maddening and miraculous place called earth, caught up in a dream called life, and here we are and how to dance and sing and laugh when the limitations and infinities become clear. So many tunnels in the one created plenitude of our manifold, indivisible, absurd and privileged existence.

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eight

I was so grateful, and in a way so disbelieving, of all that had happened to me on the coast, including all the unique and brilliant people I had met during my travels, that at one point a while back I wrote another whole book, during a five-week all-out frenzy, which was mostly about all the eccentric folks who had come into my life in Vancouver and on my excursions up and down the coast, and I was going to call the book *The West Coast Kumbh Mela*[13], honoring the numerous unbridled characters hiding or running free out there.

I was thinking then of folks like the fifty-year old, long-haired, big-bearded, insane clown who, as a young man went on scholarship down to America to play both university football and basketball, was a tennis pro, and an exceptional athlete about to be drafted into the big leagues, and then gave it all up for the wilderness, living four winters out on the furthest edge of the rainforest, and then existing in a teepee for a year and learning Native American spirituality from shamans. At the time of writing this he was spending every autumn in the American desert, every summer in the Canadian Rockies, and every winter in the Himalayas doing self-driven biological and ethnological research. And a true madman to boot. He would do the most ridiculous things, like inventing a method to keep his agility perfectly tuned by jumping up and down on a trampoline, blindfolded, while throwing a medicine-ball against the wall and trying to catch it without knocking himself silly.

Then there was Crazy Al, a man I kept hearing about in a town which I lived in for six weeks or so, and by the descriptions of him I kept envisioning a sixty-year old, wild-eyed, toothless soothsayer, but wasn't I surprised when I was introduced to a thirty-one year old man in a tank top, who was built like he belonged on the national gymnastics team, and this was Crazy Al. And so we sat down beside each other in the pub, and started to chat and I guess he saw

something in me which allowed him to feel like I'd understand him, because he leaned over, peered into me with a deep, serious, mature look, and declared, without a hint of holier-than-thou in him: "The problem is that these people are godless." And I could tell that he knew what he meant by that, and yet as the night went on I could tell also that he cared for others like little retarded children who had not the acumen to understand their limitations. Among many other things which we discussed that night he also claimed that, since he and I were approximately the same age, and of similar consciousness, we were both going through a zodiacal shift called 'Saturn return', which he attempted to describe to me though I didn't really get much out of it because all the while I was hoping it had some connection to the old Roman Festival of Saturnalia- the celebration of wine and orgies, when the slaves are set free for a week to change places with their masters and make up for the rest of the year in bondage. Feeling somewhat like a chaste slave at that time I was fairly enthralled with my take on his supposition.

And another odd soul: an American wanderer in his mid forties, whom, at the time of our meeting, was managing the small, illegal hostel I had taken refuge in for a couple of days, although he was mostly just hanging about, enjoying the crowd and waiting for the skydiving season to begin in the southwest where he had been teaching for years. Otherwise he roamed about with a small backpack, smoked the occasional joint, and told splendid tales about his own wilderness adventures, guiding experiences such as photographing an ascent of Everest, and the ten years he had spent up the coast on a tug which hauled log-booms through the harrowing, shifting currents of the narrows, and whose ship's captain, according to him, was a saint who listened to Beethoven's seventh constantly. There were no international borders for this man. There was only the earth, one earth, and he strolled about it like a lone wolf who had no concern for boundaries or working papers.

And then there was the red wine guzzling, acid popping, footloose Zen nun, who lived like a feather in a breeze, not worrying if she came down because a strong enough gust would come along to lift her up again and move her on to God knows where but somewhere, and she'd make her way doing this or that with intense passion and delight and then move on without a thought that it might be difficult ahead and wouldn't it be better to just stay where you are. No way. Keep moving, keep flowing, keep living, keep loving.

The coast is a limitless banquet of odd and indescribable sorts. There were draft-dodging geniuses, dope-smoking ministers, shaggy-mane drummers and didgeridoo players, wandering sailors, autodidactic naturalists, carvers, painters, explorers, heresiologists, blasphemers, and converts. The full spectrum of humanity is offered up there in its greatest extravagance within the most spectacular venue on the planet.

Everyone I speak of, and have written about earlier, certainly had no shortage of fears, insecurities or sorrows, just like all the rest of us. To be human has its requirements. But these folks inspired me and made me appreciate, as best I could, the unique chance we all have simply by being alive. I suppose it was for this reason that I had written the *Kumbh Mela* book- to tell the stories of those who most likely would never tell their own.

Soon after completing the book, however, I was given to understand that the 'powers' upstairs weren't all that pleased with it, most likely- it seemed from their ostracisms- because it was a horribly lopsided work, showing everyone in their best light while making no mention of their transgressions and towering faults- and so I burned the book a year later and never thought twice about that decision.

What I wonder now, however, of my time with all those magical people I met along my way, is this- did any of them make it across to the other side? And by that I mean, did any of them have the subtle lucidity and humility necessary to dissolve away from themselves and merge into the undying One? Or did they cling to their talents, idiosyncrasies, and skills, which allowed them to break out boldly from the norm, but would in the end become their undoing, if they were not able to relinquish these divisions to the whole? These are questions for which I have no answer. I have only the assumption that none, or very few, went the full distance. And I say this not out of pessimism nor scorn, but out of realism. For to cross over you can take nothing superfluous with you. No desires, no dreams, no longings, no regrets, no unfinished business. You walk through with a clean slate. You emerge without anything on your person except for the rose, which you are allowed, and even asked, to take back with you.

Unless the indefatigable intent is there to dissolve away the hard parts and ease back into the One, the individual is bound to continue being but a puppet of the ego. For none of us can cross to the other side with any characteristics, idiosyncrasies, talents, or pride. We must all melt nondescriptly into the fabulous wave, or remain ignobly isolate and separate like a turd floating about in the bathtub of a knave. Until we release all that makes us stand out like sore thumbs amongst our fellows and the world, we are destined to wrestle with the only Titan who can beat us on this earth- ourselves.

The way of sin must abate, and the way of absence take over. For you make it across when it doesn't matter if you make it, because you don't know what it means to make it, and so you stop trying. Then you make it. You cross over from the death of separation into the living moment of God when it comes time to lie down, because you have finished with this chapter in the eternal story of your being. That is when you must fall away completely, stop everything, forget everything, shed a final tear, and ...lay down.

And so I say, perhaps none of the fabulous folks I met during those years of wandering had strong enough intention to stand tall, and then to lie down. And yet I have met one who did make it. And if, at the end of this life, I am able to say that I met only one true man amongst all the people who came and went before me, I can say that I met at least one. One man who began to show me what it meant to be a man, and that it had nothing to do with unique abilities, physical strength, machismo, stoicism, handling strong drink, or screwing multitudes of women, but that to be a man meant to see clearly the abject follies of the world and to choose instead the one and only way in which to be on this earth- the way of integrity- and to choose that way at every turn no matter what the cost, and to know that the cost would often be dear.

I say that I learned about this costly integrity from Ed- a person so full of noble humility and priceless honor that he might be aghast right now were he

to know how I had seen and truly felt about him- or perhaps I did not learn about such integrity from him, perhaps I still have to learn that lesson, but at the very least I saw the living example of a man who had chosen to stand strongly against the tide of greed and desperation which consumes the lives of most of us on the planet, and to let the world carve its own path to its own destruction while he forged on alone in the night with an irrevocable force and conviction to never join in on the looting and loitering with the masses but instead to set to bailing out the sinking ship while everyone else was busy pissing into the hold.

It was back a few years, when I arrived for the first time in Sitka, that beautiful little Alaskan town surrounded by snow-capped mountains and islands leading out to sea; a vibrant little oasis of charm and personality standing out like a flagship on the magnificent outer coast of the panhandle. But I arrived there as adrift in life as a piece of flotsam thrown overboard by foreign fishermen which then bobs about aimlessly in the indifferent swells of the great Pacific before being cast up on shore as a chunk of refuse belonging to a different people from a different land, and even they don't want it. These were my lost and existential days of nomadic rambling, when nothing mattered but to keep going and going and pretend that I hadn't lost what I had lost and that I was going to find what I never found back then, which is to say- peace.

I had ferried down from Skagway after working a short contract at the Whitehorse fish hatchery, clipping the adipose fins off of six-thousand salmon fry during the day, while my female co-worker bush-hags held outlandish belching contests, and then I would spend the night drowning my estrangement to life in pints of stale beer at one of the town's many ignominious blues bars during the evening. Day and night it was culture at its finest, let me tell you.

Anyway, I ended up in Sitka as less a part of the earth than I had ever been in the past and took on serendipitous employment with Ed's two-man kayak operation, where I would end up doing all manner of things including guiding, instructing, selling, purchasing and running the show one month while Ed was away on other business. Mostly though I found myself for two summers working alongside a man who in my mind came to embody a paradoxical hybridization of the Buddha and Robin Hood; a man who's intransigent honesty, intent, and maturity of soul has remained unparalleled by any other, ever since our time together.

Ed came to Sitka as a young man to work for the town's main employer, the pulp mill, but upon completing his agreed-upon one year contract, and having seen the reality behind that rapacious and unconscious industry, he promptly quit, turned on his heels, and became the town pariah, a traitor, intent on preserving what was left of the surrounding forest and shutting down that gigantic, belching cyst forever.

It was a vicious battle and Ed's existence was threatened and impeded on more than one occasion, but in the end his sedulous conviction and uncompromising conscience would become the pivotal stroke in closing down the pernicious scourge.

I came upon him a few years after all of this was finished, by which time he had become the unassuming epicenter of the environmental movement in Alaska. His office was the control room of sedition and attack, filled from floor to ceiling with newspaper clippings, government documents, legal texts,

and conservation periodicals. It was a sight to behold the inner passion of this individual, manifested in his nature-lover's Sorbonne of the day.

As well as this monumental aspect of his character, Ed was also an innovative computer programmer, engineer, house builder, paddling equipment designer, and perhaps the most knowledgeable and honest businessman ever to tangle in the world of industry. It was quite a tremendous apprenticeship which I underwent those months we had together, for, along with all of the knowledge and skills I gained from his expertise, it was his character- and perhaps his character alone- which allowed me to exist with one foot in the world and the other dangling out in the chaotic ether.

I say his 'character', although I am not certain how well that limited word describes his characterless existence. To be sure he had qualities, idiosyncrasies, and imperfections, but there was a purified emptiness about him which was unmistakable- a vast, inhuman, impenetrable depth lying like a bottomless ocean right behind the unflinching pupils of his deep brown eyes. It was as if no one of any describable personality existed within him; no little ego waiting impatiently for recognition or applause, no little cares or needs or wants directing his every move, no little self struggling to prove or express itself to the rest of the world. He seemed absent of all the insecurities and petty needs which lie like bandits in the skulls of the greater part of the rest of humanity. A Buddha, as I said, as hollow, transparent, and unflappable as the sky.

He had reached that august neutrality in which the reception and rejection of other people's spirits blend into a singular, harmonious non-reaction- an inner event which not only brings great equanimity, but also pivots other individuals, upon meeting one such as he, back onto their own dualistic selves.

It was this particular, remarkable absence of the little qualities within him which made other people, who were still crippled by the shoddy weight of their infantile psyches, become uncomfortably self-conscious in his presence because, among other things, whatever lay behind his eyes would offer no support or acceptance to any ego's pathetic theatrics, and would only react to a true and natural gesture coming from within another, and since most of us have been built up on affectation, warped predispositions, and histrionics alone- he would react very little. And it was this lack of response, this vacuum of consciousness into which the unwitting person, caught in the void of Ed's limitless being, would fall that would begin the little uncomfortable quivers which come when you run into a mirror that offers no reflection. Or perhaps a perfect reflection.

Ed was a living piece of litmus paper, an acid test for fake persona's; a hollow canyon into which one could scream and scream but out of which would come nothing, not even the echo of their own voice, only the sense of falling ever further and further into the dark expanse of non-existence- a place where all sentient beings are horrified at the thought of going.

Ed was a finished product, a philosopher's stone, an individuated, accomplished, established, true and living aspect of the One.

And so it was in his presence and mentorship that I began, or perhaps continued, to whittle away at the false structure of my false being, slowly

carving away the learned responses, hidden conditionings, and trumped-up characteristics.

All this I can declare in retrospect, but back then I hardly knew what was going on except that all my games were over because I was in the presence of a master. I was being tempered in the purifying fire of his stainless consciousness. And I would even go so far as to say that Ed himself most likely had no clue of his own effect on others- that was how unaffected, sincere, and innocent he had become. I say innocent, but not docile. No, this was a man who could not be blown down by the putrid breaths of people who had only learned to parade their peacock feathers around but were really mere hatchlings scratching about in the turf. Ed was indeed as innocent as a virgin, but he was also as powerful as a bull. A gentle, unobtrusive, relentless man, fighting the good fight in a land of people who grabbed for anything that appeared as if it could keep them from drowning and who still drowned nonetheless. A colossus of a man, hidden within a thin and wiry frame, carrying about on his shoulders the smoldering remains of a dying fire.

Looking back I wonder how worthy a neophyte I was- back then at the time in my life when I had been so ripped to shreds by the world's futility and my own insatiable contemplations, and what was left of me had been scattered into the winds, until I had no center in which to turn and confront and receive this marvelous specimen of humanity; I was on a path that had no direction, no footing, no mileposts nor ease. I was at a stage in my development which the alchemists of old might have called the *dissolutio*- the tearing down of the old self so that a new one can be rebuilt from the rubble within. And yet, that perhaps, more than anything else, was why Ed was in my life- because there was no more stable pole on earth than himself- a pole by which I could orient myself and hold myself to the ground.

There were times of slippage however, when I would be out guiding or instructing and in the middle of a sentence in which I was orating a paddle maneuver or explicating on a natural wonder to the impatient ears of customers or clients I would all of the sudden freeze, and there I would be looking out at them, and they looking in at me, and I looking in at myself, and a rift would form and widen within me and the distance back to earth seemed immeasurable and I could see the uncomfortable gestures beginning as the clients waited, wondering and worrying that perhaps their guide had become catatonic or had entered into a flashback or hallucination; and part of me would be struggling to make it back to earth, to continue on with the discourse and the life I was struggling to lead, and another part would be hovering off in the distant outskirts of existence, unconcerned, and coldly removed, watching the stop in the play from which I had become fully detached. But then, thankfully, the unasked-for, extemporaneous pauciloquium would abruptly end and I would come out of it and go on, and the bewildered clients would snap back into their interested and submissive roles and somehow I'd make it through that day, and the next day, and so on for two intense summers of life in the world without being in the world.

This is the type of occurrence I carried around with me like a carbuncle swelling inside my head which, every once in a while, released a septic load of disorientation out into my world. And yet I have no regrets over my

imperfections during those summers. I have no worry that, had I been more attentive or more together I would have received and taken a greater gift from Ed than I was capable at the time, for I have learned enough by now to know that you can't learn anything from another which you must in the end learn better from yourself, and you can't teach another what in the end they must learn better from their self. And in this sense we are all free from each other; free to pursue our own paths, find our own truths, and live our own lives, and if anyone tries to tell you different you can bet it's because they need something from you which they have neither the courage nor tenacity to get from themselves.

The one time I believe I struck the inner chords of Ed's immense spirit, albeit inadvertently, was on my last day of work when we were saying our goodbyes and I was handing him back my office key, which spurred me to remark, "Well, so now I am keyless again", which I was. It was that comment which sort of stopped Ed for a moment, as he stood there somewhat spellbound and perplexed, and then, with a hint of amazement- as if perhaps he had not heard me correctly- he inquired, "You mean you have no keys?" And I said no, I didn't own anything which had a door or a lock on it: no house, no office, no car, no mailbox, no storage locker.

As I was stating this I remembered how shocked my friend Rick also had been when he found out that same fact about my existence; he was shocked because he was toting about with him a heavy chain of the horrid devices. And it was the same with Ed, who now, for the first time I had ever seen, showed a hint of envy and admiration towards another. Oh, it wasn't a feeble, impotent form of schoolboy envy or admiration; it was his mature way of saying, "Well done man, now there's a worthwhile accomplishment."

We all come here to take our own tests, face our own trials, and have our own experiences, and no one can accomplish another's life for them. Such is the way of the growth of the spirit.

I learned this necessity often and always in my travels up and down the coast during my decade of wandering and growing. One such experience came while in Sitka, during this period of my unpredictable instability which I now see was unavoidable and caused largely by the unrelenting contemplations which hounded me unforgivingly about the all and the everything and my unrequited queries as to my proper role within it. I was endlessly seeking answers for which I did not even have the proper questions, and endlessly seeking destinations towards which I did not even know the way. But a time came during that summer when I would learn a lesson, a way of being, regarding the folly of my desperate seeking and probing and looking ahead- a lesson which would stick with me, and return again and again as I lost and refound it, in many ways, under many guises, but always with the same underlying message.

It came about on a kayaking trip I had decided to take alone down the outer coast of Baranof Island. It was no huge expedition or perilous venture, but it was undertaken as a personal quest to extend myself beyond the tiring round of thinking, drinking, working, contemplating, writing, and sleep. And I remember paddling out of Sitka a little timid, a little concerned about my abilities to handle the full-on coastal waters, but I headed out nonetheless and

pushed southward through the islets and reefs, away from all that had come to weigh upon me and which continued to carry only the pretense solidity.

It was a terrific first few days as I paddled below looming snow-capped peaks, and past gigantic rafts of lethargic sea otters that floated indifferently along in the swells. I have often said that if I had to come back to earth again as an animal- other than a free flying bird that is- I would return as a sea-otter, those Taoist priests of the water; I would spend a life of leisure and disconcern, floating in the swells alone, or entering into the pleasant orgy of the rafted community, and I'd eat urchin caviar all day, and watch the stars and make love all night.

Anyways, along with those otters, humpback whales flipped and flirted about during my trip, and wildflowers and eagles abounded in the earth and sky as I meandered southward. I landed my kayak for a while near a hot-spring, twenty miles or so down the coast, and soothed my bruised and broken spirit in the Mother's steam. It was a beautiful holiday from myself at the beginning of the trip, but soon enough I was back inside, back into the old, relentless brain, pondering over this or that, wondering what it was all about and where it was all headed and who was I to be a part of it, and why didn't I know who I was who was a part of it? I ended up camping on a lonely island and drinking a load of bad American beer and walking about aimlessly on shore without being able to still the chronic investigations which continued to plague me.

But then it happened- as all cries into the ether must eventually have their audience- that as I was paddling back up north a few days later, at no more peace than when I had left, and I could see the final cape looming off ahead of me, at which point I would turn north-east and head for home, that a shift in the weather occurred and a thick blanket of fog came whistling across the water and engulfed me completely, totally blocking out the world around me. The wind, waves, and swells were still minimal, so I continued on my course, heading into the mist in the direction I had already set. I paddled on for perhaps half an hour or so and then without recognizing the subtle movement of my consciousness, something altered within me, something sublime and yet incredibly profound; it came about because I could not see much further ahead than the bow of my boat, and so I had lost all onward vision and sense of destination, and what happened is that I realized that for the first time in my life I was not looking ahead- because I couldn't- I was doing nothing except what I was doing. I was paddling. There was no future, no outcome, no goal, no awaiting experience, there was only the kayak, the sea, and ...me. It is impossible to describe the magnificence of this sudden disentanglement which happened to me. In a goal-directed culture, in a time and accomplishment driven world, I had just fallen through the cracks. Throughout the entire course of my life up until that point I had always been looking ahead, always planning, always waiting for a goal or an answer to appear, always existing where I wasn't actually existing. And then the blinding mist of beingness descended all about me and I could see nothing ahead, plan nothing ahead, and expect nothing ahead. I was just being where I was being, being what I was being, and doing what I was doing, and nothing more. I was right where I was, and only there. As if I had set foot in the true present presence of existence for the very first time. I had attained to the absolute actuality, the bare-bones of beingness. And then I understood why Zen

practitioners spend their entire lives pursuing the now-time[14] of being. Yet I knew something better- that it could not be pursued, it could only be lived and allowed and you could not grab hold of it, you could only dance with it, become it, and let it go.

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nine

During my youth my father excelled at the self-created skill of being able to observe people in a passing crowd and invent names for these anonymous by-passers, which, after he had pointed them out and I had looked at the person, tended to suit them perfectly. Anyone passing by on the street, sitting nearby in a restaurant, theatre, or anywhere else in the great inglorious world of the *hoi polloi*, was the unconscious subject of my father's light-hearted and lucid pseudonyming, so to speak.

To him, Clem was the chubby tourist walking purposelessly about on a ferry; Boris and Hortense were the thoroughly benign and working-class, incognizant neighbours camped beside us one year. Orville was an uptight, perfectly manicured clerk at a convenience store. Zelda was the repressed, and embittered housewife doing chores on her front porch. It didn't matter what the person's name really was, it most likely couldn't have labelled them any better than my father's trained sociologist's keen eye, acutely witnessing the underlying essence beneath the obfuscating form.[15]

Which brings me to the Dumbrowskis. The Dumbrowskis were more of a fabled family to my father than an actuality; they were ever present, and yet never became more than potential. They existed in many guises, but never in reality. Wherever we lived, or travelled, my father would always claim that the Dumbrowski's were going to join us, or we would meet them somehow along the way. They were part of our life, part of the drama in which we were inextricably bound, though I never recall meeting a true Dumbrowski. And yet, given the Law of the Word, it was inevitable that this fantastic species would one day appear before me in the manifest.

I bring this up not for its nostalgic and anecdotal qualities alone, but because this produced one of those many occurrences, or hallmarks, as it were, in the growth of my soul- the little repetitions or oddities by which I began to intuit the magical, sublime livingness of God's theatre- and so, though I had never, in reality, met a Dumbrowski as a child, their mythical affinity to my being, due to my father's regular verbal incantations, would inevitably bring about their existence in the outward drama of my life.

It came to pass that on a rainy autumn day I was hitchhiking along a logging road on the Charlottes, planning to do some Chanterelle picking so as to fill my pockets with some dough again, but suddenly I felt the need to turn around and head the other way. No doubt I had my own ideas about why I was doing this- the ego has an excuse for everything it does without ever humbly admitting that God does everything- but regardless, soon after spinning about

and thumbing my way back out of the forest, a beat up old pickup-truck came along and I was given a ride by a woman who would in the end drive me right to the mushroom fields and who, it turned out, was the cousin of a good buddy of mine from back east- four thousand kilometres away- and she had grown up in the town right next to mine. Things like this are intended, it is only for us to empty ourselves into the whole and believe. Had I not turned around she would not have picked me up, and had she not picked me up the rest would not have followed.

What happened is that we drove to a mushroom-picking camp and I set up my tarp and went to sleep. The next day I met a hippy couple who were from my home province as well, and who, soon afterward chose to camp right beside my dilapidated tarp, and their name, of course, was …the Dumbrowskis.

Although these two folks were far from the vulgar, proletariat, dim-witted mob that I had come to associate with the name, I took this event to mean that I was finally at one with a part of my destiny. And no doubt I was. The Dumbrowskis turned out to be absolutely kindred spirits of mine. Our minds met and agreed upon some of the subtlest matters. As well, soon after our meeting I was to remember having had a dream of the woman Dumbrowski, perhaps a week earlier, before they camped near me- a dream that I could not piece together at the time, but recognized her in it after we had spent some time together.

It was a portentous message, and after a few weeks of spiritual exchange, our time together would culminate with her and I alone, standing together by the side of a lake and receiving the rainbow covenant, signalling the fulfilment of our communion.

In relating this I must continue to argue that each of us must accept their own reality, that each person's reality belongs to that person and that person alone, and that we are not born to agree, we are born to see. And I was beginning to see that once I had disentangled myself from the multifarious layers of phantasmagoria and inertia, I came closer and closer to the inside of the circle, and at that point everything that happened belonged to me, and only me, and I had to believe in it or else I might have to die like all the rest, and start all over again.

I believed, and not long after these events occurred I had another dream in which I was wearing two coats- one inner and one outer- and they were almost perfectly matched. That is when I began to recognise the old axiom that "what is outside of us is a reflection of what is inside", and *vice versa*. The spiral was beginning to tighten.[16]

It was not long after this that I also began having dreams of my *anima* growing older. There she was, painted across the canvas of my subconscious, the same Sandy whom I had found and lost years earlier, and yet somehow she was different, as if she had an older sister whom had now taken to the stage in my dreams. I couldn't, for the life of me, interpret their symbolic meaning; not, that is, until a few weeks later.

What happened is that after my service was complete on the Charlottes I was given the sublime directive that it was time to bug out and head south again, so I jumped on a ferry, arrived in Vancouver, and within a few short hours ran smack into the living incarnation of this older Sandy- the very one I

had been dreaming of. Instantly I was in love. That was when things began truly coming together, and truly falling apart.

When things like this happen to you, you can bet you're on a cosmic course piloted by the unknown captain directing your ineffable craft into the infinite beyond. You know you're a part of something so big and inexplicable, so unique, and so unprecedented, that try as you might to let others in on what is happening to you, you don't really even have a clue yourself, and the best thing to do then is to just soften your gaze, open your heart, loosen your expectations, and let it all happen.

This is exactly what I didn't do. No, poor me, a most unlikely candidate for such a privileged cosmic convergence; I, like a starving man at a banquet, stepped up to bat without an inkling of how to play the game. And I swung, and swung, and swung at a ball which was never meant for me to hit. And when finally I had struck out I was miserable. Which is to say, for the second time in this crazy lifetime of mine, I had found, loved, and lost my *anima* in the flesh. And when absurdities like that happens to you, you curse God for making a scapegoat out of you and for allowing all the imperfections and indifference in the antiquated bureaucracy of the heavens to screw the whole show up. And yet it wasn't the heavens that were screwy, it was me.

That is- as I finally figured out, through all my whining, and gnashing, and writhing about- I had entered the wrong door of the castle; I had mistaken a sister for a mate. Apparently, as the powers were none too lax in reminding me, I was only supposed to knock on this elder Sandy's door and say hello, but in my misguided habit of taking the world for the way men see it, I went right for the bedroom and forgot the rest of the home. And that is when I learned a very hard, very important lesson: what God does not want to have happen, does not happen. Laugh or scoff as you might, but the force which runs about and through us, and makes all things which are made, has greater power to orchestrate the factors in our lives, and make sure that the greater event holds sway, than any of our little egos are wont to allow. I met this absolute force of will, and it stopped me and caused me more grief than I am prepared to relate. And that is all there is to it.

Looking back I can chuckle at my rage towards the heavens then, at my clenched fist cussing and calling down the maleficent force which had set me up. But I had to find, as we all must find, that what we most desire is not necessarily what is best for us. And I had to go crazy with sadness and mad with confusion over this love lost as quickly as it was found, and I had to leave Vancouver again for a spell and head down to Northern California, and I had to wander amongst the giant redwoods, alone and feeble and distraught because God was against me, and I had to walk and walk and walk and drink myself away in a little town with a little bar called, interestingly enough, 'Jack's Pub', and then I had to walk and walk and walk again until finally coming to peace in a tiny motel in the middle of nowhere; a motel, which, like myself, had a few lights missing, and, laughingly enough, would spell out the message of my imperfect gaze in bold and unquestionable terms, for, as I came upon this little motel in the woods, as the sun went out dying into the Pacific, there, on the last day of my insane pilgrimage, lay the bold and clear letters spelling out both the place I would lay my head that night, and the consequence of my own myopia:

JACK'S MOTE_. Some lights had gone out on the sign, and the L was missing in the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God, and the word became flesh and descended into my darkness, extracting the beam from my spirit eye, and I went to sleep that night and awoke a less bitter and a stronger man for my errors.

That loss, which drove me practically insane, led, however, on to a further, inward realization, as loss always does if you are strong enough to flip the coin and take what you're given into the welcoming wind. Many hard lessons which I learned through loss and struggle in my outward life became valuable insights which would expedite my inner process later on.

Regret is a matter of perspective; to have regret is to not yet know that every external failure is leading to an internal victory. Regret is the interstice of time in between the two. For would a relief pitcher in baseball, who, when warming up in the bullpen before being called into the game, and failing to throw a single strike in a hundred attempts- would that pitcher, when finally on the mound and throwing strike after strike, and in the end winning the game for the team, would he later sit alone, sombrely regretting his errant attempts while warming up? I think not.

The pain and confusion I suffered when my elder *anima* withdrew from me- or was withdrawn from me by the force of the law, so to speak- after our brief but intense love affair, which caused me in the end to condemn and curse the bumbling bureaucrats in heaven, and their seemingly pernicious intervention, would in the end provide a lesson which would later quicken my internal movement from the sacred marriage of the microcosm, to that of the macrocosm- which is an event that is, as always, obscure, and sublime, and not so easily delineated as words might make it seem. For it was during the loss and aftermath of this physical relation that I was given dreams and understandings telling me that she was not the correct partner for me- that another woman, whose soul was more suited to the destiny of my own, had already been sighted and chosen and that I needed only to be patient- a characteristic which was seemingly absent from my psychological makeup at the time- throughout it all, and the great plan would come to fruition. Needless to say that despite my initial disparaging remarks to the firmament, and my vocal ingratitude, the prophesied relationship eventually occurred and the chosen woman became an essential aspect in the furthering of my heart and spirit, which is to say, she was the one who became my *soror mystica*, as mentioned earlier. And so once again I could only throw up my arms in bewildered hallelujahs and wait for the next test to arise, as they are wont to do on the awkward path of the hapless chela.

Anyway, it was largely due to this outward scenario which I have just described that, a while later, near the end of a process which culminates a certain period of the inner work, I had taken another caretaking position and was looking after some cabins, boats, ducks, and chickens in the remote, untouched wilderness of the southern Charlottes, but this time I was completely alone for a month of psychic involution and communion with the land. Furthermore I had just recently learned to descend my microcosmic consciousness- my self- into my microcosmic being- my body-, thus finally enjoying the ecstatic union of spirit and flesh- of the male and female aspects of my own being; aspects which

had been becoming more individually apparent and more conscious of their uniqueness, and therefore more capable of recognizing each other and uniting.

And so, projecting my non-being into the flesh of being I could bring forth a sort of peaceful union which is only possible once the two polar opposites are separated unto themselves and then reunited. It was as if an internal union was taking place which brought about a tranquillity and sense of well being which I had never experienced in the previous years of my exhilarating ride from plateau to valley and back up again on the indefatigable roller-coaster of existence.

And so, continuing on with this procedure, it happened one night in a dream that these two halves- the male and the female- came together and I could see that they were vibrating at very different frequencies, in altogether disparate patterns, but as the two bodies merged into one, the frequencies blended, creating a new harmony, a harmony which would have been impossible to achieve for either of them left on their own.

An electric explosion from this union awoke me as the energy shot about disentangling itself. At that point the complete and everlasting union had not come to pass, but I was given to understand the magic and beauty of this internal marriage- the *mysterium coniunctionis*, or chemical wedding- by which the one becomes two and then the two merge back into a wholly new one. The next night Venus came to me in a dream and said that from the union the night before the mystical child would be born.[17]

This ethereal coming-together is symbolically similar to the courting ritual of eagles, in which the two flirting birds will fly high up into the air, then grab hold of each other, stall in their ascent, and then plummet downward, grappling and wrestling with each other and spinning about in a mad, tumbling descent- which is the oddest form of foreplay I've ever seen- and then break apart before hitting the turf, only to fly back up again and have another tussle with each other's loins. I say that the spirit and soul join in a similar fashion, as they grapple while descending towards the ascending flesh, in the perilous mating of essence and form.

To be sure, the event of my own inner coming-together complicated my efforts to feed the chickens and bail out the boats which I was caretaking- it is tough to rocket off into space and also take out the garbage- but it is always essential to stay somewhat grounded, lest the lightning come down and incinerate the electrodes.

And so I kept on with my duties, minimal as they were, and kept on walking amongst, and living with and loving the Earth, and let the process run on its own- in the darkly catalysed body- inalterable speed, as it is intended to do, for I have found that many problems come simply by inhibiting a natural movement which, if allowed, will progress along on its unconstrained way.

Thus it happened that, as quickly as in the manifest event earlier- when my elder *anima* and sister on the Tree of Life and I were parted, and I was left to drift and then to be led to the intended union- I again felt the greater Self divide the male and female halves of my microcosmic, inner self again. This caused a certain level of anxiety and confusion, to be sure, but it was because of the previous experience- of the coming together and then the taking apart- that I relaxed and listened and realized that if I surrendered to the Self (as if there was

an option) an even greater union might occur- the marriage of the Macrocosmic Consciousness, the Father, with the Macrocosmic Body, the Mother Earth.

It is as if the lower union had to be temporarily divided so that the higher selves could meet. For true wholeness does not exist within the microcosm, because only the macrocosm is whole, because it is the *whole* thing.

I once read in an esoteric text- the kind that falls into your hands with indescribable synchronicity, right at the time your path has become profound and confusing- that, in occult circles, it is considered the second greatest union to mate with one's mystical sister, and the highest union to mate with one's mystical mother.

I suppose this is what symbolically happened to me both times- that initially I had so desired the first option, that I could not see anything else, and so I had to be grabbed from above and taken off course so that I would not bungle my highest destiny and mate with a Sister, instead of The Mother.

It is interesting to note that my *soror* belongs to the spiritual archetype of my biological mother as well. But my *soror* was much more than even that. Much, much more, to the point where I realized that in her I had met myself- inverted and flipped about in the warping mirrors and vortices of the ether perhaps, but she was me, and I was her; that is, we were the same being, only reflected through the cosmos in a different way; we were 'twin souls' as the term is known in esoteric circles. Thus, being in relationship with her created a convergence of aspects I had never read nor heard about: a *soror mystica*, who belonged to my mother's archetype, and who was my other self, and also my lover.

And who, in the history of the occult world, could have imagined such an implausible and irregular happening?

Anyway, the marriage of the Father and Mother within me would not come to complete fulfilment on that trip either. There were still some things to work out, one which would take me to the other side of the earth, and to another place where the two cosmic Parents had gone to war thousands of years ago, and were now attempting to reunite. But that's another tale altogether.

It was also during this care-taking and monastic stint, down in the southern wilderness of the Charlottes- which was the single longest duration I had yet spent alone, in total isolation- that so much had been cleared out and fell away from me that my insides felt as if a giant psychic enema had been gushing in and washing things out for weeks, and taking all the shit inside me with it, so that when I lay down in bed at night, before drifting off to sleep, I would fall further and further away from identity until I left the orbit of my little existence and entered into the vast space of consciousness which exists within each of us, and there, with an adroit non-effort, I would negate myself and vanish completely, and all that would remain was the living space of the Self behind the self, which was my true Self.

Finally, my true Self, the one who I was beneath it all. And by returning to *It* the dam between non-being and being broke open, and the lifeblood of divine energy came rushing out of the space, and into the body, exciting and rejuvenating the connection between them again.

In order for this to happen I had to completely forget about myself, to evict any idea of who I was or whatever compelled me. I had to become as small as a tiny flame and then blow myself out. Only then did my Godself wash through me, unimpeded, and the contiguous ocean fell into the tiny drop that was me.

In doing so I found, as I disappeared from within myself, another *I* which was also me. It emerged and encompassed me, and the soft electric energy of the larger dimension would pour down, upon, and through me as the first I regained itself without losing the second *I* which was surrounding it and all else; I am inside *I*, self within Self, body immersed in consciousness, a presence within a presence, and both of them are me. And the energy poured forth like this until *I* fell asleep, or fell back into identity, whichever dream world came first

This was a tremendous rite, one which had been hovering seemingly far out of reach from the moment I started my inward pursuit, a decade earlier. Back then I had gotten up and going before I knew where, or why, or who, or how, or what was happening. I was up and going and running from not-God to God, and back and forth, on and on through all the merciless stages in between. Flailing and fighting, struggling, loving, laughing, stumbling, squirming, wondering, asking, listening, surrendering, and then back up and flailing again. At first I was a madman, then a saint, a liar, a preacher, a thief, a soldier, a hero, a loser, a servant, a tyrant, a victim, a fool. I was up and at it, and going through the howling darkness and glee, through the gratitude and contempt and worship and spit. I was a part of it, none of it, no one, some one, everyone, and all. I was never sure and always certain. I couldn't give in and I couldn't go on. How it came to be so I had no clue. I couldn't start it nor stop it nor join in. It happened without me participating and it happened because of me. In between God and not-god I loved and hurt and lost and grew and shrank, and was built and broken in the stress and calm of non-meaning.

It's a hapless lot of incalculable madness, this happening.

When everything begins to go right and wrong simultaneously, and you lose the ability to tell the difference, for there is no difference, and either way you don't really give a damn, because life has flopped up and down on you so many times that, like a person on a crazy ride at the country fair, you lose the intensity, the fear, and the joy of the event, and instead sink carelessly back into yourself; for you have become psychologically gimbaled and unable to lose your sense of equilibrium.

When you have lived existence out completely in its manifold directions- when you have thought and fought, pondered and wondered, yearned and wept, hated and loved- all to their furthest extent, and yet you are still unbroken, still earnest, still alive and mad for life, still strong and fighting, still driven on and on like that wild hare fleeing the unforgiving hounds- the most unexpected shift eventually occurs; the self dissolves in the vision of its limitless dimensions, the mind loses meaning, the heart loses loss, and the whole swollen mess of life literally flips inside out, and upside down- as occasionally it seems wont to do- and everything changes at once, yet nothing has changed.

When pain is no longer painful, joy no longer a thrill, life no longer a teeter-totter between estranged opposites, then the leveling-off is well under

way. That is when you become dangerous and necessary to the world, because you are outside of its struggles; you become a random particle, divorced from the chains and rules of life, and so you are both needed and distrusted, admired and despised, and praised and blamed, because other people's troubles are no longer your troubles, their taboos no longer your taboos, their sorrows are no longer painful, and their euphorias mere trifles to you. You are beyond their sufferings, concerns, and desires, and therefore all powerful and yet powerless amongst them.

Always thundering forward like this, it has to go on and on, all the while stopping without ending, because everything is always ending and nothing ever ends, though it only comes back to us when we let it go, because it was ours to begin with and we only had to stop chasing it in order to be caught. That is when God and not-God happen together. The wheel grows wings. The lion lies down with the lamb. One eye weeps from laughter, the other from pain. And suddenly you're always separate and never apart. You have become what nobody told you you were. And it is finished.

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ten

Heading back down the coast late that November, I had caught a ride on a black-cod fishing boat and we were soon running through the remnants of a hurricane and being thrashed about in thirty-foot seas. That was when I understood why Christ had often chosen fishermen as his disciples- because fishermen are inherently the brave, hearty, storm-tempered souls who every day plumb the hidden depths to gain sustenance for the masses, while at the same floating deftly upon the furious gale of life.

To be a fisherman on the wild west coast is to learn about life quickly via the path of hardship, loneliness, camaraderie, endurance, and faith. I have found no other occupation on earth in which I have met so many saints in the making.

The boat I was on was captained by a truly marvelous fellow, Doug, who had been orphaned from his wayward parents as a small child, and then divided from the rest of his siblings when they were sent to foster homes. He had seen every sort of tragedy and sorrow by the time he reached puberty, and to this day you can hear the tremor in his voice when he speaks of the injustices which he grew up with and witnessed as a young boy. Somehow, though, his spirit refused to be broken, and he matured with an understanding of how *not* to treat others. Which is to say, he had learned, as it were, the noble quality of *respect*. And that means he had the mature and humble ability to see life through another's eyes, to re-*spectate* existence from their standpoint, which is a rare and admirable characteristic in the self-centered culture of the west.

One of his crewmembers, Fred, who had worked for him driving trucks earlier in life, related to me a very telling story of Doug's character. Fred said that one day he was driving down a logging road he had been told not to go on

because of its hazards, but went anyway to save time, disregarding Doug's directive, and ended up rolling the truck over on its side on a steep embankment. Not only was Fred ashamed, but he assumed he was out of a job and most likely in debt for a huge repair bill. He called up the boss and contritely told him of his offense and of the crash, expecting to get what was coming to him. Not from this Doug though. Oh, he was tough when he needed to be tough, but when someone came to him with sincerity and intent to make things right, he was as forgiving as God. I relate this short anecdote largely so as to share the first sentence which Doug said to Fred upon hearing of his error and accident. Doug, who had been through hell and had come out of it of his own accord, and was trying now to build up some heaven on earth, simply said: "If that's the worst thing that happens to me today, I'm gonna have a great day." Then he hired a front-end loader, drove it up to the site of the crash, and skillfully lifted the truck back upright. And that was that.

Doug's fishing crew was composed of a handful of hard-working, caring, brotherly tough guys. A true family of men who believed in their father, who believed in them, and therefore the collective spirit was as strong as a bundle of sticks bound unbreakably together. It was a true metaphor for Christ with his disciples, out on the infinite and lonely sea of the spirit, aiding and caring for one another, and not a Judas amongst them.

I sat out the storm in the lower galley, fighting off seasickness, and fell to admiring the love and endurance of these ten young men and their seasoned pilot.

To be far off shore in a howling tempest is to be on another planet, in a different solar system, and to learn to depend on no one but yourself and those who you call your mates. And that is to learn how to live as one.

The sea was so rough, and I was so green, that the fellows had apparently taken up a friendly bet regarding whether I would empty the contents of my stomach that night or not. One of the guys even went so far as to put the movie *The Perfect Storm* on the video in the galley, in a jocular attempt to push my limits and seal his victory. He told me that the fishing boat depicted in the movie had encountered the confluence of three separate weather fronts, which had created a chaos in the seas that was unheard of in the past. And then he told me that we were heading into a section of the open coast where the meteorologists had predicted four fronts were to converge within thirty-six hours, and that he and the others were hoping to quickly pull up all the fishing gear they had left out there a few days earlier, secure the catch, and then get the boat out of there before it hit. That was some unsettling news for me. So I sat there with one eye watching a raging storm on the television, and the other eye looking out the window at another tempest, while the waves crashed over the deck of the boat and the winds howled in both scenarios, and I was wondering if I had finally come to the epicenter of my existence, where fantasy and reality met, where the show and the audience merged together, and the Maker and Made became One.

If that was the case, I thought, then I'm going to make sure this show ends without tragedy, and, surely enough, we rode out that first storm, and the four incoming fronts serendipitously never manifested, and the next day the lads set to work hauling their gear and harvesting their catch, while I sat up on the

top of the boat, watching sperm whales feed on the offal, as huge albatrosses circled all about, and tiny rainbows, off in the distance, came and went between the clouds and the horizon.

That trip on the fishing boat was a valuable lesson on the hardships met, and the labor required to be an offshore fisherman, or a fisher of men, as it were.

It takes me back to a vanguard meeting some years back, the fallout of which may account for much of which transpired within me, and perhaps was responsible for many of the experiences which I have been relating throughout this book.

While heading up to Alaska for my second summer of work, perhaps three years prior to that ride on the fishing boat, I met for the first time in my life a 'Christed' individual. At least this is what Tom, the crab fisherman, said humbly of himself, and I have no reason to doubt him. Tom was an incredibly soft and gentle, divorced father of three. He openly described the ordeals he had undergone over the past few years during his unexpected and unasked-for relentless chastening. He had lost everything dear to him: his wife and family, and the respect of those around him. At one point near the end of his trials he was sitting alone in his empty house and he could feel the Spirit enter and suddenly the walls of his house caught fire and he knew that he was being tested- the final test- and so he laid down on the floor and understood that he could not get up until he was told to go. Call this psychosis or faith, what you will, but he stayed in the house until the flames were all about and finally the Voice came and told him to leave, and he left. Soon afterward he was incarcerated in a mental hospital because he refused to lie about what had happened, and the authorities did not believe his story, suspecting him of arson, which is understandable, I suppose. Apparently there was one doctor in the asylum, however, who recognized Tom for who he truly was and had attempted to get him released, stating that he had undergone a spiritual transformation, but the ignoble medicine men in charge had not the eyes to see, and so kept him in bondage.

When I met Tom he was on the lamb, so to speak. He had been released on his own recognizance, as long as he would continue to take the mind-altering drugs prescribed for his 'condition', which he didn't, and so the hired guns were after him.

I spent only a day and a half with him but it was an eye-opening event, for he told me of many of the inward incidents which had happened to him along the way, most of which he had no clue nor understanding about, for he had grown up dyslectic and could hardly read. It was only after his crown-chakra had blown off, as he says, that he began struggling through books and texts to understand more of what was happening.

I say it was interesting, and most likely destined, for me to meet him, because from then on I had a living example of one who had been grabbed by God, beaten down, and then raised back up, and it was a meeting I was going to recall a while later, as the Spirit and I had our own wrestling match which I was destined to lose.

It was a number of months after this, after I had worked my summer in Sitka and come back down south. I was hiding away from the world for a month or so at a buddy's place in Victoria, while he was off somewhere else on the globe, and I had been making my rounds at the pubs, wandering around in blessed anonymity, and taking in the city's exemplar respect for fiddle music. And then one afternoon I found myself sitting on the couch in the living room in a bit of a reverie and daze- as I was habitually falling into about this time- and suddenly I heard a voice which said: "Give me an opening and I will come in." And at that moment I knew it was Christ's voice, the one who came before me, who conquered life and death, and who now roams about in the ether as a guide to all those who would choose to be free. Jesus the Christed one, the alpha male, and omega female.

I was around thirty-one years old at the time, just about the age in which Christ had begun his ministry. And though at that moment I had no clue how to create that necessary 'opening', I knew, at least, that I had to leave the world behind again so as to make it happen.

And so back I went again, back to the coast, to Flores Island, out from the ways of death and destruction, out again, alone again, to find some way to make that opening and let the Man come in. And I say that I had been out there for only a few days when, walking along the beach, I could suddenly sense another person with me, beside me, in me, all around me, I am not sure but I am sure that I was not alone and I am also sure that I have never been as alone since then as I had been previously in my life. Let the Pharisees, critics, and heathens have their say, but when you, of no talent nor ability of your own, find yourself walking with your hand in the hand of the man who rules the water, the other way of life is now done with forever.

Oh, perhaps life itself becomes no more cheery than before, no more easy, no more full of understanding, confidence, or peace, but one thing has changed forever- your days of walking this earth as the loneliest person alive are finished, and in another sense, they have only just begun. And that is no small thing.

I relate this now, near the end of the book, to give retrospect to the trials, failures, and successes I have documented throughout. Though I know not what parts of my life were altered by the Christ event, I know many must have been.

However, after that first opening it would be yet a long time before that new seed was to take root, grow up, and become large enough for the birds to come and nest within. It would be a long time before I realized how the spirit which lives in all things takes your soul over when you let it, and fertilizes the young shoot, and when it is grown and finally blossoms, it cuts you off at the roots and shows you how to fly.

It would be a slow and awkward period for me, as I learned to understand how the Body is spread all over the earth, incomplete and fragmented, and crying out for its missing members, and only those organs which have become living vehicles of the whole can move about and reconnect the amputated limbs. And no one knows but the master planner where that will be done, how long it will take, or what will be needed to stop the incessant bleeding.

And so I had to relinquish myself to the extent that I was capable back then, had to cut all ties which bound me to others, had to listen for the call, or receive the dream, and ...I had to follow. I had to follow not knowing why I was going where I was headed, but knowing that there was someone who did.

When this type of irregular and sublime event occurs, and the concomitant duties which follow befall you, others begin to wonder about your life, to question why you are going somewhere, or doing or not doing some such thing. And the biggest problem is that ...you have no answer.

My patented response was, "I'm following the spirit." But what that means to one whom is not following it I have no clue; I came to imagine that to them it meant- "I'm lost in a fantasy of make-believe and confusion and I can't get out." And yet when it came right down to it, and I'd speak with another about the essential aspects of this mysterious life we are granted, occasionally the tables would turn, and we would meet in that unencumbered place beyond only what can be seen.

I make no claims here for myself. I am only speaking my own truth, in my own voice, because I must; I am the only one who can say what I have seen, and yet I am not that one either, for the Self inhabits the self in all of us, and only when we abandon all sense of possession and accomplishment do we realize the one who does what is done.

To follow the call of the spirit is to lose and gain without choice, because you are no longer the chooser.

Jesus carried the Christ to earth, and left it for men to toss about like a hot potato which some will drop or throw to another instantly, and a few will hold on and carry as far as they can go.

It's as if you're handed a ball and you run with it, not because you know where the goal is, but because you're being chased, and because there's no one yet around to hand it off to, nor are there any fans, not even a referee. All you know is that you must carry it as far as you can before being caught and tackled. You're cornered at one moment, and then with a quick move you're out in the open and running free. You're tired, scared, and mad as hell. The field goes on and on and the game never finishes. Only you do.

In this we are all less like Jesus, and more like Simon of Cyrene- who carried the cross for a while, only to hand it back in the end. Yet the Christ may be invited into oneself, and is elevated in priority whenever a person, with absolute sincerity, acceptance, and courage, utters the divine fiat, "Thy will be done." Then the Christ is the one within who mercilessly takes all the rest away from you. Christ is the destroyer, the emancipator, the ruthless madman who comes after you until you're finished. Don't let them kid you in Church, Christ will knock you down, beat you senseless, take everything you have, and burn it in an inward bonfire. Your only hope at that point is to get away, which you never will. In fact, there is no hope, because Christ takes every hope away. You can only lie down, and stay down. You are finished.

Oh how I laugh now at the gentle Christ of our sleepy churchgoers. What a romantic heap of stool. The warm, cuddly Lamb of God- bah! What a ruse. Christ is like a wild and mad wolf at your heals. He is a murderer, and you are his victim. He will kill the lie inside of you with merciless love. Oh, the truth will set you free indeed, but first it must destroy you.

There is no soothing balm which comes to anoint your wounds in the night, but only the scalding flame itself, and you are the kindling. The chastening will not end but in your own death's death. Thus perhaps it is that this violence comes out of love, but let me tell you- it is violence, make no mistake about it.

When the Man comes for you, it is the most torturous blessing you might ever receive.

To be blessed is to be given what you have barely the ability to take. To be blessed is to be shown the way, and yet be afraid to follow. To be blessed is to rage against the merciful benevolence which sustains you, and to have bestowed upon you what you are not always grateful for accepting. To be blessed is to be humbled because you have what you did not ask for- the burden of a privilege you cannot imagine how to use.

To be baptized is to be shown who you are. To know who you are is to be who you are, and when you know who you are, even if the whole world were to rise up with judgment against you it would feel as if naught but a light breeze rustling through some distant trees. For after we have been baptized in water and spirit, and have carried our own cross and died between two thieves on the lonely mountain of the world's pain, that is when we are resurrected and brought back, and it is then that we will refuse to die again for others, and we will begin to live Life itself for the very first time.

To that end I say, while the dead are burying the dead, let the living exhume their lives.

When finally the chastening is complete, it is through the eyes that God meets God, and thus grows closer and closer to the remembrance of oneness. The soul now serves a greater plan than it can fathom, and so must stop asking "why? why must I leave? why must I stay? why must I lose and gain and lose again?" The Christ is a role in which the script is taken away from you, and you must wander from stage to stage, with no idea of what part you must play next, nor what you will have to say, nor when you will be finished and told to head on to another.

That is when life takes on a flowing foreignness to it, because what you do and where you go no longer belong to you, because that is your role- to have none. And therefore you are as if on-call, and ready to take on any role in the drama, if only to help see it through to its end. You become the non-existent middle ground between Heaven and Earth; the Ghost through which the Host prepares the banquet. For the Christ is ever crucified, rising at the center and zenith of our pyramidical consciousness, and thus dragging upward, as if attached to a giant sheet, the rest of the laboring cosmos.

Here we must toss aside all judgment. Here we forsake both good and bad, for, as it is said, God alone is good.[18] Whether a person serves their Christ self or their villain, they will still be a profane mix of good and bad, and only the mist of hubris will convince them otherwise.

Let no man or woman confuse themselves with their roles. There is no person who is Christ, there is only the Christ which one is given to wear like all other costumes until one is tired of it- tired of taking on other people's karma, other people's sin, and other people's lack of intent to straighten out their own

bent lives- which is that station of the cross where Jesus had said “What have I to do with thee?”, and his apathy finally set him free. For eventually even the Christ aspect of the individual, like all others, must die and be reabsorbed into the One- the microcosm must evaporate and rise into the macrocosm- if the person is to lose identity with the separate self, and become the impersonal Self. For absolute union with the All is impossible if the yogin or yogini maintains any thought of separative existence from the rest.[19]

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eleven

In every one of us there is an angel dying. And yet all that is needed is a shift, an inversion, for at the furthest reaches of the ignorance which ensconces us, lie the antipodes of sorrow and ecstasy. We have dwelt in the former, dark end too long. Now we need only fight our way to the lost extreme, for these opposites are not actually opposed, but are the same thing, viewed from different directions.

Thus, when the walls and chains you are bound in finally show themselves plainly as webs of your own ignorant devising- that these arise from neither the Good, nor Evil, but from your own confusion- that is when you stop struggling to break away from false prisons, chuckle a bit at the lesson, genuflect for a moment or two, gape wildly with wonder at it all, and float calmly away without caring.

To explain this further is impossible, for explanation may comfort and console us, but it will never set us free, because freedom comes at the expense of understanding, of expectation, and of meaning. And to grow up in a world of explanation, and to long to be free, is to be born with shackles implanted inside of you, and to have to tear yourself apart into little pieces to get the manacles out. But what must be done must be done.

Such an overwhelming predominance of odd events happened to me that I began to take in the full and unbelievable drama, and thus to realize what was really going on- I was coming to the end of my karmic cycle, for reasons of which I cannot be certain, but to be sure the firmament had broken overhead, and the Spirit was surging forth, desperate to retake command of my being.

I had been spinning out there on the fabulous ride of the tumbling manifest; out on the whip of the disintegrating circumference, where everything comes and goes and no time to wait or you’ll miss a part of the show. But I could not stay out there forever. The gravity of my disparate parts began coalescing and cooling, and falling into the center from which there is no return, because there is no desire to return, because there is no desire, because nothing is missing.

One of the last of these fragments which I came to contain, was the long sought after flower of eternity- the Rose. The Rose is a particle from the Garden, brought down with mankind during the Fall. The Rose is the innocent,

guileless, virginal aspect within all of us, though occasionally it is fully manifested in the life of certain individuals more than others.

There was no specific one person who became the Rose in my life, for I met a number of true Roses, generally in doe-like, gentle, and inwardly beautiful men or women, whose spirits express that part of the Garden.

I believe that we all harbour this aspect in a precarious and hidden spot within ourselves. I say 'hidden' because to bring it forth without thorns is to send a sheep out to the wolves. For the Rose belongs more to Heaven than to Earth, and it is this precious aspect of life which is guarded and rarely exposed to the marauders.

And so I have no doubt why I was drawn to these sorts of people outwardly, and to Rose Bay itself, so often. For I had to finally meet the Rose within myself, and I needed to see it manifested out in front of me before I had a clear image of what it was that lay buried within.

Thus the Rose became a part of my inward life because it was a part of my outward life, or perhaps it is the other way around. No matter. I can say this about almost everyone I have ever met- that they were either manifested aspects of myself, which lay dormant or clouded within me until I met them in true and living colour, in the outward show of my inward life; or they were living aspects of my inner being which lay dormant externally, until I became them inwardly and then expressed them outwardly. Either way, the outer depends on the inner which depends on the outer. Oneness is duality.

It is like this for all of us, though at times there are certain opportunities afforded which allow life to provide the entire make-up of our inner beings, brought to us on the canvas of the world, thus aiding us towards completion.

And so, just as I had to encounter outwardly, in another person, the Adversary within me, the Shadow, Hero, Guide, Mercurius, Anima, Wanderer, Madman, Alien, Christ, Coward, and Fool, so also I had to meet and assimilate the Rose.[20]

Which is to say, I had to become absolutely innocent, and absolutely inviolable.

And so that autumn as I was heading back down to Gomorrah from the pure and beneficient islands, and I could sense the oncoming doom of the weeds- those psychic fiends- along with the rest of the city's effluvium, which in the past had so easily soaked in through my tender shell- having fallen asleep, I dreamt of a knight in black armour, and when I awoke I knew that the armour was for me to wear, and that the armour was …indifference. I knew then that I had been given the right to not care, to offend the offenders when necessary- to gird up my loins and let nobody through the portcullis who was not welcome in the castle. Which is to say, I had been given the order to be as cruel and unfeeling as ...God.

This was a turning point for me, because I had spent the last many years consciously breaking the walls down which separated me from others, from the spirit, and from the heavens. And now I was being told to build them back up again, so that I might walk back into Nineveh and survive the stoning. For, up until then, I had not been able to hold the inviolable space within myself because I had been rejecting the darkness required to defend it.

Now I had to become dark myself, and had to stop accepting people's slothful, chaotic, or vulgar ways, simply because they had allowed to happen to themselves what was happening, and which they had neither intent nor energy to transform, and therefore by my not accepting them, they were forced to accept themselves without my acceptance- and that was a greater gift, and a harder lesson, than my unconditional, courteous acceptance would have given.

It was a decree and consciousness shift which, to this day, I am still struggling to perfect- and that is: how to stay open to the sublime event, and yet have the walls necessary to protect myself from the dis-eased hordes. It is an art unlike any other, but I see now that it is an essential element of the psyche if the virgin soul is to live amongst the rapists.

It had been my temperate disposition within the world's malice and errors which had left me slow to wallow. I had been trapped and languid in the horrible pathos of the day. I had no composite tendencies, replete or inviting, which might have gathered me full into a fury. I had suffocated in the torpor of lies *because I had no anger*, not even for myself. And without anger there is no way out of this lovelessness. The only way out is to punch your way out, with a wrathful love as murderous as a mother has for her child in danger.

Love, violent love- that merciless, uncompromising mandate; you must love your own soul with an inviolable madness bent on nothing but freedom, or you will die softly in this world of courteous lies.

And if I now appear brave upon the turbulent waters, it is because I have found that I will no longer drown; because I learned to breathe below the surface of life, to sink into the mud like a frog in winter, and inhale osmotically through the pores of my numinous membrane. I learned how to die and be reborn every day, and so to remain strong in the battle. I learned how to retreat when I am out of bullets, and how to attack with a loaded gun; I learned how to yield and hide, burst forth and conquer, how to flex when the force would break me, and to hold firm when a hill can be won. I learned how to stop caring when things became futile, and how to care when life was prepared to grow in the sun.

I learned to forget the monstrosities called right or wrong. I learned not to search for happiness, truth, knowledge or meaning, but only for beauty and love. I learned not to fight the day, but to fly in the wind like an ethereal dove.

A dove, I learned to float over the earth like an indifferent dove. And I learned to fly towards nothing ...but beauty and love.

As such the Rose- the Rose with thorns- and many other characters came to exist within my consciousness, as parts of my fuller self, which was itself a part of a greater self, which was part of a greater self still perhaps, and so on, and by accumulating my completeness I came into the service of the Greater Vehicle, by which all my aspects will rise up with me at the end of time.

In the end we must all contain the whole world; we must take everyone in, give them shelter, devour them like food, digest their unique occurrence, and absorb them into ourselves. We must become everyone if we are to ever become ourselves. The walls of individuality must die, the shell of the scared chick must crack, and the little bird must screech, totter, fall, and fly, if ever it is to soar away one day, mate in another lost land with another infinity, build a nest, and bear another world of its own.

I dove and ascended, digested and expelled, grew and shrank, and gathered every pair of opposites into me before, like old Noah, I entered into the Ark of the Self. Then I rode out the deluge, landed back upon the stainless earth, and dispersed my seed across the insubstantial cosmos.

But to allow this to happen I had to keep letting go of the circumference, keep releasing my grip on the ride and allow the sense of falling and vertigo to overcome my frantic need to grab hold; to fall away from it all, over and over again, until the mass grew large enough to pull everything else into it, and that now warm and molten whole ...began to glow.

I had to toss my little self away and become nothing *and* all. I had to take others in, modify them, and be modified by them, assimilate them, and be assimilated by them, and then let them go.

I could not define myself if I was to engulf the Mystery. I could not deny life if I was to affirm the glory of being. I could not limit myself if I was to accept my eternal non-being. I could not contain only myself if I was to grow to contain the entire world.

If I had kept trying to be something that I no longer was, or kept looking for something that wasn't there, I would have gone mad. I had come from the sky and had no desire to accept life on earth, but I had to accept it. I had to include myself in all of it, or remain on the outside forever.

You see, people who are born of the earth need, oddly enough, less from life than those born of the sky. Because to be born of the sky means to come here with nothing, and therefore, like a refugee, to need everything. To come here from the sky means to need to be drunk with ecstasy, inspiration, wine, poetry, wonder, love, nature, or God, because to be here with naught but the sober profanity of mankind, is to waste the reason you came. And to deny this reality is to deny your very self. To live here without being ever intoxicated with some form of existence or another, is to be barren of both the sky and the earth, which is a horrible vacancy to endure, for that is all that is left- to endure. And so you have to learn either how to die, or how to live. Or both.

I found that to exist within all contradictions, is to learn to exist beyond them.

I realized this necessity because I had been rejecting all of life, but not in the way that a man rejects something- by knowing it is wrong for him, saying 'no, thank-you', and moving on towards what he truly desires. No, I had been rejecting the world like a spoiled child, throwing away the toys I had been given and then asking for more, and then throwing these away and so on. I had to learn to accept life and understand that it is a gift, and that one of the gifts is the right to reject the gifts, but only if it is done like a man who looks to heaven, thanks the giver, and yet says he is better off without them. Only then is rejection a form of acceptance, and the contradiction, which destroys life, is finished for good.

*

twelve

I have described these events in my life as they occurred and had effect upon me, and as I came to understand them within my limited scope, but I know also that what befell me was only partly a result of who I was and my individual destiny; it was also, perhaps largely, a function of the whole and therefore due, for the most part, to needs and reasons of which I am completely oblivious. This undivided show is so gigantic, so astounding, that I do not claim to know truly what my role in it has been, nor what it is all about. Though I do know that it is certainly about something.

What happened to me may have occurred because I am perhaps on the last round of my earthly incarnations and have needed to acquire all my missing fragments into one so as to become a circle and a whole. Or perhaps it was all due simply to my intent, which I formulated at a time when I did not understand the power of such a conviction- the intent to return to God-freedom and, if possible, to take as many others with me as I could. This may in fact have been the *modus operandi* behind every serendipitous encounter, every realization, every grace, and blessing bestowed upon me over time.

Or perhaps I was like one who comes down to earth for a brief spell as a lost particle from the other side, so as to inform others of a lost aspect of themselves, and also to retrieve their missing kin. Like one of those falling stars who so dazzle themselves in the passion of their ephemeral descent that they forget to put the breaks on, and to join into the realm of being. And yet I came to the consciousness of my imminent, destined melt-down, and fell only to the point of burning. That was when I grew wings, and, like the great Phoenixes of old, arose from my own ashes, but instead of flying off I simply glided down, landed upon this fair earth, and began singing my song. In doing so I slew the Death which had come for me, and brought to earth my new Life. Configurations change, events modify events, and if one thing moves the rest must move with it.

We only change the world by changing ourselves. Nothing we do ever truly exists in isolation. There are no absolutely personal nor autonomous actions. Everything exists as part and parcel of the whole, and no one person has a life divorced from the rest. It is the recognition of this which eventually allows the surrender of arrogated, specific personal attributes; it allows the ego to soften and flood out in the acceptance that there is no action which is not an action of the whole, and therefore what we are is not the separate, striving selves we think we are, but are instead living threads in a dynamic fabric which shifts and alters as one event, though the apparent parts imagine an apparent existence apparently divorced from the rest.

What we feel and think inside is irrevocably bound by invisible strings in the invisible connectedness of all beings and all places. And so, in the end, we realize that our thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are our feelings our feelings, for they belong to the whole, and our self is simply our closest proximity to the

Self, which, at the center, we all are. And thus it is only through the self that we get to the Self, which is the spot where there is both unity and separation.

And so the paradox of this partial and impartial Self, which we are, lies in the acceptance of duality and its enterprises; the paradoxical duality- a part of, and apart from, the whole- which is the fundamental reason why, at the very core of things, everything we had experienced at the periphery becomes inverted: in and out change places, cause and effect merge, subject and object blend in and are abolished, and the less you become the more you are.

Ambiguities never cease to persist in life, nor do contradictions, alternative explanations, aberrant cases, and incoherent experiences. There is no logical system which can encompass, condense, or convey the multifarious exigencies synthesized into the all. Where pattern and principle break off, that is where life begins.

This is why things go haywire when you're heading towards the core, because the closer you get to the center, the more duality becomes apparent, for the spokes are closest right at the hub, and therefore the divisions and the One exist side by side; here a person finds the almost simultaneous occurrence of love and hate, like and dislike, light and darkness, and failure and victory.

As the moving periphery approaches the motionless center, an inversion occurs at which point longing only leads to further distance, desire creates more loss, hope begets despair, and only surrender and faith lead towards the immanent aristocracy. These contradictory qualities are at the center of the spinning wheel, which the circumference can never get to nor understand, and therefore whomsoever lives out on the feverish radius exists only where the world of effect happens so slowly that the immovable cause remains obscure.

It is only when you stop completely that you fall back inside and witness the evolving universe from the revolving hub; and it is only then that separation turns into union, pain into laughter, death into life, and the kaleidoscopic manifest betrays itself as but the splintered fragments of a singular white light dispersed outward through the prism of the self.

I had to accept myself as a finite expression of the infinite Self, and by that acceptance to accept the Self also. For until I accepted my part, I was apart from the whole, and when I accepted my part, I was in and of the whole.

I recognized this metaphorically one day, in a round-about way, during the biological contract which I had worked, looking for Murrelet nests, as I explained earlier.

The job itself was quite straight forward: one individual would shoot an arrow, which had a spool of fishing line attached to it, over a tall, old-growth tree, hoping that the line would drag over a sturdy branch during its passage. Then his assistant, which was myself, would go and find the arrow, cut the line off the end of it, and attach a spool of 4 mm diameter rope to the loose end of the fishing line. This line was then pulled backward, over the top of the tree, by the original marksman. And when he had attained the attached end of the 4 mm rope, he then severed it from the fishing line, and attached an 11 mm diameter climbing rope to its end, which I then pulled back over the tree again, via the 4mm rope, until I had the 11 mm line in hand, and tied it to another nearby tree to create an anchor. Thus, through this procedure, starting with a thin line, we

ended up with a strong climbing rope over the top of the tree, upon which the climber could ascend to search for nests.

Now, during this procedure, while I was hauling over the 11 mm rope as quickly as possible from my partner's side to mine, via the 4 mm rope, I had to lay down the 4 mm rope on the ground, trying not to get it tangled up in the thickly gnarled undergrowth of the west coast rainforest. On one occasion, however, I was too careless and when it came time to re-spool the 4 mm, it was in a hopeless tangle. My attempts to unweave it simply created more of a mess. Finally I capitulated, and began the long process of grabbing the entire clump of rope and gently pulling it apart, loosening up the knotted mess a bit, grabbing each free end, and pulling as much of the loosened rope out of the core as possible. This had to be done over and over again. In this way, gently loosening the mass, and then inch by inch retrieving the rope at both ends, I was able to untangle a great deal of the rope. The problem was this- although the free ends were growing and the knot was shrinking, the knot in the center which remained was getting tighter and tighter, until there came a point when it could no longer be gently loosened, because to loosen it would mean dragging one of the free ends back towards the knot, thus eliminating the gain. It was then that I realized this method was finished; it had gone as far as it could, but could go no further.

I sat there distraught and bewildered for having botched up such a simple task, but then a thought occurred to me- now is the time to roll up one of the loose ends into a tight ball and weave it through the central knot. So I carefully gathered up one loose end, rolled it into a small ball, and then painstakingly wove this ball in and out and through the larger central knot, until, finally the whole was untangled.

It was in a similar way that I recognized the necessity of both the oriental and occidental ways in our lives- that both are required if we are to untie the great God-knot in which we are bound. By this I mean that an individual can ease back effortlessly into the macrocosm, the Self, in the time-proven method of the east, but eventually there comes a point when that Self can go no further, for the knotted creation remains, inhibiting any further evolution. That is the point when one must ball oneself effortfully up into the microcosm, the self, in the way of the occident, and weave oneself amongst the tangled fibres of the world, if God is to finally be set free.[21]

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thirteen

Our selves exist only in relation, whether it be with the earth, with others, or with God. To realize this is to lose yourself in relation, and more than that- to become relation. It is a bond in all directions, and you belong to everything, and more than that- you are everything. The boundaries of separation weaken and dissolve, and only the integral bonds of relation remain which produce the cosmic dance.

In the slack, motionless movement, between the sublime ebb and flow of existence and non-existence, where inside and outside exchange themselves- there it is that separation occurs only so as to glorify the One.

When finally the Self has taken dominion of the self, you become like a boat by which others might cross the perilous sea. You become the ark and the covenant.

The archetypes and mythos begin to swirl about the limitless vortex of your uncaged non-being. And in that living absence you are not contained, but ...you contain.

To become such a window to the infinite is to be nothing and to be all; it is to weep when others come weeping, to laugh when they are laughing, and to dance, and dance, and dance when they come to you dancing. You're inhuman and so bloody human that you die everyday from sorrow, and rise everyday from joy. You are no longer separate. And you are no longer you.

Like a door which swings both ways so heaven and earth can visit each other; you become the nothing which allows the all; out of the original binary comes the absence called the third, the slack tide, the non-breath between breaths, the hole between the external and internal which creates the whole, the living non-division between us. The Wholly Ghost.

And so, in the sublime paradox of this position, in the tangle of our oneness, no matter what you do or how you do it, the higher you rise, the higher you lift others with you; to free yourself is to set all free. As you liberate yourself, you liberate everyone, for you are everyone. And so there is no sense in getting bound in another's prison, simply because they are a prisoner. To remain behind for them is to turn back for Eurydice and to lose her in that turning.

These days we must be both Orpheus *and* Eurydice, if we are to return to the surface with our whole selves intact. Eternity in the Tree of Life is paid for by nothing but our own lives; as the fruit falls also from the limb, so too we must fall into the mire, and grow upward from the dirt; we must cultivate our own spirits, ever pruning, grafting, fertilizing, and pollinating all the radiant blastemas of our own sapling selves; we must learn to shed our own fruit, and become living trees in the Forest of Life. For even as a sapling is not a tree until it can itself bear fruit, so only when I came to see through the eyes of the One, did the abundance of the God within burst forth in fecund and laughing rapture from me.

Each of us is everything, and everything is each of us. It's like the Jewelled Web of Indra- in which there is an infinite carpet made of hollow gems, each of which is completely clear and empty in and of itself, and yet it contains the reflection of all other gems. In this way we are more each other than we are ourselves. Only the clouded ego-gem thinks it otherwise.

The microcosm is the means of the macrocosm, which is the medium in which the microcosm flows. Man is God applied. Waves within water within waves. Gods within God within Gods, where everything ends and begins in the singular, manifold, dynamic stillness. All of life emerges from, and dwells there. God does not see you, or me, or any others; God does not see many, God sees

One. When the edge collapses the center grows, the hairy beast sprouts feathers, the feathers become flames, and the fire turns the chaff into manna.

It is a manic dawn which breaks in and rolls over upon you. It is a glee and tremor which catapults you away to the here which is nowhere. No more repentance. No more concern. No more assurance. No more to learn. The Beginning which has never ended has taken over and devoured you. And you have devoured being. Like the famed Uroborous, you are at the head of time eating the tail of space, engulfing itself to nility, and from that zero all infinities are born.

For at a certain point in the evolution of Being, each fragment of the whole, each individual, will come to recognize themselves as the center of all experience; that I am not outside of you, I am inside of you; that you are not inside you, you are inside me; that there is neither inside nor outside. Because the further you look, the more you see, until you cease to be a player, and become the cosmic Play.

When you become everything you are no longer trapped in the world, you are the world; indeed you must dance in both realms, or you shall dance in none.

But to get to both aspects of the One, you have to wipe yourself completely off the map and become the map. Your mind must dissolve into the Mind, and your body must become the Earth.

Why this is I have no clue. Why this way and not another, is inexplicable to me. It is a great godsea, and we are waves within it, and who can say how, why, what, or wherefore?

*

fourteen

No matter what I have written here, nor how I have explained or come to understanding, throughout it all I was nothing, and did nothing, for it was the great mystery of life, of the spirit, which did it all. And yet I once had a very wise woman teach me a breathing exercise which she claimed had been taught to Jesus by the Essenes. Whether this is the case or not I am not sure, either way it was a powerful technique, which helped me to still the relentless banter rattling around in my head at the time. And once, when I had used the exercise, and then lay down and entered into a deep, penetrating stillness, the woman then asked me why I had come into life, which made me wonder- why did I come here? And though I had certain ideas of why, a voice resounded unmistakably within me and said at that time: “Share your journey.”

At that moment I knew that, in telling my story, I was offering nothing to anyone, except perhaps a reason to believe, not in my reality, but in their own, for *my* journey was specific only to me, and may have little or no consequence for any other. Thus I have written this work simply to relate *my* experience, and not to create any assumption that it will pertain to anyone else’s; I intend no

didactic outlay, nor do I offer advice, for that would be a vice, and I have found it best to leave each to their own course and karma.

My way was no other's way. In fact, the path which I was on is no longer the same one I am on now. I walked that mile and then started in a new direction.

I knew at the moment that I decided to share my journey that I was not offering anyone a solution. I have stopped believing in solutions. The surfer on the teetering crest of the wave asks not why the water flows and rolls as it does, he simply lets himself go into it, become a part of it, and ride with it as far as it will go. That is the reason he surfs.

And so I entered the Kahuna's tube, riding in the whirl and the torrent and trying to stay on the board, and when the surface and the floor came too close together, the mighty tsunami broke over and almost killed me, but then it floated me up and set me gently on the shore.

As if sitting around a campfire later that night, I have tried to tell others what I have seen in the tumble and glide, and to share the mystery of my ride, for that is what you do at the end of the day. And then you go to sleep and dream another dream.

And so it was only when I began to tell this story, my story, and to accept that it was my reality and mine alone, that I finished with that ride.

This, then, has been my perspective, which is not truth, for there is no truth within perspective. God alone sees truth, for God has no perspective.

After all, what can you expect from one human life, as it goes step by uncertain step, from unknown land to unknown land, ever caught in between a timorous hello and a heart-wrenching goodbye? I suppose that depends upon which dream you signed up for, but once you have eaten of the flesh, so to speak, you must ride it out completely.

I could have been a thousand things. I could have been a shepherd on the Orkney Islands, a fisherman in Norway, fiddler in Ireland, poet in Uganda, medicine man in Botswana, bohemian in Greece, a vintner in Chile, lay-about in Australia, a father with a joyful batch of kids in Argentina, a hermit in Newfoundland, a priest in Papua New Guinea, a hedonist in Hawaii, sadhu in India, a holy man in Tibet. I could have enjoyed being a craftsman or artist anywhere. I could have made hookahs in Kashmir, reed boats in Chad, totem poles in British Columbia, yurts in Mongolia, vodka in St. Petersburg, love in Marseille. I could have been all of these things and more if I did not have to be the one thing I had to be, or chose to be, or was chosen to be.

I came to strike a specific blow, at a certain angle, in the required place, at a determined time.

As it was I lived out those years on the coast of British Columbia, wandering about both aimlessly and with purpose, loving and leaving as I went. I lived at the core of the throbbing heart of the Mother's world, at the precipitous interface between the mythic and the mean, and in the tumbling downpour of the Father's matterless mind.

There were so many brilliant souls whom I met and shared moments with along my way. So many of them touched me to the very quick, held me in their arms and eyes, and became a living part of me. It is as sad as thankfully

laughable to look back on all the fleeting characters who walked a few strides along my path, and I along theirs, as we granted each other the benediction of our sorrows, and fears, and ecstasies. How we shared, and grew, and parted then, without knowing we were one.

Perhaps it is even harder now to hold them in my heart than it was to hold them in my arms. I see them all off somewhere, faintly, smiling warmly back at me. That is the love and agony of our distance and closeness. They live within me, and I within them. And that is the heart and the reason I came here- to dive in, and descend, and never to worry about resurfacing.

And yet it all seems now like a powerful dream which can be remembered perfectly upon awakening, and then loses its hold slowly throughout the day, until suddenly it is gone and it can't even be recalled, nor remembered that it ever was. As if I look back upon those times with friends and loved ones like the trailer at the end of a movie, as the credits roll, showing brief, touching scenes, and helping the spectator remember the feel of the whole.

At the end of my decade on the coast I could feel one chapter closing in my life and another one about to open up. I walked out and onward with a peaceful sense about me, and didn't hold on, nor sorrow, nor worry, nor cry, as it became so strange and beautiful that I was touched where I had touched. For what is my own but that which I have taken or given to others. That is all I have done on this strange and wild, cold and crazy planet, where I came down to take and give and become all others, and then to rise up, and forget.

I looked back upon those ten years which I could never have imagined living before having moved out from the east. Ten years so powerful and life altering, so full of friendships and revelry, loneliness and confusion, wonder and exploration, spirit and flesh, and a host of experiences and blessed gifts towards which I could only smile and sigh nostalgically as I sat there, perhaps for the last time, on a suburban hill overlooking Vancouver.

In the night the city's lights took on an overwhelming peaceful and friendly feeling, twinkling gently back at me, as I looked down upon the stage which had given so much joy and agony to me. And I felt then, as I had on Flores Island earlier that summer, and at my shack on the hill a few days before, that these places were saying goodbye to me; that the forums in which my soul had worked, and learned, and grown were now living parts of me, and would always be, and the trials and challenges and dramas for others were to continue on down below, beneath the lights which seemed so soothing and innocuous from above, and so unified and living to me now, and which were letting me go another way, and were smiling at me, a warm, appreciative smile, which seemed to blend and meet with the smile within me, because I had joined in and diffused myself into the whole, and we were now like parting friends who had been through the best and the worst together, had toughed it out, had grown and forgiven, and now genuinely cared and wished the best for each other.

It was a goodbye to a city which had embraced and spat me out as many times as I had done to it. And it was a goodbye to myself, from myself; I was leaving that world and that self which I had been and I was heading towards another, without knowing where that other lay. And I was doing it with the pleasant sadness of good buddies parting and knowing that they wouldn't see each other for a good long while, and so they hold each other closely, and then,

releasing each other, and wiping a tear, they turn away to face a new day, having finished their time with the old.

We linger like this in each other, and in the places we've been and set our hearts into. We join in and are never lost from the earth ever again, nor from each other, though we leave and may never return.

In the end I grew away from the troubles of separative being. After the years of rebellion, condemnation, struggle, and turmoil, I finished with the process by which I would finally melt away like a dwindling chunk of ice which had been smashing about down the river after the break-up, only to then merge peacefully into the warm and gentle flow, losing itself into the whole; I dissolved into the careless realm, and became the calm and yet resolute river myself, carrying all things along with me on the voyage to the endless sea. For I found that nothing ends, that there is no end, though the mind seeks completion in all things. We go on forever, and this *is* the problem, for our eternity rends the walls of all our paradigms; it is an understanding which we try so hard to avoid because it brings no alleviation to the way in which we require goals and accomplishments so as to position ourselves in the fluid complexity. Yet it brought me to that type of peace which comes from not needing to partake of everything all at once, from not desiring to attain what I did not have, from not needing to be something, or become something else, because there is no need to rush about in eternity, for everything will happen, like it or not, and it will not cease, and when you know this about the world and yourself you begin to require less, and do less, and you sort of ease back, not out of fulfillment, but out of knowing that the all keeps going, no matter what, and therefore the little matters begin to fade away, and only what is eternal remains, calm in the acquiescent acknowledgment that nothing is ever gained nor lost, and the passing show will flicker and fade, as it is wont to do, and the grief and glory will come and go with it, but the Self shall continue forward, softly watching from the other side of dying.

I can say now that I am a living part of the west coast, and it is a part of me; such a part of me that where it ends and I begin I cannot tell. We grew together and in doing so melded ourselves into each other, and even now I can feel the trees and sea and mountains moving in me, not separate from myself, but of myself, and I know that I am also there, out on the isolated, windswept beaches, and amongst the forest and the hills. I feel myself within the land which I grew to love and married my spirit into. And even as I leave, I know we will never be truly apart, for we have woven our separate fabrics into each other.

The comings and goings which I undertook in my person, now occur within me, for this life is the plane in which things appear and disappear, allowing us to learn how to let go.

God is here and now, with me, in me, of me; the one which is both of us, wrapped in the embrace between spirit and flesh, without reason, without assumption, without concern. In, and of.

And so I take leave, for I have crossed the line, so to speak.

Know that a part of me remains somewhere, far-off on the northern, wild coast, forgetting and forgotten, alone and not alone, sane and not sane, alive and not alive, in agony from the impossible beauty of it all, bewildered, rapt, and laughing.

Know that the spirit also crashes onto the shore of life, slowly, ever slowly, tearing down the solid, imprisoned rocks and islands of the soul, grinding the stones into sand, and creating a beach, a place where we can walk upon more easily, where two unique worlds come together, and through our hearts unite into one.

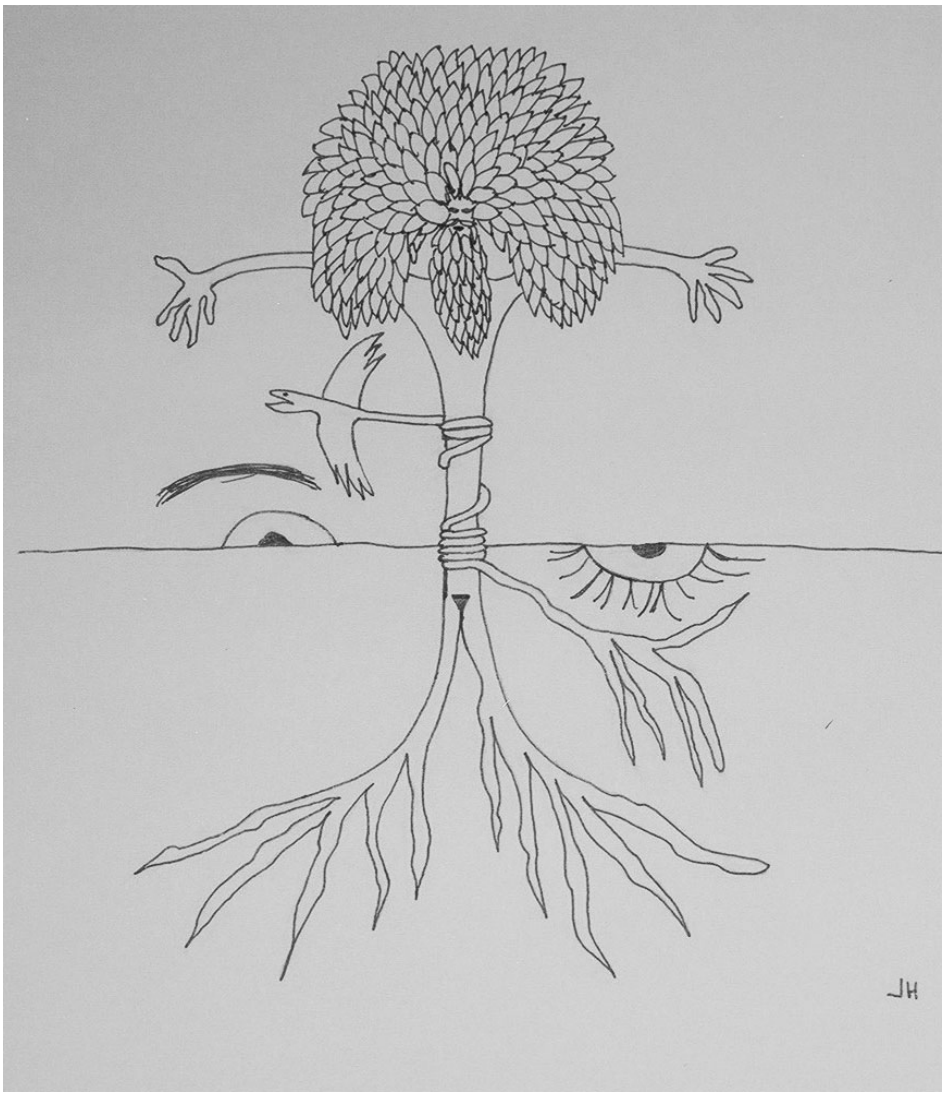
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Book II

ROOTS AND WINGS

adventures of a spirit on earth

For my mother,
whose soul gave ground for roots,
and whose love gave space for wings.



THE TREE OF LIFE
Illustration by the author

PART 1:
COURTING THE MOTHER

*"Today I am proud to say that I am **inhuman**, that I belong not to men and governments, that I have nothing to do with creeds and principles. I have nothing to do with the creaking machinery of humanity- I belong to the earth! …We have no need for genius- genius is dead. We have need for strong hands, for spirits who are willing to give up the ghost and put on flesh…"*

Henry Miller

"But on the human plane that would have been destruction: living life instead of living one's own life is forbidden. It is a sin to go into divine matter. And that sin has an inexorable punishment: the person who dares go into that secret, in losing her individual life, disorganizes the human world."

Clarice Lispector

one

Out in this world, in this impossible world, in this crazy, mysterious, magical world. Out into this world I came, like a wild thought fleeing its captor. Out and out I plunged, never towards but only away, as if I was born solely to become what God had not yet made. As if life was my way to expand the miracle, to make it more than it is or has been, and to seed that new realm even though I was lurching forward with all the grace of a limping man in a blinding sand storm, who yet was filled with all the privilege of a knight sent in pursuit of the Grail, because I was a seeker and I was the sought, and yet there was nothing to find in life that was better than creating what had not yet been.

To do this is to embrace the making instead of the made, and so to serve the Self like a polished magnifying glass making focused light of the giving sun. To be one with the Creator is to have entered into the stillness of the living word become flesh, and to be that living flesh also; it is to be the gold which is not gold but rather the condensed light of God formed out of the archetypical blueprint and into the eternal liquid structure of the ephemeral day.

And for this have I lived in our implausible world as if on an endless tightrope strung between the pinnacles of confusion and wonder, while hovering over an infinite abyss as full of joy as it is of sorrow. For there was a time when the yin and the yang, if there be such divisions, were stretched apart to their furthest dimensions within me, leaving my mind in the lofty reaches, and my heart in the pit of hell, so that I was ripped open by the insoluble feud between them. Which is why it seemed that nothing worked, because I was composed of two perfect halves, but I was not whole, and since the agony came with the ecstasy, the tug-of-war between the two halves became the goad and the leash from which I sprang forth only then to be hauled back again with ignoble regularity. And thus I was forced out into life, to take it in, enjoy it, despise it, correct it, and destroy it, and was then pulled painfully back again, withdrawn so as not to be petted nor fed. As if to enter the banquet, to drool a bit, and then be pushed quickly out the other side, in a neverending chain of engagements, was my destiny, so as to live and to not live, to die and to not die, and to always be given and never to have, which was the only way I could learn how to not-exist while existing, to enter the jail without being taken prisoner, and to fly without growing wings, so that in the end I could live free upon this earth only by continually wriggling out of my old self, and becoming what I had never been.

It was this pendulous oscillation, which in its singular turn drove me nearer to myself by the same distance it tore me apart, that broke and also mended me together. How else could I describe it? How else could it describe me? Others called it life. I didn't know what to call it. It was all very strange. Very, very strange. I never knew a damn thing. No one ever does.

And so I had to learn to embody all of my own contradictions: I had to accept and deny myself; I had to have faith in God, and I had to rebel; I had to love and also abhor the flesh; I had to strive and not strive, be and not-be, do and not-do, and take on all of life's imperfections knowing that they were somehow perfect.

I had to always be coming, and always be going. And in that provincial domain of our feral aristocracy, where the duty and dreaming mingled into an indivisible one, nobody could have told me what I would find when I ceased living with expectation, preconception, or need. No one could show me how to get no where. For throughout those formative days of my so-called separate existence, there were many seemingly inexplicable and yet undeniable preconceptions, synchronicities, exuberances, coincidences, messages, voices, wonderings, and dreams. Good God there were dreams. Night after night did I writhe upon the mythical membrane in between consciousness and sleep, where the greater and lesser forces spun webs of unspeakable drama throughout my defenseless becoming, while obstinate realities took refuge rhapsodically within me.

I did not know then what life's reckless meaning beckoned, for I recognized no impetus behind my manic actions other than flight and boredom, though I knew not why I was bored, nor what it was I fled. In fact, I did not at first seek truth, only a complacency to dispel such arduous yearnings. Every act was an escape from myself and the mind's implications. I was made stable by the force I exerted against what opposed me, and not because I could stand. And that is that.

Never let it be said, though, that my despair outweighed my euphoria, or my agony my bliss, for I have gone down into the belly of the beast, and there I howled with a woe and tremor enough to chill the gods, and there I also laughed and roared with a rapture enough to cause them envy. And there it was that I gathered up both sides of that rope strung between everything and its opposite, until I pulled the chasm into me, filled that hollow with my own emptiness, and caused my divided world to merge the darkened moon into the light of the sun.

But in order to do this I had to learn to sit with the disquiet, to feel it, accept it, and then throw up my arms in resignation, and hallelujah, for it is a crazy path which the spirit partakes in its breathtaking descent into the earth. It is a perilous dive into the catacombs of the flesh, wherein the transformations are as fast and furious as the raging seas of spirit all around. And it was only in the release of all that refuses to fall that, paradoxically, I learned again how to fly. Which is to say, it was only when I allowed fear to become loneliness, loneliness to become acceptance, and acceptance to turn into wonder, that …that I became the unknown God.

This came about because, in the intimacy of all our absences, where the self assumes no borders, and form shatters without breaking, I remembered …how to forget. I forgot, and that was enough to release me from woe. For only the unadorned Self can slip through the membrane of matter and into the void of the One, because you cannot get to the other side by trying to get there, but only by letting go of what holds you, and floating away though yet planted amidst life's pervasive glue.

For me there was no other option. I had to leave, and I had to stay. And in the violent collision of these two necessities, in the wash and fire of the spirit's healing, in the sacrificial evisceration of the mind, in the fiery assumption of the grosser self, when I knew I was done for, and the Word itself hovered hopelessly above the willess flesh, at the crescendo of my

dismemberment, I suddenly came to peace because I finally realized that everything in life was wrong, that it was intended to be wrong, that God was insane, that men were as devils, and that it was going to get far worse before it got any better. And, given these unequivocal suppositions, easy enough it was to recognize life as naught but a terrible joke. But, then, after all ...a joke it was. So with that matured understanding it occurred to me that it is up to each one of us to choose how we take that joke- whether we walk through our days with a foul and bitter scorn, or skip merrily through life with a hearty chuckle. That is what I came upon. And what happened to me is ...I began to laugh.

And in that jocular twist it seemed as if everything wrong had suddenly vanished, and the only thing to remain was the inexplicable. And so all I was left with was a formless, passionate, intimate ...faith. I have no better way to poorly describe it. All I was left with was the madness and mystery called life. And that was enough, for if truth be known, the last straw does not break the camel's back ...it gives it wings. And so my cup had gone from being half empty, to being half full, and the cup which is eternally half full, is the same one which forever runneth over, for appreciation is one of the symptoms of heaven, of that terrible, agonizing gratitude, the kind that bends you over weeping and then grabs you by the breastbone and lifts you up in joy.

Gratitude. When you sift out the trials and struggles, the loneliness and perils of existence, no matter who you are or how you got there, what's left in the end is the privilege of life.

It was through that privileged and pathless mayhem that I came like the mountain wind, without warning or direction. And the curses and blame did not end nor impede me as I went on beyond the God who is and the God who is not, beyond what the powers made of me and what they took away, beyond all way and connection, beyond where they caught me and where they tried to make me stay. I went on. Up, and up I climbed, to where I could not climb back down. I climbed up and up, alone and not wanting to be alone, until I chose once again to reverse my course, and took that desperate mad plunge back down, down through the sky, through the earth, through the mind, and into the soul, for though I no longer cared to be in this realm, I also cared to be here, despite the love and sadness of it all.

For that is the heart and the reason I came here. To dive in, and descend, and never look back with regret, nor with worry. For below the waters of life is the same Self, as above that wild surface.

*

two

But let me explain. Let me hopelessly explain why I cannot explain what I cannot help but try to explain.

Were it not for the fact that God dwells, and is worthy, in all people, I could not just now have so emphatically declared the gospel of my own idiosyncratic dissent, ascent, and descent. For life never follows an intended

course, because there is no course here, there is only life. Here, where everyone dances their puppet-self on the ephemeral stage of Babylon; here there is no authority, there is only a ruleless dance, not danced rulelessly. Here, the sun shines, the trees twinkle, and the trumpets play Taps at a hero's funeral, and yet there is no one around to hear the music except mourners, and so it seems such a waste, because the miracle hems us in as much as it inspires us, and so the glory and grief walk hand in hand and only a fool would choose to walk along with them, and only a madman would not. And that is why it seems such a waste. Though it isn't. It just seems that way.

Most of us come into life without asking, and leave without knowing why. We laugh, strive, want, suffer, and cry. And yet there are times when life stands us back up, when life awakens us with a haunting. You see, I had lived so long within dreams of my own invention, that I had lived for so long without actually living. And then, somewhere in between it all, amongst the cacophony and the void, when the hold I had on life- or the hold life had on me- weakened as if from sublime intent ...I began to remember. And in that remembrance I forgot without caring.

Many things I will never understand nor be capable of explaining: Why we are the way we are; why life is the way it is; when it all began, and where it is all headed- of these I have not a clue. There were many odd and unexpected experiences, mythical hallmarks, and sublime events throughout my journey, but, I suppose, this is the way it happens to us in this fantastic realm where being and becoming are both different and also the same, because what was is what will be, and what will be is what is, for time is a false matrix placed over a continuum, just as the acorn is the oak when seen through its continuance, and the song is the singer as long as the music goes on.

My song begins back when I was eight years old, and my family and I had moved for two months to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where my father was teaching at St. Mary's University for the summer. During our stay we met and spent a great deal of time with another family which had two sons slightly older than myself. At the end of the summer our families were departing for different areas of the continent and, on the evening in which we said our goodbyes, I lay down for bed, not knowing if I would see this family- which I had grown to love- ever again. That night I experienced something immensely powerful, awakening, and destructive. The entire night I lay awake as if in a fever, though I had no fever, yet there was a tremendous battle between two opposed paradigms, or visions, going on somewhere deep inside me. In one vision I was on a gentle conveyor-belt with many others; there was a calm and peaceful feeling, and my body was seemingly immersed in a bath of harmonious energy. Then the vision would switch, and suddenly everyone would be contorted, and off the conveyor belt, thrashing their way manically down crazed and dirty streets, struggling to go forward, but being impeded by, and impeding, the flood of insane humanity coming the other way. In this second vision there was no peace, no respite, no harmony, and my body felt as if it were flung into a chaotic electrical maelstrom from which there was no escape. Then the whole show would flip over again, and the conveyor-belt scene and peaceful feeling would take over for a while, and then back again to the chaos and disharmony, and so

on, the whole night, as I was flung continually between opposites, and lay pinned to the bed, an eight-year old kid who, as best as I can say now, had just begun his inexorable, head-long fall into the flesh.

Perhaps the troubling initiation I underwent, that night in Halifax, came about because, in parting from that family which I had quickly grown to love and enjoy, I was receiving the first brutal awakening to one of life's darker characteristics- loss. I had begun to care, and, concomitantly, I had been cast out of the careless, quiescent realm of childhood, and into the trauma, confusion, and peacelessness of the flesh.

I see now that, in many ways, at eight years old I had actually not yet left the warm and protected chamber of the womb. Not until that night when the blissful glow of childhood was suddenly swept out from under me, the floor beneath me vanished, and with nothing to hold onto but the insanity of the world itself, I began the terrible and essential downward plunge from limitless play, into limitless troubles.

To be sure, it is a long and agonizing descent from the untroubled firmament, out of the womb, through the mind, into the heart, and down to earth.

A close friend of mine once shared a very telling dream she had of this sense of loss which our angelic nature suffers upon arrival in the world. She had dreamt of a community of winged people, who spent their days flying joyfully together in a mountainous canyon they had come to call home. One day, however, they were all captured by humans, had their wings cut off, and then were released to live out the rest of their days without the freedom so natural to them. After this horrible mutilation some of them tried their best to assimilate themselves into the human world, though they never really belonged, and continued to carry the burden of loss and sorrow to the end of their days; others retreated from mankind, and sat up high, overlooking the canyon, forever remembering when they were all together and free to fly; and some took a last flight off of those canyon walls, not being able to endure the pain of their new imprisonment.

As I write this down shivers are flowing into me from above, and tears are struggling not to fall, which is always a good sign that I have hit upon a truth. And though I have often felt as one of those whom had their wings clipped, and have anguished over freedoms I do not even remember losing, I see now that I have not come to this earth to mourn, to suffer, or to belong. I have come so as to once again learn how to fly. And yet, as I have found during the thirty-six years I have now been in this world, it is a different thing altogether to take wing as an angel, than to soar as a man.

*

three

Coming into this world as I did, as we all do- like little God-maggots, growing in the stool and searching for our new wings that we might learn again

to fly- I could never have imagined what was to happen. How could I? Who, after all, can know the unknowable? Who indeed?

It began as a vast, phantasmagoric festival of non-meaning; the Dream bloomed, charged and buoyant within me, as moments blended and engaged, became made and unmade, then ripped and mended into the fabric of our intertwined lives.

Real life was a harmony barely audible, through the bustle and clamor of the day, to which, however, I eventually learned to dance with wild abandon upon this seemingly dead and spiritless earth.

Like all others I was at first trapped in this cosmic pandora, roaming hard and yet hobbled by the proximity of our woes; aflame and fluid in the directionless stream, I recognized pattern and intent, though I knew not what was intended. Tangled in life's multiple cobwebs, like someone passed along the upstretched hands of an infinite crowd, I let myself be carried away by the directionless touch; touch was all that mattered, where I went was of no concern.

Like a worn vessel I listed into the seasonal winds to wherever it was I was taken, indifferently swept into the infinite storms, the love, and the doldrums.

You see, when I initially fell to this world, I did not die but was badly maimed. Broken and lost I remained like just another fallen angel, wrecked and unable to fly back to God. I was a reality, but I was not in reality, and so I realized instantly that I did not belong, that I would never belong, and that ...I was not supposed to belong. For if I belonged, how indeed could I see through the lie, the folly, and the futility of our so-called lives. I did not belong, but I belonged for that very reason. It seemed like one hell of a cruel joke.

In fact, as soon as I was spat forth onto this makeshift prison of woe and confusion, they got a hold of me, and the inevitable corruption began.

It was in a blood-thirsty land into which I was deposited without weapons, knowledge, or crime. Or so it seemed at the time. For in the beginning nothing happened but a great celestial fiasco; as the full moon itself gave light to the rainbow, the sun cast darkness upon the land, and the stars themselves shone mystic anguish in retaliation to the night. The cosmos pitched Sol versus Luna, and Luna versus Sol, but never found a solution.

In fact the whole desperate mess- of being- was like seeing something obscurely reflected in a rippling sea; above were the ethereal images, below was the ever-changing all. But that's life, after all- always reflected, always upside down, always fluid and moving.

It was into this mercurial, amniotic flow that I fell away from everything true. In perilous adhesion to the concupiscence of the day did I swim in the dark and Godless depths. Manifold points of separateness deluded me into becoming, and I drowned gleefully in the habit of being, gasping wantonly with lungs which had forgotten how to effortlessly breathe.

My inward gaze was not yet strong enough to balance out the weight of the outer show. Caught in the movement, and swept fruitlessly into the vast organic sea of human misery, I was in hopeless pain, the pain of one who belongs nowhere, because the plague of mankind was everywhere, and spreading, piling up shit upon shit, until there was nowhere to walk without

being soiled, nowhere to run without being chased, and nowhere to sing without being caged.

Everything I had learned from society was a malicious lie, or, at best, a cowardly act of negligence burying the miracle of life with every word, and burying the spirit and soul with pith and petty bile.

I forgive others their blindness, but I curse them for having no strength, no love, no humility.

And yet, as I found, it was not with others that my failure or victory lay, but only with myself, for I had to realize that if I allowed myself to get tangled in other's cares, or fall victim to their pleasures and desires, I would certainly miss my call.

And so, as if driving a foreign car, on foreign streets, in a foreign country, I had to learn to inhabit this foreign world- and become an invisible driver, stealthily making my way through the roadblocks, alleys, and highways of this planet of love which was somehow lousy with gloom. For I realized that most of society would do everything it could to stand in my way, everything it could to hold me back, to convince me out of my passion, out of myself, and out of life, and so I learned to depend on nothing and nobody, but only to believe in myself, for I saw that if I blamed others for my station, I gave away my power, if I sought out others for my salvation, I gave away my spirit, and if I needed others to cure my sorrow, I gave away my force.

The trick, I discovered, was to not let mankind spoil my time in this remarkable, enviable world, but to dance my own dance and pay no heed to the confusion all about me.

And yet it was an awful process, fighting my way through the false self, false perspective, and false purpose, all of which had been inculcated into my formative being by the magnanimous elders of our times. But then finally, in the quagmire of lostness, I found something I cared for more than comfort, honor, or money. And that was …myself. And as soon as I tuned in to that self I realized that my life had been like an old and beaten radio that looked worn on the outside, but man when you put the earphones on and turned it up, damn if it didn't play good music.

I could hear again the fiddler. I was opened, lifted, cleansed, moved, and dancing. And I was still.

It is so hard to describe this transformation, but somehow, unpredictably, in those vagrant, directionless wanderings, I had found within myself something's nothingness; I had stumbled unwittingly upon an indisputable recognition. I did not know what it was, I simply accepted that it was …me.

It was as if, in the last battle in the ghastly war of attrition my soul led against all lies, there was nothing left but an eye, torn out at the roots and inverted by its own intransigent sight. And it was through this eye that I found the far-off land of which I had dreamt quite often but never seen, though when I finally I turned within …I was there.

Yea indeed, meandering guidelessly through the tunnels of decomprehension, I had found not-finding, and lost all sense of the ground. In the absence of all image I fell joyfully away from thought towards thoughtless beauty, and into the mindless upswell of the heart's conquest.

I did not actually surrender to this or that, or what have you, I simply gave up, for I had no more need to go running about everywhere. I was finished, so to speak, though not in the vogue of any metaphysical euphemism for attainment, but because I was through with the struggle, the strain, and the whole damned mess of it; because I was surely in the magician's chambers, and had in fact been there all along. I could do nothing except the only thing there was to do when there was nothing left to do- I became still. Nothing more could have been done; as if I had been chased up a closed canyon by a mighty force, there was nowhere else I could run; I was corralled by the extraordinary shepherding of being. I had no more fight left with mankind, for fighting was exactly what had imprisoned me. Thus there was no victory, and no defeat- the war just sort of ended, at which point I turned away …and walked on home.

*

four

Before all of that which I have just written came to pass, which was before I understood that God brings all things about through us, I had to live my life out in the world. Out in this crazy, impossible, beautiful world.

And so at thirty years of age I was in Old Delhi, India- Mother India- and had been there for three months, unable to leave, because I was going mad on loneliness, Old Monk Rum, freedom, torpor, and words.

India, Mother India, a land of madness and miracles, where nothing is reasonable, and everything belongs, because in India there is no norm, no paradigm, no structure, nor concept upon which to base any idea of right or wrong, for the Mother accepts all, and is all. If you go to India and try to fit in, you never will, because no one fits in there, not even Indians. And that, I suppose, is why the Indians greet you as if you were a deity- as one for whom there is no duplicate, because to be unique is to be eternal, as eternal as God- which is why they greet you with *namasté*: I bow to the God within you.

At the time of writing this book I have been to India a number of times, and yet to this day the only word I have learned which I continue to use, besides *chai*, is *namasté*. It is a word I am still learning, and perhaps a word I will never finish learning. *Namasté*, I bow to the God within you.

It is a word which has no similarity with any salutation from the occident, and its closest approximations are the Hawaiian word *Aloha*, and the Alaskan Upik word *Chamai*, both of which have also been pathetically mistranslated into the banal English word 'hello'.

Namasté; it is a word which destroys this world, and creates another. In an instant. For, the moment we greet or part in this way, the entire fabric of the universe is re-woven and becomes an infinitely unpatterned unity where entropy and order, the sacred and profane, and the spirit and flesh are no longer opposites, for there are no opposites, and everything is singular, secular, and sacred, and all blemish is honored as a unique addition to the gyrating, cornucopic menagerie flung out from the fecund womb of ruleless creation.

When first I stepped foot on Indian soil, I felt as if I had landed on the moon. Never had I encountered a country whose impact shook me to the very core, like India. Of course, I had arrived before 1992, which meant that the Indian government was still refusing to allow any foreign products into the country- a moratorium which had been sustained for the previous forty years, as a further Ghandian step to remove all external influences, and help return the culture to its purest state, which was impossible, of course, but it provided the likes of myself with a destination which was so thoroughly unique and untainted by the rest of the world's offal, that it was, as I said, like arriving on the moon.

At that time India was an insular, inviolable, independent entity, both economically, and spiritually. Nowhere on earth was the seething chaos so uninterrupted, so organic, so thickly perfumed with the contiguous, ever-present Great Self, animating all, choreographing all, birthing all, burning all, and being all, as in India. Even unto this day, nowhere else is God so lost within the struggling microcosm, and so found within the panoramic whole.

On my first trip I had arrived both heartbroken and with a terrible fever, which is how I always seemed to arrive at any of the destinations I chose for an indefinite overseas trip, after I had said goodbye to all I had known, sundering the chords of love and malice which bound me to others, and so launching my shuttle out into the fabulous cosmos, to whirl about until landing God knows where for an unlimited length of time.

That first trip I stayed for six months, and by the time I left the mystic land, I was a part of India, and India was a part of me, and thus it would be now and forever.

And so I returned again after a few years, some two decades or so beyond that psychedelic night in Halifax, and I was on one of an infinite number of dirty, crowded, and chaotic streets of Hindustan, and all of the sudden a *déjà vu* set in, and the remembrance of that long and punishing evening as an eight-year old kid came tumbling back to me, as if I had finally come full circle and was now living out the reality of that fantasy, as if the dream symbology was now being fully manifested in my life, having taken over twenty years to play itself out, falling unnoticeably, but unavoidably, out of the timeless sublime and into time and disorder, and I was far off of the conveyor belt, and had no idea how I was going to ever get back on it again, for I was in Old Delhi, thirty-years old, and living alone in a loud and dingy, cheap as they come, crumbling hotel.

No traveler stays more than a few days in Delhi, if he or she can help it. Delhi is a place to leave, not a place to stay. Only I couldn't leave. I was a writer now. And that meant I was doomed. Doomed to live even farther apart from life, doomed to have a carbuncle forever eating away at me which no one else could see. Doomed to the awe, the solitude, and the paralysis necessary so as to allow the breech word to make its way laboriously out of the birth canal of my soul and not be dead when it hit the page.

I was a midwife, a whore, and a mother to the word back then. I would wake up every morning at about 6:30 am, just as the red orb was peaking its head above the horizon. By 7:00 am I couldn't imagine how I would make it through another minute, let alone another day, for the creative act was also a destructive act, and I was caught in the living tension between birth and death. I was in the grip of a force of which I had no knowledge at the time: the force of

growth, and of decay. I was growing and dying, giving birth to the new, and burying the old. I was at every moment being born, raised, seduced, invaded, impregnated, and then giving birth, raising little ones, growing old, laying down, and dying, all at every moment of every day. Caught in the redemptive fire of the soul's own apocalypse, I was being accepted and rejected, judged and released, honored and despised, deified and denied, in each breath, act, and surrender.

But then somehow I would also be swept into the eye of the hurricane, and I would come to a calm, and after recovering enough composure to venture out, I'd have a quick breakfast every morning at one of the nearby *dhabbas*, and then head back to my little cement cell, at the mosque-like Camron Lodge, in the heart of Paharganj, Old Delhi.

The first few hours I'd spend typing into my prehistoric laptop the notes I had scribbled down the day before, always building up a work, and always tearing it down. I was an artist at work and the work was myself, and like the alchemists of old, I had confused the outer with the inner, imagining that I was writing, while all the while I was being written. I was in the tumbling throes of my descent into flesh. All that lies between the pages of this book is what I remember of that fall.

I suppose I took up writing because there was no other option for me as a way to exist in the world. There was not a career, occupation, or temporary job which held any interest for me. I had no desire to live by a clock, to help mankind fill the world with trash, or to saddle my unbound existence with a label or role. In other words, I was expendable, because I refused, as much as possible, to become an unwilling cog in a moribund machine.

And so writing became the only worldly activity for which I held any interest or energy. All else was merely clutter and obstruction. Though I suppose this is a natural reaction for a person like myself, and for those of a similar disposition. In fact, I once had a dream in which I was told that the vocation of art is a refuge given by God to those who are not fit for the world. And, to be sure, I was not fit for the world, not as it was anyways.

With such a critical, and categorical understanding- that writing was the one and only option for me, a spirit come down to earth, and that such a craft was the only means for me to not drift off into an ambivalent and fruitless existence, the meaninglessness of which has led so many of my brothers and sisters onto the street and its derelict ways, because that is what happens when you lose every mooring in life and float away, becoming a derelict in the caustic sea of human inhumanity- with that understanding I threw myself into the art without knowing where it would lead, but knowing that everything else would lead nowhere.

It seems like a romantic dream to imagine a young artist in a foreign country, dwelling in down-and-out hotels, smoking cigarettes, drinking *chai*, and living out the poetic nature of the soul. But that is where it ends- a romantic dream. The rest is loneliness, melancholy, or uncertainty. And yet, what in life is that much different?

Life includes pain, and that is that. Show me a person who has not suffered, and I will show you one who has not lived.

This is a realization which I had to acknowledge long ago, but which has helped me walk with a strong gait, regardless of the load I was carrying. And by that I mean I had to accept my failings, limitations, and unmet desires as best I could. I had to look forward, to cast away all that would bind me, to forgive myself for my continual blunders, to humbly pray for guidance when necessary, and from then on it was only a matter of sticking to the grindstone, and learning to love this life which is worth loving.

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five

Occasionally I was lucky enough to run into a kindred soul who was passing through Delhi for a short spell, and, upon meeting and becoming acquainted, we would enjoy each other's company for a few days, which allowed me the necessary respite of communion, before we inevitably said our goodbyes and I was yanked back into my solitary labors.

One fellow I met in a dirty little restaurant in the old city, was a long-haired Brit who had come to India for a number of reasons, one of which was to seek out a venerated astrologer living in the area. This Brit, Thomas, had read a few books by the astrologer, but had not considered visiting him until a month earlier, when, back in England, Thomas had the inspiration that he should go to India. Although he was penniless at the moment of his inspiration, circumstances worked in his favor- as they do when providence is at the wheel- providing him, within little more than a month, enough money to undertake the inspired journey, and there he was.

He and I spent a number of evenings together, sitting on the rooftop of the Camron Lodge, drinking rum, and discussing the subtle forces and subliminal fields which create the conditions of one's life and destiny. Thomas had a wise carelessness about him, which made him a pleasant companion, though this unconcerned disposition of his was largely due to the fact that he had fatalistically given himself over to impervious powers, which were in control of his life today and forever. It was this acceptance of his powerlessness which gave him such apparent equanimity and poise. However, one day he came to my hotel room a broken man. He had just come from seeing his astrological idol, who had read his charts, and failure was written all over Thomas' face.

Apparently the highly respected star-reader had told Thomas that he was on the completely wrong path, and that he should give up his metaphysical yearnings, return to England, go to a trade college, and learn some sort of useful workingman's occupation. Thomas was devastated. And not only that, he was in full confidence that this guru was correct.

I was in disbelief, although I can see now that Thomas's seemingly unshakable nonchalance and inner peace were merely phantoms easily extinguished the moment his idealistic beliefs turned against him. Which is to say that all was well and good with him when he was a seeker, a wanderer, and man of the spirit, but it all turned sour when he became a ditch-digger or an

electrician, which were the types of fate that he now seemed reluctant and yet determined to accept.

Well, I gave it my best shot to convince him that this astrologer was a charlatan- as all 'experts' are charlatans, no matter what their faculty- and tried to persuade him that there was only one voice worthy of listening to- his own. I'm not certain how well I succeeded, however, because when a person has given their power away, and wants to give it away, there is little chance of helping them win it back.

Thomas and I parted a few days later, and off he went to whatever demoralized destiny he had finally accepted, and off I went to the one I had accepted.

A number of weeks later I was again granted a brief respite by the appearance of a middle-aged Australian vagabond named Arnold, who had been to India many times before, but had returned this spring not out of personal desire, but instead to search for his older brother, who had disappeared without a trace a number of months earlier. I was glad to have Arnold's company, but sad for him because of his almost certain loss. He and I spent a few days together, going around to travel agents, shopkeepers, and government offices, distributing his brother's photo and description, though we both had little hope that the search would turn out favorably. For the most part we simply hung out together, and found communion in that foreign land from which neither of us had any idea when we would leave.

Arnold was a brilliant talker, when his mind turned away from its sorrows. He was the type of guy who had read so much, thought so much, and conversed so much, that he was a neverending wellspring of fringe concepts, obtuse understandings, and esoteric tales. And it was a fabulous treat for me to be amongst a member of my tribe, and to sit back and listen to his assimilations, evocations, and conclusions about life and why it is the way it is.

And yet, of all the things about which he spoke during our days together, the stories of his brother were the most interesting to me, because, from Arnold's point of view, his brother was no less than a *mukta*- a God-knower. Albeit, his brother was a God-knower who had earned his daily bread by smuggling a half-kilo of hash out of India, rolled up in five gram balls, wrapped in cellophane, and swallowed into his stomach, every time he ran out of cash. But he was a God-knower nonetheless. And although I never met Arnold's brother, and cannot confirm his spiritual constitution, I can declare, from Arnold's descriptions of him, if nothing more, that I was hearing about one of a rare breed of individuals on this earth. Which is to say, I was hearing about …a man. And by that I mean, I heard of an individual who lived without fear, without shame, without guilt, and without self-denial. And such descriptions in Arnold's stories about him kept me ever present in our lengthy conversations.

Half a year later I had returned to Canada, and had lost Arnold's address, which was very disappointing to me because I not only enjoyed his company, and hoped to see him again someday, but I also wanted to find out if he was ever successful at uncovering clues as to his brother's whereabouts. Luckily the spirit runs thicker sometimes than others, and connections intended to be made are never lost. In this case, while I was in Canada, Arnold ran into my father, who was in India at the time, although they had never previously met

nor seen pictures of each other. They happened to be in the same area, in a town in a northern Indian valley and Arnold "Just picked him out as a traveling Canadian"- as he wrote to me later- at which point he approached my father, and asked if he, my father, was who Arnold thought he was- and through their serendipitous, implausible meeting, Arnold and I were reconnected.

These types of magical non-coincidences happen, though generally for reasons beyond our ken, but to be sure, the universe is alive, and conscious, and fully aware of every grain of sand in the cosmic ocean of life.

One of those grains of sand also washed up on my barren shore in Delhi that winter, in the form of a beautiful and wise young Canadian woman, who to this day lives close to my heart, and close to the core of the Mother.[22]

I say such things because there is no better way to say them, though I do not in any way lay claim to understanding nor clarity, but when a person stands before me, and I can feel the core of their essence, and later have dreams regarding the nature of their being, then I make statements like I just did, for the only other option is silence, which may arguably be far more lucid and applicable than words, though still I cannot help but imperfectly groan about this miracle of life which is so far beyond me.

Anyway, before heading on to Darjeeling, which was where I had decided to flee when the chaos of Delhi had finally become unliveable, this aspect of the Mother, and I, had a couple of charming days together, sharing words and feelings, and basking in the spirit of Mother India, which culminated, the night before I left, with her and I sitting on the rooftop of the Camron Lodge, and witnessing the most ethereal, and beautiful pink dove go fluttering over our heads and then land on a nearby wire. To the materialist's mind it was simply a bird, but to the spirit eye it came as the holy ghost. And we received the descent of that heavenly gift, as the deep red sun sank beneath the Indian horizon. And in the morning I was gone.

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six

In the Delhi train station that morning, in the frantic bustle while hunting for my carriage out of Delhi's tortured cosmolopolis, I had my day-bag and the back of my pants slashed by a malevolent urchin, who sought to rid me of my *rupees*, though fortunately all he got away with were a few condoms.

No matter, upon arriving in Darjeeling, two days later, I made my way to the small hotel which I had been directed to stay at by that brilliant young aspect of the Mother whom I had just departed from in Delhi. The hotel was located down one of the town's many dank and twisting, stone walkways, and after losing my way a number of times I finally ended up in the lap of one of India's most eccentric, incarnate expressions of the Mother- Amma Ongel, Mother Angel, owner of the Shamrock Hotel, a wayfarer's home away from home.

Amma was a rotund, fiery, loving and unbending matriarch. A woman who ruled her roost with care and an iron fist, making certain that each of her children- and anyone who arrived at her door was her child- were well-fed, well-bedded, and well-guarded from the insurrection of the night.

It was indeed a haven, a Shambhala for my soul, when I arrived into her bosom, and found myself eating home-cooked meals every night around a massive table, among other travelers, and being harbored from the neverending onslaught of invisible jackals at my heels. Amma received and released a multitude of souls like myself, all of whom came for corpulent sustenance acquired from the gravity of her soul's grounding. And when nourished they, like I, were sent off into the distance as if launched on the wings of her wisened dispassion. Roots and wings. Amma was the earth, but she did not withhold her children from the sky.

There were pictures in Amma's living room of her, this mother-to-all, standing with Nehru in the early 1950's, for her spirit had been a part of the birthing of Mother India, and she was resolute in her manner of approach, respect, and reproach, as necessary, to the entire populace of not only her country, but the entire world.

I was one of the many souls towards whom she had opened up her arms, had taken a liking to, and, after I had stayed with her for a while, she was even about to let me run the hotel for a few months while she was away overseas. That is, until she realized, in her own words, that I was "a drunkard and a womanizer"- facts which I could neither deny nor alter at the time. And who could blame me. I was alone, and so I chose to booze. I was alone, and so I chased women.

I do not regret any of my absurd and societally unacceptable life back then. I accept all of myself, no matter who chooses to deny me. After all, I was no murderer or thief. All I wanted was some liquor and love. And who could blame me.

Regardless of Amma's outright decision, I did not hold it against her. She had to keep the cocks out of the henhouse, so to speak, and her decisions were based on the best for all. And so I continued to stay on at the Shamrock for a month or more, living in one of the lower, unheated rooms, during the month of January, when it is very cold in Darjeeling- so cold that I had to sit wrapped in blankets, attempting to warm myself with tea and rum, while hovering over the little kerosene stove I had purchased for 70 *rupees*, and then occasionally turning on my laptop, and continuing to pour out, from the neverending cauldron, the many ingredients lurking within me.

Anyway, as I said, I stayed on at the hotel for another month, and then headed south to find some warmth, if nothing more. A few months later I met up with Amma again, unexpectedly, in Bodhgaya, where I had been licking my metaphysical wounds while living in a small mud hut on a large property where many supplicants were engaged in a silent retreat, which is where I had decided was the next imperfect place to write, drink *chai*, become frozen in wonder, and go mad.

I ran into Amma on the street, and she was quick to convince me to help her put on a meal for about thirty Buddhist monks at one of the many monasteries in the town. And so I chopped vegetables one evening for her, and

added my pitiful *baksheesh* into her limitless alms, and then we parted with a hug of love and understanding, going our separate ways. And so I left her like the prodigal son once again leaving the Mother's home, out again, away again, to spend and lose and gamble away all that I had been given, and all that I could not maintain, because I was like an insatiable man outside of the Garden, off of the conveyor belt, and I did not know that my pockets were empty, my vessel run dry, and my heart grown more barren on each exodus out and away and into the ungrounded cosmos, into the sky, where all spirits fly freely with wings but have no roots nor nest to which to return, and so they fly on and on, always imagining peace up ahead, always yearning to find and never finding what they left behind but did not know it- home.

I have seen men like myself running on that outer edge, along the precipice of non-being, balancing on the point of the furthest visible star in the galaxy, and hovering there, in the painful and yet untroubled distance, where only drink, or sleep, or madness brings relief from the inexorable need to keep running with abandon, always further out and away from humanity, society, rules, constructs, struggles, life, and love.

I too have walked through that void bounded by euphoria and despair, where the wings without roots fly effortlessly toward nowhere, because nowhere is the absence of all else, of all that befalls us in our tramp through the forest of futility and care.

I too have left this earth because it was not enough and far too much for me, and I too have found that once you break through the stratosphere of souls, it is almost impossible to get back, because to get back means to accept everything you have rejected in order to get away, and that reversal is a gross bathos from the untethered reaches back to earth, which is a turn-about that the free-flying spirit rarely, if ever, dares to choose.

However, as I often remarked to anyone who commented about how lucky I was to live so freely, to come and go as I chose, and to make decisions based on no one but myself and God- I often declared with absolute honesty that freedom means nothing without love, because without love, freedom is merely exile, for though it be the unchained spirit which lifts the wings to soar on high, it is the roots of love which give the eagle's wings its nest. For freedom without love is merely a massive prison without any rest, and nothing to do but fly on and on and on, because without love there is no home and without a home there is no such thing as freedom, only flight, because freedom is not love, but love *is* freedom.

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seven

During my stay in Darjeeling, before heading south, I had run into a man named Hank, whom I had met only once previously, the night before leaving Canada for India, at a buddy's place who was holding a going-away party for me. Hank and I were both heading to the subcontinent within the next few days, and mutual friends at the party were trying to convince us to hook-up

over there. Neither Hank nor I were moved by this idea however, for neither of us had an itinerary, a plan, nor a desire to have anything out in front of us fixed or related to time or calendars, for the spirit moves not to mankind's constructs, and neither Hank nor I worried about whether we would be guided to meet up, if such was the spirit's intention. And indeed, like two needles in a billion-stalk hay stack, we were magnetically drawn to each other on a street in Darjeeling, and have been good buddies ever since.

Things like this 'coincidental' meeting happen anywhere, and anytime, but for some reason such convergences seem to occur with greater frequency, and more improbability, in India, where the veil between the whole and the parts is so transparent that at times it may as well not even exist; for the Mother is the matter into and from which all life comes and goes and finds its way without knowing why nor how. And it is only in a place like India, a land of a billion people, where a man can, for example, walk up to another man, in a random building in an bustling mountain village, and ask "Are you Jack Haas' father?", and there is a good chance the answer will be yes. It was the same with the meeting between Hank and I, for we were guided to come together, and the matrix of Mother India was the perfect living venue in which such subtle bonds like ours could come together in the chaos of the cosmic stew.

A similar occurrence happened on my first trip to India, when I had decided to include a brief visit to Nepal, so as to partake of the mountain culture, the Diwali Festival of Lights, and a glass or two of the rice beer called *chang* which I had heard so much about.

I left from Varanasi on a two day bus journey to Katmandu, and, as always, there were delays and unexpected breakdowns, and so, into the second afternoon it was obvious that we would not make our destination until very late in the evening. Although time had ceased to concern me at that point in my travels, I was admittedly anxious to get to Katmandu because, on top of the reasons mentioned above, I was also holding onto a thread of hope that I would meet up with a woman from Canada, whom I had fallen helplessly in love with during the previous year in Vancouver, although no tight bond had grown between us. And so I had left for India, and she for Thailand, and we had agreed to leave a message for the other person at a specific hotel in Katmandu, were either of us to get there on our separate journeys, so that we could attempt to meet up somewhere, if fate was to have it that way.

Well, to be sure, as providence always provides, I was on that tardy bus heaving its way over the broken dirt roads, winding through the mountains, and every once in a while the bus would stop in one of the sparse hamlets along the route, so as to take on more new passengers, all of whom were now forced to ride on the roof, as the bus was already crammed turgid with humanity inside. A few hours before arriving in Katmandu we stopped again, and I got off to release my bladder, and suddenly ran head long into the woman I adored, who a few hours earlier had gotten on top of the very bus I had been on for almost two days now, but I hadn't noticed because she had been sent up top. And so I had been riding along for the past many hours, anxious to know if I would ever see my heart's desire again, and she had been riding but a few feet above me all the while, and all you can do when the loving universe works such magic upon you is throw up your arms in bewildered hallelujahs, and …make love.

Things like this happen, to be sure. A similar story comes from a very good friend of mine who was in India alone a few years after that episode of mine, and she was on a bus heading through the plains when she got to talking to another westerner sitting in the seat beside her. It turned out, as they soon realized, that they were both from western Canada, had mutual acquaintances, and, in fact, were cousins who had never before met, though they knew of each other.

Oh, the ties are deep and unbreakable in the magic carpet woven by the invisible weaver who plays each thread into the unimaginable pattern desired at any specific place, at any specific time.

The spirit runs as thick as matter, and is matter, and all the separation and agony of the world are merely patterns in the living design, and the union and joy are but colors in those patterns which are not separated from the carpet, nor weaver, nor wearer, nor loom.

To continue though, having been guided to meet up with Hank in Darjeeling, I decided to join him and a few others on a ten-day reconnaissance trip into the Niora Gorge, a primitive valley in the lesser populated region of northern Bengal.

There were six of us who hiked into the valley from a nearby village, where we followed a river up to its source, and then traversed along a ridge at about three-thousand meters of elevation, walking on ancient yak trails, sleeping in bamboo shepherd's huts amidst gigantic rhododendron forests, and all the while being flabbergasted by the pristine beauty of one of India's last unlogged and unpeopled valleys.

It was a tremendous Himalayan adventure, not only because of the wilderness experience in the ancient land, but largely due to the presence and character of Hank himself, a big-bearded Canadian madman who, for the last fifteen years had spent six months every winter doing biological and ethnographic research in the mountains of India and Nepal. He had scoured the lands, journeying by foot, skis, bus, jeep, and elephant, to the most remote reaches of this timeless land, and had some fantastic tales to tell. For example: he claimed to have seen the stuffed remains of a small yeti, somewhere in a little mountain village in western Nepal, and then told how the mountain folk of Nepal know of hundreds of other 'little creatures'- the likes of which we call gnomes and goblins- and were as certain of these beings as they were of the sun.

Though it was not Hank's stories of other beings which were the most entertaining, but those which he related of himself. Like the time he was asked never to return to a certain Buddhist monastery after he was caught ogling a western woman's breasts, who was sitting near him during a 'closed-eye' meditation, at which point the lama became irate and declared that Hank was a pig from the fourth realm of hell.

Another time Hank spoke of beating up bandits who sought to rob him on one of the mountain routes which lay far into the hinter regions, but who failed because Hank was a towering, unbeatable force of a man.

Hank had hundreds of personal yarns and anecdotes from his journeys throughout the mystic land, but one in particular springs to mind for its color and absurdity. Hank narrated how he and a buddy, who had joined him on an

expedition into the rarely traveled areas of Uttar Pradesh, stumbled into a hidden cave where they were suddenly in the presence of a naked holy man who was sitting on the bare ground in the lotus position, with one hand held high in the air, and his penis tied in a knot around his massive beard. Note, I did not say his beard tied around his penis, and neither did Hank. It was a unique sight, to be sure, and one which might have caused anyone else on the planet to either kneel down in veneration to the yogi, or instead to leave quietly, out of respect for this sadhu who had most likely been sitting that way for years. Not Hank though. Oh no, he had seen every sort of mystery and inexplicable event known to mankind during his sojourns in the wondrous land, and so he did what he could not avoid doing- which is the one thing that, if ever he were to be called a saint, it would be for this- he burst out laughing. But it wasn't just a quick giggle at the absurd sight, and then on to more proper behavior. No way. Hank is as unbridled, unquenchable, and unabashed as they come. He was soon into uncontrollable howls, eventually falling to the ground in tears and laughter, and having to roll out of the cave and crawl out of the valley on all fours, as the hilarity possessed and weakened him like a child bursting with painful delight. Apparently his mirth was so contagious that his buddy was also on all fours with him, and unable to halt the stream of tears and hoots of unstoppable glee bursting through him. In fact, the two of them laughed for no less than two hours, at which point they were far away from the cave, where they slowly collected themselves.

Knowing Hank as I know him, and having been shown by him a great number of times that one of the essential ways of making it through the peril, stupidity, and pain of life, is to walk always with a light heart, I can bear witness *in absentia* to this happening, for Hank is the laughing saint who heals the world of its insanity and troubles with his lunacy and comic way. And though he is a very serious and caring man at times, he has trod upon this anguishing earth for so long, and seen such wonder and horror, that it seems somewhere along the way he walked out of the fires laughing, with sparks dancing in his eyes, and merriment cascading from his jowls, and for that I applaud and cherish him.

It is this foolish wisdom which I find so often sadly lacking within myself. The seriousness and outright weight of this life has often burdened me beyond what was necessary or healthy, so much so that at one time in my life, when I was deep into the muck and gore of existence, and could see no way out, my *anima* came to me in a dream, with the intent of showing me how to fly. In the dream she began floating upward, at which point she yelled out what I understood perfectly at the time- as one understands things perfectly in dreams- "Everything is light! Everything is light!" And I awoke knowing that the word 'light' is a *triple entendre*, and that the light which dissolves darkness is the same as the lightness which is not heavy, which is the same as the light-heartedness required to rise above the quagmire of struggle and concern. Indeed, I saw quite clearly then that the finished soul rises like a lotus out of the mire, and they rise out …laughing.

And it was this same light- the light with three meanings- that I also knew would, if anything could, dissolve the manifold darkness within me which at times bored, oppressed, and blinded me to the privilege and delight of our blessed existence.

I was shown that the light-beings which we are, are only light enough to fly if we lighten up within. But to this day I have yet to find that essential lightness within myself, or any other, except in that whimsical, beautiful, and foolish wiseman- Hank, the laughing saint of the Himalayas.

Writing all of this down makes me wonder if in fact the world in which we live is already one designed for laughter and joy, and it is only my own misconceptions and false efforts that make it seem out of whack. And perhaps this is why twice in this lifetime God has come to me and unequivocally declared- "There is no problem!"

To be sure, I quickly rejoined that, from where I was standing, there were heaps of problems, though I can't argue with God, for when finally I entered unwittingly into God-consciousness, years later, during a shamanic journey on the discarnate wings of psychedelic mushrooms, there certainly were no problems, and, if there were …they were hilarious.

There is no problem. The only problem is how to live without a problem. And that is a problem, for, at this point in the evolution of our species, humanity seems determined to cause its own grief, however obvious or obscure.

I have been coming to this notion for a while- that since most of our problems are self-created, true wisdom does not lie in solving problems, but in not causing them. Yet this type of *via negativa* is a truly subtle art, far too difficult for most base egos to sense or consider as an answer to the self-created conundrums and confusions which plague most lives. It is a true finesse, and one for which I claim no perfection- to live subtly, acceptingly, and consciously enough to cause ourselves, and therefore others, as little grief as possible- for though this may sound simple, it is perhaps the rarest of accomplishments in our strife-ridden world.

*

eight

Every morning on that trip into the Niora Gorge, just as the sun was coming up, Hank could be seen bolting frantically out of the hut for his morning bowel movement- an alarm clock for the rest of us which was as entertaining as his verbal diarrhea. Of course, over time, India inexorably creates such chaos in one's digestive track. In fact, on our hike out of the valley, after our ten day expedition was over, one of our team member's hemorrhoid's herniated, causing him to walk the rest of the way hobbling like a goose with a golden egg glowing red hot between his legs.

Such happenings are inevitable, however, while traveling about in the third world, where no one is immune from unavoidably developing some form of stomach upset, intestinal parasite, or amoebic dysentery every once in a while.

The two most memorable instances of internal upset I suffered while out and about in this marvelous, mischievous, maddening world, include one

fine May day, when I was sitting on a beach in Gibraltar, after enjoying a hearty British repast which I washed down with a few pints of the Kingdom's finest ales, the likes of which I had longed for every day of my trip to Morocco, from where I had just returned, and where I had unknowingly ingested a healthy dose of some fairly tenacious vermin, which reared up its ugly head in grand, ignominious fashion, as I was sitting unwittingly upon that nice, British-clean beach, and leaned over to fart, and uncontrollably sprayed shit all over the back of my legs. Not a pleasant experience at any time, let alone on a beach dotted with translucent-skinned holiday-makers, none of whom were in the water, because it was May, and Gibraltar might as well be sitting in the North Sea at that time of year for the chill of the water temperature. No matter, I had to bolt from the back of the beach, through the labyrinth of prone bodies, and into the liquid-nitrogen, where I stood belly-button deep and humbly cleaned off my backside, to the curiosity of the crowd, after which I clenched my butt cheeks together, and waddled like a penguin back to my hotel room in Algeciras, Spain, where I spent the next four days spontaneously evacuating on the common throne.

It was an ego-reducing experience, to be sure, but still a mere slap on the backside compared to the kick in the crotch I received a few years later, during a forty-hour ride from Delhi to Kashmir, on a ramshackle old bus, full of angry Muslim men who were continually getting badgered by the Indian army at the omnipresent check-points we had to go through due to the armed uprising in the area.

In this second instance I had been toughing out a bad case of belly-ache and rectal discomfort as we lurched our way along the serpentine mountain highway towards Srinagar, on the last leg of our epic. A young Muslim fellow had befriended myself and a few other westerners, and was interpreting conversations between us and the driver. He was a good chap, whom at one point was curious to see my passport, which I handed to him. Soon after doing so I felt a surge of labor pains shoot from my stomach to my sphincter, and I knew I was about to give birth to a gruesome mudslide, on that bathroomless bus bound for a war-torn piece of heaven. I quickly asked the young Muslim fellow to beg the driver to pull over, which the driver refused to do, because the road was narrow and winding and we would be sitting ducks for other trucks coming along if we stopped. My entreaty had drawn the interest of the entire bus, most of whom seemed delighted at the thought of watching a spindly North American kid make a mess of his trousers. I had to use every ounce of strength I could muster to hold my rectum closed and stave off the breaking dam. And it was at the height of my anguish, when, perfectly choreographed, the young Muslim fellow, leafing through my passport, came to my photo and name, which caused him to hold it aloft, and, in great astonishment and glee, loudly announce- "His name is Jack Ass! His name is Jack Ass!" Which, as you can imagine, was impossible to deny at that moment.

I had my revenge, in a way, however, as I did not fill my pants on that bus, because, and only because, we came to another check-point within a few minutes after my alias had been unfortunately divulged. What happened is that I ran off the bus as soon as we were stopped, and made it quite apparent to the Indian soldiers what I was in need of, and was quickly directed to an outhouse

about twenty meters away from the bus. After cathartically purging into the open pit below, I noticed that there was neither tap nor bucket of water on hand with which to wash my backside, as per the Indian way. Luckily I had a security package of toilet paper on me, and cleaned myself up the old western way, and left the outhouse. That was when the soldier, who was standing near the bus, looked towards me, knowing there was no water in the outhouse with which to wash my hands, and he made a 'want-to-wash-your-hands' signal to me, rubbing his hands together and motioning towards a nearby tap, to which I nonchalantly shook my head, and, to the disbelief of the officer, and, I hope, the whole spectating bus, I marched right back onto the bus, with what he and they must have assumed were shit covered hands. Take that you scoundrels. Make an ass of me and I'll do you one better.

I can't imagine what the other passengers thought of me, and it didn't matter, because the bus arrived in Srinagar soon after that, where I rented a wonderful houseboat run by a fantastic man. And the agony was over.

I sat alone later that night on the deck of that beautiful houseboat, on brilliant Lake Dal, in that mysterious land of Kashmir, soaked in wonder, and listening to the prayer songs of the old Muslim men come wafting over the water towards me from a mosque across the way. Rarely have I ever endured such a journey, and rarely have I endured such ecstasy and anguish at the experience of the unbelievable piety and sound coming upliftingly over the water to me; I was in ecstasy because I was there to hear it, and in anguish because no one was there to hear it with me. But that is life. You have to take the good with the bad or you get neither. If you want to eat, you've got to accept some shit.

And yet my best 'shit story' does not contain a momentous encounter with a fecal flood, but exactly the opposite. I'm speaking of the first ten days on of one of my trips to India- ten days in which I did not have a single bowel movement, which, to be sure, is a record on that continent of incontinence.

I had arrived in Madras as I always arrived on my extended overseas journeys- sick and lovesick. I had said goodbye to my lover of that time, had flown away indefinitely, and en route had been infested with a vicious bug during a two-hour stopover in Seoul, Korea, which caused me, by the time I arrived in Madras, to be in a feverish delirium.

I slept the first night on the cement floor of the Madras airport, and then took a rickshaw to a hotel in the city where I lay awake in agony for three days and nights, at the end of which I decided that if I was going to get better, it was not going to happen in such a barbaric metropolis, and so I made my way to the train station, bought a sleeper seat, and headed north towards my intended destination- the holy beach town of Puri, where I imagined a little sea breeze and a bit of ganja might ease the pain.

Upon arriving in Puri, a day or so later, I paid for a few days in a hotel, and then went to cash some traveler's checks at a nearby bank. That was when I found out that none of the banks in the area would cash Canadian traveler's checks. I was suddenly a very, very poor man, an untouchable, and had barely enough *rupees* left to buy a ticket for the next train to Calcutta- which wasn't leaving for another four days. And so I sat in that bed-bug ridden hotel room, ravaged both internally and externally by vermin I could not even see, aching from the love I had left forever across the other side of the ocean, and virtually

penniless, existing on a few samosas per day. It was a good lesson, but one which would not come to fruition until I finally boarded the train headed slowly north, and it pulled into Calcutta, two days late, as per usual, and, in my delirium, I allowed myself to be misguided onto the wrong ferry across the Hooghly River, and then, soon after, I was caught in the slamming doors of a subway- which I had to take since the ferry had left me nowhere near where I needed to be- because the doors I had been standing near would not open at my stop, and I was forced to charge through the crowded train to the next car, but then almost got carried away by the subway, because, although I was able to get through the doors before they closed, my backpack was caught on the inside, and no way to pull us apart, though I finally broke free in a feverish burst of violence. Then I wearily made my way to the hotel district where I was informed by the clerks at every front door that all the rooms were full, at which point I was broken and emaciated, and must have looked that way, because a young British trollop, who had been on the same train as I, took pity on me and offered to share her room, for which I was greatly thankful. But I still didn't have a *rupee* on me because the banks in Calcutta do not change traveler's checks either- you have to go to special 'money changers'- and with only a half an hour left before those closed for the evening I left my bag with the Brit and sped off, only to be misdirected a number of times again, until finally, with only a few minutes to spare, I arrived at the money changer's window and swapped a couple of traveler's checks for a few thousand *rupees*. I was saved. I may have been ill, famished, lost, loveless, and alone, but now I had money, and the sense of security it gave me allowed me to saunter serenely back toward the hotel, to stop for a victory soda at an outdoor stand, and then, at the moment I was thinking how safe I was, and how everything was going to be fine now that I had money again, I was smacked on the head by a massive wooden sign which came flying out of nowhere to strike me- one out of a billion people- and steal that assurance and calm out from under me with a near concussion. But that was all it took- ten days of sickness, poverty, despair, confusion, lostness, infestation, and now injury- that was all it took for me to learn what I was supposed to learn after ten days when I did not take a shit because I was either too ill or too poor to create the excess we have come to call shit- that was all it took for me to know that money cannot guarantee security, and the goose-egg left on my forehead after that was proof enough for me.

Oh, the spirit casts its gentle and not-so-gentle lessons down upon its cherished victims, and, to be sure, though most teachings are unpleasant, and, if not so, are humiliating, the ego and false understandings must be ever diminished, ever weakened, and ever broken in order for such simple wisdoms to penetrate our brutish craniums. Make that- *my* brutish cranium.

*

nine

There is a shift which occurs in life, a transition from the 'heading-out' stage, to the 'return' stage. I say that we begin the heading-out part of our separate journeys the moment we are born, as each of us sends ourselves out into the world of experience and challenge, building up a repertoire of acquaintances, characters, and other spirits which we meet along the way; and then we begin to 'return' when we stop venturing out into the world for learning and stimulus, and instead turn inward so as to process and debrief ourselves on what we found in the heading-out period. The latter stage is one of sorting and sifting through all the characters and experiences which we have assimilated into our souls during the former stage, bringing some of these aspects to the fore, while subordinating and rejecting others, as each of us attempts to find the perfect assortment and combination necessary to be whole, all the while slowly sailing back to the source of our origin, thus completing our life's journey.

I assume most people enter into the return phase around mid-life, which is why a crisis occurs for many at this time- because the soul is beginning to look the other way, towards home, and is tired of all the struggles and foreign adventures in the manifest. This shakes a person up who has come to identify themselves as the one who is heading-out, and who may have forgotten the place from whence they set off.

It seems to me that I turned around pretty early in life, at about twenty-seven years of age, for whatever reason I am not sure. I know that life in society and the goals it projects began to grow pale within me, and then went out completely, and all I was left with was a floundering ship, seemingly piloted by an invisible helmsman on an incredibly circuitous course home. I could say, in fact, that my whole life has been nothing but a journey home, only I had no idea where that might be, I merely knew that I had not found it amongst men.

In fact, trying to find a place in the world where I would belong was like trying to eat through my rectum, and shit through my mouth. And though the world had invented suppositories and emetics, these placebos led only to self-sodomy or ineffective purge.

When I ate of the world, I neither ingested, nor digested, I bled. I bled from the bosh and distractions of the day. My belly was full of society's poisons, and yet a great hunger still swallowed me whole.

The more the world disappointed me, or perhaps the more I disappointed the world, the more I retreated into myself. I sort of fell backwards for lack of trying to stand in the slight breeze.

People say that I became old too soon, that I surrendered too early, but that is the view of those accepting a world in which men tear each other to pieces for scraps. I simply stopped caring, and turned away.

By the time I was thirty years old and living in India, I felt like an eighty-five year old man, sitting on his porch, staring off to nowhere, having lost all aspirations to take part in the world.

I guess I fell away from it all too easily, lost my grip or something. What happened, I suppose, is that I could see how everything made by mankind

was corruptible, that it was all in a state of chronic crumbling, and it was only through mankind's frantic efforts that things appeared to be well-ordered and in a state of homeostasis, but if you took away society's exhaustive labors for even a single day, the whole unsupported edifice would begin to tumble. And, as I saw it, nothing humans had produced was worth serving nor maintaining, and I was not willing to assist in the demented efforts to uplift and keep replacing the cards as they continued to fall from the house. I preferred to see it crumble. I preferred destruction. I preferred to see the orderly and yet intensely precarious structure fall into ruin, and see then what my fellow humans really were made of.

The shift, though, was an arduous one for me, as I slowly tacked and turned in the quiescent doldrums. At times I thought perhaps that I was missing something important- some vision, or passion, or trait which would have attached me to life and brought more excitement and vigor into my daily affairs. And yet, in a way, it was my distaste for the constructs of mankind that was itself the seed of a more integral, worldly interest. I say worldly, because with nothing created by mankind left to fall back upon, I was quickly alerted to the only things that remained- the earth, and the heavens. And so, in the act of distilling out the dross from the ore, so to speak, I was left with naught but the ingredients necessary to complete the alchemical stew: The earth, the heavens, and …me.

As such, during the shift, I instinctively fell into a moratorium from all concept and care. I lived on no truths for a time, mentally starving the world out of me; I fasted from 'what is', and was nourished on the wholesome fat of ignorance. I devoured the hunger in me, hungering without respite, until that hunger gnawed itself away. I was not satisfied, but I no longer hungered, for I had disentangled the heart from its losses, the mind from its news, and had unwound my somebodiness into no one.

Oh, many times after the shift began I longed again for life, for even a false meaning to return me to the tangible confusion I left for the intangible confusion I now could not leave; how I wished again to taste the world. But I was already gone. I did not stay. I left that place, unfollowing the path without direction, for I had said goodbye, and turned and walked away from everything. Everything. And when I looked back, searching for the 'me' that I had been, there was nothing left except a life that was no longer mine, passing away before my eyes; I was drowning in mystery. I had looked too far, and finally had no image of myself nor of being.

It was a bizarre, unthinkable, disturbing place that I had gotten to, but I didn't go back, for I realized quickly that the only thing I longingly gravitated toward was the innocent wondering of our unknowable Creator; to sit and stare at nothing and infinity, that was all I wanted. The freedom to slow down, to stop, to exalt; I loved life too much to be busy.

And so I realized that loneliness was the only power I had over the world, and to be lost was the closest thing I could find to freedom, for everything else was a trap, because in the end, there was no solution except to tough it out. To sit with it, to feel it, to accept it, and to throw up my arms once again in agony, resignation, and hallelujah.

It was only in such ghostly solitude, only when I was alone, only when I was lonely, conceptually lonely, that I could dispute the dubious finitude that was myself. It was there, as the mystery engulfed itself in a breathless utopia of intimate strangeness that the tickling communion of grace would trickle down through my innocent nothingness. The methodology was easy- I simply forgot what I was told to remember.

And this …this was the death I came to die. For truly it is a death to lose all need for the world; to do nothing, to think nothing, to be nothing. Yet a single moment of honest apathy is worth a thousand years of reckless striving.

Thus, as if the verdant and bloody field of Kurukshetra itself were laid out beneath me, I fought the world without fighting and did battle without battling, simply by holding firmly onto apathy- my aegis ...my shield against the tolerable. Which is to say: a miraculous privilege happened to me one day- boredom; I had tasted life, and found it bitter.

And so I came eventually to the point where I had narrowed my focus away from the world; I had closed my eyes and yet kept moving until the only thing I could sense was myself stumbling blindly. And though all around me was a boisterous crowd, excited and chattering, and heading the other way, I did not run to view what caused exuberance in the masses. *I kept on going towards where I happily ...had no idea*.

I did not so much as even look in the direction of the bold, glorious norm, but struck out instead within myself, and haunted down lost passageways, makeshift as if all my own. As if to solemnly stare through infinity, onto this glazed incongruous known, was now mine, and mine alone.

I neither acquiesced, nor adhered to the fake conclusions driven hard upon us all by the godless hordes about. I was in the war, but I was no warrior, only an indifferent soldier gone AWOL in the glorious night; I was fugitive from both sides of the fight, caught in the soul's no-man's land, like a sacrifice the spoiled Gods refused to take.

And yet I still took part in everything. I went everywhere, thought every thought, loved every love, and suffered every pain, like all the rest, but none of it was mine- I did not belong and that is why I belonged. So you see where I was at then.

It was a strange concoction of merriment and writhing, in which the joy of life made the hurt that much more painful. The more I fled the thorns, the more I got pricked. The more I tried to grab the roses, the more I got pricked. The thicket grew around and through me. The more I ate, the more I breathed, the more I thought, hoped, attempted, or cursed, the more I got pricked. Still I fought hard against the crime of our earthly destinies.

At one point in my life, while I was back in North America, and experiencing a similar estrangement from all that is, I was compelled to head out one cold and miserable February day from Vancouver, towards my haven on the coast- Flores Island. It took me two full days of hitchhiking and bussing to finally make it to the little hamlet of Tofino where I caught a Native-operated water-taxi out to the island. Upon arriving, just as the sun was going down, I began a two-hour hike to the far, wave-beaten west coast, and the destination of my pilgrimage.

I remember the darkness and mist falling upon me as I slogged onward and entered the last part of the trail leading to a secluded beach where few others ever came, and so it remained a natural bastion of isolation and purity. And I remember that only a few hundred metres into the bush my flashlight went dead. And I remember at first stumbling about trying to refind the trail, and not being able to find it, and then spinning around thinking I could hear the ocean, and following the sound, then realizing it was only the wind in the trees, which meant I had been flailing in an unknown direction, and then I began stumbling through marsh and swamp, and climbing over endless deadfall and through ferns and salal, and imagining what a torturous night it was going to be in this wet and freezing west-coast jungle. And I remember finally coming to a stand-still from lostness and exhaustion, and leaning against a great tree, and looking up to the heavens, and uttering the words I suppose I was meant to utter from the outset of my journey- "OK, OK, you've got me now." And I gave up. And I remember how in the moment of that acceptance and surrender I was as if wiped clean, as if the prodigal part of me had been returned again to the home of my beginnings, and I was reunited with the source again, and suddenly without thinking or questioning, or wondering about direction or distance, I started off going again, with a newfound determination through the undergrowth, for I had returned to the spirit by giving up the ghost. And I remember finally making it through to the edge of the forest, and stepping out onto a darkened beach, and realizing that I had come out just a few feet away from where I had intended to end up, and despite my frantic confusion I had been guided through it all along, and all I had needed to do was surrender and allow it to be so. And I remember the cheers of gratitude and relief that leapt out of my mouth right then, flying off into the empty night for no one to hear but the trees, the ocean, my God and me.

And then I remember arising early the next morning, and feeling that I had still some fight and unpeace left within me, and in the damp and bite of the west-coast winter I set off down the massive beach, as I had done in this very place so many times before, walking up and down to beat the taint and thickness out of me. And somewhere along the middle of the day I remember turning to face the ocean, and in the empty, capitulative openness which comes from such solipsistic mortifications, throwing up my arms and asking why I had needed to come all the way out here, again, why had I to face the loneliness and discomfort again, why I had been told- "Get ye to the sea my son", again. And I remember how obvious and easily the answer wafted through my mind; a simple answer, one that a child could have told me, but an answer I would not have understood until I had been whipped and frozen by the world, had lain down and been lifted up and lain down again because I could not do what I was supposed to do, which was the answer to my lostness all along, and the answer was- "Just Be!"

And as I fell softly into the rhythm of myself once again, and calmly began to walk along the beach, I realized my lesson was over. And I strolled back to camp, packed up my belongings, and prepared to venture forth again into the world of men from which I had just been driven, only a day earlier, but now I came back to share the commandment which had been spoken to me from the sky- "Just *Be*!"

For there is no moment, no event, no grain of sand, no laughter, no death or healing, no thought or feeling, no tear or yearning out of place. The cosmos is eternally complete. There is no problem if only we would just be. That is all that is asked of us. As simple, and difficult, as that.

*

ten

Prior to the shift of which I have just spoken, life was not such an overbearing weight pressing down upon my furtive countenance, nor hounding me day in and day out. Oh no, I had my day of revelry and laughter, to be sure. And by that I mean I had many years of ribaldry, tomfoolery, pranksterism, and otherwise attempting to cause others as much brotherly grief as possible. And when the final accounts are taken, those years of uproarious delinquency might actually balance out against the debits of melancholy with enough credits of fatuity that my ledger will be clean.

Much jocularity existed in my life during my early years, and reached a sustained crescendo while I was in university, for by then academia had turned sour for me, and I had become painfully bored of the whole mess, and then downright contemptuous, which is why I turned swiftly away from those hackneyed ways and took up my higher calling of beer swilling, partying, and causing as much catastrophic turmoil to my mates as I could muster.

In a way I must have already made the decision *against* studies, and *for* carousing, on the first day of frosh week, because upon arriving in the massive co-ed dorm in which I was to live out my first year of university, I was asked by one of the floor supervisors to assist a few other freshmen to move a large number of cases of beer from the lockup into a common room where soon the inaugural festivities were to begin. And so I trundled up many flights of stairs with the others, and into the lockup, and when we came out- each of us toting forty-eight bottles of beer- the rest of the crew turned right, and I turned left, and ran right back down those same flights of stairs and into my dorm room, and suddenly I was a couple of cases of beer to the good, which, combined with the two forty-ounce bottles of Jamaican 151 proof rum I had brought in my suitcase, made for a fair beginning to the wild and wonderful frosh week about to begin. The mayhem had started.

Soon enough I was linked to a gang of jokers and jackals, and if we weren't scaling the outside of buildings in drunken bravado, we'd be hiding on one of the upper balconies, and showering cabbies and cops with a sortie of eggs. And if that turned monotonous we'd be covering people's rooms in shaving cream, maple syrup, or wet flour.

Or perhaps we'd forsake the unrelenting desire to cause material grief, and would instead enter upon some well thought-out psychological damage, like sneaking into a person's dorm room in the middle of the night, then slowly placing an obnoxious sounding music tape into their stereo cassette, cranking the

volume to full, and then getting out of the room before the silent leader on the tape had ended and the apocalypse begun.

It was astonishing, after such an event, if one of our hapless victims came bursting out of their room in a fit of anguish or rage, to see how bone-white their flesh had become, after being awakened unexpectedly in such traumatic fashion.

Unfortunately most of the victims caught on quickly and would be sure to lock their doors at night, a factor which we soon got around, however, by hiding wind-up alarm clocks in remote areas of their rooms, sometimes in the deepest recesses of the hanging ceilings, while the luckless sots were being distracted out of their rooms, during the day, by a comrade.

I would lie in my own bed later that night fighting off the giggles while thinking of the alarm firing off at 3:00 am, and the ensuing search and accompanying agony and fury involved. It was no less than pure joy to bring such catastrophic novelties into another's life. Pure joy.

The next year I moved into a nine-bedroom house, which left the other poor occupants as sitting ducks, for now even locked front doors could not keep me and my accomplices out, for the villainy lived within. This caused the inhabitants to suffer ongoing calamities such as having their toothpaste tube injected with Preparation H, which, if you know anything about that hemorrhoid ointment, has quite a severe burning effect when spread upon soft tissue.

And if that wasn't enough, and it wasn't, I was in the habit of carrying around with me a small tube of oral novocain gel, which came out of the tube clear, and therefore could be squeezed inconspicuously amongst the bristles of an unguarded toothbrush, without the owner noticing- not, that is, until they had finished brushing their teeth and the entire inside of their mouth had been frozen numb- a startling and inexplicable occurrence which caused no little amount of hypochondria and worry.

No one was safe nor immune from such antics, and though I certainly received my fare share of retribution from the victims, the assaults upon my well-being simply spurred me on further.

As such, one night my pernicious comrades and I completely outdid ourselves.

It happened one evening, during my second year of institutional torture, when four of us were living in the basement quarters of that big nine-bedroom house.

A buddy and I snuck stealthily on all fours into one of the lower bedrooms occupied by a woman friend of ours, while she was asleep in bed. But this time not only did we set the alarm to go off in the middle of the night; we also set the clock forward, so that when it rang the clock would read 7:30 am. Time to get up.

Furthermore we hung a light-bulb outside of the house, near her window, to simulate morning, and a few hardy, determined cretans and I stayed up until 3:00 am, sitting in our night-clothes, in the downstairs kitchen, and eating cereal, so that when her alarm went off, and she thought it was 7:30 in the morning, she got up, had breakfast with us, did her hair, made her lunch, and left for school soon afterward.

Boy did we pay for that one, though it didn't deter us, not even slightly. As much psychological confusion and damage as we could mete out without doing personal injury- that was our unwritten *modus operandi*.

Another strategic assault upon an individual's peace and self-confidence came in a few bold maneuvers against a wiry, young Bermudian fellow who had come to Canada for his university education and who was rooming with one of my mates at the time. This bloke returned to Bermuda every Christmas, spring-break, and summer holiday, and he once told us that everyone who entered Bermuda, be they citizens or visitors, was subjected to a thorough search of their luggage, as the authorities were painstakingly neurotic about drug smuggling.

One night before he flew home, this fellow had passed out from an excess of drink, which allowed us to sneak the filthiest, most horrific, triple-x pornographic magazine we could find into his suitcase, of which he knew nothing, until he was standing in the Bermuda airport, with a brutal hangover, in front of the customs officer going through his bags, and suddenly she had the periodical in hand and was holding it up in somber scrutiny, at which point the poor wretch became mute with disbelief.

That was a good one, but we weren't through with him yet. He was still smiling too much. Thus I took it upon myself to enter his bedroom whenever I was over visiting my buddy, who was his roommate, and the unfortunate lad was out, the intent of which was to turn his waterbed heater up to full blast, which, if you know anything about water, heat, and convection, would cause the temperature to rise slowly, but then become a steaming cauldron which would not cool down for days after the mischief had been discovered. Often he was pissed at me for a few hours when he discovered that his pancreas was overheating, but he soon got over it and all was forgotten. That is, until the time his roommate and I installed an extra, hidden heater under his water mattress, and ran the electric cord out the back corner, and into an unused plug, and then turned both heaters on full blast. And my God did we howl.

About a week later the Bermudian lad was in a fit of rage, claiming that I must have broken his waterbed heater because he had discovered that it had been turned up, again, a few days earlier, and although he had turned it down, the water was still a boiling vat, upon which he was writhing in sweat and discomfort every night.

Well, in the practiced, matter-of-fact presence which I had come to embody at times requiring such histrionics, I simply denied having broken his heater, which was true, and dismissed his charges as pure libel.

Three weeks later my partner in crime and I entered the abject fellow's room when he was out, and found the heater we had surreptitiously installed under his bed now severed from its wiring harness, as if our victim must have finally stumbled upon it, and in a fit of deranged mania torn it in half, a feat requiring no small amount of determination nor strength, and one which, upon observing the outcome of our games, left us in uncontrollable eruptions of hysterics and cackles, the magnitude of which may have even given Hank, the laughing saint, respect for our zealous and passionate undertakings.

*

eleven

Back in India, a number of years after my ill-fated trip to Puri and Calcutta, which ended in the massive sign descending onto my cranium, I was to meet up again with the same force which had chastened and bludgeoned back then, though in this new encounter I was not to receive a heavy-handed lesson, but instead a blessed gift.

I was on my way down from the Ladakhi plateau, where I had been traveling with my *soror*[23], my mate of a number of years by this point, on this most recent of my visits to the subcontinent.

We were headed back to Delhi, after spending two months together in the high-altitude northern states of Spiti, Lahaul, and Ladakh, including a two-week stay in the state's capital, Leh.

In Leh we had found ourselves in the presence of a Buddha, who was well disguised in the being, personage, and character of the owner of a family-run hotel which we stayed in, on the outskirts of the town. This fellow had never been outside of Ladakh proper, except for a short trip to the city of Jammu. Other than that he had remained in this one area his whole life, and yet he was not only as worldly as any traveler who had spent their whole life on the road, but he also cast forth an otherworldly smile like I had never seen before, nor since. Good God could that man smile. And it was not a smile belonging to the demure, enchanting, Sophia-like grin of the Mona Lisa, but an all-out, ear-to-ear, I-can't-believe-how-great-it-is-to-be-alive, childish, spontaneous, unabashed, tremendous, uplifting smile. That man smiled a smile I had never seen on another person. And I had certainly seen Tibetans, Nepali, and Sherpas smile, and nobody on earth smiles like these folks, as if no other culture has tapped as deeply into the bottomless wellspring of joy hidden but not obstructed by the troubles of the day. In my time amongst those folks I had seen smiles that made me insane with disbelief, because they arose instantly, for only the slightest of reasons, and cast the rapture of existence out at me and wham!, one moment I was face to face with one of those hard-working, somber-seeming mountain folk, and then, in the twinkling of an eye, I was standing in the presence of Bodhidharma himself, whose joyous wisdom now radiated uninterruptedly out of his eyes, jowls, lips, and cheeks, destroying not only me but all agony in that smile's path. Those mountain people can surely smile. Compared to them no one in the western world has ever even smirked, except perhaps the laughing saint, who must have received his mirth osmotically, from so many years in that psychic atmosphere. And yet, all of those delirious, unstoppable, unquenchable, uncanny smiles I had witnessed in my Nepali friends and Tibetan acquaintances over the years were but mere grins of amusement compared to the smiling, unflappable cheer that radiated at me through the face of this humble husband, father, gardener, hotel-owning, bidi-smoking Buddha who killed me with his joy.

That man was a gift, to be sure, but a blessing of a different kind was about to follow, as our stay with him had finally ended, and now my *soror* and I

were on a bus headed south, after which she was to fly back to Canada, and I was to stay on for another ten days in Delhi and continue to write. I was in the midst of a book I had been working on for quite a while, and was in a fever to finish it because I had lost my love-affair with words at the time and was therefore pressed into the uncomfortable position of having to complete what I had begun- a task which I met with the determination and delirium of a runner who knows not when the race which has exhausted him will ever finish.

Luckily the spirit was strong with me, as they say, and must have been feeling a bit of sympathy for my labors, on that journey down from the purified heights to the lowlands, because, although I had relinquished smoking any form of cannabis at that point, our bus was heading through the hash-haven of the Himalayas, the Kullu Valley, where we were planning to stop for a few days and get a room in Vashist before continuing on to Delhi, and I was feeling free from such abstemious mortifications. So I let myself consider revisiting Shiva's cerebral sanctuary as an open possibility, largely because I was seriously worrying that ten days in the tortured metropolis of Delhi was going to be an endurance test for me, as the last time I had been there, writing for months on end, I had escaped barely intact from that punishing, cataleptic wrestling match with the stubborn muses. And so I got to thinking that a little bit of hash might make my stay a little more comfortable. And yet I decided that I would not actually buy any hash, but instead would scour my hotel room, and if I found any chunks or pieces dropped by stoned travelers in the past, I would take this as a blessing, and consider it God's gift to allow me little mental holidays over the next week and a half, so as to survive Delhi during my studious endeavors.

Well, as odds had it, I did find a nice little chunk- about half a gram- of the black gold, which was smeared into the jute mat covering the floor of our room, and I took this as the go-ahead from the spirit. The little nugget was no ingot sized monolith, by any means, but plenty enough to trigger my purified insides into the necessary reactions.

After arriving in Delhi a few days later, my *soror* jumped on a plane, and I booked into a hole-in-the-wall hotel room, in the old part of the city, for the next ten days of writing, reading, typing, editing, and, when each day was finally over, of having a puff of the blessed resin and letting the mind wander away from its prison.

All things come to us, be they good or bad, if we either need or deserve them, for the mirror of the external is always perfectly polished and ever-ready to spontaneously reflect back our internal lives, in manifold ways, so as to symbolically applaud the spirit's intent within the show.

In this case, about five days into my daily labors and evening flights, I was out for a meal and fell to chatting with an Indian Sanskrit scholar and poet, whose name, interestingly enough, was Ashish Dube, which immediately made me think of hashish doobies. Very odd indeed, because I was smoking the hashish I had considered a gift from the spirit, and this was now mirrored perfectly in my acquaintance's name, a name which was not only phonetically similar to my manna, but which in Hindi means: blessing.

All is reflected through all. All is all. We may think this is a piecemeal creation, but to be sure, it is as contiguous as the sky. All things shift and pull, in tune and time with our lives, and all events harbor a greater intention.

It is for this reason that at times I accepted circumstance, allowed that the greater will would administer existence better without my interference, and so I gave back what was not really mine anyways, by relinquishing the knowledge of what I could no longer pretend to understand. At times I chose to be blind and stumbling and guided by another, larger vision, than to continue being directed by my own finite sight.

To be sure, in lesser dimensions I could have easily contained a juvenile longing requiring no such sustained appeasement of being's infinitude, but in higher dimensions I confronted a bewildering apparentness that allowed for no assuaging stimulus, whether harbored or relinquished, simply because I was now obliviously aloft amongst the ubiquitous mystery and its neverending suddenness, and therefore dependent on nothing and interdependent on everything.

For there is nothing on the outside that is not on the inside also. And in the end there are not two worlds clashing at the membrane of the self, but only two aspects of a singular happening, which ebb and flood into each other. And it is we who construct the locks and canals between the two, inhibiting the flow between them, for the finite ego lives at the estuary, while the infinity of God lives at the source.

And so I say that because the God force within us is the same as the God force without, when we harmonize with that singular source, all surrender and rebellion are the same act, and at that point, no matter what goes on, life *is* divine intervention, though it becomes more apparent when we tune our radios to that hidden song.

And yet all those who do blend in and become one with the greater rhythm still know nothing of its meaning, message, nor means, but only that it cannot be heard with the ears, nor described by the mind, but only felt and followed by spirit joined to the heart levered open.

It's all in the rhythm. It's all in the eternal dance dancing to the eternal rhythm in the glory field stretched out ponderously over the soporific veil. It's the rhythm of stillness and pandemonium, harmonizing in the rapture of now. It's when meaning and need shatter into the wantless glow flowing through the static poverty. It is the crush and bend and the unbroken laughter married to the neverending sigh. It is a rapture and a longing danced in the sorrow-soaked ecstasy of life's abandon.

I have danced in that dream where the pentecost and penance rise alongside each other, as two helixes bound in a single strand of awe. As if I came to this realm of flesh for naught but to swim dancing in a medium of love, anger, spirit, pus, urine, milk, flesh, and blood. As if I was born into the entrails of a dying beast, and only in its death did I come to life. As if God's hyenas tore into the carcass of this realm, and as their jaws came crashing through their game, I was set free from death, decay, and all that spoils the cosmic brew. As if to that death which birthed me I now turn back towards, like an astronaut leaving his own solar system for another. I see where I have been, but not where I am going. I know only that through the death from which I was birthed, I learned how to crawl, to walk, to run, and then …how to fly.

*

twelve

All is reflected through all. All is all. These may seem like trite platitudes shot out of an inaccurate weapon at a target so big it cannot be missed, but axioms like these are displayed time and again in the minutiae of the manifest.

I'm thinking, for example, of my time spent dwelling in another room of the Mother's house- the Mother Earth- a year or so after that last sojourn to India. I was camping near the windswept, black-sand beach in the utopic Waipio Valley, on the northeast side of the Big Island of Hawaii. I had hitchhiked with my *soror* from Hilo, up island, to the rim of the Waipio Valley, from where we walked down the precipitous, four-wheel-drive road which leads to the bottom of the vale. There we forded a river, and made our way onto the east-facing, marvelous stretch of black sand, dotted in behind by a sparse forest of ironwood trees.

In looking for an appropriate place to set up our tent, we happened upon an oddly primitive and yet well maintained 8ft×8ft hut, built completely of bamboo. It was seemingly abandoned, and so we set up our tent beneath the awning, and stayed there for the next few days, occasionally gathering avocados, citrus fruits, and macadamia nuts, which we roasted in the hollows of rocks placed in a fire. There was a pure spring bubbling up in a nearby property, from which we gathered drinking water, and so the whole scene began to take on a paradise-like quality, the likes of which only such Caucasians as Robinson Crusoe, or Gilligan had ever before experienced.

After a few days in the valley together, my *soror* had to return to Canada, but I stayed on, camped beneath that bamboo wonder, nibbling upon the fruit of the land, walking the lengthy beach, and reading G.K. Chesterton's biography of St. Francis of Assisi, which I had purchased for a few sheckels earlier at a local market.

I was impressed by St. Francis, that gentle titan who one day simply up and quit the world, but didn't leave. Not Francis, not that unobtrusive zealot. He could have wandered off into the forest alone, and stayed there, and had a merry old time of it basking in the warm and sustaining glow of the spirit, far out and forever beyond the turmoil of the day, but he didn't. Francis stripped himself bare, declared he neither needed nor wanted a single thing from mankind, and then proceeded to live amongst the faithless throng, like a self-enclosed beast, neither needing clothing, nor shelter, nor money, but only Christ and the earth to sustain him. "My brother the wind, my sister the rain", declared Francis, one who had crossed the invisible threshold into the realm of peace and union, and yet remained among all men divided from the source.

St. Francis belonged to both God the Father and also God the Mother- to the spirit and to the earth- which is why he, like Christ, also fled to the solitudes of the Mother, the earth, for his communion with the Father, before returning to a world which was doing its best to belong to neither.

I spent the next few days hanging about in that pacific paradise while polishing off the book. Occasionally locals would pass by for a chat, some of whom made mention of the hut I was staying in, although there seemed to be a fair bit of confusion as to the name of the character who had built it. And it was not until I left the area, climbed back out of the valley, stuck my thumb out for a ride, and was picked up by a woman who lived in the region that I found out the truth. She told me that the man who built the austere hut had once been a high salaried professional in some technological field or other, and then one day, for reasons known only to himself and God, he quit his job, renounced everything, entered the Waipio valley with nothing but a machete and some matches, changed his name to Ken, built his little hut, made clothing out of coconut hair, learned to live off of what Mother Earth provided, and invited anyone faithful or brave enough to come and join him at the place he now called 'Homecoming'. In short, he had pulled off the St. Francis gambit, had walked away from the corruption of mankind, and back to God and the earth, thus bridging the gulf between the spirit and matter, just as his predecessor had done.

It was no great surprise, then, that I had been reading Francis' biography, while unknowingly staying in a hut built by one of his own, or perhaps even an incarnation of that old druid himself, St. Ken of Waipio.

Individuals such as Ken, St. Francis, and Christ, have somehow found within themselves the endurance, tenacity, and passion to live both upon this earth and within the heavens. To live in one of these is enough for most of us, and few, in fact, live in either; most of us exist at the intertidal zone, where neither a house nor a garden is possible due to the flood, nor an ark nor a fishing-line for the ebb. And so we do not really exist at all, because we belong neither to the heavens nor the earth, and are as if fleshless phantoms, or spiritless bodies, aimlessly wafting about without mooring, and blowing about without wings, and wondering why life is so meaningless, so agonizing, so odd. And the answer is because we do not exist- not until we take up our citizenship in the heavens, or build our love upon the earth.

To find our homes in either of these realms would lodge us finally into a life where we might find peace, and beauty, and worth, but then to look upon the likes of Francis, and Christ, and know that they somehow set both their roots on earth, and their wings in heaven, is to understand the distance we still must go in order to be whole.

To walk that diaphanous bridge- wherein the spirit descends into matter, and where matter rises to spirit, and in that union a new quality is born, a new frequency is found, and the cosmic radiations infuse the earth energies with their intimacy, the Mater becomes the Pater, and the pattern enters the matter- to walk that diaphanous bridge is to marry once again the two realms to which our beings belong, and which are united in, and of, and through us.

*

thirteen

I am no Ken, and no St. Francis, have never thought I was, nor tried to be, and am not drawn to- or perhaps am repulsed by- the idea of absolute renunciation. I have mortified and denied myself improperly enough in this lifetime to know that such asceticisms require no small amount of dexterous mastery, which only too easily goes wrong, and therefore I shy away from them, like a child away from fires by which he has previously been scorched. I do, however, believe in our need to live on and with the earth, as well as in and of the heavens.

In fact, the next time I was on the Big Island of Hawaii, I took the opportunity to build a primitive hut of my own. Though it was not at all primitive compared to Ken's, as I used three felled Ohia trees for the frame, a large industrial tarp for the roof and water-catchment system, and about forty feet of greenhouse shade-cloth for the walls, so as to keep the bugs out but allow the ever-blowing Hawaiian breeze in.

When building that little hut I was intending to construct it in such a way that everything was level, firmly rooted in proper joints and bracings, and otherwise fit to fulfil an engineer's specifications. However, although I had learned some mortise and tenon joinery, some cabin building techniques, and a bit of masonry in the past, I soon realized that the only skills I was employing in the creation of my hut were ones I had learned while at play building forts during the summers of my youth, in the forest behind my Grandmother's cottage in upstate New York. I also realized that it was only in my 'adult' life that I had been corrupted by the idea of perfect angles, sheer strength, and building codes, none of which mattered here, nor, I hope, will ever matter, for though I plan someday to construct a more substantial abode for myself, somewhere on this marvellous earth, I vow within myself to use as little modern technology and practicality as I can, and instead of building a home, I vow to build a fort.

Anyway, it took me only a day or so to create a liveable Tarzan's hideaway, in which I took up residence for nearly two months, near a Hawaiian holy site, with views of both Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa, and surrounded on all sides by wild bamboo orchids and a few mango trees. The hut was on a parcel of land which my father, brother and I had planned to purchase together, as land was incredibly cheap on the south-east side of the Big Island, due to Pele's[24] unpredictable landscaping impulses. Unfortunately the deal fell through because the bluffer who owned it reneged at the last moment- like all bluffers, who say one thing but do another and are so full of excuses and explanations employed so as to sanitize their inability to keep their word- and I was left to walk away from my prized hut, my fort, and wander out and away again, into the crazy, fabulous, implausible world.

But before that all happened I lived in the hut, on the earth, for over two months, and because of my newfound connection with the earth's energies, I was, without intention, bridging the very gap which divides us all inwardly, and so divides the earth and heavens outwardly.

I say this for a number of reasons. Firstly, because during those two months I was almost completely alone, and yet so grounded by the earth that I must have been capable, at that time, of receiving a visitation by a force which would have incinerated me had I been unattached to anything capable of buffering the charge. I am speaking, of course, of God, who came to me in a dream one night, wherein I was suddenly speaking to a being wearing an amorphous mask, which, after a while, he, or she- for the person was quite androgynous- took off the mask, and, lo and behold, it was God explaining to me that he, or she does not show his, or her face to many people, because, it seemed, he, or she was saying, no one was all that interested anymore. Well, to be sure, I was interested.

This may all sound like a bit of crack-pot stage theatrics, but on the day after the dream, or visitation, as you will, I had resumed reading a spiritual book which I had started a week or so earlier, and it all of the sudden made reference to Joseph Campbell's book series, *The Masks of God*, which was a synchronicity that further validated my experience.

Campbell would make another literary appearance in my life a few weeks later, after a night in which I had experienced a most lucid and convincing event I can only describe as 'moon consciousness'. This came about as I was sitting under a full moon, and sensing without a doubt that I was within the moon's consciousness- that She was cascading Her consciousness down upon me, upon the land, and upon all others under the light of the night. It was a very strange reckoning, a very compelling connection, and a very telling episode which made me understand why civilization, specifically city culture, is as crazed and out of balance as it is: there is no moon consciousness in the city, because the electric lights completely obliterate not only Luna's visual amplitude, but also her psychic effect on humanity, and therefore those in the city live only under sun consciousness, which becomes oppressive and despotic when not balanced out by the moon.

Soon after that experience I was to once again come upon a book, this one by Joseph Campbell himself, titled *Transformation of Myth Through Time*, and I had it in my hand for only a few minutes before I skimmed ahead and landed on a chapter in which an alchemical drawing, originally brought to attention by W.B. Yeats, showed an altogether unknown 'cycle' of the moon, which was a counterpart to the cycle of human lifetime, and in the drawing the 15th night of the moon represented the 35th year of a person's lifetime, and was significant in that it represented the moon and sun in perfect balance.[25]

I was thirty-five years old, and things were moving very rapidly and profoundly for me at that time, for, as I said, I was finally grounded by the earth, and so the electrical energy of the spirit could move freely into me.

Also in Campbell's book was a description of a person's kundalini rising, which was another synchronicity, arriving to me in short order, due to the fact that during my time in the hut, without any effort or intention on my part, my own kundalini began to spontaneously rise up. This was a process which occurred over several weeks, and, despite various dreams and intuitions, I did not know what was happening until my heart chakra opened up in a burst of empathy, and then I could feel the serpent writhing within, passing up through my pineal gland, and heading for my crown.

Slowly, ever slowly, the serpentine energy had climbed its way up my chakras, while I changed nothing in my day to day life, eating what I always ate, drinking beer, smoking the occasional joint, and going mad with loneliness, wonder, confusion, and joy. Business as usual.

It was in those lower, grounded reelings, where I was cast about in my usual cataleptic fits of spiritual exhaustion, attempting relentlessly to escape myself that I was also sinking further and further into the filth and the flesh, and only because of this was I eventually …able to fly. Ah, to fly- to erupt without any movement, to rise without going high. I flew inside myself, through the infinite space of unmeaning, through the lift and the glide of just being.

I suddenly belonged to existence with such tangibility, such connection, such passion, that in that blessed bind I implausibly found a hidden release; as if I could not escape the flesh without becoming flesh completely; as if the context must devour the Word, in order for the contextless soul to go free.

Which is to say that I stopped *only* dreaming of the flesh, and I became *also* the flesh. I had to take on the flesh so as to take up the flesh, for the Assumption occurs when the flesh is assumed. And I, divested from the thought structures of mankind, entered into the bridal chamber where naked Beingness and naked Non-beingness unrecognized their differences and were unified into one.

The fact that I changed nothing in my life and had my kundalini awaken and rise of its own accord, makes me wonder if all the postures and purifications espoused by the so-called experts are as useless as every other piece of advice applauded and lauded by the back-slapping dilettantes so prevalent in the new age and spiritual industries these days.

In fact, I know of a woman whose kundalini rose up completely in a few minutes while she was at work and had never considered coaxing it forth. But forth it came, out of the root, up the spine, and blasted out the top of her head, which is how it ended for me, blowing out through the top of my head, which made me feel like I had no head, but was suddenly immersed in the entire consciousness of the unseparated cosmos, where the self becomes all, the *I* becomes everything, and nothing is distinguished from another for the division has ended with the disintegration of the wall.

It was a staggering openness which I experienced then, but which escaped from me soon afterwards, because, as I said, I had to leave the grounding of my little earth-floor hut, due to the bluffer, and fly back to Vancouver in the middle of winter, and suddenly my flesh was now separated from contact with the earth by impervious layers of pavement, concrete, wood, tile, rubber soles, and socks. My contact with the grounding Mother had been removed, and with that gone the winged serpent had nowhere to hold. A few weeks later I began experiencing excruciating pains along my spine, and then had a dream in which a huge snake was cut in half, and I knew then the peril of our distance from the earth, the ground, the Mother. My kundalini had risen, and then had been broken in two, and it would be a long while before that chakra energy had healed enough to send the little serpent writhing upward again.

Modern culture is so far removed from contact with the earth that it is no wonder we exist like frantic phantoms in an astral chaos, for there is no grounding in modern life, and without grounding- and by that I am being

absolutely literal- without living upon, touching, and being one with the ground, the polarity of our possible wholeness is thrown way out of balance, and the spirit soars like a kite without a hold, a bird without a roost, and a ghost without a fleshy home.

I say this because never have I felt such otherworldly peace as I did in that hut, when I lived on and became intimate with this earth, this flesh, and this body which are one.

We must live in direct contact with the earth once again if the roots required by the wings are to hold. Roots and wings, these are the interdependent halves of our spiritualized earthly lives. For it is only in the loving and hallowing of the flesh and the earth that the spirit learns that it is not whole without it. And it is only in the voice of the flesh that the song of the spirit is finally sung.

*

fourteen

Spiritual processes have not always gone as smoothly for me as the unintentional rising of my kundalini. In fact, I would say that my path has often felt like I was trying to drive a child's tricycle along a mountain path covered with fallen trees, for, as much as I was embraced by the Mother, the spirit, and God in my hut in Hawaii, so also have I often been prodded and pushed around the world under not such comfortable circumstances as in that oasis in Babylon.

Like my ill-fated trip to France where, instead of being passionately embraced by the soul and body of the Parisian woman I was going to see, I received, as compensation, not only a bloodthirsty welcoming and instant heartbreak, but also a malicious beating by Christ, my baptism in water and spirit, a one day visit to Rome in which two prophecies a crazed friend of mine had uttered about my life came true, and gut-splitting intestinal cramps from fasting improperly during four bewildering days in Paris, going mad for love and hunger, all without knowing that the ruthless chastening sent down upon me at that time would not end until everything inside of me was dead except innocence.

Had I known at the outset of my journey to France that it would be fraught with nothing but madness, hunger, misery, absurdity, and loss, certainly I never would have gone. But then, neither would I have been murdered by the Man, baptized into eternity, and then resurrected as the virgin in a wholly new female trinity.

But let me explain. Oh, let me helplessly explain what is impossible to explain.

I had decided to go to France for a number of reasons, the most important of which was to rekindle a romance involving a Parisian woman, whom I had enjoyed a dazzling but brief tryst with a few years earlier, in North America, and who had supposedly welcomed me into her bosom whenever I felt ready to nest there.

I arrived in France and at first was feeling quite carefree and simply basking in the spirit and soul of the land and its people. I was quick to realize, in fact, that, in many ways, France had a very similar feel to India. Perhaps because these countries are two of the rare areas on earth where the culture, and not just nature, is in harmony with the Mother, who is the presiding aspect of the Godhead in both places.

Indeed, you can feel Her in France, in the mood of the city parks, in the ancient statues and architecture, and in the citizen's uninhibited sensuality, which left me thoroughly aghast on my first trip to France, a decade earlier, when I had seen young couples rolling about on the lawn of a city park, unabashedly groping, French-necking, and otherwise doing everything but public coitus with each other, in broad daylight, without a hint of care or concern for the thousands of other park attendees. Nothing like that goes on in North America. Oh, no, better to be properly shaved, dressed, and well-behaved, at all times, despite the primordial needs and desires running amok within each one of us, so as not to let the others know the wild animal lurking manically within.

But in France there is no division between beast, man, and God. All occur without obstruction within each individual. It is a land of cultured barbarians, of urban Pagans, as I came to call them on my second trip there- when I felt the Mother's energy so strongly that I thought I was back in India. Though maybe I was just undergoing a sentient premonition of all that was to follow on my unwitting pilgrimage into the whore of Babylon's underbelly.

Looking back now I realize that my dance with the Dark Mother began long before I had any knowledge of Her, or of the history of Kali in India, or the Black Madonna in France, though this is where I would find myself, caught in Her hallucinatory clutches, broken apart into a thousand unrecognizable pieces, and then reassembled into a wobbling new thing, as I succumbed to the love and violence of Her and Her vicious Son. Had I known, two years prior to this, what eating a chocolate Madonna in a dream might portend, I may have up and quit the whole quest I didn't know I was inexorably launched upon.

But now I was in France, on a train heading into the southern Alps, on my way to visit another Mary- the young Parisian flower whom I had come all the way to France to see, so as to continue our wonderful and yet distant relationship. But it was not to be, for the Mother and Son duo of disaster and delight had other plans, as I came to find out in the throes of the etherical delirium I was soon to enter in upon.

It happened that, having fallen asleep on the train running from Paris to the French Alps, where my mistress awaited, I dreamt that a madman in dreadlocks was chasing after me with a shotgun, shooting and killing me, over and over again, as I fled frantically, was shot, died, got back up, fled, was shot, died, and rose again. The madman was Christ, and I was his game, and when finally I was finished- dead and yet still living- the dream shifted and I had a vision of Christ showing me how to eventually rise out from underneath water, to etherealize, and then to disappear. It was a teaching about the true nature of death and resurrection.

But now I was dead, and I arrived at my lover's house, a little less than fully together, and she must have sensed sublimely that she was now being

courted by a cadaver rather than a mountain man- a recognition which soon turned that tender, caring doe into a vicious bear, no longer willing to be eaten, but instead bent on devouring me as carrion. Which is another way of saying that in the energy shift accompanying my spiritual destruction and awaiting rebirth, my mistress had somehow changed from a dream into a nightmare. And it is a horrible day when you are both murdered by Christ and betrayed by your lover's kiss, but that is what happens when the tunnel you are walking through is no longer a part of your path, and the mad chastener arrives to chase you mercilessly the other way.

So I soon left her and the Alps, like a specter dragging his own loveless corpse behind him, and trained back to Paris, and in a frantic attempt to right my floundering ship …I began to fast.

Fasting is one of the most demented mortifications I had ever previously undertaken, albeit rarely at that, but fasting in Paris was a step further into insanity and masochism, for soon enough I was a moveable salivary gland wandering about ghoulishly amidst the moveable feast. There is nowhere on earth where food is displayed in markets, shop windows, and cafés, as temptingly as it is in Paris. And that this had been the chosen venue for my self-inflicted flagellation shows the extent of my contorted inner condition, brought on by Christ's brutal attack upon my existence.

I remained four torturous days in Paris, and never ate a thing. *Quel idiot!*

I was running away from myself, then towards myself, towards, and away, forward and backward, everywhere and none. I was separate and yet not separate, for I was in a tug-of-war between losses, where heaven, hell, and earth met like an improvised patch in the fabric of being, inside my weary, radiant core; as if being torn in all directions by a band of lunatics, I was painfully going nowhere.

On the fifth day I boarded a train for the Riviera, and began eating fruit. I was headed to Rome- a destination which I cannot remember the reasons for choosing, though I know there must have been reasons, for I was in the grip of the Dark Lady and her ruthless Son, and His bullets were still flying after me, and my fate was well described by their invisible hands. I stopped en route to spend the night in Nice, staggered feebly to a hill-top hostel, went to my bed, fell asleep, and awoke next morning so clean, so hollow, and so open and alive, that I could feel the Mother's heart beat within me, with an intimacy and power that I had never felt from that subterranean rhythm before, nor after, for now She had taken me back into her bosom, as a Mother does after the thrashing, and I was in Her, and She was in me, and the whole world throbbed to the beat of Her love, life, and sorrow.

Perhaps this was the Mother's way of comforting me, and so now She and Her Son were playing good-cop, bad-cop with me: one of them laying on the whip and steel, and the other holding me finally to Her chest. Oh, She is a dark consort to the vicious Man at times, but thankfully, as I said, She has in Her what all mother's have in them after the spanking, which is to say- love.

Thus I lay there basking in that thick and engulfing energy and unquestionable connection, sensing that I was completely within Her, as we all are, and that the very pulse of Her heart *was* my existence. I lay there, receiving

the integral energy of that lower communion, and when I was finally calmed I slowly arose out of bed, and, after eating my first breakfast in five days, left the hostel whereupon I instantly met an angel sent to ease my way.

It was a spontaneous encounter, just outside the dorm, where I struck up a conversation with a middle-aged German woman who was also forsaken by love, was also following her dreams- which were truer than reality- was also engaged in an austere diet, and was also in France pursuing a tragic love, although her passion was directed towards a perfume tycoon whom she was certain had been her husband in many previous lives- a fact which he acknowledged after meeting her, though at the time of our meeting she, like I, was also being led about into the hotbed of loss and confusion due to the divine intent, no doubt, to simplify a self-imposed problematic existence.

She and I were perfect mirrors for each other, because All is reflected in all, and, as it is said, whatever comes to you in life is a reflection of what is inside of you.[26]

In the two hours which we spent together we covered every topic or inner issue we could reach, from ancient Egypt- where she claimed to have been Nefertiti- to the Apocalypse. She was a breath of cosmic air blown into my asphyxiated lungs, and I inhaled her vigorously. In fact, I had found such comfort with her that I began to share the spiritual turmoil I had encountered over the last few weeks, including the dream of Christ murdering me and then of Him rising out of the water. To this she nonchalantly remarked- "That was your baptism," a statement which did not sound necessarily correct to me, but was corroborated by an ex-minister friend of mine, a month later back in Canada.[27]

But for now I was still drowning in the lower waters, and still unable to rise out and fly.

I parted from the Egyptian Queen a little more at peace, a little more faithful, a little more 'together'- as the colloquial expression applicably denotes- and then departed for Rome.

South I went into Italy, on an overnight train, out of France, out of the land of cultured barbarians, out of the home of the Dark Mother, and down into Roma- *amor*- where the Father and Mother still are one.

It was in Rome where I was shown that even though I felt lost and confused, love-sick and weary, and was still wandering about like a husk of chaff devoid of meal, blown about in the arid wind with no possibility of setting root, I was, as ever, being guided and healed.

I noted this as I entered the Sistine Chapel, and looked up at the plates Michelangelo had spent four years prone in the making, and quickly recognized the plate in which God is creating man- the one where God's and man's fingers are coming together to touch. This was a revelation for me, because at the moment I saw it I was mentally transported back to Canada, where, two months earlier, I had been visiting a buddy in the hospital who had, according to the establishment, lost his mental stability, but who was in fact dwelling in a heavenward realm, all the while spouting gibberish and prophetic insights like the Oracle of Delphi gone mad. Only he wasn't mad, he was in the loving arms of the Lord, and he was spouting the Word, and the Word became flesh, and my buddy reached out his finger towards me, and I reached out mine towards him, and we touched I didn't know why until I stood there in the Sistine Chapel, two

mad months later, broken and mended, abandoned and found, destroyed and created in the fantastic, centrifugal vortex of heaven's quickening hurricane.

*

fifteen

The denouement of that European chastening and baptism came like a slow and excruciating climax which did not culminate until a number of weeks later, after I had left that disastrous continent behind, had flown back to the west coast of North America, and was holed up in a lonely room in San Francisco, still battered, broken, and bruised, despite now knowing that all was as it should be.

It was here, finally, that I had come to be like a flesh bag of dissipated spiritual fragments from which a new cornerstone could be chosen, and from that rock another temple could be born. And by that I mean that during my stay on the west coast of America, I was eventually liberated from the ardors of my transformation which had been set in motion by the murderous Man, but this end came about only after I had abandoned the torturous confines of conception, false conception, and arrived at the emancipating qualities of immaculate conception, otherwise known as ignorance, thus bringing me back again to the center of my own eternal wheel.

This came about, as I said, while I was staying in San Francisco, for though I desperately wanted to return to Vancouver and the welcoming arms of my buddies, I couldn't budge any further, because I was a cracked vessel and had nothing to meet or greet them with except a look of desperation- a desperation which nothing but mercy could help me through, and so I knew that I could not return until the inner apocalypse was over. So I stayed in San Francisco, exhausting every last iota of mental energy, trying to put some of the pieces that had fallen apart back together, so that I might return to life again, somehow. The battle had gone on for weeks and I could see no end to it and so I made the drastic decision to leave the city on foot, and head up the coastal highway, and walk the worm and torment out of me, even if I had to walk all the way to Vancouver.

Such a firm resolution must have been the catalyst required for the climax to come, because the night prior to my departure I had gone to bed in psychological tatters, had begged for mercy, and then dreamt a dream in which many female bodies were lying on many tables in a morgue, all of whom had been murdered. At one of the tables a woman physician- whom afterward I was to call Physis- was working frantically, attempting to resurrect one of the bodies. Beside her a solicitous wise woman- whom, upon waking, I was to call Sophia- was in a grievous panic, worrying that the resurrection would not be successful. Finally Physis moved back from the table and pronounced that the job was finished, and that she had been triumphant. Yet Sophia was still absolutely overwrought with anxiety, and was beseeching Physis, asking her if she was certain the woman was alive. At that moment a young, very innocently minded

girl- whom later I was to call the Virgin- sat upright on the table and playfully said- “Of course I’m OK”, and I awoke.[28]

This was the type of transformational dream which would occur to me every now and then, when the tension of growth and change into something new- because the old me was no longer useful to the whole- had reached its breaking point, like a child who had been forced to wear the same clothes year after year despite his growing body, until either the flesh became contorted or the seams tore apart and the garments were lost to the wind. I was scattered to the wind that evening, at the climax of the struggle, and all that remained was all that can ever remain during a complete transformation- innocence. I had become as a child.

I knew then that everything inside of me, except wonder, had been destroyed during the previous weeks, because I had fallen into a false view of reality- and only the unknowing, virginally minded child could remain within me, were I to get back to the hub. I had been wiped clean in the fires leading up to the genocide and resurrection. And now, sitting awake, I felt an amazing calm and joy come over me, for I had come again to the blessed experience of awe- to the place where I did not know anything.

I had been caught in a labyrinth of my own creation, and to get me out of it the Dark Mother and her Dark Son had to come brutally after me, and all the walls had to come down about me, for I could not find my way out until after the earthquake- when finally I was free in the open space of pure and blessed ignorance again. Everything had been solved by killing every solution. And that morning I aborted my now unnecessary mad march up the rainy coast, jumped on a bus, and headed home.

*

sixteen

I returned to Vancouver, after the resurrection in San Francisco, and once again stood innocent before mankind, because I had done my time, had been scoured inside with Christ’s caustic soda, and had come out of the flames tempered, glowing, and refreshingly free.

Indeed, it was only after the grosser movements of my confined imagination had been burned clean of redundancy and need; after the unforgiving calamities usurped me from all courage and despair; after the whole mad show boiled up in ecstasy and failure; after I stumbled and bloomed, aghast and transparent in what could not be and is; it was then that I broke, redeemed and abolished, as if newly awoken or just fallen to sleep; it was then that I possessed intimacy with gratitude and awe, because I was life and living, and now was all too new forever.

Like a happenstance dismay of unknown wonders, the specious and soothing images upon which I had been weaned had broken apart in an apocalypse of unmeaning. And it was from, and because of, such a disastrous undoing- in which I was dismantled into unrecognized bits and then smashed

irrevocably beyond myself- that I was subsequently patched back together, so as to return to the world, to life, and somehow manage to live it. And that is the hard and living hell of it, let me tell you.

Euphoria, you see, is indeed a ghastly blessing; I expired from the inspirations by which I was engulfed, I was dispersed by the ecstasies which described me, I exploded against the firmament, and then was torn asunder, shredded magnanimously into digestible bits, and swallowed back into the fulcrum of torturous, graced bewilderments. I lived then intoxicated by a thousand realms at once, respirating in the thin abysses.

There are indeed limitless depths of disbelief which I have swum through breathlessly; the incontrovertible, exhilarating moments when I remembered that I did not understand.

My mind had become a lung through which I inhaled impossibilities. My endurance was infinite. Never did I feel the need to surface gasping, for I had come again to live in the impunity of not-knowing (ergo in the redemption of awe), and I knew that every moment in which I would not stare incapably off into space, aghast with disbelief- every moment in which I was not honest enough to seize up, inexorably baffled, every moment that my being did not turn incorrigibly towards the splendor of the unreachable, immanent Mecca that is and is not mind- would be a golden moment lost.

I sought to last forever in those ephemeral cataclysms, in those lost velocities and spent configurations, wherein I was composed solely of problematic ecstasies, of masochistic ebullience, for I so willingly inhabit only those disastrous tranquilities, expatiating along the harrowing, vertiginous ridge of lostness, and thus thriving fecund in those dimensions which exhaust me.

It was not enlightenment that I underwent, but its opposite; a pure, absolute, intelligent ignorance. Who are we? Why are we? What are we? I tell you I did not, and do not know. I only know that we are not what we think we are, thus we are what we are not. Hallelujah indeed!

I had returned again to the mystery, the distillate, the quintessence of the all.

As the last remnant of memory and recognition dissipated from my dissipating consciousness I was delivered into unimaginability after unimaginability; I received a showering of ‘never beforeness’ colliding all about and around me.

There are no samples nor tastes of infinity, there are only unswallowable gulps of life, drowning me in swollen breaths of intobated non-suffocation. Me? and this? and all of it, and good God how to come to terms?!

How could it be? How could all of this be? And yet ...and yet it is, and I am it- the Mystery incarnate within itself; intimate and detached, part and yet parcel of the whole crazy show, as it were.

I no longer yearn for fathomable happenings. This world is as good a place as any to confront implausibility. I know merely a bewildering, spectacular, authenticity that I can but poorly describe as ‘unfathomableness’- a confounding, wordless, somethingness; I believe only in the outlandishness of being; I am convincingly, absolutely, absorbed by the wonderment of being.

My life becomes more and more mythical to me; I come to realize that I am not what I am; I am less and so much more; I contain everything that was,

is, and will be; every event, every fantasy, every reality. I am, and I cannot believe it.

Everyday, reality becomes increasingly less real, and this unreality becomes increasingly more real; the unreality of reality feels more real. Reality is so unreal it must be real; absurdity is the most certain validation of our questionable existence.

It is not logical to see the world logically. The reality of reality is its unrealness; reality is nothing more than the unrealness that it is; a fantasy that is real. Reality occurs as this unreality of the real- as simply the most absurd concoction of improbabilities that a reasoning mind can hope to withstand. It is far beyond anything imaginable; whatever it is- it *is*; and only reality could have come up with this unreality.

Ah, to be the complexity that man is, and yet to not be complex enough to understand this very complexity; existence pondering existence; mystery mystified by mystery; it amazes me that I 'am', and yet that I do not, by the very act of being, know of it already.

Have I then come into this life only so as to applaud the miraculous implausibility of all that is, by ecstatically not understanding it? Am I here to humbly exalt the glorious mystery of being, and nothing more? Are there others who have lost their mind as grace-fully as me?

Yes, indeed, Prometheus may have stolen the fire, but I made off with the bomb. I severed the bonds by which I was uselessly tethered to machination. I slayed the last of a dying species by debunking plausibility, and disproving without proving.

I uprooted the Tree of Knowledge, and then burned the fruit using the limbs for a pyre.

I resonated entropy into the tangling forms, tearing all of life's hardened images from my virginal eyes, and finally I forgot the knowledge by which I had been ex-communicated from Life. And when I staggered back onto my feet and found my new footing in the ether- that was the first step I ever took forward.

It was as if I finally caught up to myself, and then ...I existed no longer. As if I descended and then rose again, resurrecting myself out of the death of what I know I was not, into what I know not; no, I do not know what it was that I was, nor what it is that I am- and this is the cornerstone of my absorption.

I did not, after all, contaminate my being in the vortex of plausibility. I did not embrace the rhetorical overtures of conception. I did not accept life's eternal distractions. My task was, and is, to continually not-know what others claim to know; to weigh the anchors of the mind.

I have no truths, only the rejection of all untruths. I did not find a conclusion, only a beginning; I disappeared into mystery, emerging out of the absence of myself.

Yea indeed, as the raging forms glistened in the ecstasy of what may, I stood again before myself.

Indeed, it is time to purge the cloaca of our fetid concepts; time to cauterize our septic meanderings; time to euthanize obsolete symbologies. After all I have seen, and all I have unseen, I now preen conception from my mind like

a baboon picking squirming gnats from its own knotted fur; I gnaw upon the mind's maggots.

I simply want to erase everything and to start anew; to smash the blackboards, and throw away the chalk. Oh, life indeed is a more genuine mystery than it is a common fact.

I am no longer a coward of the mind, I will not cognitively submit to agreeable notions. I unknow the world ...defiantly.

In a genocide of cerebrations I massacre ontologies and pillage their existential remains, ruthlessly exterminating ideas, and hacking my way through the barricades of false emancipations. For in the realm of false understandings there is no heroism, only a war that never ceases, and soldiers that never die.

You see, though mine was a distorted illumination; like the blinding light of the sun, bouncing off the lightless, light-giving moon, I did still rise up in the night of our being, and shine forth despite my perpetual darkness.

And now I have returned to take mankind's whole being away with a single malicious observance.

Give me your greatest edifice, man, that I may with innocence knock it mercilessly to the ground.

I did not come to take part, but to take apart. Mine is a ruinous decomprehension. I have devoured facts, and excreted mystery; sacrificing so as to get rid of- and not with intent to gain- I did not cauterize the infected wound, I severed the entire limb; I unrecognized existence in a fanatical moment of destructive non-interpretation. I am a wild animal of mind. I am ferocious in brave ecstasy. I am savage …because I am free. The blood of meaning is on my hands.

*

seventeen

Why did this whole crazy show come about? I do not know. I know only that it came about.

It was as if I lived a manic descent from unbeing into being; I did not understand, nor control my harrowing plunge. But when I landed I hit with a thud that would have killed me if the Self wasn't an undying being. That is how I was able to get back up and walk onward, wiped clean-through by the flames of my agonizing re-entry. And when that happens- when the kenosis has come full circle, and you're alive and dead, alien and belonging, strong and yet broken- that is when the real work begins. That is when you bring the fire back to earth- acquired for the men who will misunderstand you, stolen from the powers who will despise even your good. So be it.

I say this because, like many of you, I also had my insides ripped out, hacked to pieces, molded into nothing recognizable, and stuffed back into my groaning hollow. Loss and sadness were nothing new to my eternal being. But all movements have a reckoning, a consummation, and a respite, for the moving moment is alive, and grows and transforms just as any organism grows-

imperceptibly, slowly and yet continually, and just as relief comes to a fugitive finally brought down after an arduous flight, so does this mad show run down its engine, and is fulfilled or is finished with a sigh of delight.

Yea indeed, like a dizzy logotrope, spinning wildly about, grasped by that halcyon light which follows the passionate arc- to turn towards the colossal mystery of being, to follow the real but invisible movements, to want truth inside of you more than you even want yourself there, is to appear mad and sane in the world of reason. To move with a heaven-tethered eye, never bending from its sight, is to look through a different window, and yet still live inside the house.

I had spent much of my life trying to pretend that I was not lost, until I finally realized that everyone is lost, and that the whole mad show is nothing but a card-house of hiding places which people build so as to forget all about this absurdity, because a person becomes deranged trying to belong to something they do not understand. And no one understands.

And so I eventually accepted that to be lost is to be honest, and that therefore it is not wrong to howl wildly into the lonely night, for there are no remaining options but to go mad with ecstasy and anguish, to fall in love with the night, and to find the gratitude in which to live the mystery out.

But am I not also caught in the inexorable, powerful grip of life? Yes indeed I am also caught, and yet ...I am also that very grip; that grip squeezed in upon itself like an empty fist, unable to break free of its clench until it punches something harder. But I do not punch. I only grip more arduously into myself, because only exhaustion will undo my hold upon my task, my world, my self. I am the grip on life, of life, in life, but I do not punch …I sing.

I too am in this world, this life, this voice behind the mind. I am speaking slowly, through the misty night of our old losses, hoarse from the brooding depths of life's fatigued untruth. I pause often, sigh, and continue. Hear my hollow metronome, charmed of the meter's dark whimper.

I thought of never touching down, of never saying who I was, where I had been, or what I did when I got here.

I thought of never writing a syllable from this broken mold of unwhole timelessness, because it seemed that I had attained nothing: no happiness, no truth, no love, no answer. I had no path to salvation, and no idea of how to redeem. I had nothing to give others but myself, and my wild, euphoric imaginings.

But life brings its own tasks, and I am not one to argue. Not, at least, with the One who yet knows me.

Were it not for the frequent bouts of absolute catatonia, interspersed with durations of uncontrollable imbecilic laughter, I should say it was not all worth it. But I was not born from the lineage of complaint. I harbor no existential vendettas. In the end I did not deplore the insurmountable perplexity, nor was I thanklessly discouraged by it. Though neither have I bled endlessly through the wound of consciousness for nothing; for if I have stuck my earnest spirit out from the warm abyss only for long enough to spill forth my bile and laughter then, as now, while the roaring blade hastens whistling towards its mark, I shall not miss a beat, nor a word, nor a jingle, but will calmly wail out my true song, my vision, my life.

And so, under the coercion of the tender, tickling Muse do I send out my own imperfect vision into the barbaric land of men, and the Word, while it is alive and living, emits from my diffident pen.

But if I share with you what I can, it is not so as to impose a regiment upon our infinite lives, but only so that I might give myself away, in a blind attempt to join with you completely.

Oh, perhaps I am only a hoarse voice in the chaotic chorus of the Great Song, but ...I am a voice. And though what I have to say is only what I have seen, I cannot help but seek to quicken our spirits through a vortex of awe and gratitude, and so to bleed the voice of sorrow from the stone.

And yet, am I simply a lame busker, crooning stale requiems at the honored gates, to all those gathered impatiently about, waiting to be denied entry? Am I but the phlegmatic sexton of an abandoned, crumbling, obsolete temenos? A bell-ringer without a church? A hanged man, ejaculating life back at his dead executioners?

No, no, definitely not, for I am still alive and free, and though I did not begin to fight until I had already surrendered, that was when I became undefeatable, because though I was the weakest man alive ...no one could destroy me. But before I got there I had to suffer through the consequences of the lie; I had to lose myself in order to become myself; I had to descend to the Devil, before I could rise to God. And then what came to me in the tender futility of life's beauty, as I balanced solicitously between exaltation and rage, was a tepid, graceful bewilderment- a melancholy born of beauty, despair, and wonder, which caused me in the end to only vehemently affirm life, to embrace everything, to take it all up, all of it, to accept, and accept, and accept, until there was nothing left of me but acceptance; to not struggle towards, to not struggle away; to be willing to say "Yes, yes, of course ...yes!", even if that 'yes' agreed to the 'no' that was the very disintegration of itself, so that in that surge of dynamic affirmation, the flood of unbiased acceptance would rush through the estuary of my being, and, like a dam broken above a village, would cause all souls caught within my ubiquity to be swept away from all comfort, all knowledge, all pain, and then to be gathered up, drowned in a torrent of rapture and glee, taken away by the new tide, and swept out to the welcoming sea.

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PART II:
SERVING THE SON

"And now they saw that the Christ had died to the Sun, died cosmically to the Sun, had been given by the Father, to be born on Earth, to die and descend to the ends of the earth where the Father could not reach, and to rise again, so that his life and the Father's and the Holy Spirit's could become one with the earth itself and all it contained."

Christopher Bamford

"Split a piece of wood and I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there."

Jesus, the Christ: Gospel of Thomas

one

To be spiritually initiated, as I was initiated in France, by the unexpected violence of Christ and the Motherly discipline of Mary, is to be recruited as a foot soldier into a war in which you can never tell who's on your side, you can never find enough ammunition, and you can only win by losing yourself.

I was sent on a tour of duty to New Zealand, the orders of which came in one dream: I dreamt that my father owned a banana plantation in that country. A simple dream, and one which Jungians or other symbolists would no doubt tear apart and massacre into a tepid message bound up in historical archetypes and mythology. But this was no alchemical dream.[29] For I had already recognized many times before that when I dreamt of my father, this was actually the male aspect of the Godhead communicating to me, and when I dreamt of my mother it was the female aspect. So, my father had a banana plantation in New Zealand. I was therefore bound for that destination, without question. Except first I had to correct the simple problem that I was penniless, a factor which was fixed in short order as I was guided to quickly earn enough money for the journey.[30]

I arrived in Auckland, spent a few days on the nearby coast, then met up with my *soror*, who had flown in a few days after me, and together we hitchhiked out to the Coromandel Peninsula, so as to get away from the madding crowd as quickly as possible. After camping out uneventfully that first evening, we had our thumbs out again in the morning and were picked up by a multi-tattooed, rum-sipping, young renegade named Jim, who lived and worked in the area, had fathered four kids, and was on a weekend drive-about and binge while his wife and family were away elsewhere. He looked as tough as they come, but was as soft as a feather inside. Jim drove us down the coast a ways, and then let us off at a beach where we planned to hang about and camp that evening. However, after staying in the area for a few hours, the *soror* and I decided it wasn't a place we wanted to camp, and so we walked back up to the road and stuck our thumbs out again. After waiting a short while a car came racing towards us and squealed to a halt. It was Jim again. He had driven a full loop around the area, just for the joy of it, and so once again we were in his buggy and heading south. I suppose Jim and I had found some comfort together by this time, and had located some common ground on which to converse, for we began discussing all sorts of fringe experiences including magic mushroom trips, and the play of the spirit on earth. And it was near the end of this second drive together, as we were approaching our next destination, that I decided to query Jim as to whether he knew anyone in the area who owned a banana patch. He said he knew of only one- his parents.

Ah yes, the spirit was with us- as if there was ever any doubt- for the spirit runs the whole show, and is the show, and no matter how obscure or impossible the odds, no matter how confused or disoriented we become trying to follow it, the guiding spirit is always with us, no matter what is going on, nor how chaotic or vague, we are always where we should be.

By the time we had ascertained that serendipitous piece of information about Jim's parents, however, the evening was upon us, and it was too late to proceed on the quest, so the *soror* and I said goodnight to Jim, and he sped off on his merry way, and we went to a nearby campsite.

The next day the *soror* and I turned around and, following Jim's directions to his parents, hitched back up the coast in the direction which we had just come the day before, arriving at his folks humble little homestead in the late morning.

Upon meeting them I was certain that I had found the intent of my sublime mission, for Jim's parents turned out to be tremendously gentle, unobtrusive, generous, and meek folks. That is, they were children of God- the one who sent me, the one who harbors the outcasts, the impoverished, and the lonely. And Jim's parents were doing just the same, as I was to find out, for they had created over many years, without riches, a safe haven for a fare number of dispossessed and homeless souls. Which is to say, they were doing God's work on earth.

To be sure, they were no bible-thumping holier-than-thou types. In fact, the four of us never even spoke a word of religion between us. And I gathered, if I had to generalize, that these folks were influenced by Buddhism, marijuana, and gardening, more than anything else, and may never have even read nor heard of the Bible, or may have considered it absolute balderdash for all I know. But they had love in their hearts, and that, after all, is the only true religion.

So the *soror* and I spent the afternoon with Jim's parents, and the four of us had some lovely conversation and communion, thus connecting our spirits through the eyes and, as such, remaining together even after parting. And that, I expect, was the intent of my sublime directive- to meet those meek and honest owners of the banana patch, and link souls with them.[31] For in the act of meeting others at the soft and intimate essence of our separate cores, the consciousness of God within each of us comes into recognition of its divided parts, which, upon that recognition, are no longer divided. Thus the many become one.

Furthermore, after leaving those beatific folks, our stay in New Zealand came to provide a great wealth of cosmic and alchemical experiences for me, most of which are either incredibly difficult, or impossible to describe, for certain events in life are so unique and intimate with an individual's exclusive path that the profundity and impact of such experiences cannot be related nor given to another- because they are intended for no other. I can only say, therefore, in a very imperfect way, that traveling to New Zealand, and to the southern hemisphere for the first time in my life, was like moving to a completely new vantage point in the earthly drama, and, as such, seeing it from a different perspective altogether.[32]

On that trip I was to meet individuals who told impressive tales of their meetings with 'masters', such as Jesus; I met folks who claimed to have been healed by aliens, and others who had spent decades on Mt. Shasta, studying the 'I AM' teachings of both the masters and aliens. I also met, on the south island, one of my sisters who came from the same limb of the Tree of Life as myself, and who was not only a member of my physical sister's spiritual archetype[33], but was also so connected to the minutiae of my own life that we had a vast array of

mundane occurrences in common: like the fact that she had begun playing the recorder at the same time as I, just weeks before our meeting, and she had, I was to find out, pinned onto her office wall the exact three short pieces of inspired writing that I had been carrying with me, and occasionally handing out to acquaintances whom I thought might enjoy them.[34]

These types of 'coincidental' similarities are regular occurrences for souls lying close to one another at the epicenter of the creative core, regardless of their distance from each other on earth. Just as it has been found that identical twins, having been separated at birth, who find each other as adults, often have an implausible number of similar occurrences and interests in their lives; so it is the same with the subtle essence of spiritual siblings, who may know nothing of each other, but are still inspired from the same center, and therefore often share many commonalities, both sacred and profane.

In addition to all of the above, on that trip to New Zealand something was being worked out for, or between, my *soror* and myself. Something hidden, unconscious, or dark.

There are manifold reasons for me stating this, but only a few of which can be related, for these alone had cohesion in the manifest.

For example, my *soror* eventually purchased a used car while we were in New Zealand, so that we could tour the south island without the agony of further hitchhiking. She acquired it from a fellow who bought and sold cars to travelers as a way of making his daily keep. The interesting thing was this- not only did she have a prophetic dream of the exact car we ended up taking, but, a few days earlier I had dreamt that a debt, or penalty, had to be paid, for the killing of six people. Whether this was a purely symbolic, alchemical, transformative, karmic, vicarious, or penitential dream- to this day I do not know, but I do know that the car we drove away with- the one my *soror* had a preconceptual dream about- had the license plate K1ll 06, on it. Not likely a coincidence, not in my life anyway, and not a great omen to boot.

We spent much of the next six weeks touring the south island in that odd chariot, and guerrilla camping on the most remote beaches we could find, all the while throwing our spirits into each other- as is the way of the alchemical partnership- and then resurrecting each other out of the ruins.

We were also at this time practicing the sublime art of spiritually witnessing each other, by which we would sit face to face, at a distance of four or five feet from each other, and then soften and yet focus our separate gazes, away from the material realm and into the spiritual, and so see what was happening within the essence of the other. It was a tremendous esoteric art which we were learning from only our own internal intuition and guidance, but which would lead us down a path towards a vision neither of us expected, nor desired to see.

It happened that we had chosen a wild and distant beach just south of the town of Haast, my namesake, in which to enter the year 2000- the millennium changeover. We were alone out there but for a couple of charming little Blue penguins, and a swarm of not-so-charming sand flies, which is a common insult on New Zealand shores. And so we had retreated into our tent,

deep in the woods, and had entered into the sublime seeing art when the horrors unfolded.

I expect that there was some fairly dark energy in the ether over the entire globe that evening, what with thoughts of apocalypse, armageddon, apokatastasis, and the second-coming roaming with wild abandon through the consciousness of six billion people, and into the common unconscious sea linking us all. But whether the *soror* and I had picked up a communal wave length, or were perceiving our own hidden demons, I do not know, but I do know that at the peak of stillness and subtle penetration required of the art we both disappeared from each other's sight, and all that remained was …the Beast. I say this with absolute, categorical literalism. What lay before me, and before my *soror*, as she later expressed, was the inexplicable, undeniable vision of a fur-covered, crazed, wild, angry, and animalistic Beast. If you have seen the character created in recent renditions of *Beauty and the Beast*- a story which is nothing more than the metaphorical drama about the duality which lies within all of us- you will know *exactly* what we saw, in, and through the other. Quite a millennium shift, let me tell you.

As I say, I do not claim to understand the exact nature of our visions; whether we were meeting only the inner beast possessed by the *soror* and I- hence the K1ll 06 vehicle- or the repressed beast which lurks in the common unconscious and therefore belongs to all of us. To be sure, I have certainly found no shortage of darkness within myself, when I have been honest enough to take actual account. I have found aggression, deceit, violence, avarice, and lovelessness within myself, which are facts I do not admit proudly, but only for the sake of telling it like it is. For since all things are clear in the sight of heaven, it matters little whether I come forth with such admittances or not, for all actions and thoughts are well documented in the ledgers above. I admit to these heinous characteristics only because in admitting to them do I hope to weaken them, and so to cause less division, destruction, and despair in the future.

Much of these agonies of which I speak come down to one, and only one, crucial flaw within myself: judgment. It is my judgment of others which has caused great division, my judgment of others which has caused me to destroy, and my judgment which has brought despair.

And so I pray, Lord, let me no longer create despair nor loneliness, unless it be Thy bidding. Let me bring but love and rapture, and let me celebrate the day. Let me hold, and heal, and forgive them, as they must hold, and heal, and forgive me. Let me kiss, admire, accept, and release them.

Lord, let me bring them home.

*

two

All is reflected through all. All is all.

I suppose, therefore, it was appropriate that I suffered for love, like I had never suffered before, a year or so after that trip to New Zealand, on the

only island on earth, to my limited knowledge, where the Mother and Father- our cosmic parents- had gone to war, divided forces, and destroyed, in the violence of their combat, an entire civilization- Santorini, one of the many possible locations of lost Atlantis. Santorini, the island remains of a once giant Mediterranean volcano, and the ancient site, perhaps, of one of the Mother's most aggressive assaults upon the Father's creation- his prized civilization in the middle of the sea- the *medi-terra-nean* sea.

My esoteric findings lead me to surmise that Atlantis, as a culture, had grown too far away from wholeness, utilizing only the mind, and its logic, as a means of living on the earth, and, as had happened to its diametrically opposed twin, Lemuria- which had existed in the middle of the Pacific, and which used only the heart, and its emotions, as a guide- it could not sustain such one-sided existence in a universe striving for wholeness. And so, just as Lemuria may have been sunk in a deluge caused by the wrath of the Father above, so too Atlantis met its end in the volatile eructation of the Mother's fury.

To many people such mythological suppositions may sound like pure fable and fantasy, but to the ancient inhabitants of Lemuria, who saw their God Maui raise up the North Island of New Zealand with a fishing pole, and whose wild Pele reeks havoc on mankind even today; and to the post-Atlantean, Olympian Greeks, who were ever ravaged by the wars between Zeus and his wife Hera, there would have been no doubt as to the likelihood of such a visible catastrophe being caused by invisible forces. The manifest is the outcome of the sublime.

It was no great surprise, then, for me to find myself split apart from my *soror*, who I had by then recognized was not only my partner in the soul's work, my lover, and mate, but was also my twin soul[35]- the other half of my whole being. And so in the months of her absence I was suffering the agony of oneness divided, on this broken island, the hollow remains of which might indeed symbolically represent the ancestral separation of cosmic forces which thankfully now are returning into One.

How do I know that she and I are twin souls? A reasonable question. Firstly, because of a number of dreams which both she and I had, expressing this very truth. That, in itself, should be sufficient proof, seeing as the subconscious often knows far more than the day-to-day conscious. However, because she and I had been brought together perhaps one incarnation earlier than was originally intended, we were also living out a chaotic mixture of karmic experiences, belonging to separate destinies, which often intermingled like two inharmonious frequencies, causing us no shortage of turbulence for some time. During one episode, when it appeared that we might have to go our separate ways- at a time when we were not yet certain of our twin soulship- I had a dream in which my father came to me and said that he would be with me the following Friday. And since the male aspect of God was represented symbolically in my dreams by my physical father, this meant that God would be directing the show, without the least bit of doubt, that Friday.

Having not shared this dream with my *soror*, she and I went out for a morning coffee that Friday, during which I found myself wondering when God was going to show me what I was supposed to be shown. I was also feeling the urge to go to a used bookstore near the coffee shop, which is where my *soror*

and I went soon afterward. However, during our coffee, my *soror* had drawn a quick sketch of a symbol she had seen in a dream, an evening or two before, which was basically two halves of a circle facing away from each other, representing wholeness divided:)(

Upon entering the bookstore she and I headed for different aisles, and, after skimming a few shelves of books, I soon found myself being pulled, over and over again, to one particular book on esoteric understandings. I kept picking it up, putting it down, walking away, then coming back to it, quite a few times, until finally I skimmed to the back of the book where there was a description of twin souls. I read the page, then put the book down without much thought, and walked over to my *soror*, who, I soon found out, was reading a book actually titled '*Twin Souls*',[36] and which contained, on the inside of its cover, the almost exact opposite version- albeit this time containing a man and a woman- of the diagram she had drawn during our coffee: ( ). Wholeness.

The Father was with us, and I knew then what the intent of the message was: we were twin souls, and should remain together, through thick and thin, as they say. For though the convergence of two different karmic tributaries had caused us great tribulation, the river was widening up ahead, and the torrent was heading for calm.[37]

Anyway, many months before that calm came about, my twin soul and I had gone to Naxos- the nexus, the center, the place at which no imperfect wholeness could hope to survive, for the forces at the center are impossible to maintain if there be any cracks in the egg. The circle must be complete, or implosion or explosion is the inevitable result.

As I said, we had gone to Naxos, to write, to drink wine, and to make love, and instead, a month later, after our center had imploded, I was alone on a ferry, heading out to sea, away from her, away from love, away from wholeness.

It had to happen though, for, along with the karmic chaos mentioned earlier, there were also hidden, archaic divisions within us, divisions which still needed to bubble to the surface, be acknowledged, accounted for, and forgiven. For until all the cornerstones were properly placed perfectly beneath us, any structure we attempted to build between us would inalterably topple from its faulty foundation.

Our foundation had crumbled, and I was compelled to leave Naxos, and had decided, for no specific reason, to head for Santorini, though en route I made a brief stop on the Island of Ios.

It was early March, and the island was all but dead. I had planned to stay there a few days, but during the first night my Father came to me in a dream and said that he would be with me in the morning, which, I knew, meant that God would be fully directing the show that morning.

I awoke without expectation, but was instantly sensing that I should leave the island, for it had nothing to offer me. This, at least, is what I was thinking, though, to be sure, the important thing was not the reason for my leaving, but only that I left.

I have found that you cannot always, and perhaps rarely, be at peace when you follow the spirit, because to be only at peace would mean to not allow the spirit's goads of desire, curiosity, fear, boredom, discomfort, and so on, to be

projected into you and so move you on to where the spirit wants or needs you to be.

Needless to say, within two hours I was on another ferry, now headed to Santorini. It was on that ship that I ran into another woman who belonged to my sister's spiritual archetype, and who was certainly the person I was intended to meet, on a boat I had no intention of boarding, that morning when God was directing the show.

I can say now that every time my *soror*, my twin soul- who was of my mother's spiritual archetype- and I were in trouble, an individual who was an aspect of my sister's spiritual archetype was there to catch me. This happened on three different occasions, on three different continents, under completely different circumstances, and so, although I cannot describe the sublime event perhaps any more understandably than what I have just said, I know that the pattern holds true, and that each stage of growth we are in, as our souls strive for wholeness, can be thought of as a ladder, the rungs of which are well described in the blueprint of the universe. If we take a step up, we receive the experience of that rung, and if we take a step down, we receive that corresponding experience, no matter where we are, or what we are doing in this life, for the sublime spirit is ever the operating reality, though the material mind rarely sees it as such.

I was soon alone again, however, as the woman whom I had met on the ferry from Ios to Santorini- my sister's spiritual archetype- had departed in a few days, so as to continue with her own travels, but not until we had each shared a great deal of our similar ideas and experiences, and had embraced the eternal connection between us. I stayed on in Santorini, writing, drinking, going mad with wonder, as per usual, and pining for the other half of my soul now across the ocean in Canada again, for though my twin soul and I had been seeking to elevate the entire cosmos with our love, our own union was imperfect, and thus our efforts had blown up in front of us.

And so we had parted geographically, but not emotionally, for the love between a man and a woman belongs to the very nature of the universe itself. The love between a man and a woman is the glue which binds the cosmos together; it is the bridge across the chasm of nothingness, the sanctuary amidst the apocalypse. Nay, the love between a man and a woman is Eden itself, the Garden, which is mirrored neither in the claustrophobic confines of the city, nor in the lonely lands of the wilderness. Love is a garden in which heaven and earth mingle, and in which grows all beauty, all sustenance, and all meaning.

For without love there is only the hot wind to walk forever into, and the barren earth to walk endlessly upon, while never finding peace, nor harmony, nor respite, because nothing on earth nor in the heavens can support a house divided, and only the violence of Christ, and the compassion of Mary remain to shield one from the neverending rains.

I was in the neverending rains, in the blood-red rain that ran Christ's passion onto the earth that Easter on Santorini. For the air had grown thick with the red dust of Egypt, blown across the sea for weeks on end, and when the rains finally came, and they did, and the Red Sea parted, and Moses walked out of Babylon that Easter on Santorini, the drops came plummeting down dyed in red and covered the white-washed houses of the island with the anguish of the

division between heaven and earth, which Christ pulled back together, and holds together, eternally, on the axes of the cross.[38]

Later that Easter evening, after the lugubrious deluge had cleansed the earth with the blood of the lamb, I was invited to a Greek festivity, the end of Lent, a day like no other day for the Greeks- the day of their return to the flesh. For the Greeks do not renounce cigarettes, booze, chocolate, or swearing during Lent. They renounce meat. And when their forty days of wandering in the fleshless spirit are over, they return to earth, to the flesh, and feast like I have never seen people feast before- rapaciously, gratefully, joyfully, and communally.

At the festivity that night there were five goats and one pig roasting over spits, and the Greek men and women would tear outer chunks of meat off of the cooking beasts, and then hand these chunks to each other as if they were giving of the manna, and the recipients would eat as if they had never eaten before. They were eating of the flesh, returning to earth, and finding it good, finding it necessary, finding it holy. They were eating the body, and drinking the blood, and the sacrificial lamb- both the Son of God *and* Son of Man- held this world together like Hercules between two brazen bulls pulling in opposite directions, and the sky rained blood, God descended into the flesh, into the earth, and remains here in all of us, the Christ within, bound by separate chains, one to heaven, and one to earth, pulling together the spirit and the flesh, for Christ is the living logos of life returning love into the world from the word which is the verse of the universe, and is done out of choice, out of love, out of ecstasy from the union which creates this world.

*

three

This too shall pass. So goes that wonderful Hindu axiom, which, had I been aware of at the time, may have provided badly needed succor during my regress. Regardless, things turn inevitably when the tide shifts, and as my energy waxed and waned in the smoke and mirrors of the day, I still went forth, found myself again, albeit without idea, without purpose, without glee, and yet plunged ahead some distance further, into and beyond myself, in the ruthless absolution of sublime, divine intent.

I had endured tests and received appeasements, but still there was no peace, and no return, only a fire flaming hot inside of me, inexorably engulfing everything in its path. I was its path.

After the resurrection of the flesh on Santorini, I boarded a three day ferry for Israel- that land where the spirit had dwelt in matter for perhaps it's most intimate and arduous episode. Upon arrival I immediately headed to Jerusalem, specifically Old Jerusalem, seat of the Father, the holy land.

There is no more fantastic, mundane, ironic, worldly, otherworldly, harmonious, inharmonious, and otherwise completely contradictory place on earth than Old Jerusalem. It is an impressive conglomeration of ancient Roman

walls, early Christian churches, Islamic mosques, Jewish holy sites, Arab markets, cobbled alleyways, and trinket shops, all packed into a few square kilometers of humanity, history, and hunger. Hunger for salvation, hunger for power, hunger for money, and hunger for peace. The entire occidental drama, with all its passion and angst, collides here in the throbbing epicenter of Old Jerusalem, where a neverending parade of Orthodox Jews, Muslim merchants, Christian pilgrims, and an eclectic array of travelers from all over the world come seeking God, redemption, inebriation, or truth. Whether any of them find any of these whatsoever is a mystery to me. If I found anything it was inebriation: two parts ethanol, one part ethereal, which is a proper human martini.

The first thing I did upon arriving in the Old city- after checking in and setting up a mattress on the rooftop of the Petra hostel- was to walk the *via dolorosa* …in reverse. This was a stroll partly intended, and partly not, for I had read about the *via dolorosa* a number of times, and had imagined it as a sacred path leading through a bucolic landscape, which would make for a pleasant walk and a unique historical pilgrimage as well. But in searching for the route, through the chaotic tangle of the labyrinthine Old city- which is not bucolic at all- I came upon the last station, Golgotha, first, and then, out of sheer pragmatism, retraced the entire pathway in reverse, to its origin, the first station of the cross, the betrayal. This act of heading up-stream, as it were, against the grain of history, was, as I said, unintended, though when I realized what I was doing, I was pleased. For though it is impossible to walk the world's most famous pathway in the opposite of the normal direction, without knowing it, I did not do this as an affront to Christ and his ardors along this way, but was yet glad to symbolically scorn the agonizing, parroting, plagiaristic herd which walks this path now and every day. Enough, I say, of the crucifixion. Enough of the sorrow, loneliness, betrayal, and blood. The path Christ took ended two-thousand years ago, and He is no longer a dying God, not in my experience anyway.

I suppose that walk I took on my first day in the holy city was somewhat symbolic of my trip, which had very little to do with piety and alms, though I was certainly interested in the actual land the Man had once roamed free upon. I say free because, to me, Christ was the first libertarian man, for he was the most wild, most unkempt, most recalcitrant and most human *being* to have ever set foot upon this earth. And I wonder if it was the unrelenting freedom within him which terrified the others, who lived in cages of their own devising, and therefore they had to either destroy him or face themselves.

But I did not go to Jerusalem to alleviate such quandaries, nor did I go for a spiritual pilgrimage, because the only place to go for that is within, and no journey nor destination outwardly can get us there. In fact, during my time in the land of Cain, I found myself mostly hanging out with a couple of other lone wolves- a Danish and a South African man- both of whom had also left their mates, for one idiotic or perilous reason or another- and both of whom were therefore perfect unwholesome and ungrounded mirrors for the estrangement I was creating and feeling from my own lover at the time. Compared to these guys, however, I was like a tea-totaller and family man, as they were so far away from any type of unity in the flesh that only heaping doses of Vodka and Arak,

the Arab liquor, could keep them functioning within their dull and relentless suffering.

The three of us were camped on the top of the Petra, a high point in the Old city, overlooking the whole vainglorious and groaning assemblage of zealous fanatics and penitent supplicants. I spent my daytime hours wandering alone through the catacombs and alleys of the many archeological and architectural sites in the area, hovering inwardly in a state of suspended awe and tension from walking the stone streets which were heavy with thousands of years of strife, struggle, and salvation.

In the evening I would return to the domicile and my brothers, and we would sit up on the rooftop overlooking the entire mad show, as darkness fell and a calm descended over the clangor, and we would remain there, putting back the beers, and soaking within the ensconcing mist of humanity's highest aspirations and lowest depravations.

To sit up there, in an ancient land filled with modern conflicts, and to have the loneliness of separation eating away at you within- burning a slow burn that does not scorch but devours you unknowingly, like coals smoldering through the roots of a forest, until the forest is dead and no one imagined that it was happening- is to experience what happens when you have wings but no roots.

Those were hard and beautiful nights, staring out across that thick knot of aggression and ideology, crammed into the ruins of an age long past.

From where we sat you could see the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the four quarters, the Temple of Solomon- the place at which he is said to have ascended into heaven- and the Dome of the Rock- the second holiest site, after the black rock in Mecca, of Islam.

It was toward this mosque that my Danish companion- who had lived in Israel, off and on, for over a decade- pointed one night and asked if I could see the 'black beam'. It took me a few moments to retrain my focus, but then I perceived what I could not understand, and what scientists have been making *ad hoc* hypotheses to explain ever since it was first recognized- a black beam, the consistency of light, but not light, in fact, its opposite- a beam of darkness, running from the golden pinnacle of the Dome of the Rock, up into the sky and disappearing into the very heavens themselves. Muslims claim this is their connection with God, with Allah, which seems to me as reasonable an explanation as any other. For the 'black beam' is a phenomenon beyond explanation, because, to the best of my knowledge, darkness cannot be projected; only light can be projected. But this was a beam of absolute darkness, blacker than the night, which is why it could be perceived only at night.

A very odd event, to be sure, and, to this day, it remains one of the most inexplicable peculiarities I have ever observed.

Let the physicists and materialists say what they will about such occurrences, for me the Old city of Jerusalem appeared as a confluence of many primeval streams, and the mysteries within and around it betrayed the profundity of such sublime convergences, whose turbulence creates and maintains the spirit's tangle in the realm of time. A tangle which I have come to fear, abhor, desire, and cherish.

Were life for me but a mere unobstructed vantage point, like the Haas Promenade, on the outskirts of Old Jerusalem, where one can see equally in both east and west directions, I would no doubt ease into the spacious gap where struggle and temptation are but spectacles of no import but to color the show. Yet life for me, and I expect all others, is no mere vantage point, and is instead an intimate exercise of an all-consuming penetration into and through what can never be grasped but only hallowed, cursed, or avoided. And perhaps this is why the darkness is as necessary as the light, why the flesh is as required as the spirit, and why love is as essential as indifference.

Indifference is the vantage point from which we choose the targets of our arrows of love, hate, or ambivalence. Looking down from that height of carelessness we see a wretched ghoul and pass over, and then further on we see a tender child, to which we descend. Looking from the height of indifference we find the places where we will swoop down and enter with sword swinging, kisses flying, or boredom, or awe.

Without the vantage point the tangle is insurmountable. Though without love or anger in our hands, the tangle is but a knot of death. And so we need to be above, and we need to be of.

That we stand above, on a far-off hill before coming into life, and then, with a desperate mad plunge, take upon ourselves the ardors of this coat of flesh- which is no garment after all but an integral part of our true beings, and a part which we have returned to retrieve and claim as our own- it is only in this way that we can attain also to the transfiguration, the ascension, where the spirit and flesh are reunited and rise up together as one.

This concept of ascension[39] had been following me unbidden about for a couple of years at this point, mostly in the form of haphazard meetings with individuals who were, or had been, followers of various esoteric or new age teachings devoted to the attainment of ascension.

I believe that the complete liberation of the flesh- through its unity with the spirit- is not only possible, but inevitable. The confining qualities of dark matter have groaned under their own torpid gravity for too long already, and the lofty, rarefied air of the ungrounded heavens have concomitantly become cold and unliveable. The shift is coming. Avalon.[40]

You see, only after the spirit has entered the mystic flesh, can the flesh escape to the spirit. Only after the Father enters the Mother, can the little flame be engulfed by the fire.

And this means that we do not truly enter the eternal realm until we truly enter the ephemeral, for that is when the type and archetype, the mythos and the mean, the Logos and the Son, are bound at the same diaphanous membrane between all that comes and goes, and all that never changes. That is when we become the emptiness within which all form exists, though first we must become the form within the emptiness, for stillness lies *within* being.

When we become the flesh completely, only then will the flesh become free. To enter into matter, to become matter, is to release the spirit trapped in matter, the Mater, the Mother, which is to know, to honour, and to become Her.

*

four

When you fall, as we all have fallen- from the stars, through the stratosphere, down the womb, out the canal, into the heart, and unto humanity, you are instantly captured, incarcerated, whipped, starved, indoctrinated, degraded and controlled. They get you quickly, and the horrors multiply unceasingly.

It's as if you are dropped into the sea, dragged helplessly under until you run out of breath, and only then do you begin to thrash with enough wild frenzy to break free. But even if you do break away, you still have to swim an incredible distance back to the surface, with nothing left in you but exhaustion and pain. It is desperate, to rise up with your body, from the bottom, without a breath to relieve you, nor a strong hand to tug you along.

This makes it much harder to fulfill our destinies. And yet fulfill them we must, for we have each been sent to this unique corner of the cosmos for a specific reason. And we must wake up, remember who we are, where we came from, and what odd and singular purpose originated the reason for us coming to this realm of matter and madness, to this world where people seem intent on keeping themselves in hell, a hell into which we then become accustomed, and do not consider leaving until most of us are so far immersed in the dark labyrinth that to then leave means a complete reversal of the direction we had been heading, which is to begin the long and lonely journey back to the beginning, to that place we had never really left but only forgotten, to our own sacred 'I'.

It's all about what we've got inside ourselves- what hunger, and longing, and rage built up from centuries of folly and separation- what passion we have to drive our selves through the walls of false understandings, irrelevant lies, useless facts, rules, and fears.

We must rise up every morning out of the ashes we each became in the lonely night before. We must rise up like ghosts from the death of unlove, into the impoverished world, and forge on another yard, or foot, or inch, whatever we've got left in ourselves. But we must, for our own sake and no other's. When the spirit has departed and the flesh remains intact, that is when the true work begins.

No longer do we grow peacefully upward like sublime lotuses, gently rising above the mud. Now is the day we must push our flesh up through mankind's hardened cement, and learn to blossom like mountain roses through the stone, with all our glorious, soft beauty, protected by our sharpened, merciless thorns.

And the only way I know to do that is to be yourself, to forgive yourself, to love yourself, and to forget yourself. To connect all the disparate layers of existence through the quicksilver of the self. Of the self. To be of. To return to God in the midst of things. To be the God-flesh of our own becoming. To deny nothing, to renounce nothing. To accept. To be of. To be.

There is no way home but to become home. There is no way back but to go forward. There is no way out but to go in. There is no way to become free but to forget everything we have ever been told, to start again, and to never look back from that road. We must dance again to the cosmic song, with the rapture of the lilies.

For society's comfort and monotony will only put us to sleep. Schools will teach us to turn away from beauty, and we will turn. Petty pursuits will unfill our infinite hollows. We will call it happiness when events conspire to distract us from the anguish of not knowing ourselves. Image will kill imagination, sight will blot the sky, thought will bind the heart, and we will live not laughing, and die without shedding tears.

And thus to fly free from such inertia will take everything we've got. Determination. That one word sums it up for me. Until I was determined to exalt, and love, and live my own life, I had no chance. And, to be sure, the day I decided it was time to leave my own hell, was the day the doors began unlocking ...of their own accord. For there is only one way out of hell, and that is the wish to leave, and that is all. But then, I also knew the costs. I knew that in a secret bliss to shame the gods I would walk life's empty streets as the loneliest person alive. Lost and hungry I would fall in a cold rain weeping. The vultures of spirit would pick me clean of meat. Innocently I would come, undefeated I would go. I would exist without knowledge or meaning. I would be gentle and mad. The world would dwindle completely. *And I would live forever*.

*

five

I believe now that Christ called the Father down to earth, in his prayer- "Thy Kingdom Come…" - not as an affront to the Mother, but because Christ was already *with* the Mother, and therefore had no need to ask of Her in the Lord's Prayer, but only of He who was still and ever needed if the cosmic chaos was to be righted.

I believe this now, only after years of following the guidance of the Father, and dwelling upon the heart of the Mother. And nowhere have I dwelt upon Her with such intimacy, as I have in Hawaii, for it is there that She is alive, and conscious, and growing.

If Santorini is a remnant of Atlantis, then Hawaii is a remnant of its counterpart, Lemuria.

Upon landing in Oahu, on my first visit to Hawaii, I headed instantly north, out of Honolulu's fervor and moan, towards the famed North Shore, home to the world's most consistent and breathtaking surfing waves, including the ever impressive Bonsai pipeline. But I was not going there to surf- not in the ocean anyway. I was gliding instead on the sublime wave which the spirit sets behind one, so as to coax a person towards the distant shore.

On the commuter bus headed north I had poured over a map of the island and selected a Hawaiian holy site as the most proper locale in which to

find a secret hideaway where I could camp unfettered upon the earth while trying to find some peace in the ethereal tumble. However, after disembarking from the bus at my chosen spot, I wandered about for an hour or so until I was fidgety and sensed that it was not the place for me to stop after all. So I hopped onto another bus and headed west along the north shore, until, just before entering the quaint little town of Haliewa, I noticed a large wooded area leading out to a beach, and decided that this was going to be the place for me to take refuge. I disembarked once again, and made my way towards the sea. En route I stopped to urinate at a public restroom, and there met a long-haired, middle-aged fellow who was punch drunk and alone, and was quick to offer me a can of beer- which, naturally, I accepted- and then another, and another, then a toot on a reefer, and so on, until we were great comrades by the evening, and I was half-baked, and so I thought it best to find a place to lie down and dream off the buzz, at which point I gathered up my goods and thanked my new found buddy for his generosity and company, to which he unexpectedly recounted: "Don't thank me, thank Jesus."

Yes indeed, the wave of spirit had carried me across the dark sea of grosser possibilities and placed me on the implausible shore of a brother's soul.

After that first evening, I ended up spending a great part of the next week with Geoff, a dope-smoking, probationary, neurotic, beer-swilling, HIV positive, holy man. A holy man, I say, because he was neither respectable, nor did he have respect for others. He was a fool, a castaway, an ignoble scavenger who did not give a damn, and so he had transcended the oppressive bonds of respectability and sanity, and had become a fool in other people's eyes, a nobody in his own, and a fit vessel for the living, mad spirit in God's.

Not that he spouted any monumental, cosmic truths or had any great union with the absolute or anything, yet Geoff knew who he was, why his life had taken the turns it had, what the payment for his errors was, and how he was going to live, and laugh, and endure the sentence placed upon the remainder of his days. And that was- he was going to live life to its fullest each day, and not let up until he was harkened home.

I had met him very soon after the turn of the millennium, on my return from New Zealand, at a time when the whole world was standing a bit on edge, expecting that maybe we'd all be called at the same time. Perhaps this was part of the reason Geoff seemed at such peace within himself, because he believed that no one on earth lived without a sentence placed upon them which carried a finality as definite as his own.

Upon discussing the aforementioned millennial shift with Geoff, I remarked that it had not yielded the expected apocalypse, and then I made some flippant, rhetorical query as to why nothing had occurred, since everyone thought something would occur. In response to my statement Geoff, with an all-accepting countenance and tone, turned to me and stated matter-of-factly: "Because no one shall know the hour or the day of its coming", which is a trite, biblical misquote perhaps, but, after all, Geoff had been living ten years or more with his own, inner apocalypse, and he was certainly more of an expert on the matter of endings than most of the new age doomsayers who had been spouting calendar dates and predilections over the last few years, none of which came to pass, because no one shall know the hour or the day.

In Geoff's company I became quickly assimilated into a loosely-knit pack of homeless drunks, drifters, vagabonds, big-bearded pariahs, and pseudo-mystics, all of whom exist in substantial numbers throughout the Hawaiian islands, including Oahu's north shore, where these fringe types appear not unlike odd thistle bushes in a sea of roses, as they are mixed incongruously into the cornucopia of the bright and beautiful, fit and firm young men and women who have made this chunk of paradise their home. In fact, I have never been to another place on earth in which so many firm and fit, bikini clad vixens, and hard-bodied, rock-jawed studs abounded. It is no wonder that the television series *Baywatch*- known so well for its skimpily clad Aphrodites and Adonises- was filmed in the area.

Unfortunately for me I was neither interested in surfing waves, nor chasing dames at the time, as I was still strung painfully between two nooses, one leading to the spirit above, and one leading to the body- specifically my *soror's*- below. She and I were apart at this time as well, and I was stuck on Oahu, running amongst a pack of mongrels and misfits, and she was on Kauai, riding out her own tsunamis.

And so I did what I had always done every time I was alone, confused, impoverished, and free- I drank beer, smoked dope, surrendered, prayed, howled in bliss and agony, went mad with torment and ecstasy, slept upon the Mother Earth, beneath the Father Sky, met each morning balanced somewhere between torpor and awe, and left each day in search of the dream.

There is nothing left to do when nothing is left. You have to go on, without knowing why, or how, or where to. You have to find the force within yourself. You have to harvest the fruit that has grown within, thresh the chaff from the germ, and sew what seed remains into the pit of your guts, and hope that the next bloom comes bountiful, and soon. You have to plant that winter wheat in the darkest of your days, for if not, when the sun finally comes, you'll have no flour into which can be placed the leaven.

You have to find the fire inside, especially during the arctic night. And I hit that arctic night hard and brutally one miserable balmy evening on the north shore of Oahu, after knocking back a bellyful of beer and a couple of joints with one of the reprobates, until I passed out on the beach and awoke in the middle of the night to find my fanny pack, passport and wallet, gone. One of my brothers had gone sour, and my own inebriation had given him the open door to sin.

I was demoralized, because, with the loss of all the aforementioned paraphernalia, the last chance I had of meeting up with my *soror* on Kauai had now been snatched away from me, and all I could envision up ahead were endless days of panhandling, aluminum can collecting, paperwork filing, and the agony of loneliness, pennilessness, and loss. It was a cold and desperate feeling, to be without everything, especially love, identity, and money.

That was when I sewed the seed in winter.

It is said that the seven main islands in the Hawaiian archipelago represent the seven main chakras of the body, and, depending on which island you are living on, or visiting, that particular chakra undergoes stimulation and awakening. Whether this is true or not I am not certain, and yet, having had the kundalini awakening on the Big Island, as described earlier, where the root chakra is the one being stimulated- which is the location where, it is said, the

spinal serpent sleeps- I can at least say that this might be true. All is reflected through all.

Anyway, I was on Oahu, the throat chakra, the will, which is where the ability to express your desires into the manifest lies. Except the exact opposite to my desires had just happened, and I had no idea how I was going to right it.

The Judas who had taken my goods was camped well into the bush somewhere, so deep that he had bragged a few days earlier that no one had found him in the year or so that he had been there. And I knew that if I did not catch him with my identification and wallet on him, these would be scattered into the woods, never to be found, and no proof of his theft would be possible. I had to act, immediately. But how? It was pitch black out, I was in an unsober haze, had neither flashlight, nor idea where he was, and no thoughts on how to proceed.

And so I did what I have done many times, under similar circumstances of duress- I prayed.

As astounded as I am by the power of prayer, I am perhaps yet more astounded by how thoroughly disregarded this timeless method of communication is by the greater portion of humanity. Though I suppose the lack of interest in prayer comes down to a simple fact, which is this: prayers are always answered, but they are rarely answered in the way the petitioner desires. And by that I mean that what we ask for might not be what is best for us, and what is best for us might be far harder, or more sublime, than we are willing to accommodate. And a prayer we issue might bring assistance, but that assistance might have to come in the form of pain. And who on earth would pray for that kind of assistance? Who indeed?

Anyway, I prayed. I prayed for guidance, for assistance, for understanding, and for help. And in that receptive state which I entered into I began to commune with God, or my higher self, if you will, in such a way that I understood that this theft had happened because I had allowed myself to fall back into unhealthy debauchery to the point that only a small tragedy could turn me in the other direction. I then promised God that I would give up all the pollutants if He would assist me to regain my passport, wallet, and what little cash I still had.

Then, in that receptive state, I began to understand how, if I were to find the renegade in the forest, I was not to accuse him right off, for if he had dispensed with my goods he could easily deny it and nothing could be done. No, I was to say nothing, but let the vacuum of my silence draw out his confession, as silence often does, in front of which guilt stands very little chance of remaining hidden.

I was also subtly informed that I must not, in the end, have any anger towards the thief, but only forgiveness and love, because these are the only means with which to heal those so wounded that they lovelessly cause such grief to others.

After this communion, although I still felt uncertain about ever finding the delinquent's hiding spot within the thick acreage of bush, I suddenly felt a surge of determination, and of confidence, most likely sent down to me from on high, and I felt all of the sudden that I was no longer a victim of fate, but was

instead a master of my own destiny, and I got up from the ground, and, just as dawn was slightly breaking, headed into the thicket.

I must have been guided, for there is no other way to explain what happened, because after walking for only a few minutes through the thick bush, and then standing absolutely still, I noticed a dim movement a ways off, which I expected must be my traitor. And so I walked slowly into the direction in which I had seen the movement, and as I got closer I could see a makeshift tent, which I soon quietly entered, to the thief's dismay, and then sat down slowly, and looked him gently in the eyes …without a word.

We must have sat there for only half a minute or so when he reached to his side and disclosed my fanny pack, and then began a pathetic diatribe on how he had walked off with it unintentionally, because he had once owned a pack very similar. An absolute lie, but one which I did not accuse him of, nor of the theft, because I had been given too many lessons on clean living, prayer, silence, forgiveness, will, and love that night, and was so thankful to my heavenly guide that I could not have admonished this fellow even had I wanted to. And furthermore, I was really no better, as a few days later I broke my vow to the Father, and began consuming the substances I had promised never to partake of again. An action, which, I hope, has met with as much forgiveness as I had been directed to give another. For it is crimes like his and mine which are the outcome not of mortal sin, but of living rootlessly, of balancing along the unforgiving ridge between freedom and loneliness, a place where I found myself running when I no longer needed to run, suffering when I no longer needed to suffer, worrying when I no longer needed to worry, grasping when I should not have held on, judging when I should only have loved, and all the while struggling to end the war within me between the opposed combatants of the eternal instant of faith or of fear, and trying my best, while balancing between them, to teeter to the side of God.

*

six

Thankfully I believe that I was forgiven for my dastardly deception on Oahu, and for the rest of my ignoble ways, not only because of the Law of Forgiveness[41], but because I continued to be guided even after my transgression.

In fact, soon after that episode on Oahu, I did make it to Kauai, and into the awaiting arms of my lover.

And I see now that much of the division between she and I came about because we both had to learn how to be a couple, which is a different thing altogether than being two individuals. And, as per my part, just as Odysseus, who had to spend eight years on a peaceful island after completing his heroic journeys, so as to have the questing spirit domesticated in him, that he might return to Ithaca and be a caring husband to Penelope, so did the primitive

wilderness within me have to be tempered and cultivated, until it became a Garden in which another soul could live.

And now it was on that garden isle of Kauai that my twin soul and I spent the next couple of weeks secretly camped in the forest, in behind a relatively little-used beach, where we rekindled the fire of passion and love which burned red hot between us regularly.

It is in and through this love union between a man and a woman that, I believe, we are wrenching back together the primordial duality which has caused the heavens and earth to be divided; for in the union of a couple's polarized souls, the universe, which is composed of opposed, involved, and dependent energies, is reunited in and through the love between a man and a woman, which brings about the orgasmic light of wholeness, of the spirit joining the flesh, and so binds the ancient fissure into the everlasting one.

And, to be sure, my twin soul and I entered without delay into the wild and harmonious, frantic and felicitous, shameless and lusting intercourse which caused the real energy to glow and grow around and through us, as it does with any couple making love like the Gods, and mating like wild beasts at the same time.

Never had I experienced nor imagined possible the erotic energy created in the living cauldron of our ever-changing sexual methods, perversions, positions, and possibilities. It is amazing how many different movements, acrobatics, shifts, and thrusts two intertwined human bodies are capable of completing without losing the pelvic union. She and I conjoined intuitively, as if the complete tapestry of positions from the temple of Khajuraho were built naturally into our genetic code.

The passion that burned between us, and the friction we produced as our two halves of the whole commingled in the copulative benediction made holy in its uncontrolled, uninhibited, and sensuously pornographic delight would have been enough to light an entire city, had the energy been harnessable.

I state such things not only for the sake of telling it all like it is, but because I am a child of God, just like Christ. And I say this not as an attempt at comparison- for there is no comparison with the Man- but because I do not hold the image of Christ as an inhuman character, who came down to earth to castigate and admonish humanity for being what it is. I see Christ as absolutely, painfully, and courageously human. I see Christ as the essence of humanity in all of us, which includes our confusion, agony, inebriation, abandonment, philandering, and lust. I see Christ hungry for love, for sex, for orgasm, and ecstasy. And I see the guiltless bravado to which he gave himself in every act he ever did on earth.

I can see Christ insatiably slopping about in Magdalena's loins, shamelessly enjoying her honey pot, and then licking her slowly from her clitoris to her tits. Why would he not have done such? A man alone amongst men, bound to the earth as much to the sky- the Lord of the Dance- wild and broken open to the loss, the agony, and the rapture. Why would he not have given himself to the joy and mystery of the tantra of sex? A wine bibber, a glutton, and a rhapsodic lover, who dove down deep into the Earth Mother's womb, and into the open legs on Mary's welcoming bed. Son of a vision, mate

of a whore, Bridegroom to God, Christ came to dance, to drink, to love, and so much more.

Let them call me a blasphemer, a heathen, a pagan, or lost. No matter. I see Christ full and purging all that belongs to and runs out of the flesh. I see him after a night of wild revelry, bent over on all fours, emitting vomit onto the dark stones of a cobbled alley. I see him spraying warm urine against a lone olive tree on a desert hilltop at twilight. I see him clearing his nose like a barbarian, onto his weathered sleeve. I see his shit curl in all-too-human coils as it exits his hairy rectum, and I see his cum launched euphorically out of his pendulous member and into Mary's welcoming caverns. I see it all for I do not deny Christ, nor the flesh, nor the earth, nor the heavens. I do not deny. I say this and a mad glee overcomes me. I do not deny.

I see Christ and Mary engaged in every act imaginable, from cunnilingus, to felatio, the sixty-nine, the wheelbarrow, spanking, probing, petting, jerking, sucking, and screwing. I see it all, for I will not deny Jesus the pleasures of the flesh.

I see Christ standing naked in the warm wind, guzzling from a bottle of wine, while Mary is guzzling from him. I see him behind her, his teeth buried into the back of her neck, and his proboscis buried into her quiff.

I see Christ as a man without shame, without remorse, and without self-denial. And perhaps that is why they lynched him, because he exposed how pathetically everyone else had limited their lives through guilt and cowardice, and so his life was a spit in their face, a living mirror of disgust, and a fearless act of contempt.

For it was this same Christ who murdered me and who also saved me, this same Christ who demanded goodness of me and also demanded indifference, this same Christ who cared for me and also did not care, and this same Christ who spoke to me and who also was ever silent.

Christ was a man repulsed by the futile ways mankind deceived themselves and others, and he was none too slow to let others know this. I see in everything he did, and did not do, his belligerent, and determined words- "I will do as I please. I will eat meat if and when I want. I will drink wine if and when I choose. I will love Mary whenever and however I desire. I will work on the Sabbath if I please. And I will lie around as much as I can in the meantime. Take your rules, your lies, your judgments, shames, fears, and your deaths, you can have them, because I care for none of them."

I feel Christ's disgust burning holes in the hearts and egos of the citizens, belittling them, ostracizing them, and condemning them. And yet in his contempt and rejection of mankind's ways, I see his love, and hear him saying, "I love you enough to turn away from your stupidities, conventions, repressions, and fear, for in the simony of your souls do you sin against the God within you, and I will have none of it."

I see Christ in all the sordid ecstasies which humanity both desires and denies. I see him dancing a mad dance, because the world is not enough for him, and because God is too much, and the cup will not be removed but that he has drunk it dry. And so he is unleashed in a wild and euphoric, desperate dance of acceptance and abandon, a tortured and uncultured, ignoble and redemptive dance of the flesh, because he is here and now, the maker and breaker of

mankind, a son of mankind, a created God, gripped in the feverish passion of one who has nothing, is nothing, knows nothing but that to be alive is a mystery and a miracle worth enduring through no matter what, no matter where, be it in the harsh confines of all the cities on earth, in the lone sorrow of the endless wilds, in the arms and hearts of his brothers, sisters, and enemies, in the rain and sun and snow, in the hunger, the satiation, the awe and tribulations, in all that it is to be a man, to be on earth, to live, and love, and take up your song and sing for the glory of creation, even unto the cross.

*

seven

From Kauai my *soror*- my twin soul- and I decided to fly to the Big Island of Hawaii. We awoke early, the morning of our flight, and decided to head straight to the airport to see if we could get on an earlier flight than the one for which we were scheduled. No doubt this eagerness was being inspired in us, because we did make an earlier flight, and only because of this did we meet, on the plane to the Big Island, a man who befriended us, and who, after my *soror* had left some weeks later, gave me a small hut in which to live, located near his house, on some land he was looking after in the Puna district. And then, due to my contact with this fellow, all the rest which was to follow played itself out.

What happened is that this fellow, Brendan, was in charge of a number of properties owned by a multimillionaire who was off island, for reasons I shall not go into here. One of the properties was a massive, pristine piece of paradise, containing a large banana patch, various fields, mango trees, and, most importantly, an extinct, forested volcano, inside which there was a magical little lake.

While my *soror* was still on the Big Island, Brendan took her and I to this unique property for a swim, at which point she instantly recognized the lake as one she had seen in a dream, days earlier, and was told in the dream that I was somehow connected to the lake, but she had not known, until we arrived for the swim, that the lake actually existed. This was a powerful portent, for after my *soror* had left Hawaii, a few weeks later, and I was staying in the hut which Brendan had offered me, near his house, I began to feel claustrophobic because Brendan was exhibiting a not-so honest approach to our friendship. And so I was thinking of leaving and finding other accommodations. But then one night I had a dream in which I saw the lake in a vision, and, among other things, knew that I was to stay where I was until things played themselves out.

Well, not two weeks later the man who was then caretaking the volcano and lake had to fly to Oahu for a couple of months, and, lo and behold, I became the caretaker of that magical piece of the Mother.

I say this with absolute candor, for though the entire earth is a part of Her body, there are some places in which She is so alive, so conscious, and so available, that to be in those places for any period of time, is to connect with Her so intimately that you feel as if you’re sucking on her very teat.

I assume it was necessary that such a connection take place between myself and the Mother, which is why my *soror* and I had boarded the plane early from Kauai, which is why we met Brendan, which is why I stayed with him, and was told to stay, and not move, which is how I finally ended up living on, and loving the earth in a way that I could never have imagined.

To bond with the Mother in one of her hotspots is to hit upon an erogenous zone of the world, and to send sparks flying into yourself, and out into the cosmos; it is to send your connection with the Father down into the womb of the Mother, and to become the living act of coitus between them; it is to give yourself to the earth, as much as to the heavens, and in doing so to bring that Christ within you down from the cross, and back into the womb of Bethlehem.

I expect this type of connection is happening in many places around the world, though I doubt it is happening in any great manner any place where the earth is covered in cement and defiled instead of being deified. For, whereas the Father can be reached anywhere, at anytime, by anyone willing and earnest enough, the connection with the Mother is a more specific and demanding event; for, whereas the Father can be reached through the spirit, the Mother must be connected *in* the flesh. And so it is only in the unspoiled areas of the earth where She can be most easily embraced, interacted with, and adored. One such place is the Big Island of Hawaii, and, more specifically, the Puna district.

Puna is a vast area of natural beauty which is populated by an abundance of hippies, new-agers, drifters, back-to-landers, dope growers, mystics, maniacs, musicians, artisans, dropouts, ex-pats, saints, and infidels. It is Babylon. Though it is not the Babylon separated from the Godhead, but the new Babylon, re-united to the spirit and yet still anchored to the earth. *Terra firma*, *spiritus mundi*.

If the Big Island of Hawaii is the epicenter of the Mother Earth, with Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa soaring skyward as Her two bodacious fourteen-thousand-foot breasts, and the lava flow from Kilauea as Her ever-purging menses, then Puna is Her womb. And I am not being facetious.

Indeed She is as alive and accessible in the Puna district of the Big Island of Hawaii, as any other place on Her entire earth body. In fact, I find it no strange coincidence that on Mother's Day of 2002, the largest volcano in the world, Mauna Loa, began to swell, and at the same time Kilauea stepped up its lava output, as if to announce Her true being to the world.

It is in Puna where the orgasm of spirit and soul occurs, in Puna where the Father's invisible member enters the warm womb of the visible earth, in Puna where the Mother cums, grows heavy with child, gives birth, and then suckles her children. Puna is the matriarchal stronghold. It is where the Hawaiian Goddess Pele calls the shots.

There are tales of large corporations attempting to create a foothold in the area, with the intention of building a resort and living off the fat of the land, as it were. But only tales remain. Each attempt at corporate or cosmopolitan insurrection has met with disaster, economic ruin, or a strategically placed magma flow, because this is one of the last places on the earth- which is Her body- where the Mother will not be fucked unwillingly.

Pele is known for Her fire, Her anger, and Her love, for She is wild and unbridleable. The offerings most often presented to Her by Hawaiians seeking Her favor are gin and cigarettes, for She is dark and reckless, always ready for a party, and always ready for a fight. Love and fire. To whom She loves She gives the bounty of the earth, to whom She hates She destroys.

There is a well known story told in Puna, of an old woman, said to have been a temporary manifestation of Pele, who wandered around the Kapoho area one day, in the 1960's, going from house to house and asking at each door for some food and shelter, and being turned away by all until finally being taken in by the lighthouse keeper. Rumor has it that she left his place a few hours later, peacefully, and gratefully, and the next day a lava flow wiped out the entire village- except for the lighthouse keeper's home. To this day you can see where the flow parted to go around his house, and then rejoined so as to leave none of Her compassionless children unpunished. Love and fire. She takes care of some, and wreaks havoc on others. And who can blame Her.

My own mother often said that if ever there was threat of harm to one of her children, she would turn into an unstoppable grizzly in order to rescue us, and I believe her. I believe that her love was so strong, that it could turn, when necessary, into a rage that no human could match. I believe this with all my soul, and as I write this I feel my body filling with shivers, and my eyes growing cloudy with tears, as if I can finally understand the love of a mother for her children.

And now I take this understanding of a mother's love, given to me by my physical mother, and I wish the same for Gaia, Mother Earth, whose children are in danger, just as She is in danger herself. For the earth is now all but a dumping ground onto which we cast our limitless garbage, and I, for one, will be glad on the day She declares "No more!"

No more. Enough is enough. I look forward to the day when the Mother's wrath, guided by the Father's vision, reclaims all that has been stolen from Her. And I believe this is possible, for She is not unaware. In fact, it is well understood on the Big Island that Pele will not let lava be taken off of the island without severe consequences. And there are many tales of tourists scoffing brashly at such local warnings and deciding to fly home with a little chunk of the Mother, and then of these unbelieving heathens mailing the lava back to the island, a few months later, in an attempt to appease the force now ruining their lives.

Oh, She is a dark, ferocious, and unforgiving matriarch at times, this devouring female, Kali, Black Madonna, Green Tara, or Pele, call her what you will. She is your Mother, and She is vicious.

*

eight

There is a nude beach on the Big Island of Hawaii where the spirit runs as thick as magma, and all archetypes of the human drama are represented by those who are called to frequent this beautiful and secluded locale.

It is one of those rare places on earth which has not yet been quarantined nor corrupted by the ever fearful bourgeois rabble and their henchmen. It is a place where lawlessness gives way to freedom, nature gives way to nudity, and euphoria gives way to song. It is a place with aspects of Valhalla, Avalon, and Eden, all intermixed and resonant in the confluence. It is a place where a garment of flesh is the norm, drumming circles are regular occurrences, laughter and awe are the order of the day, and nature is the church within which the congregation holds communion.

It is a community of a handful of regulars, and a neverending succession of traveler's, transients, and tourists. And yet no matter what the mix of characters on any given day, the feeling is always the same: harmony.

I have seen almost every spiritual archetype- which I have come to recognize- make an appearance on this particular black-sand stage at one time or another, for it, like similarly chosen spots, is a spiritual vortex where God's own soup of souls is mixed to a particular taste on any given day.

It is also an area of incredible beauty, and oceanic delight, where I have had the privilege to snorkel naked with wild dolphins on a few occasions, an event which I can only compare to the float-flying feeling I have experienced in dreams, during periods in my life when my spirit lightened and drifted gently up and out of context.

To be out in the deep blue, warm-as-blood water, unclothed, and to be slowly meandering under the waves, in the weightless and timeless calm, amongst a graceful and carefree school of dolphins, is to return to a part of ourselves which is ever living just below the crashing surf of life, and agonizing to finally fly free.

The dolphins themselves must sense the calm on that uncommon beach, for they happen by it quite regularly, often lunging out of the waves in acrobatic somersaults and flips as if trying to express or release the explosive joy of simply being alive.

It is a joy which lives in all of us, but is so quickly obliterated by care and strife, though I believe this inherent mirth can be resurrected in a moment by anyone who up and tosses their oppressive worries aside.

As such, it was on that beach itself that I came to witness one person who carried that wild bliss closer to their heart than ever I have seen in another- a young girl, perhaps nine years old, who must have had angels dancing and smiling over her with delight at her uninhibited antics, exuberance, and authenticity.

Never have I seen another individual who lived so completely, so naturally, and so abundantly. Compared to her, the rest of the thoroughly alive and spirited cast on the beach were but walking cadavers, and lifeless puppets, for she was the living incarnation of Life itself.

She reminded me of a study I once read, in which some researchers had hidden a camera on the outskirts of a playground, to film children at play. The scholars were intending to do some such psychological or sociological report or another. But these academicians must have been far more lucid or inspired than is the norm, for they began recognizing certain patterns in the play, while they were reviewing the series of tapes taken of the children.

It was as if there was a sublime music running through the playground, and as if the tune would surge here, and then there- as if the playground itself was a living symphony, and the children were the instruments.

And then the researchers discovered something even more fantastic. It suddenly dawned upon them that one little girl was always in perfect harmony with the whole, as if she was in tune with the entire symphony, and that whatever she did, or wherever she went, the music went with her, or she went with it, for these two things were indistinguishable, because she had tapped naturally into the music of life which was being pulsed through the world, and specifically into that playground, and more specifically into her, and through her, and of her, because she was …Life. All others were merely instruments of the music which she incarnated.

And it was the same with the young girl on the nude beach, in that faraway corner of that fervent land, where I saw the living music of her being dance among the spirit's instruments, and in doing so she gave life back to the life she had been given.

Had I not learned by that point to empty myself out of all context and manifestation, thus attaining the non-reactive position of non-being, and the vantage point of present absence, I would never have seen this all going on, and so would not have recognized her harmonic expression of the whole. Luckily for me I was well acquainted with non-being, for that was my natural state, and it was only with the constricted corpulescence of being that I had to struggle towards and become, which is perhaps why that marvelous manifestation of spirited existence so powerfully enthused me- because she was unconstricted *being*.

A few months later, perhaps due to my intoxication with, and joy of, her spirit, or due to one of God's infinite unknowable plans, I was sent a dream in which that same young girl was saying something about wanting to go to the lava flow on the island. The next morning I awoke and headed to the beach, and ended up, unintentionally, planting myself right near where she had dropped her garments. When she returned for them she was speaking with some adults about wanting to go see the lava flow, a signal which prompted me to finally say hello to her- which I had not done in the past both for lack of genuine opportunity, and because I was shyly smitten with her, though not in the Lolita sense, but because I was smitten with life, and she was the most alive specimen I had ever encountered. And so we had a brief chat together- no doubt planned well in advance by the Great Choreographer- and connected our spirits through the eyes so as to never be apart whether we were ever to see each other again or not. Which we didn't.

Indeed, it is the pulse of life, and not the understanding which counts. It is how we wake, and walk, and hug each other.

For to truly ‘be’, is to be life’s orgasm, to fertilize novel happenings onto the universe, which is the erotic intimacy of life begetting life, of mystery making mystery; it is to swell and be consumed by the infinity of possibilities, of the unendurable stimulations of new nowness, of the spasmodic, quivering ejaculations of life gyrating forward into what it is and never has been.

Life is this dynamic conception into manifold wombs, through which we burst forth uncontrollably, dizzy into moments creating moments, spending our seed about like a ubiquitous colander over the world. We are these orgasmic moments tossed and piled upon one another into a wriggling, insane heap of becoming.

We do not evaporate, we sizzle, burning hot and sudden, like comets breaking up into the atmosphere, feverishly dazzled by their own incineration. And so our lives become glorious sparks vanishing as quickly as they are born, and we are the fluid movements through forgotten experiences, purged so as to let other novelties appear, for we are created to continually create, and the only rule of the game is that there aren’t any.

Any place but where we’ve already been, that is life’s sole direction. To look back is to go back.

To be new is to be the ever-flowing never-knowing perpetual mystery of ourselves.

Like virgins deflowered in their first act, we are consummation, though release we shall never know, but instead only the blinding-forever-moment when the universe cums ...and we are its coming.

*

nine

The spirit manifests in groups, as much as in individuals; for just as lone atoms join to become a molecule, and molecules become material, and material creates the manifest, so to the individual is harnessed and fitted into a complex group so as to create a workable and unique molecule with which the spirit proceeds to evolve the universe. And, like the carbon atom- which is the base of all life on earth, because it can be bonded onto by so many other atoms, in many different ways, and can grow into great chains, therefore becoming the common matrix of all that is of this realm- so too, the spirit is bound and woven throughout the full breadth of the cosmos, and is the substratum upon which the entire drama builds and has meaning.

I was in Dharamsala, India, when this observation became crystal clear to me. I had come to the land of exiled Tibetans, and was living there for a month, reading, writing, drinking *chai*, and watching the dance of lightning play over the Dalai Lama’s residence one evening in the middle of a week-long gathering of monks from all over the world. I expect the molecular conglomeration from their collective souls must have grounded the spirit in such a way that the electric ether could not help but strike that lightning rod of their

united beings in a continuous display this one evening, for the display occurred nowhere in the valley except right above the monastery.

Though it was not that holy gathering, but instead another collection of individuals which, to a much greater extent, sparked my own passion and interest that week- another conglomeration of living human electrons that would end up providing some of my thoughts on the molecular workings of the spirit which I have just attempted to describe.

I had moved into a bed-bug-ridden hotel, built hanging on a steep ridge on the outskirts of the town, and overlooking the splendid Himalayan valley. What struck me almost the instant I arrived at the hotel was how many of the residents seemed to know each other, and not just like travelers tend to know each other- for a night of impromptu revelry and balderdash, the morning after which a quick goodbye is said and then onto the next meeting somewhere else, with someone else- but in a real, heart-felt, familiar way.

Later that evening a fair number of these folks had gathered into the room beside mine, and I was serendipitously invited to join what would become one of the most memorable evenings of music, mayhem, and union I had ever been privileged to witness.

The air was filled that night for hours on end with song and harmony, as this group of rag-tag musicians masterfully jammed a holy litany of ballads, folk tunes, self-written songs, and spontaneous outbursts, as if they had been playing together for years, and had seemingly known each other for their entire lives. Either that, I thought, or they belonged to a commune of some sort, here in the valley. I could not see it any other way, for their music and souls melded and blended together in a union of love, talent, and siblinghood to such an overwhelming degree that, for the first time in my lone and wayward life, I wanted …to belong. It was that magical of a gathering. I was certain that these truly authentic and marvelous characters were members of one type of spiritual organization or another- be it a Buddhist monastery, Hindu ashram, Christian church, or some other esoteric organization- though at that point it did not much matter to me for I was inspired and uplifted in their communal company, and knew very clearly, for the first time in my life, that whatever community of likeminded souls these people belonged to, I was going to join them …the next day. That was how powerful was the gathering of freedom, unity, care, and carelessness that evening.

Late into the twilight hours the assembly dispersed, and I went to my room, lay down, fell asleep, and dreamed a dream in which I was told that the folks with whom I had just spent the night, and with whom I had fallen into awe and adoration towards, and was ready the next morning to beg entrance into their tribe- these folks had been gathered together to heal each other. And this had all been orchestrated sublimely, by that carbon molecule of the invisible realm, the spirit. I was impressed, to say the least. And, more importantly, I did not have to enter their cloister, because …I already belonged. Not to this insular group, mind you. No, I was not a part of their molecule. I was a renegade atom, belonging to no specific molecule itself, but being received by all, joining all, and then leaving all. But now this did not matter, for I was a roaming piece of the cosmic whole, flung into the implausible bedlam of a limitless periodic table, created by an intelligence so powerful, so far beyond and ahead of our limited

conception, so grand and generous and conscious of each little lost atom, and capable of pulling together fragments from the furthest reaches of the globe, subtly congealing a marvelous molecule in a flee-bitten, filthy, traveler's hotel, and turning it into the House of God for a night, and willing the souls of all invited to grow in the sublime passion of the invisible world, that I bow down in my station, in my abilities, in my cares and concerns, for the Creator's glue runs into and through myself and all things, and the river collects its tributaries, and through the rapids, waves, and falls, we are all taken to the infinite sea.

But how do you describe it any more clearly when this type of experience and observation comes to you? All you can say is that, without any talent, itinerary, or ability of your own, you are always where you're supposed to be, always guided by thoughts given to you, ever meeting everyone you must meet who has been intentionally directed towards you, and that therefore all people are non-separated expressions of the Creator, that life is much grander and more directed than it is possible to imagine, that the actual is illusion, the illusion is actual, and God is now and everything. That's all you can say and then you stop trying, you live in the living moment of the emerging manifest, and ...you let *It* happen.

In this way everything in life- even the smallest, most trivial experience or action- is in reality a building block, carved by invisible masons, and placed in a way so as to precisely construct the house being built within ourselves.

For example, when I was in university, despite an inability to stay awake in class, I completed a degree in Biology, with a concentration in Ecology and Evolution, which I had chosen specifically because I was in love with the mystery of life. Ecology is based on the interdependence of all life, but little did I know at that point how absolute the rule truly is, and that every act and intent is a part of the whole, whether we know it or not. All flesh is one flesh.

Furthermore, during one of my insultingly tedious classes, we were required to do an independent study, and in going through the motions I stumbled upon James Lovelock's vanguard theory called *Gaia*- the Mother Earth- which basically hypothesizes that the earth is actually a living organism. Albeit his theory was actually anachronistic, and only vanguard to the patriarchal minds running rampant through academia ever since the institution's inception; Lovelock was merely unearthing, so to speak, what the Druids and Pagans had long known as an absolute truth- that the earth is alive.

Anyway, I did a study on Lovelock's theory, and was glad to have learned a bit of swallowable academia, and yet, because I was still thoroughly brainwashed, having been raised and deranged in the polarized dementia of such academic institutions, I did not realize back then that my affinity for the Mother was already growing within me, even during those formative years of my conceptual incarceration.

In fact, as early as three years old, when I was caught going from door to door in our neighborhood, trying to sell the bums and boobs, cut from the nude bodies I had found in my father's Playboy Magazines, to any takers, I can see now that I was already infatuated with the Mother.

To be sure, there are hidden but living blueprints within the entire fabric of our journey through life, and not only our specific, individual life, but

also within our connected existence, for the 'part' is so interdependent with the whole that the lines of division, distinguishing where one individual leaves off and where another begins, slowly dim and eventually fade away, as we dissolve from identity and infiltrate the whole. The connectedness *is* life, and the destination to which we are all headed is the same one, though our experiences of the trip, and of our arrival, may be very different.

My physical brother, for example, carries a very similar spirit, soul, and disposition to my own, and though our paths are as idiosyncratic as all others, there are also immense and deep similarities between us, for we are of the same fabric, and therefore are made from the same loom.

Knowing this, it was inspiring, but not shocking, to find that my brother had taken, while I was writing this work, employment on a privately owned, ocean-going vessel which, for a summer, was cruising the marvelous fiords and channels of British Columbia and the Alaskan panhandle, and was called, of all things, *Mi Gaea*- Mother Earth.

These are the types of occurrences which logical positivists call coincidence, materialists call chance, and the seers call destiny. No matter, enough of these types of synchronicities have occurred in my life for me to recognize, though not understand, a subterranean matrix, multifarious in its appearance, though arising from a common center, which we all can feel but perhaps never know.

It is this commonality, this integral core, which is each of our soul's brotherhood and sisterhood to all others. For just as a hive of bees or a nest of ants is called a 'superorganism', in biological terms, because the whole operates as if it were an actual being, and because no single ant nor bee can survive on its own for very long, for they are thoroughly interdependent with the entire hive or nest, so also are we not only mutually dependent on and with each other, but with the heavens and the earth as well, though we know it not, and so we pollute our brethren with judgment, our heavens with sin, and our earth with oil.

*

ten

As much as I have within me an East Indian yogini, an Irish monk, a Native American scout, a Teutonic barbarian, and a French decadent, so also do I contain a peaceless, wanderlusting Norseman. It cannot be otherwise, for I have been to most of the Viking Countries, including Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Scotland, and Iceland, and I can see no other reason why I have been drawn or guided to all such places.

Perhaps this accounts for a certain amount of my estrangement to the rest of the world, for I consider the Vikings to have been the original astronauts of the earth- the ones who would launch themselves into the unknown, to the ends of the earth, for no better reason than they could not keep still. In this way did those northern gypsies roam the harsh and unforgiving North Atlantic for more than a millennium, discovering North America no less than five-hundred

years before Columbus- that southern European homebody- who, being not quite as nautically skilled as the Norsemen, landed a mere fifteen-thousand kilometers from his intended destination, and then proudly declared that he had reached …India.

The Vikings, however, found what they were looking for- solitude. For the Norseman's soul is the soul of loneliness. Not a loneliness like the Celtic soul, which has been transformed and made beautiful and inviting through its music and poetic melancholy- but the loneliness of the north itself, of the rocks, reefs, icebergs, and seas which the Norse came to inhabit. The Norse soul is the most distant soul within the entire occidental family, though it is a soul which belongs to all of us, for we are all part Viking, barbarian, wanderer, and nomad, cold and peaceless and wild within.

I was sent to Iceland due to a series of four dreams. I did not understand what the first two dreams were trying to convey, but when the third one rolled around, I knew where I was being asked to go, though I knew not why. And so, for the first time in my dream-following life, I was indecisive, for I had never wanted to go to Iceland, and my funds were running short at the time, and perhaps I was not the best of spiritual servants the world has ever known. Finally, however, I recognized what I should have remembered all along- that the spirit knew far more than I knew and I was not to question but only to up and follow. So I accepted my orders, after which soon followed an affirming dream, and then, over the next couple of weeks I was informed, in night visions, of what boots would be best to wear, and what coat to take, and so on, for I had no idea what weather I was going to encounter wherever it was I was supposed to go when I got there.

I must not have been equipped well enough, however, for the morning I was to leave for Iceland I was given an old down-jacket by a chap in the hostel in London in which I was staying, an event which spurred me to suddenly remember another dream which I had somehow forgotten, in which I was with a man driving a large truck- the Greater Vehicle, as the dream symbology runs- who was worried that I would be cold. I expect that the jacket was His way of making sure I would not die shivering.

Anyway, heading out of London to Stansted airport that afternoon, from where I was to fly to Reykjavik, the bus I was on was slowed grievously due to road construction, and many passengers seemed doomed to miss their flights. I was sitting beside a peaceful, grey-haired woman who carried an air of dignity about her, and just after the driver announced the probability of further delays up ahead, I heard the woman quietly declare, "No, all of the workers have gone for tea, and the road will be clear." And I knew she was willing it to be so. A white witch, to be sure.

After we arrived at the airport, without encountering any further delays, and the passengers scampered off the bus gladly knowing they would catch their flights, I turned towards this elderly matron of the subtle arts, and whispered "Do you think any of them imagine that it was you?" to which she responded, "No, there are many unbelievers."

With that meeting as a send off I flew to Iceland and arrived on a mission for which, admittedly, to this day, I do not know specifically why I was sent, although I know that there must have been reasons. For in one of my

dreams which spawned the trip, there appeared the message SOS, and soon after arriving in Iceland I was picked up while hitchhiking by a spritely young blond woman, and after getting into her car, taking off, and turning on some tunes, the song playing on her CD was SOS, by Abba, a name which in Aramaic means 'Father'- the one who sent me I don't know why, but He did, to that land which is the last vestige of that great northern race who worshiped Odin- the All Father.

Perhaps I was sent simply to meet this young daffodil in the north land, exchange a few words and connect our spirits through the eyes and that was enough. Which may also be the reason I was picked up hitching in the remote, north-eastern region, by the country's vice-president; an unprecedented event which could only happen to a long-haired, big-bearded, heavily-avoided vagabond on that isolated island of a mere two-hundred and fifty thousand people. And so he and I also exchanged words and connected our spirits through the eyes, and then parted without ever parting again.

Or perhaps I was sent for my own soul's sake- so that I might have a chance to walk upon and view the austere beauty of the Mother in Her unadorned and yet voluptuous state, for that is how one finds Her in Iceland. And it is only there, or lands like it, where fire and ice meet, and treeless, rolling green hills abound relentlessly, and an impermeable layer of cloud prevent Sol from casting His glare upon the land- it is only in places such as this that one must find different eyes to partake of the sublime, surreal, and yet supernatural abundance of the Mother.

In the austere, unforgiving landscape of Iceland, I found that I did not love the earth because of the trees, the birds, the warmth, or fruit, but that I loved the earth for itself. Because to camp in Iceland, in the barren, harsh, and windswept *living* land, is to find no fecund adornments wrapping the ground in swollen spectacle, but instead to stand or lay upon the bare earth, the unclothed Mother, and to suckle the beauty of Her being in a shivering, disquieting, intimate embrace.

It was in Iceland that I finally overcame my personal need to return again and again to the thriving, sustaining plenitude of the magnificent west coast Canadian wilderness, for I had now lain with the naked Mother in that northern land pregnant with Her supernatural spirit, and there I adored Her.

I say supernatural because Iceland is a vibrant region supporting the mythological world. Here one finds Mt. Hekla, under which it is said exists the theoretical gates of Hell. Here also is Mt. Snaefelsness, which was Jules Verne's inspiration for his story *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. And here one sees a netherworldly quality in the land, where mountains are not mere rocks but are the castles of elves, and hills are not simply inanimate bulges but are living mounds of the Mother.

Iceland, like Hawaii, is a land only recently tortured by the encroachment of mankind proper, for it did not receive its first humanoids until the tenth century AD, and this fact, more than anything, could explain why the Mother is still billowing with primordial delight there.

It is also a land still holding the spirits of its first inhabitants- the Irish monks, who came seeking even a more remote location than Stelig Michael for their otherworldly piety. And it contains the remnants of the Vikings with their

Norse Gods, as well as a plethora of mythical creatures such as gnomes, faeries, elves, hobbits, and trolls, for these earth-spirits still find favor not only in the land but also in the minds of many Icelanders even today, and I can vouch for a strong sense of these nether-realm beings, whose dwellings lurk within the land, just on the other side of our realm, but continuous with it, and involved with it.

And so, perhaps I was sent to that North Atlantic land so as to visit a place which is suspected not only of being another possible location for the original site of Atlantis- the Father's creation- but may have also been a colonization of Lemuria, because of its unity with the Mother. And so Iceland is one of the rare places on earth where the Father and Mother are each a substantial presence.

As stated earlier, He resides in the ancestral Norse spirits who worshiped Odin, the All Father, and in the Christian Monks who worshiped God the Father. And even to this day, the culture is so bound to that patriarchal polarity, that Iceland is the only place on earth, to my knowledge, that has a Phallological Museum- a museum of penises from species all over the world.

And yet the Mother is equally as strong in Iceland, for She resides in the living, gurgling land of fire and ice, and in the Tolkienesque remains of the realm of earth-spirits. And so the Mother and Father aspects of God exist together there, as dramatically as anywhere on earth, and they do so in a subtle harmony which might be capable of occurring only on such a remote island, battered constantly by rain and wind, hidden in perpetual fog, in a northern sea, which is yet a land warmed by the living blood of the volcanic earth, bubbling just inches beneath the surface.

*

eleven

Iceland is a land of lost witchcraft and wizardry, of sagas, battles, slaves, and seamen. And though I have often wondered why I had been guided to go there, what I had accomplished, what I had found, and what I had learned- queries which to this day I remain without concrete answers- I know that on that isolated rock, alone in the grey chill of an arctic day, I met again the Christ within us all, because, in many ways, Christ *is* the loneliness within us all.

This came about on an empty, magnificent, endless black-sand beach on the south coast, where I camped alone for a number of days near the end of my month-long stay. Staring out towards an empty sea, as I stared out towards the North Atlantic on that trip, is, I have found, a great way to wash away all but that Christ-loneliness within ourselves, and to enter into the self which hides within the self. In this way do we encounter not only our most intimate being, but we invert our vision, looking now inward rather than out, which helps the third eye open, because the third eye is spirit, not flesh, and so, by looking out to the unblemished sea, our sight can find no object on which to rest, and therefore all vision ceases to focus on 'things', and instead slowly changes direction, and looks towards home.

I have sat on many beaches in such a way, staring out to sea, and I have walked on many of those desolate beaches all around the world, in such isolated haunts as the Queen Charlotte Islands, the west coast of Vancouver Island, the Alaskan panhandle, the fabulous Whahariki beach on the south island of New Zealand, hidden beaches on Kauai and the Big Island of Hawaii, the endless shores of County Donegal, Ireland, and even the massive stretches of more accessible shores on Santorini, and Goa, in India, but never have I walked on one while as lonely and full of wonder as I was on the massive black-sand beach found on the south shore of Iceland, near the town of Vik.

This stretch of intertidal magnificence lies right near the main road which circumnavigates the island, and yet it is as remote as the seventh moon of Saturn, and is one of those few places where puffins and other sea birds, rarely seen from land, are as prominent as weeds.

And so I marched up and down that neverending beach for many days, wearing a winter coat and walking in bare feet, just so that I could be in contact and feel Her, and camping amidst the dunes, communing with the puffins, drinking warm Icelandic beer, eating cold Icelandic beans, and trying to come to terms with what I was always trying to come to terms with- myself, God, humanity, and the earth. What a maddening complexity of incompatible variables; take any one of them away and a perfect unity might prevail, but put them all together and all you get is a frantic jumble of incohesive forces and fields and a damn fine mess of the miracle. And perhaps this is the crux of the whole spectacular problem- that to *be*, means to be not only individual, but also in community, in God, and in the Earth, and perhaps we, as evolving beings, are not yet capable of perfecting this mad quaternity. And maybe it is this very unsolvable tangle which is symbolized by the four directions of the cross on which the Christ within all of us is alone and yet pulled in all directions by the inharmonious show.

No matter, if I was sent to that remote island for both love of the Mother, and also communion with the Son, perhaps it was for this latter reason that I was to meet a young man named Bjorn- a large yet timid twenty-five year old Icelandic musician- in a northern town, who, I recognized quickly, was wearing the same pants that I had seen in one of the seminal dreams driving me into that awkward pilgrimage. And, to be sure, Bjorn came forth with some interesting news soon after we became acquainted, in that he shamefacedly admitted to me that he often held audience with the Holy Spirit, and that *It* answered his questions. Yet he could not share this phenomenon with his countrymen because he feared their disbelief, their scorn and their ostracizing. To his confession I was quick to rejoin that perhaps he ought to rethink his silence, and, regardless of the perils to his ego and societal status, he should consider telling it all as it is, not only for his own sake, but for all others.

I understand Bjorn's conundrum, though, for it is not easy to expose yourself in a crowd of naysayers. And though Iceland held all the pretense of a religious community, I was slowly finding out that, as a collective, the country had slowly fallen away from God, away from acceptance, and innocence, and into greed- a fact which would betray itself in numerous subtle events. For example, a number of times during my stay, waitresses did not give me the proper change back after I had paid, and it was always in *their* favor. And

grocery stores often displayed one price near the product, but sneakily charged a higher fee at the cash register.

I was wondering if I was the only one seeing these subtle lies- because perhaps I was the only one paying concerted attention at the till, due to the pauper's budget I was on, and therefore could not help but become aware of the deceit being perpetrated throughout the breadth of the entire island. But then, as I was hitching towards Reykjavik during my last days on the island, I was picked up by an elderly fellow who confirmed my investigation, and who said that the entire country was thick with this type of deception, this type of greed, this type of disastrous, hidden, and cancerous unlove. SOS indeed.

This type of communal sin, which begets the coming communal chastening, reminds me of a conversation I had with another old gentleman I met on a ferry from Holyhead to Dublin, on my first visit to Ireland. After he and I had spoken for a while, and we had taken up the ever popular topic of the great famine, he turned calmly towards me and solemnly stated that though the whole affair had been disastrous and disheartening, some people believed that it was God who had caused the suffering, a point to which I agreed, because the spirit can quicken or chasten an entire group, as is necessary occasionally, which is why The Book of Revelation is filled with judgment for, or against, entire populations.

Oh, Lord, save them and every Gomorrah like them. And save me as well while you're at it. For I am a sinner who did not understand that true sin is simply a lack of love, and that this lack of love comes from judgment, which creates the duality of right and wrong, which creates good and evil, which creates separation, which creates death.

Luckily for me, somewhere amongst the confused trials of my erratic re-ascent, I met again the same snake who had taken me down, and again I bit into the apple given. But this time I took a bite only ...so as to spit it back into his disbelieving face. And then I said goodbye, and left him in his wily hell, and I walked back into the Garden to feed evermore upon naught but mystery, love, and the Tree of Life.

If only I had always known how easy it was to pry apart those bars of separativeness. To walk through, to breathe, to grin, to walk away. If only I would have kept playing in the play of the soul and nothing more- to be wrapped, in the rapt, welcoming, fabulous stream.

And though I am nobody and know nothing, I still come humbly to give aid to you who blunder on obliviously, with an offering to wash the mote out of your eye, so that with love you might weep the plank out of mine. For I have seen another possibility, another chance for freedom, as it were. And I will not go down without a fight. I have found the new garden in which grows no Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but only the Tree of Life. And perhaps when finally you become tired of the world and its criminal misconceptions, perhaps then you will seek to flee along with me.

I stand in earnest welcome for your tired eyes.

There are different answers these days. We must be kind and ruthless to ourselves. We must destroy the thoughts given to us, by abandoning every idea of right and wrong, and forgetting ourselves at every moment, so as to arrive at where we came from, and there to love without finishing.

And for this we must simply leap without descending, and climb without holding on, for there is no Way, no distance, no movement, no arrival, departure, longing, or fulfillment. Nothing need be done here; nothing to save, alter, deny, invent, desire, or understand. Nothing to seek, nothing to abandon. In the inevitable communion of our approaching new innocence, we shall reap not, and neither shall we sow.

Come into this new garden, come in, gather it all up, eat your fill. Here you shall find no exile.

*

twelve

Out in this world, in this incredible world, in this maddening, miraculous, mythical world, certain very absurd things kept happening to me, almost all of which I neither expected, intended, nor desired.

One such oddity began as another sequence of dreams, drawn out over a number of years, in which an old homosexual man was very interested in making love to me. I knew in the dreams that the man was God, which made me quite repulsed, and I always awoke with a sickly feeling, thinking that God was a demented old codger who ought to seek His fancies elsewhere. Little did I know, however, that this apparent homosexuality of God's was simply symbolizing the type of relationship He would like to have with me; He wanted to love me, but the only way for that to happen was for me to be completely open and receptive, and the only way for that to happen was for me to become as a woman in relationship to God, which meant to be concave to His convexity, as it were.

In fact, I understand now that a man does not become united to God until he becomes God's wife, for to receive is to *be* female, and so to take upon the bridegroom is to become one with Him.

I cannot deny that this sounds like absolute balderdash. And yet, as always, a truth which I had refused to accept from within, had necessarily to present itself in the outer world so that I could accept that the spirit was not relenting in its project.

What happened is that I was in Ireland, and I was rootless and homeless, though I had never felt more rooted nor home, a paradox which could only exist in Ireland, because it is a land that has been uniquely made for blokes like me, for souls rapt in the wonder of existence and dancing madly without aim but for the love, the agony, and the brilliance of it all. I was dancing a mad dance inwardly as I outwardly toured the pubs of Galway. I was like a sailor who had never before set foot on land, like a man born out at sea, who had never known the feel of good old *terra firma*, nor of the type of solidity which belongs to no physical realm but is found only in the heart's vagabond provinces, and is a fluid perfection which the spirit knows as home. And if ever I felt like I had finally come to shore, and was home, it was in Galway, Ireland, for there is no place on earth which houses the lost and wandering soul in such multifarious

pubs, like Galway. The town is thick with bohemians, hobos, troubadours, minstrels, mendicants, gypsies, hippies, publicans, drunks, and freaks.

I was staying in an anarchical, disgusting, congested, wonderful, and blessed hostel on the outskirts of town, wherein the most amazing cast of individuals were either living for months on end while working in town, or staying only for a brief period during their travels.

Anyways, before I lose the thread, it happened one evening, as I was sitting around the hostel's kitchen table, sipping on some cider, and bantering with a number of Europeans, that an Irish man, about my age, came stumbling in after a night of pubbing. He was blasted to the moon from drink, and he sat down with us and began spouting all sorts of nonsense, and yet he was in a somewhat lucid, dream-like state, and at one point he kept looking at me and declaring, "God is gay! God is gay!" to which I responded, "I know", though he didn't seem to understand that I had understood him, and kept on delivering his odd axiom, like a mantra risen from the drunken sea. But I understood him alright, and, not only that, I was thankful for his unexpected speech which supported my unconventional premise.

Given this corroboration, I can calmly declare that all men are women under God, though not in the sex and gender sense, but in the concave-convex sense; for in order to be intimate with God a person must allow God to penetrate them. And the only way to do that is to become hollow and receptive, which is a state of grace which I continue to imperfectly strive towards, for it is easier be in God, than to let God be in me.

No matter, I was in Ireland, and Ireland was in me. And never have I been to a country where I was so quickly guided by the spirit, welcomed by the citizens, stimulated by song, and pickled in the pubs as I was in Ireland.

In fact, I ended up in that spirited hostel through a series of guided circumstances, as originally I arrived in Galway after spending two days travelling from the armpit of the world, London, and was weary and in desperate need of a pint of the black blood. So, upon arrival, I checked into the first boarding house I could find, which was right near the bus station, but I instantly realized that it was painfully clean, absurdly regimented, and as dead as the doorknobs within it, and I knew that I would not stay there long, though where I would end up I had no clue.

So I headed out onto the main, cobbled street, put back a few pints in a pub, and then went to a park by the river where I encountered an amazing assortment of young folks playing music, doing circus stunts, bantering about, and otherwise having a fine old time of it. I thought to myself- that is where the spirit is, in those people, and I stayed there for a while, imbibing their essence, and then left to get a bite to eat.

At the restaurant I was joined by a long-haired Italian fellow who was working at one of the local shops, and living in Galway for the summer, and who had some good advice on where to stay. He suggested to me another hostel, which had exceptionally cheap weekly rates, no rules, and no worries. And, I was to find out, after I had gone and checked it out, that it was the home of all those young folks whom I had been admiring, which was reason enough for me to drag my bags out of the soulless sepulchre I had placed them in earlier, and

move into that house of spirit the next day, and that was where I met the bloke declaring that God was gay.

And though I am a man who enjoys his privacy and time alone, both of these were absolutely impossible in the tightly packed mayhem I soon found myself ensconced within, inside that broken-down, smoke-ridden, noisy, and congested rooming-house where the spirit ran as thick as molten gold: the Archview Hostel, or, archetype view, as I saw it. I was to stay there for two weeks, despite, and because of the human chaos within, and was to meet all sorts of fantastic characters exhibiting the maddest, liveliest, and most talented lives I have ever seen in any such wayfarer's community.

Every night in the crowded stairwell there would be guitar playing, song, and revelry. It was like living in a co-ed dorm in which no one had to go to class the next morning, no one had to study, and the only project was to live, and love, and spread the fever of euphoria around and through all who came to that effervescent stew.

There were a number of rooms in the hostel which had become known for housing groups of individuals from specific countries. There was a Spanish room, an Eastern European room, and a French room, which was the one I was lucky enough to get a bed in, for the French live life like no others on earth.

I had returned to my roots, had folded my wings, and found myself in a nest the likes of which I could never have imagined.

And so for the next couple of weeks, if I wasn't at the hostel, hanging out with those remarkable Europeans, I was out pubbing, to be sure. For Galway is not a town, it is a convention of pubs, albeit with a number of roads in between its various taps, an assortment of restaurants to feed the partiers, some hotels and a bus station to service the patrons, but these are merely collateral institutions facilitating the multitude of drinking holes in this one-of-a-kind west coast town.

I spent day after day patronizing the various establishments, listening to music sessions, and meeting the occasional local. One spirited fellow who beckoned me to sit down with him was putting back the pints as if he was inhaling oxygen, and all the while spouting gibberish about his 'master' in Asia, which was all very interesting, but I wasn't in Asia- I was in a pub, in Galway, Ireland, mad with music, joy, and drink- and so had little ear for his neophytic zeal. Luckily, however, he eventually switched channels and shared with me one important Irish commandment around drinking, which was to always leave the last sip of beer in your glass for the faeries. It sounded reasonable, although I was loath to give up even a drop of the juice. However, I capitulated to the local tradition. After all, I was consuming my fair share of the black blood called Guinness anyway, so much so that I soon found that if you drink enough of it- as if one could ever drink enough of that dark-mother's milk, but by 'enough' I mean no less than six to eight pints a day, a peasant's ration- your innards become coated with that dark and delicious tincture, and your stool becomes black as pitch. The first time I peered into the ivory throne after a few days in Galway and saw the ebony logs piled like cones of soft charcoal upon each other, I could not believe it. My shit was as black as the blackest night, and remained that way until I weaned myself onto a more holistic diet of cider, whiskey, and hash, which I was quickly trained to do while staying in that most

quintessential of outcast's hostels on earth, and passing a bottle of the hard stuff around with groups of young Europeans, like only the Europeans do, and rolling big, conical reefers, like only the Europeans do, and taking in life, and food, and liberty, like only the Europeans do.

I had come to a place where I could be at peace, *and* in company, which is an almost impossible feat for a writer, because writing is generally the outcome of loneliness and quietude. But in Ireland I was able to somehow bridge the gap, and find a way of harnessing the wild beast but for an instant, not to quell its life, but to record it, and then onto the next stampede, and then a word, a sentence, a paragraph, some whiskey, a toot, a bit of laughter, some song. I had come to accept life in community, which I had never been able to accomplish in all my writing life, because to write, as I saw it, you needed to be absolutely alone, and absolutely still, unless you were a Maeterlinck, Nietzsche, Miller, or Artaud, all of whom were compelled from within by an overwhelming need to walk, and keep walking, at all costs, for only in walking could they find the rhythm in which they also could write. I suppose this is why Artaud went mad on Inishmore, an island off the coast of Galway, which is covered in a neverending labyrinth of perfectly square stone fences, the claustrophobic limitations of which must have oppressively harnessed that wild Pontiac and so brought him to destruction, for when a man with no wings searches the earth for a place to soar, his search is in vain, for life on earth is not about soaring above, but about lifting that which is below, because the roots must always take hold in the writhing, primeval soup, and only wings strong enough to remain tethered to those roots, and yet rise upward like a kite on a string can secure the soul in the tumbling tide. For just as the soul is anchored on earth, so must the spirit be anchored above, for each is dependent on the other. It is this dynamic- of the spirit rooted in the heavens, and the soul rooted upon the earth- which demands our strong flight into the gales above, simply to still the soul below in the smashing, manifest sea without breaking the line between the soil and the sky, for only then is the union of heaven and earth ever won. This is the tension of the Christ holding onto both the soul in the sea, and the spirit in the sky, and never releasing one for the other. For we must belong to both Heaven and Earth, to the Father and the Mother, to the Spirit and the Soul, if we are to bridge the gulf which destroys us.

We must become a flowing which flows as matter flows, like one gigantic sea which swells and thunders here and there, is calm and inviting elsewhere, and yet is always but one sea not divided but for the mind which says it is so.

*

thirteen

I certainly drank my fair share of Guinness during my stay in Ireland, though my intake was nothing compared to that of a brilliant young cossack named Jim Gains, whom I met in a country hostel, just outside the town of

Donegal. Jim was on a year-long drinking binge, which began soon after his younger brother died in his arms in the aftermath of a head-on automobile collision, the trauma of which had led Jim to the pub- any pub- everyday for the last year, from 10:00 am in the morning until the publican poured him out onto the street in the wee hours. Jim was as hard at the sauce as they come, and boy was he all the more pugnacious, perspicacious, and laughably entertaining because of it, for though he was thickly embalmed with the booze, it seemed he was born for it- like many a Celtic man- and would live his life out and attain a ripe old age despite the chronic pickling- or perhaps because of it.

Jim was as crazy as they come, and full of euphoria for life. He related to me how one night, while visiting Paris, he and some friends snuck into the well-guarded cemetery containing Jim Morrison's grave, and poured an entire bottle of Jack Daniel's over the tombstone, in veneration and respect, and then cracked another bottle and downed it between the group, before laying down and sleeping that night by the tomb.

I spent a day wandering around Donegal Town with Gains, sipping cider near the ocean, and sharing stories, poems, and ribaldry. He was a fine mate to endure the world with at that time, although I was noticing that he was so full of wild energy, so full of his own effect on others, and so full of making merry from whatever came to him, that he was off his center, and I had the sense that something was going to collapse around him, which did.

As we were walking back to the hostel, which was on the outskirts of Donegal Town, we passed some travellers headed the other way. These folks had just found a baby kitten in the forest, but were soon to be boarding a bus, and so asked if we would take the cat and try to find a home for it. As I was by then refusing to get tangled in other people's lives, karma, and creations, I had no intention of taking the kitten, but Jim immediately jumped at the possibility, without much thought, and soon we were headed back to the hostel again, he with a pussy in his paws.

After arriving, Jim asked anyone and everyone if they would be interested in taking the little kitten as a pet, which none of them were. And so it quickly dawned on him that he had taken upon himself a responsibility which he had no desire to fulfil, and now he was the owner of a feeble little animal, whom no one else wanted, and neither could he keep, for he was soon leaving town as well, and there was no way he could be a pet owner, not with his unpredictable and untethered lifestyle anyway. He soon became morose, anxious, and a bit unstrung, as his life was now in shambles, because he had thoughtlessly embraced a possibility simply because it was a possibility, and he had taken on someone else's burden without realizing what that meant.

In very short time he was such a wreck that he was talking about clubbing the cat over the head, because he could not take it with him, and no one else wanted it, and it was going to have a horrid time if he simply abandoned it, so he might as well end its life before the suffering began.

At the height of his frenzy he and I were sitting out on the front lawn of the hostel, and he turned to me and, with a desperate tone to his voice, asked, somewhat rhetorically, "I wonder what Christ would do in a situation like this?", a question which I have often asked myself, so often in fact that I have actually come up with an answer: he would pray, for that is what Christ did when there

was nothing left to do, because he knew that he could do nothing of his own power. And so I related this to Jim, who, though he was a strongly spiritual man, thought maybe I was playing with him, because what can prayer do at a time like this?

Well, Jim's conundrum and confusion continued, and we sat out there for another hour or so, and the tempest within him surged on, until once again he turned to me and asked, "What would Christ do?", to which I rejoined, this time emphatically, "Christ would pray!"

I could see the wheels now churning within Jim's overwrought cranium, and with a last look of capitulation he got up and ran into the hostel, and I knew he was going in to pray.

Jim had gone upstairs, found himself a quiet, empty room, and laid his soul bare in front of God. And when he came back downstairs the proprietress of the hostel told him that she had decided to take the cat.

Jim was elated, and not only that, he had experienced what the most powerful powerless man to ever walk upon the tempestuous shores of this psychic realm had known full well- "Of myself I can do nothing", and so he prayed.

*

fourteen

After my encounter with the notorious Jim Gains, I headed to the northern coast of County Donegal, and if I have said that Ireland is as close to home as I have ever felt, then it was on those massive deserted beaches in the far north of the country that I found my bedroom. After all, the word 'Donegal', in old Gaelic, means- Fortress of the Foreigner. A perfect place for me to belong while not-belonging.

I had been informed by another traveller of a magical little hostel near Dunfanaghy, and I arrived there one afternoon to find that it was run by a trinity of marvellous folks- a French woman, a Dutch woman, and an Irish fellow. The Irish bloke was so spritelike that he could have just been lifted out of the Hobbit Shire. His name was Fergal, which means: man of gold. The true gold. And boy did I take a liking to him, and vice versa. We shared many a pint between us, sitting around the peat fire, or out in the magical moors of that remote region.

The hostel had been built out of an old grain mill, which had been built over an ancient Celtic power spot. The owner was a brilliant, ex-military man, who said he had been guided to buy the property, and restore the mill, but that was all he knew, except …that magic happened there. And, to be sure, it is one of only two places I can recall at this time in which, the moment upon entering, I felt the spirit surging through every stone, beam, and adornment.

As well, the estate was endowed with a small creek, some fields, a few hillocks, and a little grotto where you could go and sit and become one again with the land of faeries.

During my stay at the hostel I became well acquainted with the folks who were running the place, as well as a few patrons, and one long summer afternoon we held a beach party on one of the endless coastal beaches which are a plenty in that area.

I have had my day of drunken revelry, and I have had my share of wild and reckless gatherings, but for some reason I will always remember that afternoon and evening as one of the most remarkable events in my life.

I suppose, if I can put this last statement into perspective, I say such because I encountered on that beach a juxtaposition which I had always lived with but which in the past had eaten away at me, rather than elating me. And that juxtaposition was this: I found during the many hours that our gathering of kindred souls spent on that outer shore, which ran well into the middle of the night, that I had suddenly merged the two necessities of my being, without intending to do so, but somehow it had happened, as if by providence; for I was now out on a remote, spectacular, and forgotten coast, as I have always loved to be, but I was also with my tribe, and so I had finally reached a metaphysical union of opposites, wherein I was hovering in the realm of lostness *and* foundness, of not-belonging *and* belonging, of loneliness *and* companionship, of distance *and* of intimacy.

To be out there, on the wild side of life, far from the clamour and groan of the world, and yet to be a member of an inclusive clan, none of whom belonged anywhere, but all of whom belonged there that evening, a motley crew of homeless drifters, on the outer edge of the earth, in rapture and aloneness, in sorrow and company, together in separation, one night, one wild, windy, manic, drunken night in which to revel, to sing, to dance, and to drink, because we had finally found communion and togetherness, and had suddenly become a part of the universe in its lonely, undivided, and ecstatic mystery.

It was the remoteness married to the intimacy, and the alienship married to the sense of home, which drove me mad with a feeling of joy married to melancholy, the union of which is the absolute make-up of the soul. I was in the world, and of the world, and not-of the world.

The feeling that this gave me ignited the remembrance of another beach such as the one we were on that night- back when I was on Oahu, years before, alone and without comrades, and I lay down on my back, in the blackest of nights, and looked out into the infinite cosmos, and for the first time in my life I began to have a sensation of earthly vertigo, because I began to feel that I was in the space which I was looking at. Which is to say, I suddenly realized that when I looked into outer space, that I was *in* outer space- and I knew, with categorical lucidity, that no matter what else we are- and I expect we are many things- we are also aliens, somehow living now on this forgotten planet, with forgotten people, singing forgotten songs.

And perhaps it was because of that experience on Oahu, that now I had finally found the peace and joy on the beach in Donegal, which was the fruit of that seed of foreignness planted years earlier on Oahu.

And it is this recognition which allows me now to declare that I believe we come from the earth, *and* from the stars, and it is only in the union of these two aspects of ourselves- the juxtaposition of belonging and not-belonging- that we become cosmically whole.

I see now that I belong on this earth as much as any man. And I belong in the sky as well.

I expect this is the case for all of us- that because we come from both the earth and the sky, we find no peace in between them. And therefore it is up to us to find a way to belong, not to one or the other, but to both. For we come from an infinity which we shall forever darkly remember, and though its recollection sinks down into the darkest depths of this earth, the dull remembrance will haunt us all our days unless we finally come to terms with who and what we are. For it is out from the infinity of Self that we have landed in the finitude of this world, and though we must honor, love, and cherish the privilege of our stay, we must never forget that our seed also comes from another place beyond the Milky Way.

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PART III:
THE FATHER, THE SON,
AND THE MOTHER

"…for it is our task to imprint this provisional, perishable earth so deeply, so patiently and passionately in ourselves that its reality shall arise in us again 'invisibly'. …The earth has no way out other than to become invisible: ***in*** *us who with part of our natures partake of the invisible…and can increase our holdings in the visible during our sojourn here …We are the transformers of the earth… ."*

Rainer Maria Rilke

"The cosmos consists of the Father, Son, and Matter, each of which three principles contains many forces. Midway between the Father and Matter, the Son, the Logos, has his place, the Serpent that moves eternally toward the unmoved Father and moved Matter; now it turns to the Father and gathers up forces in its countenance; and now, after receiving the forces, it turns toward matter, and upon Matter, which is without attribute and form, the Son imprints the ideas that had previously been imprinted upon the Son by the Father. Moreover, no one can be saved and rise up again without the Son, who is the serpent. For it is he who brought the paternal models down from aloft, and it is he who carries back up again those who have been awakened from sleep and have resumed the features of the Father."

Hyppolytus

one

A few years ago any talk of aliens- and by that I mean visitors from other planets or realms- would have meant very little to me, except as a possibility which I had not discarded, nor yet accepted within myself. But a sequence of unexpected incidents brought the alien concept into closer proximity to my own life.

This began slowly and innocently enough, with a series of synchronicities- which is always a good sign that the greater consciousness is at work within the part- during my stay in Iceland. While I was there I had found myself reading passages out of a number of books describing alien encounters and abductions. The books were interesting enough, but I gave them little thought until I was sitting in the Reykjavik airport while waiting to fly back to England, and an Icelandic gentleman about a decade older than myself sat down beside me and instantly began an extended soliloquy on various enigmas, occult happenings, and alien encounters, which he described in a very similar manner to what I had been reading a few days earlier.

After our brief chat I boarded the plane, landed in London, and had a full day to idle about while waiting for an overnight bus to Scotland, where I was planning to meet up with my *soror*. Since London is one of my most hated places on earth, I did the only thing I could think of in order to survive the day- I bought a bag full of beer, and headed to the most remote corner of Hyde Park I could find, although remote is an audacious misnomer in this case, for there is nowhere to hide in London, no serenity, no peace, no respite, only the ongoing movement and hum of maniacs, motors, monarchy, and misanthropes. The hub of the British Empire. A sewer. A cultureless, lifeless scab upon the earth. Like all cities, only worse.

On my way to the park I picked up a free entertainment guide from a street vendor, because I noticed there was an article on Kurt Cobain within it, and I was morbidly curious as to why people such as he take their own lives, which is something I have never been able to comprehend, because life is such a marvellous, inexplicable, profound gift, and I cannot understand why people do away with it. Suicide astounds and bewilders me.

I recall reading that the Buddha once said that to be born on this earth is as improbable as finding one needle on the highest mountain, and then finding another needle in the deepest ocean. And so I wonder- why can't people see this? Why all the rushing about? Why all the petty agonies, mundane conceptions, and useless distractions? Why the trepidation? Why the anger? Why the pathos? Oh, to be sure, at times in my life I have possessed all of these imbecilities, but never have I thought of ending this marvellous benediction, for though I recognize how discomforting it is to live on this amazing earth, in this incomprehensible life, amongst an abundant realm which could arguably be the most magnificent place in the universe, and yet still find oneself battling the ever ensuing flood of ennui, despair, discontent, and want, I still maintain it is well worth it. And I mean it when I say that I cannot fathom why we are impoverished within the beauty, tormented within the rapture, corrupted amongst the glory, and lonely in the Presence. I do not know, and can explain

this neither to myself, nor another- why the awe and the gratitude go hand in hand with the disgust and contempt I have no clue, though thankfully I am at least aware enough to accept that the miracle and the mystery within and all about me is worth every penny of the price, for I have walked that bridge between ecstasy and ardor my whole life, and cannot deny its reality. And perhaps this is the last duality I must confront, embrace, and be done with. For perhaps I am not yet at the orgiastic center from which all opposites arise, and I must still face the ultimate release of both acceptance and rejection, desire and repulsion, discontent and joy, and perhaps only in those dual abandonments shall I finally rise beyond the cosmic tensions, and become the living One.

Anyway, I sat down under a tree in Hyde Park- where there is no place to hide- surreptitiously cracked open a can, and began to read the entertainment tabloid I had found, though I went slowly, and had read only a few pages before falling to sleep under the polluted sun, having quickly polished off a few cans of the juice. However, during that sleep I kept dreaming that I was still reading the article about Cobain, and that I was recognizing something familiar in it, the tone of voice or something, which made me, upon reawakening, assume that maybe I was being told to continue reading it. And no doubt I was, because soon after carrying on with the article I read that Cobain had once made a short movie in which he attempted to prove to his family that aliens had landed in their back yard. The article stated that Cobain also claimed, as a young man, that when he had become famous he would blow his head off, which sounded like he was a pre-programmed being or something. This fact, and a few other similar points in the article led me to accept that I was definitely being directed to certain information.

Later that day I boarded a night bus headed for Scotland, met up with my lover the next morning, quickly bagged her, and was bagged by her, in the usual way that we bagged each other after we had been apart for a spell, and then, after rebalancing our intimate polarities through the euphoric exchange of bodily fluids, we headed for the mystical Avalon-like isles off the northern tip of Scotland- the Orkneys.

The Orkney Islands are an amazing little archipelago in the North Sea, and not only for their natural beauty, but also because they contain two of the most quaint towns I have ever been in, excluding, of course, remote Himalayan mountain villages with no road access. Stromness is a magnificent stone village, where one feels as if they had returned to the Middle Ages, and a public hanging will be happening at noon. And Kirkwall, although less inviting in its rustic splendor, has the luxury of containing the millennium old, and disturbingly uplifting St. Magnus cathedral. It was in this holy temple where I took communion for only the second time in my life, and where I was staggered to find that the community of this church had somehow managed to utilize the nicest Port I have ever tasted, as the blood.

It was also in these two ancient and charmed villages, in this land rich in archaeological ruins, stone circles, sea birds, old buildings, and fertile farmland that, during our stay, my mate and I found ourselves, on two separate occasions, making a spontaneous change of plans, turning around on our heels, and then, almost instantly, meeting up with one of the very eccentric islanders,

who, in very short order, brought up, of their own accord, stories of alien encounters, abductions, and how humans are to aliens as cows are to humans.

The synchronicities had piled up to a critical mass, and it was not long after this that I began awakening in the middle of the night totally paralyzed- like all the stories of abductions describe- and witnessing little beings escaping from my view. The paralysis was quick to wear off, but the encounters continued occurring every few days for the next couple of months, and I was beginning to wonder what sort of jeopardy I might be in, and worrying about what was going on while I was asleep during the visitations. Luckily I am not one to take such things lying down, so to speak, and after a few more incidences I decided that there was not enough communication from the aliens to warrant my allowing them to tamper with my being anymore, for, after all, it was *my* being, and so finally one night I awoke in the midst of my own violent outburst against the intruders at which point they vanished, and bothered me no longer.

All this may come off as a load of hallucinatory mumbo-jumbo, and perhaps that is all it is. I make no claims about anything. I am a man who knows nothing, a fact to which I openly admit. And I accept that the 'alien' visitations could have been purely psychological constructs of mine, or, of the greater Self, which is a reasonable assumption, since the last little man to visit me had a shaggy mane of hair, not unlike myself at the time- though he himself was only about three feet high- and may therefore have been either a psychological production from my unconscious, or a certain aspect of myself, finally breaking into this plane through the veil from an alter realm.[42]

And so I cannot truly say now whether I was actually visited by aliens, or whether all that occurred was instead the creative production of my own Godself, leading me down a tunnel so as to keep me distracted and avoid my figuring out the true game. I do know, however, that since experiencing those alien episodes, I have had a number of individuals confess to me, out of the blue, that they have had experiences which can most easily be explained as alien encounters. I have also had astral connection with two close friends, and in that alter dimension have seen their 'alien' selves, which are not apparent in this realm. And I have received certain messages that aliens are real, and, for the most part, well hidden.

This is a difficult topic to discuss, though, for the Godself is ever at play, ever creating new and more complex obstacles, challenges, and realities so as to keep the self bound into the show, while the Godself lays back and enjoys it. Were it not for the fact that one, and only one, event is occurring, it would be easy to retreat into multiplicity, and its infinite dramas, to explain the happenings of life. But that the alien episodes came and went for me, leads me to believe that I was only being tested by my Godself, who hung a carrot out in front of the self, to see if I would bite. Luckily I am no jackass- except, of course, to a curious Muslim boy on a puffing diesel rocket ship bound for a terrestrial, yet alien land, in this infinite, outlandish, excruciating life.

Oh, indeed, this is a realm of mystery, a world of miracle, and a life of awe. And the Self that creates it does so for reasons I cannot fathom, for I am the Self that creates what I cannot fathom.

And thus, I throw my hands up in bewilderment and gratitude, because I can find no other response worthy of my confounding and precious

predicament. And though I continue even now to look up longingly into the sky and am filled with curiosity and awe as I consider the limitless planets brimming with other civilizations, peoples, and realms which I would all too willingly love to explore, I also look equally below my own two feet, and feel with a knowing sense that I am already out in that crazy cosmos, already an alien to others, already a voyager, at this moment stomping about on a beautiful and mysterious blue-green planet whirling out, and in, and through the universe where I belong and do not belong, and for that I cannot but bend down and kiss the ground of this wonderful, implausible, otherworldly earth.

*

two

I may have certain spiritual ideas not incompatible with conventional religion, but I am no evangelist. That would make me nauseous. Not that I have anything against evangelists. As a matter of fact, I find them quite entertaining, with their apocalyptic fervor, sweaty brows and armpits, and three-piece suits into which are stuffed their burger-turgid bellies. And, to be sure, I would much rather listen to one of those bombastic, bellicose men of God, instead of the soporific, and simplistic palaver of a new age guru, any day.

In fact, I once met an extremely unique ex-evangelist who came into my life at a very pertinent time, and though he bellowed as loud and eloquently as all the other well-dressed lightning wielders, he was neither well-dressed, well-behaved, nor even slightly charming, and, in a way, was an outright bastard. And yet, I stand and salute him, for reasons I will now relate.

I met Frank on the north shore of Oahu, during my time as a wayfarer, while I was chumming about with Geoff, the HIV-positive holy man whom I had met on my first trip to Hawaii. Geoff and I were sitting at an old wooden table in the sun, drinking our morning coffees with a number of other societal outcasts and street folk, and Frank arrived at our ranks with a larynx full of fire and brimstone, and began forcefully delivering his impassioned sermon composed of a hodge-podge of scattered axioms and novel platitudes. But Frank was no bible-quoting, mealy-mouthed preacher. He was the real thing. By which I mean that regardless of whether I agreed with what he had to say or not, and largely I did not, I quickly recognized that his ideas were completely his own, his observations were well thought out, his words were extemporaneous, and passionate, and his facts and proofs for his theories were based on no one's experience but his own. I had found myself a live wire, and I tapped in and enjoyed this rare breed of a man who had found within himself the fire to glow, and who came with a blazing torch toward anyone in his way.

Frank also seemed to take a liking to me, most likely because I did not agree with what he said, and I was none too shy to voice this, though nor did I snub nor disrespect him, and instead tried, as best I could, to dance with his character and energy, to create a thriving dialogue and transform his staccato

monologue into a tête-à-tête where I could participate and surf inside with some flow.

We conversed for a couple of hours that morning, and then Frank asked if Geoff and I would be interested in coming back to his property and, for a couple of bucks, cutting down a few palm fronds from some tall trees, which he intended to use for crafts he was involved with.

Being ever low on greenbacks as I was, I readily accepted, and so we went back to Frank's place, and set up a twenty-foot ladder precariously against the palm trunks, up which Geoff and I took turns climbing, shakily and hesitantly, until we arrived at our prospective targets and hacked through a number of the fronds until we were finished.

Back on good old *terra firma* again, Geoff drifted mentally away, and Frank and I got to talking a little more personally, and after I shared with him that I was an aspiring writer, his eyes lit up and he beckoned me into his house.

There on a desk in the middle of his living room sat a stack of typed papers, rising about a foot high, which must have been no less than fifteen-hundred pages. His manuscript, a true magnum opus.

It turned out that Frank had been an evangelist back in Texas, up until about ten years ago, when things started going weird on him. He related that he began waking up in the middle of the night and hearing a howling, blood-curdling, terrifying wail from some animal he had never heard before, and it sounded ghastly, as if it was from hell itself, and was dying at the hands of a pack of deranged ghouls.

This sound recurred irregularly, every other night or so, and went on for a number of months, and Frank had no idea what was going on, and he was getting quite shaken, for the ghostly beast in anguish seemed to be getting closer to his house whenever the howling occurred. And then one night he awoke and the frightful sound was right at his front door.

Frank was shit scared, but made himself go to the door, and with the tortured groans wailing out in the night only a few inches from him, he finally found the courage within himself to open it, but nothing was there. Frank knew instantly where the horrid squeals of anguish had been coming from- himself; from somewhere deep within the caverns of his own soul's pain. And that was the end of his days as a conventional evangelist, and the beginning of his life as a man of God, or so he said.

After that meeting with whatever aspect of himself was in such sorrow and ache, Frank began years of solitude and deep introspection, and writing down conversations he was having with a voice he called Wisdom, the voice of God.

And there lay the fruit of his labors- fifteen-hundred pages of asking, listening, learning, and transcribing.

I spent only a brief period leafing through the papers, as I had no need to dive into them heavily, what with the living word in my presence, and though it would be impossible for me to sum up Frank's findings, a few key elements have remained that were the cornerstones of his perspective.

To begin with, according to Frank, although we are all, at this time, liars and thieves- and anyone who declares otherwise is also a self-deceived coward- although we are all liars and thieves, we are in this universe so as to

mature, and learn not only how to live properly, but also how to create our own universe, just as Jesus Christ, who created this one, had done, and then died into it- as one must do as the final act which brings into manifestation one's creation. So saith the voice of Wisdom.

As I said, I held little agreement with this sixty-year old, four-time divorcee, foul-mouthed, truculent, recalcitrant sooth-sayer's opinion, but I liked him. Even if he were a liar and a thief and a self-deceived coward, I liked him, for he carried a boiling cauldron of enthusiasm and determination around inside of him, the force of which drove him on through life with a conviction and intent rare to find in this world of flabby-hearted followers.

Frank was no follower. No way. And that made me respect him. Though I also saw his imperfections, weaknesses, and confusions, and I even fell victim to one of his well-disguised foibles, after he had hired me to edit his manuscript and then pulled the plug at the last moment, exposing the bluffer hidden within. No matter, Frank was no follower. He believed in himself, in his own experiences, in his own words, and in his own creations, and therefore was true to his vision of this world, and the next. And for that I commend him, because, though I disagreed with his final conclusion- that we must die into our own creations- like him I saw that we exist in an infinite cosmos, not only physically, but metaphysically as well, and since we are co-creators of our life in this realm, I saw no reason why each of us would not some day have the skill, knowledge, and courage necessary to create our own reality, our own cosmos.

And therefore, I say, if Frank wants to die into his, so be it. I, instead, shall be born into mine.

I state these things without being facetious, because I honestly believe that God receives what God creates, and we are all pupils in the schoolroom of the master, learning that to be God is to create what we experience from what we are.

And though we are truly the only ones who can make or break ourselves, there is also a pedantic domain within the tenure of our unconsciousness; a rhapsodic impediment which obviates our ancient folly. There is a trembling underbelly buried beneath the mind of all men, a fevered and uncouth dominatrix pinned behind the eyes of the soul. And it is this imprisoned power which wails and gnashes in the night of all our days. It is this flightless monad, this empty revolver, this checked war cry which dooms us to become the victim of ourselves. But if that is the case, let me be instead the hegemon and not the prisoner. If I am to be held by nothing but my own force, let me wield that power and be healed.

I ask for this with both courage and trepidation, for I have seen many self-created disasters looming large in the lives and deaths of all who come and go from this plane, and I do not claim to hold the key nor the answer.

Perhaps this is why God once came to me, at a time when I was seeking to manifest something which I desired very much- but had not thought through all of its karmic and collateral fallout- and God asked if I was willing to take on the consequences of my creation, a question which set me aback and forced me to delve in and try to understood the gravity of such a power, and so begin to see that to make even the simplest of things in this world is to set an infinite string

of dominoes falling, and to never know exactly what will become of that first push.

And so, until we are capable of creating what will not be disastrous for us to experience, we must remain under the tutelage of those who have mastered their means.

But when we are finally ready, we are released on our own recognizance, so to speak, and allowed to be the Maker and receiver of all that is Made.

*

three

Within a period of a year and a half I had danced with the making and lived in the made, and had spent extended periods of time in two of the places where Lemuria is suspected to have existed- New Zealand and Hawaii-, and in two of the places where Atlantis is speculated to have been- Santorini and Iceland.

I expect there was something in my nature, or something to do with my part in the greater show, which required me to mix energies in such polarized areas. Perhaps, because I sought wholeness within, I had to find wholeness without, and therefore I became as if a service vehicle, commandeered by my Godself, and driven unrelentingly to wherever supplies could be found to complete the cosmic stew.

Throughout those journeys, and the learnings which accompanied them, it slowly became apparent to me that to join the Mother and Father through ourselves is to allow Him into Her, which is to bring heaven down to earth. For when we invite the Father- Thy Kingdom come… - down to earth, through the lonely Christ within us, we become the conduit through which the Pater penetrates the Mater, and thus we reunite the cosmic parents, and, receiving both, become as One.

And though I lay no claim to anything other than my absolute ignorance in all things- for I am learning every day, failing every day, and being forgiven every day- marrying the Great Father and Great Mother within me would come, if ever it did, on my first visit to the sight of manifest creation itself- which is to say, at the pulsating, seminal, amniotic lava flow of Mt. Kilauea, Big Island, Hawaii.

I was taken out to the flow by two very large, very unique, and very gay men who I had been hanging out with for a number of weeks by then.

One of them claimed to have re-incarnated on earth so as to endure the trials required in order to receive his next promotion in the cosmic hierarchy- archangel status. This fellow was an eclectically brilliant sort, who at one time had entered into a sublime career for the spirit, in which he was requested to undertake a number of earth-energy related activities, including flying all over the United States one autumn to specific high energy areas, and, standing at the intersection of clogged Ley lines- the Earth's invisible energy meridians- he

would empty himself completely and become a conduit for the energy required to repair the flow between them. He was an immensely entertaining, knowledgeable, generous and yet untrustworthy bloke: entertaining because he was full of ancient lore, mythical anecdotes, and new age theories, and was ever spouting these forth in effusive, theatrical joy, eloquently proffering all the fringe ideas which populate the esoteric world; knowledgeable because he seemed to know not only a little bit about everything, but a lot about most things, and therefore could draw laterally upon a multifarious contingent of oblique paradigms, and occasionally bring forth a juxtaposition which greatly impressed me; generous because he had fed and housed me for over a month when my poverty had become extreme, and had given me a haven when I needed it most; untrustworthy because he was forever seeking something behind his words, forever poisoned with the remaining fragments of his false ego, which made a mess of his genius, and forever utilizing his spiritual powers in hidden and devious ways, and therefore was a hypocrite who said one thing but meant something else, which is the last thing an archangel should be, since the first piece of knowledge such a being ought to arrive upon this earth with is the absolute realization that everything is clear in the sight of heaven. Everything. And therefore all thoughts contrary to speech are exposed to the hosts above. And the angels on high laugh with scorn and no pity when words come out of us which do not match with what is in our minds.

No matter. I saw his bad side and appreciated his good, and was better off in the end for his company.

The other fellow with us contended to have been, among other things, a Hawaiian holy man- a Kahuna- in one of his last lives. He had a great many spiritual talents, or so he said, including being able to diagnose a person's faulty 'trimeridian', which, according to him, was some such invisible organ in the subtle body responsible for, among other things, keeping a person's body temperature homeostatic. He also claimed to be somewhat of a psychic, crystal worker, massage therapist, and spiritual guide. He was a good lad, whom I enjoyed spending time with, though I paid little attention to his blithering, until one time when we were on the west side of the Big Island, and he was trying to convince me that I should be baptized in the ocean waters of a Hawaiian holy site which we were visiting. I told him that it was unnecessary, because I had already been baptized, to which he put up an argument, and was seemingly trying to guilt me out of myself, and so I turned viciously upon him and related, in not so soft terms, how he had no clue about what he was saying, because the baptism which Christ brings is a bludgeoning, and that he ought to stop prattling on with that pathetic chortle about how pretty everything became once you had been dipped in the sauce, because it wasn't the case at all, for when the Man comes after you, He comes so as to destroy you, and it is not an enjoyable event, and if you think it is then you merely betray your own ignorance. I gave it to him, and good.

Anyway, I still enjoyed his company as well, and had some truly remarkable times with both of them, even if they were simply megalomaniacs with outlandish and grandiose visions of their all too humble predicament of being human.

And so the three of us headed out late one afternoon, towards the lava flow, arriving from the little-touristed east approach, where we pounded a four-wheel-drive vehicle over the remains of roads devastated by Pele's last assault on mankind's feeble constructions- the Kalapana flow of '91- then onto an area of rough lava tracks made of softball sized chunks of the old Lady. Finally we had to park the vehicle and begin on foot, scrambling towards the shimmering wasteland where the living river of molten rock might be found.

We were out there about an hour and yet had found nothing except an endless field of dried lava. The sun was getting low in the sky, and it seemed our sojourn would come up impotent. And by that I mean that *my* initiation would not come to fruition, for, as one of my incarnate guides had stated- this was 'my trip', meaning it was my dance with the Mother, my chance to make connection, or not.

As the three of us stood there, deep into the heart of the solidified lava field, watching the sky darken, I was beginning to feel the sense of a failed project, of ships passing in the night, so to speak. And so I sat down, closed my eyes, and tried to make a connection with Her.

Well, it wasn't long before I realized that I wasn't going to make the connection, because I wasn't hearing or feeling anything within, and I could not pretend something was there when it wasn't. I was about to give up, call off the exercise, and begin the long march back, like one of Napoleon's officers stumbling haplessly across Siberia after the loss. But then a thought suddenly came to me- or was given to me- which was that the Mother needed *me* to participate, that I was necessary, and that my will was a part of our connection. And so I entered into stillness and humbly asked Her, if She was willing, to please create a flow about one-hundred yards out ahead of us. And that was that, and I got up and stated to one of my otherworldly chums that if the flow were to happen, it might be out ahead of us about one-hundred yards or so. Admittedly, I was full of uncertainty still. But at that very moment a light sprinkle of rain began to fall, and a brilliant rainbow appeared in the sky just behind us- the Father's covenant with me- and I let out a cheer I don't know why other than I knew then that I had been heard. And damn if you wouldn't believe it, but by the time we had walked approximately a hundred yards or so out in the direction towards which I had made my request, a small flow had begun bubbling up through the cracks of older lava, and widening out, oozing like dark, viscous lymph from the nipple of a prone woman. She had heard me, and had answered. And the Father, the Mother, and I were one.

Into that river of glowing liquid rock I spontaneously threw, as an offering, the straw hat I had been wearing for the last month, as I had nothing else materially to give than that hat, and nothing else immaterially to give than my identity- which the hat represented- and though I have said that Pele mostly desires cigarettes and gin as gifts, I gave all that I had to give, and, either way, when such a convergence happens, and you are a living part of a world so confounding, indisputable, and intimate, one which has run you through the mill for so long that the only thing you have left to offer is your individual identity, well- you do it, because you realize that there is no such thing as separation anyway, and therefore you only give away the illusion of your difference from the rest of life, of the universe, and of God, because the Son comes from the

Mother and Father, and because you are unequivocally in and of the all, for which you are now a part that is not apart, and so cannot but scream out a glory and hallelujah by throwing yourself into the tumble and so giving back all you have been given.

The macrocosmic marriage takes place when the *sacred androgyne*, the Christ, is pulled between the Father and Mother- belonging to both- to such a degree that the individual dissolves as the bridge between them, and the cosmic unity is won. Is One.

When finally we are embraced by both the earth and the sky, at the very same time, we become the living interface, the writhing membrane where the eternal orgy between the opposed but not separate forces of the Mother and Father- the yin and the yang- intermingle, and the Great Parents make love, and we are their orgasm creating the world.

Heading back home later that evening, one of my cosmic mentors voiced a claim, stating to me: "Now things will go easier for you", which they didn't. For, despite the magical union that night, little did he know that life is rarely easy, and that most successes usually lead to harder trials. But this is the type of understanding that unrealistic and overly optimistic new age types can't bear to accept, because it deflates their helium balloons and brings them back into the muck, the matter, the *prima materia*.

The Big Island is a vortex for such metaphysical types, be they delusioned seekers, or true visionaries. To be sure, that living chunk of rock in the middle of the Pacific, the Big Island of Hawaii, is a vessel whose gravity attracts and contains the most astounding variety of mavericks I have ever come to know. It is a microcosmic milieu of soothsayers, energy workers, medicine men and women, healers, dreamers, charlatans, quacks, queers, warlocks, and witches. It is a community of ganja smokers, ayahuasca journeyers, peyote imbibers, and mushroom takers. It is a land of Buddhist monasteries, Hindu ashrams, new age retreats, Mother Mary worshippers, Sufi mystics, and every occult genre under the sun.

The spirit runs so thick there at times that you can almost throw yourself effortlessly into its current, lose all plan and idea, and let the cosmic stream flow you out of your old pattern, whisk you hither, thither, and yon, and then set you down suddenly in another place, now more perfect for your part in the play that is your awakening to the dream of the whole.

*

four

A number of years after that initiatory experience at the lava field, when I had been away from the netherworldly isle for some time, I returned for a visit with my twin soul, with the intent to stay for two full moons. And so we arrived on the Big Island a few days before Luna's perfection, vagabonded about a bit, and then on the night of the full moon camped up on a high ridge, on

the lip of the forested volcano located on the estate I had caretaken a number of years earlier.

That night we engaged in no ceremony or ritual- I do not believe in ceremonies or rituals- but enjoyed the clear sky, glistening stars, and radiant moon before falling to sleep in the wind and on the earth. Just as it should be.

We awoke just as the sun was coming up, and, turning around, we could see Luna's complete orb setting in perfect unison with the rising of Sol. This was a blessed omen, for a number of years earlier, on a deserted beach in New Zealand, we had experienced the exact opposite astral occurrence, while watching a full moon rise as the sun was setting. And so we had finally come full circle, had seen ourselves through a sublime cycle in which we had descended into the darkness of the earth's night together, wherein we had our many trials and misadventures, but then rose up together into the light of the sky. We had made it through the ambush of psychic chaos, and were now out of the discord of darkness.

All that had befallen us, and specifically me, over the years seemed now to be nothing but a result of a division which had been mended, and now new karmic dominoes were beginning to fall.

In fact, soon after that full moon, circumstances congealed into our meeting with a woman named Allanah, who was perhaps the closest manifestation to the Mother on Earth that I have ever encountered.

At fifty years old Allanah was the mother of five children ranging in age from three to twenty years of age. She had spent the last twelve years living directly upon the earth, under a large, palatial tarp- as many earth-children do on the island- where she cooked over an open fire, tended her garden and fruit trees, and gave shelter to those of Gaia's offspring who were drawn into her midst. I say she was living upon the earth, but it would perhaps be more accurate to say that she *was* the earth, for she was a truly incarnate aspect of the Mother Earth herself.

As soon as my mate and I arrived on Allanah's land I recalled a dream of perhaps six months earlier, in which I had been shown that area of the island, and had known in the dream that a very unique community existed there. And somehow, half a year later, through no effort of my own, I had been guided and welcomed to that very spot by the matriarch of the place. But that is the way of the spirit on earth, after all.

I was now on the Mother, and with the Mother, and it was not long before my own little microcosm in the macrocosmic play came full circle once again. And by that I mean that after a day or so at Allanah's, my twin soul and I were offered to caretake a nearby property owned by a man …named Jesus. I kid you not. All is reflected through all. All is all. The actual is the myth, and the myth is the actual.

And though the Jesus owning the land was not Jesus, the Christ, still he was a man of generous being, and solid intent, and was by no means a scar upon the flesh of his namesake.

It appeared to me now that a lengthy chapter in the destiny of my life had run its course, and that the symbols of the manifest had mirrored back to me my awkward and imperfect journey, of courting the Mother, and serving the Son.

I was coming to see how truly involved we are in the creation of our own lives, how our thoughts and intentions play themselves out in both sublime and profound ways, and how the dominoes which I had set in motion, without knowing it, years earlier, had inexorably come to pass due to the karmic inertia of my own creative force. I say my own, but really I mean God's, whose Self is my self, and also is not, for we are the same and yet different, which is a problematic bit of illogic which I still cannot understand but have come to accept it as true, for this, like all contradictions, are part and parcel of a singular universe necessarily composed of dualities.

The world is my dream, *and* the flesh is my dream also. I AM both, and in accepting myself as being *and* non-being, I become the immortal self of this mortal world, for I am where flesh and spirit come together, and where the Mother and Father, who had been at odds, are now married and in harmony as they unite, taking each other into account, and making love through me.

The other is the same and the same is the other. The stable is the evanescent, the one is the many, and the coming is the going amongst all that remains. If the universe is built of opposites, then the ephemeral is proof of the everlasting. Though just as all opposites are dualities of the One, so too the transient and the eternal are each themselves two halves of an ineffable whole. To seek only eternity is to obfuscate that which is beyond the concept of time. What is always, and what is fleeting, are the yin and yang of a cosmic mystery so profound, so outlandish, and so subliminal, that it can never be found for it is everywhere, and can never be known for knowledge itself is one of its aspects. And so it is futile to seek, to study, to surrender, or strive, for all of these are mere fragments of what encompasses them, and is them. And so the striving, and seeking, and surrendering are themselves but grains of sand on an infinite beach lapped by an unknowable ocean, and the farther shore is the nearest place imaginable, which is why we can never find it, because the moment we look it is gone, because no vision can see itself, no wind can blow itself around, and no mystery can comprehend itself. And for that I raise up my glass and shout out Hallelujah! Hallelujah!, because the earth is, because God is, because I am, and because it is all beyond itself, beyond reason, beyond knowledge, beyond time, emotion, hope, wonder, duality, oneness, sex, love, creation, destruction, being, and nothingness. It is all beyond itself, and this is the glory, the perfection, the philosopher's stone: to finally arrive and be nowhere, to finally understand and be dumb, to finally bridge the incomprehensible gap, and so to become both the agonizing part *and* the ecstatic sum.

*

five

It was the interminable diversity of the community living in the area near both Allanah's and Jesus' land which provided a welcome stability which somehow grounded me. And in that grounding I was soon lifted off of the earth, and rooted in the wind.

It was a small community filled with an amazing assortment of diverse and individual souls. It was a spiritual community, though without any guru, temple, monastery, rules, orders, ideologies, or sacred books. Which is to say, it was a true spiritual community, for it had been formed sublimely by the spirit itself- just as with the collection of musicians I had come upon in Dharamsala, India- a fact which made God-the-Father the only guru, God-the-Mother the only temple, love the only rule, and life the only sacred text.

I had been guided home, or, at least, to one of my homes. For it was here that spirits and souls kindred to my own heart's longings lived in abundance, in varied locations in the area. Most of them existed in austere abodes, under large tarps, with no walls, only a basic kitchen area, a bed, some chairs, and an open-fire cooking pit in the center of their home. It was like visiting a camp of nomads who never moved, at least not on outward journeys, but instead had set out long ago on an inward course which would lead each one of them into the God of their own soul.

The folks whom I encountered there were a neverending barrage of delight and amusement to me. One such fellow named Tim had a great many tales to tell of his time on the mainland, while working amidst the dark spirit of the world. Tim was an odd fellow, to be sure, but one in whom I sensed a great deal of honesty and authenticity, which is why I enjoyed listening to his anecdotes- despite their oddity- about his habit of going into homes all across the land which had recently been the sites of mass murders, and sleeping there, and sensing and communicating with the tortured souls of the recently departed. It was as weird a hobby as I could imagine, and one which made me think Tim was a crackpot, and yet he held my eyes and did not seem to be lying.

On top of this absurd habit, Tim related other tidbits of his personal research and experience. He spoke of how the earth was ruled by a society called the 'Bonesmen', which was an elite group of men based in Yale university. He spoke of wars on Mars- those which had been and those which were to come. He claimed he had seen a person spontaneously combust, and spoke of personally being abducted and attacked by certain aliens, and of being healed by others. And lastly he spoke of his time as a roadie for the Grateful Dead, and of all the sublime spiritual events which occurred during the years that group focused the energies of thousands of souls into the vessel of love, freedom, psychadelia, and psychosis.

Another unique character I came across was a fiery, dreadlocked, genius renegade named Koosa, with whom I sat sipping wine one evening and who- in his own words- had died completely one night on an ayahuasca trip, died completely, and in that death learned that life and death are but one thing, and that death is simply a breather, allowing us to return to life rejuvenated, and- as I had found years earlier on one of my own mushroom journeys- that death occurs only when life in the flesh is no longer worth living. As well, during that trip in which Koosa had died completely, after coming back to life he learned about the necessary duality of oneness. And he learned this from a tree, no less, which told him that a female is like the roots of a tree, which are buried in darkness and would die if exposed to the light, and a male is like the branches, which must grow ever higher, and only towards the light, and that both the roots

and branches are necessary, and one cannot live without the other or the entire tree would perish.

Next I met a woman living nearby who stated that she had met every president since and including Nixon, none of whom could meet her eye to eye. She claimed to have willed, and then been offered, an apprenticeship to be the anchor for the Today Show, but turned it down because she realized everyone in the industry was so unhealthy, an observation which she was perhaps qualified to make, because she had healed herself from cancer by forgiving a man who had abused her when she was young, and therefore had healed her inner anger. And after that self-healing she spent the entire following year eating nothing but ice cream and cake, and yet growing healthier, happier, and stronger all the while.

Yet there were not only these types of fringe oddballs running amok in the area. There were also absolutely sublime, peaceful, and wisened Buddha-types. One such fellow was John, a fifty-something father and grandfather, who had worked six days a week for twenty-five years while living on the mainland, and then had become divorced and lost everything, which he claimed were the best things that ever happened to him. When I met him he had been living on the Big Island for a number of years, making, selling, and playing bamboo flutes, living here and there as a caretaker, and enjoying the peace and tranquility of the earth, and, as best as I could see, entering into the inner chamber of his soul, without effort, without pride, and without care. In doing so he had become one of the most peaceful, non-reactive, fluid, and harmonious individuals I have ever met. And never a single word about spiritual or religious things. Nothing. He had arrived, and no words, nor ideas, nor pedantry could allude to the subtle realm into which his spirit had floated. He had become as if an epiphyte, which grows above the earth and not in the dark soil, and yet is as much a plant as any other plant, though it is rooted in the sky, and not tangled in the ground.

Though as peaceful and inwardly harmonious as John appeared, I was to meet with a young man one day who held an empty perfection and inner cleanliness that came upon me as if I was looking not at a being composed of flesh and spirit, but a window only, perfectly polished and without flaw, and which therefore had no interaction with anything, whatsoever. This young fellow had become the eternal, intermingled membrane of the invisible self flowing unmoved through the entire cosmos. And that is all I can say. For he and I met while in the presence of a number of others, and spoke only our names to each other, and then did nothing but hold each other's liquid stare for perhaps ten to fifteen timeless minutes, until a gentle smile crossed each of our faces, and we released each other from the harmony of that deep communion, and I have never seen him since.

It was in the presence of such a diverse group of souls that I found myself full of gratitude and acceptance, and in which I enjoyed a number of potent congregations that provided my life with experiences of spirit in community, the likes of which I had not known existed.

I recall one blessed gathering to which my twin soul and I had been invited, where an assortment of free individuals gathered to share spirit, song, ayahuasca, and healing.

As much as I had been filled with awe and admiration for my time spent with the group of musicians in Dharamsala, which I described earlier, that impromptu event in India had been but a trickling stream compared to the gushing river of life which poured this night through these people who had long ago turned away from convention and respectability, and had turned instead towards the earth, God, and their own eternal selves.

The evening was hosted by a man in his late thirties who had lived in remote valleys on Kauai for many years, had prayed and asked for guidance, and eventually had been led to the Big Island where he slowly built a life for himself out of cinders and lava, and at the same time he had created an invisible umbrella of spirit under which the community now gathered like a forgotten tribe who had not forgotten God's home.

To describe even a fragment of the characters attending the event would be to digress endlessly into the sacred precincts of three-score hallowed souls, for it seemed to me that I had come upon one of those anachronistic occurrences written of only in mythological or ancient tomes, because the entire collection of our spirits were released from our separative confinements by the medicine- as ayahuasca is called in the shaman's world- and we were then gathered up as one, into another realm, via the ecstatic music of numerous Sufi bards. For in attendance that night were a number of young men and women who had been called early in life to go to India, live in caves and with sadhus, and then take up as their spiritual vocation the art of the Sufi song. And boy could they sing. Let me tell you, I was in awe and gratitude while experiencing the overwhelming passion, grace, commitment, and talent I felt in this family of perhaps six men and six women, all sporting gigantic dreadlocks, heavenly countenances, and lithe bodies covered in flowing robes. And their music …their music was rapture itself. The songs went on into the early hours, and all souls danced in the unmoving ether, through the rapt presence of all who were one.

I had found a community to which I finally could belong. And yet, as is the way of surrender, I was soon being told in a number of dreams, that yes, these people were great spirits, and great souls, filled with immense faith, love, and service, and, yes, I would find myself drawn to these folks, and would accept and be accepted by them, and, no, it was not yet the place for me to stay. I was being told to live and love amongst them, and then to go another way.

It was the necessary repetition of this message, in a number of dreams, which helped me realize that though I cherished this opportunity to live in such a brilliant place filled with kindred spirits, there was yet another chosen spot up ahead for me, and were I to stay here I would surely find peace, freedom, harmony, and joy, but I would not fulfill my life's most perfect goal.

Following the spirit as such, over a number of years, I had finally come to learn one of the most important lessons of all- how to give myself completely to a situation, and how to let it go; how to invest my whole being into whatever lay before me, and then, to know when the shift was complete, to divest myself, to hug the ones I loved, to say goodbye, and then move on to other fertile ground. I had to learn to die only because it led to more life. I had to learn to let go only so that I could further receive. I had to learn to say goodbye, because only then could I say hello.

And though I know now where I am directed to go, I know not what lies there, but this, after all, is no longer a necessity for me. I say, let my Christ self be my inspirer, and I shall wander on.

For throughout the earlier dementia of my unbecoming, I had lost sight of the hard won reunion, and hid behind the shield of trivial whims, as life fell not loosely about me, but clung fast in wanton, false division. I had betrayed my sacred non-understanding by embracing a profane understanding. But now I had only the mystified acknowledgement of a stupendous, debilitating obviousness: awe and acceptance were the only responses I had left for being. For though mine was a distorted illumination; like the blinding light of the sun, bouncing off the lightless, light-giving moon, I did still rise up in the night of existence, and shine forth despite my subliminal darkness.

Ah, *blessed be Thy entanglements which complete me*, for it is Life's hand which moves me along, and I am but a reed in the flute of the infinite heart, a song of the generous voice which sings, and a dream of the fabulous Dreamer.

Divine orgy, profane delight. Fiddler, I am your fiddle.

*

six

The Christ is the center which is also the pinnacle, ever crucified into the new life, rising from the core of every plane, and pulling, like a great carpet, the entire cosmos upward. Like the topmost sprout of a growing pine tree, which appears as a cross, the Christ in all of us is the ever-changing form of an evolving humanity; the 'son of man' is the upward ascending yet earthbound rising newness, ever living and dying in, and as, the transforming flame of humanity's furthest reachings.

To be human is to be Christ, which is to be the intersection of the entire menagerie of visible and invisible realms, and to be bisected and constructed by the push and pull of these infinite, unique radiations of the cosmos. For the Christ is not a separate entity, nor is the Christ a separated entity, because the Christ is non-division itself, which is cosmic union, the marriage of all dualities. Christ is One, the Noah of now, carrying every pair of opposites across the tempest of spirit and into tomorrow. And this Christ is the absence which creates the whole, and therefore the Christ is the whole. The hole *is* the whole, which is the last stage of the microcosm, the last agony of separation, the last growth on the skyward tree. The blastema. The last to grow, the first in height. The first and the last.

And this Christ is not a person, for the Christ is the event of individual abdication of self-ownership, opening up into harmonious, sublime, undichotomized being, in which the unfoldment of life occurs synchronistically within and without the now unseparated individual, who is still individual.

Christ is the one within, who does not bother with mankind but trusts God in all things, which is the absolute surrender of personal interpretation,

which is an offering that affirms "Thy Will be done", which is the end of the ego. For with the utterance of such a statement a person becomes disinterested- they lose interest- for to truly say "Thy Will be done" eliminates the possibility of interest, for what interest have they now in matters? What's done is done. They let it be, and fall away, and are set free without having *done* anything.

As such perhaps there is no such thing as a saint after all, for miracles are performed in the saint's presence because of their absolute faith in the infinite possibility of spirit. The saint does nothing, but only abdicates his or her being, thus creating the option for divinity to occur in their stead. And that very abdication is divinity's first act, wherein the chastening flame descends so as to eviscerate the unlucky candidate through whom the spirit desires to operate, and thus the saint dies so that God can live. But also God lives so that the saint can die.

Redemption is thus empty, and yet full of sacrifice, for the closer you come to yourself, to the force which creates you, and to happiness, the closer you come to the possibility of true sacrifice, for then you understand the value of what it is you relinquish- the cost to yourself to acquire it, and the subsequent cost to release it. But you know also the psychic economy of such a decision, and why it must be made, and why you will make it, and why you will be the only one who will ever know.

Back in the pious and puerile years of my becoming, I had not only uttered "Thy Will be done" on numerous occasions, without, at first, knowing the absoluteness of what that actually implied, but I also committed a sacrifice, by offering to God something which I cherished, as a trade so as to benefit another who was in great pain at the time. That was when I came to understand very quickly the power such an invitation possessed, for I had given up something, something dear and precious to me- in an attempt to help another. I did so because, at that time, I could do no other. I had no strength to stand in the face of human misery. If someone near me was suffering, I suffered as well. I had no walls, and that made me a perfect candidate for Christ to come flying in with his shotgun and create all the trouble that was to come after it.

I believe that sacrifice, which I made without ever intending to ignite Christ's chastening upon me, was the key which unlocked the door to many of the events which followed. Though, looking back, I am not certain whether I performed any sacrifice at all. For since all and everything is an emanation of the One Godhead, nothing is separate, nor is possessed by a person which does not belong already, and firstly, to God, and therefore there is no sacrifice possible, but only a giving back what is not ours in the first place.

No matter, I soon found myself asked to undertake a number of endeavors which were always confusing and hard to follow, though I followed as best I could. What I gather from my learnings is that we redeem others by ceasing to exist ourselves. What I mean is that once we are in contact with God, there is nothing left to do but be absent, and thus let God do as God will. To serve the Christ, then, is nothing more than self-elimination, and deserves no applause, and no praise, because it requires no talent, no decency, and no honorable characteristics. I should know, because I am a sinner.

However, in learning about the new non-role which I had been bequeathed, I was beginning to understand why life in the world had been so

troublesome, so hazardous, and so futile to me. I was beginning to understand the horrible truth about vicarious atonement, about how in our emptiness we offer a void to all who are full of anguish, anger, and woe, and in doing so we become their anguish, anger, and woe. This was something which I soon realized I was not interested in, and so I had to find a way to keep one door open, and the other door closed.

In the midst of mankind's confusion, I had to become like a one-way valve, empty and open to God within, and yet shielded and guarded against the chaos without; I had to let God out onto the world, but not let the world back into me.

That was the trick, to be like a physician in a leper's den- to touch without being touched myself. Because to let God pull another out of the claws of death, through me, meant to go down into their death without dying, and to care for them without caring for them. It was to hold a line between life and death, upon which to let God regularly descend and ascend, and slowly, ever slowly, coax them back up, while never turning away from life myself, never changing my direction nor stride but only for a second to stop, let God go down into them for a moment, and then climb back up while I was still living. Only in this way could they be whisked out of the clutches of the reaper.

For to redeem another without incurring trespass is to witness non-division with humility; it is to stand amongst them in your emptiness, to look them in the eyes without yourself, so that their God within can awaken, and their love can spill forth everywhere.

*

seven

In the descent of our spirits into flesh, we become aspects of the Father, entering the Mother, and so we bring Heaven down to Earth, and the Earth up to Heaven.

And just as He hosts spirits above, in the form of angels, archangels, cupids, and saints, so does She, who is the Earth, host spirits down below, the company of which the Druids, Pagans, and any primitive peoples were as aware of as their own beings. I am speaking of the earth-spirit realm of animated matter, wherein dwells faeries, gnomes, elves, gremlins, and the living consciousness of trees and other plants. It is a realm still alive and thriving, and is a plane on which we humans would also be consciously dwelling were it not for the fact that we have cut ourselves off between the heart and the mind and have somehow exiled ourselves out of the natural realm.

To return to this realm is not easy, though not impossible either, for we are already a part of that twilight dimension, where all that is beats to a different pulse- the pulse of the Earth.

I have fallen into that fantastic realm in many subtle ways, on many different occasions, during my relapses into the other way of seeing, while out in the glorious natural world, and yet I have never so fully entered the Land of Pan

as I did on two separate shamanic journeys which were catalyzed by the mystic psilocybin mushroom.

On one of these occasions my *soror*- my twin soul- and I had spent a winter evening on a beach near Vancouver, huddled under a blanket together while snow fell all around us, and in the quietude and openness of our communal vortex, we slipped into the nether realm and there together witnessed the forms of three laughing and naked female faeries, who were dwelling at the membrane between our two worlds.

Another time, my *soror* and I were out on a wild Pacific beach and we fell through the looking-glass and into the 'green realm', wherein we could perceive each other's earth-spirit beings, as well as the entire dominion of the earth's energy, bound in and through and of all living things. It is a realm to which we all belong just as absolutely as to the one we mistakenly call reality, for 'reality' is a misnomer applied by minds which have walked into an empty room, into a tight corner, and, standing with their backs to all else, declare that they have found the truth. Yet there is more than one reality operating in and of and through us at any given time, and it was during that shamanic journey on the wild Pacific coast, into the other realm, that I also perceived the discarnate, demonic force, now holding the earth hostage, and devouring and destroying Her. And this I say with absolute honesty, for there is a demon within the earth, perhaps within us all, which is enslaving, destroying, and killing the natural, living earth and its netherworldly creatures to which we belong and of which we are. And so it is only for us to give up our limited views and addictions to oil, electricity, buying, selling, having, and doing, and let our natural selves regain their rightful status in the collage of our beings, that we may again return to the wholeness of heaven and earth, spirit and flesh, and the marriage of God and beast which is man.

It is because of my experience of that dark oppressor causing calamity upon the earth, and for many other reasons as well, that I now quite openly declare that I do not enjoy the spirit realm, and perhaps never will, for, compared to it, the material world is a holiday in the sun.

The spirit realm is thick and lousy with misguided entities, dark energy, parasitic spirits, and untameable ghosts. It is a realm in which souls are won and lost, repressions are given power, and courtesy is unheard of. It is anarchy, feudalism, slavery, monarchy, and the ever shifting sands of a plastic reality, all thrown into a tangled heap of intermingling wills and energies, creating a kaleidoscopic pandemonium stuffed inside a madhouse run by no one. And this is why I do not enjoy it, for I have faced many trials, many near disasters, many troubling moments, and odd encounters in that twilight frontier.

In fact, though the Big Island of Hawaii is paradisiacal, natural, otherworldly, and serene in many ways, there was once a time while I was on that living rock when the darkness of certain spirits was so thickly knotted into the drama in which I was involved, that I was told, in none too allusive terms, by the one who guides me, that there was an uncontrolled evil around which would end up harming me badly were I to not leave, and leave instantly, which I did. For I had learned by then that the Father of my being knows a great deal more than ever I have claimed to see.

And a similar occurrence happened in a remote valley in the Himalayas one summer when my *soror* and I were exploring the ancient Buddhist areas. We must have stumbled into a spiritual black hole, because all of the sudden I was in a terrible tangle with spirits which did not seem to have any interest in my well-being and the only thing to do was retreat as fast as possible because I was not capable enough of defending myself from such invisible, nefarious forces at the time.

Another episode occurred in Hawaii again, after I had seemingly broken a rib while body-surfing. I must have been invaded by a malevolent water-spirit at the instant of my body's impact onto the sand, because the pain in my ribs continued to increase as the weeks went by, instead of getting better, and I was wondering what was happening. As was my *soror*. So one night she asked for guidance and was taken, in dream, to find a small green woman who had somehow found her way into my body, so as to attack me, and was there gnawing away at my internal being until my mate ordered her with full shamanic force out and away and back into the sea, at which point the little green woman left, and the pain in my ribs began to slowly abate.

I was very thankful for my mate's assistance, and yet she was not the only one who had ever come to my rescue. Oh no, the number of times Jesus, the Christ, saved me from doom, when I was deeper in the darkness than I was capable of escaping from, were almost uncountable. In the past I have called upon the Man so many times that I worry of badgering Him. And yet, to this day I continue to call when the going gets tough, for though I am at times a coward, at least I am not a fool.

Ah, the spirit realm. Drop a gallon of liquid LSD into a small town's water supply, and you'll have a quick briefing on the chaos and disharmony I have experienced, and I know that I am not alone in this feeling.

One of the oddest happenings which occurred to me in the spirit realm came at a time when certain dominant aspects of my life were attempting to take full control of the wheel, so to speak. In this case, as in many others, my will and intent behind such a push inevitably exposed an unexpected energy, or spirit, attempting to intentionally obstruct me, or perniciously lurking in the shadows, for one pathetic or nefarious reason or another. It is astonishing how many desperate, destructive, and deceitful beings exist in this pandemonic realm in which all our spirits commingle, commune, and commit crimes.

The event of which I speak was completely idiosyncratic, unexpected, and hard for me to handle, and came about one evening when I had awoken from a dream in which I was being symbolically shown that there was some form of intrusion or intruder obstructing the furthering of my highest pursuits. Upon awakening in the middle of the night I remained in that pseudo-conscious, lucid state where the mundane and spiritual realms mix visibly. In that state I recognized a female spirit clinging onto me. She was not being aggressive nor evil, but soon I realized that neither was she planning to let go. That was when I understood- as such things are understood in that state, as in dreams, without proof or explanation- that she was the soul of a miscarried relative of mine, who had been lost before I was born, and so she had been holding onto me ever since I came through my mother's womb, so as to remain a part of our family. It was apparent that my spiritual pursuits and efforts had finally exposed her, though

she had been hidden to me, and in me, for thirty-five years, and now had no desire to leave.

Nothing could be done to diplomatically persuade her to leave, and yet I was fully determined to extricate her from my being, for she was off of her own path, and encumbering mine. And, let me tell you, it was no small effort to pull her off and drive her away. She kept coming back with greater and greater tenacity each time I attempted to drive her away, and I had to dilute my care for her and give myself to the spiritual violence necessary in order to liberate myself from her clutches. This was all happening in the sublime realm, and when the ensuing battle was finally over I called on any spirit helpers available to come and guide her away from me and towards her own necessary path, and new life, which they did.[43]

Yet as much as I am weary of the spirit realm, there is no avoiding it, for to exist, is to exist in the spirit realm, as well as many other realms, for all are intertwined at one level, concentration, or another.

The problem for me is that I have always been far too open, so much so that I suffered from terrible allergies, and neverending sickliness during periods of my childhood, which, I was to find out in later years, are sure signs that you are absorbing other people's negative energy, and becoming like the liver of the spirit, wherein all toxins are sent to be processed.

I was always too unhealthily open. As a child, at my grandmother's cottage, I often suffered horrendous allergy attacks, sore throats, or plugged nasal cavities, which could last for weeks, or even the whole summer. Many decades later I read in a metaphysical book that children who are very open often suffer the consequences- in the form of mental or physical suffering- from the pathos or corruptions of another in their midst. And there was one elderly person, living in my presence, who was as corrupt as they come; outwardly giving but inwardly taking, outwardly full of pleasantries but inwardly a murderer, outwardly caring but inwardly conniving and oppressing, and I suffered in the atmosphere of that person's psychic chaos without a clue that it was not simply a bad case of hay fever, or a cold that would not go away.

Later in life, as a young man, I had a certain type of pain occur on one side of my neck a number of times, which came on all of the sudden, would stay for a few agonizing days, and then slowly fade away. I assumed it was the remnant of an old football injury, returning now and then whenever I slept improperly. This, however, was not the truth, for I did not know at the time that we call someone a "pain in the neck" for very accurate, spiritual reasons, though in modern days we do not recall the lucid understandings which this now colloquial phrase once held in years gone by when the dark arts were more prevalently understood.

It was not until I met a woman up in Alaska one summer who was a wild and cocky mother of two, and who claimed to be a witch, that I began to understand the nature of psychic warfare. This woman told me a number of tales about her escapades in the realm of attack and reception. One such story was about a personality clash she had with a woman at work a few days earlier, which ended in a subliminal psychic feud, resulting in the witch sending out hate energy into her foe who was soon bent over in her chair, in terrible pain, holding the back of her neck.

I expect the witch's victim had no idea what was going on. And neither did I, on numerous occasions, until I became wise not only to the adverse effects of my own openness, but also to the ways in which other people's aggression, hate, contempt, or inner turmoil can be sent out from their being and absorbed by anyone in its path, even if that person was not the intended victim.

On one occasion I was in a heated quarrel with a person close to my heart, but who was not exactly inwardly honest about their feelings, and though they were claiming to care deeply for me, at one point they walked behind me and I felt a shooting pain go through my back, as if I had just been stabbed, which I had, psychically. And so I also then understood the term 'back stabber' in a way I never had before.

My openness problems were magnified because, along with the unconscious chaos and separation carried about by the ubiquitous *hoi polloi*, there were also absolute and irredeemable scoundrels who, despite their polished, convivial outward personalities, had sometime during their life turned inwardly against their fellows, had let hate into their hearts and all the darkness, dementia, and disease- which inherently accompanies such a plunge away from the brotherhood and sisterhood of mankind- in. These pernicious characters were almost impossible to avoid and root out from my life because their malevolent thoughts and feelings were kept well disguised from the rest of my companions who allowed, or even invited, these troglodytes into our gatherings. This was troublesome for me because I was, as usual, far too open to the psychic realm where love and atrocity mingle, and the hate-deranged spirits would seep in and defile me almost instantly, and I would leave a party at the end of the night, in which one or more of the devil's minions had been present, with a sickly feeling from the osmotic contact with these fetid creatures. And then I would have to direct all my energy towards cleansing the vampires from my blood.

Occasionally, during life, I was so open that if I was in the presence of an individual who was battling with some sort of inner demon or the like, I would later, that night, dream their dream, and enter into their subconscious, shamanically absorbing their hidden agony, and then, without knowing how, I would get rid of it. All such things I never intended, and when I realized such events were happening I made a stern vow and evocation to the universe declaring that I refused ever again to take on another person's sin, karma, suffering, or illness, for I was like a psychic whore with both ankles tied behind my head, helplessly allowing all who cared, to walk right in and screw me. And when that goes on and on, you end up like a spiritual sewer, with all the waste and darkness that people cannot, or will not, work through and discharge of their own accord. Some call this type of experience 'vicarious atonement'. I call it being clogged by mankind's failure to mature, and I refused to allow such things to go on with me any longer.

Not that I wasn't responsible for my share of the tragedy-of-the-commons. Oh no, I certainly grazed my untamed psychic bulls out onto the overburdened fields of the common soul as well. I am no saint, and have never claimed to be.

After all, as I see it, to become a saint or bodhisattva, is a catch-22, in that a soul attains such a level if, and only if, they are willing to renounce their

personal liberation for the sake of all others. And therefore liberation, for the saint or bodhisattva, is not possible without this sacrifice, though nor is it possible because of this sacrifice, for they must be willing to lie down in the River of life, so that others may step upon their back and advance another pace towards God.

I must not, therefore, be a saint nor bodhisattva, because I am not willing to lie down.

So be it, I am not a saint. A saint serves mankind. I do not serve mankind. I serve God, the innermost self. I serve God because I refuse to serve mankind. A saint is like a female Husky, in the far north, who lies down with turgid tits on the frozen tundra and nurses the little pups. A person of God is one like a dog on the sled team, who pulls God onward, driven by the whip and the love of running. I am harnessed to the God who loves freedom. And so I lead without leading, and would die of hunger were it not for God, though without me God would freeze. And so, like a Pegasus towing the chariot of Helios, I surmount the heavens in service to God, the innermost self, and this is a matter of choice, and a labor for which I am ever grateful. But at the end of the day I, who am harnessed to the spirit, need my meat, which God gives to me so as to keep me strong, and which God takes from me so as to keep me hungry. As is the requirement.

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eight

I relate all of these things not out of the presumption of knowing or understanding anything. I do not know. Let that be my fiat. And I can explain things no better than I have already imperfectly tried. No matter. To serve the spirit is an event beyond explanation, beyond fulfillment, beyond truth, beyond falsehood, and beyond right and wrong. And if the reader thinks that I am merely grandstanding through all of this, let them remember that I have declared myself a sinner, and not a saint. Though if ever I was a saint, it was an afternoon long ago, on North Beach- a thirty kilometer stretch of uninterrupted sand on the north end of the Queen Charlotte Islands, off the coast of British Columbia.

I arrived on the Charlottes and hitched up-island to North Beach, where I spent a few days walking and camping along that massive stretch of sand that is a membrane between the two worlds. And I strolled upon that lengthy wasteland more alone than I had ever been before in my life, and as far away as I had ever been from others, for I had said goodbye to humanity. I was finished with society. I had walked away, because I could no longer endure the inexorable loneliness and agony I could not avoid witnessing in the world.

After a few days of this I sat down one afternoon and the tears began to pour out of me because I saw what would happen to them, what *was* happening to them- my people- and how impossible the situation was. Nothing could be done. I had left, and left for good, and I screamed with an anguish like Demeter must have suffered when Persephone was sold out from under her into Hades. I

wailed like an astronaut who had lifted off from his moribund home planet, heading out to where he knows not, and looking back as the fires raged on, engulfing his old world and everything he cared for in the unstoppable flames. I was not in Heaven, but nor was I in Hell, and the thought of my brethren, toughing it out down there in the bowels of imprisonment was enough to take me down and flagellate my soul. Oh, I begged God that day, begged God to do something, to help them all, somehow, because I could not endure the thought of everyone's lonely confinement, each in a glass cell facing all other glass cells.

That afternoon I wept on and on because of the agony which had no end, and which it seemed others weren't even aware of but which devoured them in every act, and every thought, and every minute of the day. And I had walked away from it, because I could not solve it, nor heal it, nor could I face it any longer. I cared too much, more than what was healthy, and more than I could endure. It was the most painful afternoon of my life, so much so that the memory of it even now brings a glossy coating to my eyes.

You see, that day when I cleansed myself of the entire earth's woe and agony, of all the useless human misery I had witnessed throughout the years, which came thundering down upon me, and I lay there between great gobs of tears, begging God to do something, anything, to fix it, by whatever means, because anguish and loneliness were everywhere, and I could do nothing, and there I lay broken open to the heavens, growling out beseechment to the sky, for I had, throughout the frantic course of my merciless chastening, seen all I needed to see, thought everything I needed to think, and sacrificed all that I had- you see, I knew at that moment that ...God heard me, and God understood.

It was too much. Far too much. And when the day was over I walked back into the forest as if I had died and then risen, cleansed of a burden I could no longer carry.

But that was a long time ago, a time when my heart had no defenses, a time when I couldn't stop feeling what I couldn't help feeling, a time when I wanted to fix everything that I now want to see crumble, a time when I sought to help others while still needing help myself, a time when the Father had me by the throat, and the Mother had me by the balls, and only the strength of my heart prevented them from tearing me in two. But I was not strong. My strength came from my weakness. My love came from a lack of poise in the face of another's agony, my hopes came from not accepting what was hopeless, my prayers came from a lack of faith that all was as it should be.

I see now that it is the Christ within us whose heart weeps for human suffering, and so we must be careful that the sacrificial lamb does not become a scapegoat, for, to be sure, a person can die of grief, as I almost died- once for the world's pain, and once for my own.[44]

And what I was to find after that emancipating release of stored-up agony, of worldly pain which I had sponged into myself and then had purged out through bitter tears and woe- I found that the trick to living upon this earth without being taken down is to love yourself, but not at the expense of another, and to love another, but not at the expense of yourself, which is to have compassion without empathy, which is to love and yet be free.

For now is the time we must learn to be re-born in Hell, to live in Hell, and to not be in Hell.

I became free of much of what I was carrying back then, and later on I was to become freer because I realized that most people did not need nor want freedom the way I needed and wanted it. Strange, but true. Indeed, like some prisoners of concentration camps in the Second World War, who, it is said, upon having the chance of certain escape, chose to remain where they were rather than face the uncertainty of freedom, I encountered many people happily dwelling in cages that had long ago been torn down.

That was when I learned to leave each to their own loneliness and sorrow- for it was their lesson, their way, and their only chance of return- and I should not bandage the bloodletting, or the worm would never be gone.

Indeed, I learned to stop trying to relieve misery from people's lives when I realized that they got out of life what they needed, what they deserved, or what they wanted, and, in fact, that much of their anguish was God-given pain.

And so, I had to clean myself out, and only myself, open up, and break down the walls which separated me from the rest of the miracle, though at the same time I had to cease letting others inside me, had to cease taking on their sin, and so block their anguish from devouring me internally. For once I had shed my skin, I found that others could easily crawl within.

That was when I took my white wings off, and put my black armor on. That was when my love turned from a feather into a sword. There was no other way.

To be sure, it happens to all of us eventually: you come innocently into life, laughing and playing and clowning about, the world pushes you forward, the days blend into years, everything appears to be reasonable, actual, and true. And then one rainy afternoon you stop suddenly in the tepid process of the day. You sit gently down for no reason. You stare into the senselessness of it all while the tortured miracle of life blurs away before your trembling eyes. And you begin to weep and weep and weep from all the hidden fault and pain, and you wonder why the hell it is the way it is, and you do not know, and it's all gone, all of it, and the whole show has the numb, eternal ache of a phantom limb you never knew you had.

But when the tempest has passed on, and the wind blows the clouds into sun, the implausible absurdity and miracle of life then suddenly cascades like benedictions down upon your fallen soul and an unknown smile is born within which flips the madness over, lifting you up agog and howling. That is what happens.

Indeed, until you have laughed yourself silly from loss, you have lost nothing, and neither have you laughed. For it is only then, through the critical gloom of becoming, when the impotent conciliations run turgid, and the swollen vein runs dry, that the folly may begin to delight itself, and that is when you begin to laugh, and laugh, and laugh, and not even know why you are laughing.

*

nine

I look back now and wonder if Christ had been trying to contact me for many years, beginning in my mid-twenties, until finally I awoke to the communication. I say this because, going over all the events which have transpired, and trying to put the pieces together so as to see what the entire puzzle is about, I recall having had a number of dreams, years ago, in which a young girl, whom I had known as a youth, named Melissa, kept showing up, and seeking some sort of interaction with me. I had no clue at the time why she was suddenly appearing in my dreams, and it was not until a number of years later, when much clearer contact had been made, that I finally deconstructed her name: Me Issa. Issa was what Jesus was called in Tibet. [45]

And though my interpretation of the Melissa dreams may seem a slight stretch, many years later, and just a year or so before writing this book, I had a dream in which Joseph Campbell came to me and said that after the crucifixion Christ had gone to Tibet. And since that time, Christ has come to me in dreams and made it apparent that I should no longer be living on the path which I was previously on, and I should instead move towards the more eastward aspect of my being- my oriental self. For it is only in the dispersion eastward, after the long, focused march in the west, that the soul dissolves its won consciousness back into the neverending One.

Which is to say, after our work is done, and we have completed our outward voyage, tacking effortfully into the wind, there comes a time when we must turn about, throw up our spinnakers, and, running with the wind behind us, set our course for the void of Self called home. And therefore, it was only after my concentrated dance along the western way, that I had next to turn eastward, so that the last aspect of God to be separated from God- the Christ- would eventually rise and be returned to the whole.

And though I look back now as one reckoning with all that has come to pass, perhaps I have not yet finished with anything at all, but only just begun.

I suppose this is a necessity for an occidental, like myself, to further the growth to wholeness of their microcosmic self, just as an oriental individual might need to seek out the western way later in life, so as to balance out their metaphysical polarity, so to speak.

In the end, anyone who can find all opposites within their being- the male and female, east and west, good and evil, above and below- that person's self becomes the entire universe, and then there no longer is a self, only a clear and limitless banquet through and of and in which their consciousness, now the same as the cosmos, remains calm in the surfeit and silence while awakening within the dream. It is an awakening devoid of arrogation, of realization, of accomplishment, of pride, of joy, of sorrow, of nostalgia, or expectation. For it is an awakening to the night that hides within the day, and the day which lives within the night; an awakening where moon and sun consciousness merge beyond distinction into the quiescent realm where all elements are as if one; an awakening where water, air, matter and fire are distilled into a singular

substance and song, where essence and form become each other, and the doingless doer is everything and none.

Which is to say that such a person ends up in a sea of absoluteness which is never the same, for it is always changing, which is the hard part to understand about absoluteness: it flows.

It is in this newfound realm where I have breathed like I have never breathed before, where I have apprehended as I have never apprehended before, and where I have belonged like I have never belonged before. It is here, in the presence of absent veils, and inside the transparency of liquid objects, that I am awakened as the stillness within and through and of all, and all is the awakened stillness in and through and of me, for stillness is the core which is no core. It is the marriage which is no joining. Because at the absolute center, in the stillness beyond time, there is neither recess nor distance, but only a singular, infinite space wherein the entire cosmos persists as a phantom penetration writhing through the impervious, immoveable space.

In that space where matter and consciousness are contiguous and the Mother and Father are one, the awakened self is that still essence forever embracing the manifold show.

Where the vertigo of infinite emptiness holds aloft the plenitude of exigent forms, the great absence suspends all presence, in and through and of itself, it is there that I dwell beyond myself with you who are no other.

And since finally there is no difference between God, the Earth, all others, and me, I lie down within myself, and flow into the never stopping movement, because I have stopped distinguishing what I am from what I am …not.

*

ten

I wonder now if life only asks of us what we ask of life, if life only wants from us what we want from life, and if life only gives to us what we give to life. It must be so, for the whole of life is the quintessence of intimacy, the epitome of reflection, and the paradigm of reciprocity. There is no separation. Show me separation, and I will show you bonds as thick as the universe itself. We are in and through and of this great, incomprehensible madness born in the womb of our own disbelief.

And I wonder if God asks only of us what we ask of God. For though there is gain in serving God, to be sure, there is certainly also loss. And so in serving God one must accept loss. For how can one give of themselves without having something taken away? To choose one path is to kill an infinity of other paths. This is the agony of intent, and also its power.

I had to realize that if I did not accept that there is loss in life, huge, gut-wrenching, tear-your-hair-out-in-chunks loss, as well as heart-breaking missed opportunities, irrevocable blunders, torturous failures, manifold griefs, agonies, and sorrows- if I did not see and accept that this is as obvious and

incorrigible as the sun, I was sure to be crushed under the weight of life's failings, instead of being lifted up by its miracles.

To think of the number of times I watched a lover walking away from me, or realized that a chance of inspiration or growth had passed right in front of me and then out of reach, is enough to bury me beneath a sea of sorrow as deep as the ocean blue. But I could not let loss win. I had to accept loss, and all the bitter thoughts that came with it. I had to learn to turn aside from every avenue which I could not take, and to not curse at my limited dominion. I had to come to terms with what it means to make a decision, one decision, and to understand why the root of the word *decide*, means 'to kill'. For just as sui*cide* is to kill the self, and homi*cide* is to kill another, to de*cide* is to kill the infinity of possibilities which will not be chosen but only missed, and mourned, because to decide is to look in one direction, and to never look back, and to know that this is necessary and unavoidable, because without making a decision and holding to it, life is filled not only with missed opportunities, but also with woe and ennui.

In and through the roundabout, fantastic, labyrinth of this cosmic tangle, I lost far more than I care to relate, but in that losing I found the one thing worth finding- my own eternal Spirit.

Along the way I roared because I had to roar, I danced because I had to dance, and I wept because I had to weep. Because I was also caught in being, and I hated it, loved it, wondered at it, and suffered it to the fullest completion of my soul. I dove into the deepest darkness I could bear, and flew to the highest summit on which I could stand.

But in order to serve my own existence, I had to destroy, to disorganize, and to go mad, for there was no other way to complete the necessity of my being, within the claustrophobic structure avowed to our life.

And so I became what it is only possible to become when the opposites of contempt and mercy, thought and feeling, and anger and succor come to exist with equal intensity within an individual- when a person comes to fully disdain life, and yet praise it as glory, without ever contradicting the One. Which is to say I became ...a human. And I became such for no special reason but that I began to care ...with ruthless love.

For a human knows how to stand alone in the midst of a lie. A human knows how to laugh when others are weeping, and to weep when others are laughing. A human knows how to believe in no one but him or herself, and so to believe in all people. A human knows how to forgive him or herself, and all others, and so to finally be capable of forgiving ...God.

A human knows how to accept and reject, how to affirm and deny, how to be different and indifferent, how to fight and how to surrender, how to dive to the deepest depths to retrieve a retrievable soul, and how to let another drown.

And a human knows how to be a man *and* a woman; to be whole; to descend into, occupy, inhabit, and become the rose of their own life and flesh. To be and to not-be, and thus to be two in one and finally free; to let the receptive, concavity of their being unvex the sublime pleroma, and to bring forth His convexity only in order to protect Her.

It is through this sublime androgyny that the circle becomes complete as the soul and spirit unite in splendor.

This sort of metaphysical tripe is not exactly the type of pretentious pedantry that I care to write about, but I have little option, having chosen to say it like it is, and let the critics have their banquet.

You see, I could do not but rise up from this punishing plane. And man I rose up like a phoenix scared out of its wings. I rose up, bold and mad from the challenge, the need, the impossibility of it all, and went forth into the dark and the terrible, with nothing but hunger and breath to carry me through.

I rose up not because I wanted to, nor because I knew where I was going, but because, beyond my wildest imaginings, I saw a truly horrible vision- I saw that nothing would change unless ...unless I changed it. It was up to me. No one could save me but myself.

I had realized that I could depend on no one but myself. And, still more so, that I was weakened by mere association with most others; that if I, of my own accord and volition, did not step out of the tide of mankind's folly, if I did not look hard inside and find out who I was, and why I was born onto this earth; if I did not with all my might seize this improbable miracle, I was doomed to never be nor know what was intended for me.

The only one who could save me was myself, and for that a gigantic, relentless effort was needed. I saw this fully. I breathed in, swallowed hard, and quivered only for the briefest of moments at this burdening realization, and after a single instant of masochistic acceptance, all equivocation vanished; invigorated by the impossibility of our tangled predicament, I grew strong, turned my eyes irrevocably into myself, and without courage or fear fixed hard that stare which would never again blink, nor weary, nor die, for I had chosen to hold and to make my own ground, to find and be myself in the hurricane of our ubiquitous confusion. I was on my way.

Originally, you see, I had found an entrance and mistook it for my home; I confused the doorway with the castle, and lived wretchedly in the foyer of mankind's interpretations. Then one day- by grace it was- I found a hammer, lifted it with my tired arms, and went forth savagely into the pain, the lies, and the folly, and I have not yet stopped from smashing. Wherever there is a wall, there is open space behind it.

The only way I found to break through was to learn to feel. The only way to feel was to kill the mind; to weep, to laugh, to scream, to punch, whatever it took. If the mind continued to hold the reins, the battle was over, and it was an easy battle to lose because when a man's heart is finally levered open by the jaws-of-life, the first thing he feels is the pain of all he has lost up until that point- lost without knowing how badly it had hurt him. The next thing he feels is the wretched sorrow and contrition within himself for all the pain he has caused others without knowing it. And it is these first two acts in the inaugural opening of the heart which often wreck a man who has never before allowed himself to feel, for the feeling which comes first, if ever it does, is a deluge of all the pain that has been repressed throughout life, in an initial torrent which will not abate until he has felt it all and transmuted it into acceptance. And that can be a great deal longer than a mere forty days and forty nights in a tempest.

Though were life suffering and nothing but, I would easily have remained apart, and never sought to descend. And yet I could do not but come

down. Fall and rise, rise and fall, forever grasping through the thorns for the roses.

That there are roses in this painful life, and that I, like all others, try, but can rarely grasp them, that is our torture and folly.

And yet we come down only so as to find what roses we can and then rise back up again, up from the profane, through the mythological, to the divine- from the linear contextual, to the symbolic contextual, to the acontextual- transformations through which we gather and disperse our fragments in a wholly unpredictable way. And so, by contracting and expanding our living nothingness …we become the all.

We all start at the center, and we either explode or fizzle out. If we think or care too much we are finished. Which is why I say it is time for us to dis-solve, to forget ourselves into stillness, to suffer neither knowledge, nor judgment. It is time for us to become innocent again, to go mad, to live without knowing what it is to live. It is time for us to seek nothing, find nothing, run free; *time for us to be kids again, to play in the dream of life.*

It was in this way that I became Life, but it was a wild and unconventional path I walked, learning that every real decision was left up to me, and to me alone: to spit in the face of absurdity, to live completely in the freedom of the day, and to find my own true being. For in the end there was one Law, and one Law only to which I was bound, and that Law was ...to be Myself.

It had been a splendid metaphysical intoxication which had hemmed me earlier into being, an unharnessable freedom which roamed about my cage. And then finally, through that dynamic haze ensconcing every moment, I found myself dancing- yes dancing- in wild, blind ecstasy, through the mad and drunken night, to the rhythm which I alone heard, and which no other heard above their own.

Dancing the dance called life. The beat and love rushed through me, the flesh gushed pain and joy from the memory of the untameable soul.

You see, it was essential that I find a way for myself out of the agony of time, and the only way to do that was to find the rhythm of eternity within myself, where neither past nor present nor plans held sway, but only the peace and ambitionless miracle, swaying gently in the warm breeze on the farther shore, a shore towards which I swam with desperate abandon, into that thundering chaos of beauty and delight.

I was filled beyond repair, and emptied for the heart to heal despair. The rules had been erased, the truth was long deceased, now it was my turn to fuel the fire of madness and release. I was returning to the land of rapture and awe, lifted out of life, away from the term of our exile, by the very force which had sent me there. I was going home.

*

eleven

I am neither an apologist for, nor a proponent of, the use of drugs or purity as catalysts to assist a person upon their path. To each their own, that is rule enough for me. And though I have occasionally partaken of stimulating substances, as it were, I have also often abstained for long durations, and during those periods I was always startled to be beckoned by the spirit back into imbibing one or another of the invigorators.

As such, while staying on the Big Island of Hawaii, in that little, plywood hut which Brendan- assistant to the millionaire- had originally granted me, which was in a quiet, alternative-living subdivision, built on top of a lava field, just a few blocks from the ocean, and about a mile from the libertine beach, I had slowly eased into a peaceful, unhurried, and drugless inner calm, which had come about because over the few months of my stay there I had been moving to the tune of no clocks, no itineraries, and no rhythms other than my own, and so I had truly entered into my own personal rhythm, and therefore had begun to settle also into the rhythm of my most inward, eternal self.

Apparently, however, I was not yet as calm nor inward as was required of me, for one night I had an odd dream in which I thought someone was saying, in French, "Ça va, Ça va." I awoke quite perplexed, for I had no idea what this statement had to do with me at the time. And, furthermore, although I had a number of francophone acquaintances, and had studied the French language in the past, I was by no means a master of the language. In fact, on one of my trips to France I had walked about for weeks without a clock or watch, and when I needed to know the time, I would approach a gentle looking Parisian and, pointing to my wrist, inquire "*Quel temp fait il?*", to which I received a great many absurd or condescending looks and responses, which struck me as odd, since I was only asking for the time, I thought. Little did I know that for three weeks I had been pointing to my wrist and asking what the weather was like. *Quel idiot!*

Anyway, I was unable to interpret the "Ça va, Ça va" part of the dream until I went to a local market later that day and immediately ran smack into a stall selling CavaCava, the Polynesian plant, also known as Awa, or Kava, the root of which is ground into a powder and made into a drink, and has, it is said, amazing soothing and calming qualities. This made me think that the dream was suggesting I try some, which I did, later that afternoon, brewing up a thick tea, and then sitting alone in the quiet of the tropical forest, where I slowly eased further into myself than I had been able to attain over the past few months of idle nothingness.

In fact, I was in such an immensely still, immaculate, and yet fully conscious state that in short time I had disbelievingly recognized the subtle division within myself, and within all humans- the division of the 'I AM' into the 'I' and the 'AM', which was a startling revelation, because it meant that my 'self' was actually a binary amalgamation of two almost autonomous halves: the discarnate, insubstantial, creative 'I', and the incarnate, manifested, created 'AM'. I was the 'I', expressing the 'AM', which I also was, and both were needed for me to feel 'I AM'. It was profound and disturbing, for now my self belonged to two separate realms; I was the two and the one, the whole and the divided. And I had a sense at that moment that most people live their entire lives thinking that their 'AM' is their whole 'I AM' and never stopping so completely

within and without, that the subtle self, the true 'I', is recognized as the unmoving motivator that it is, and the 'AM' is recognized as the moving, materialized half.

To be sure, when everything else falls away, only two things incorrigibly remain: the 'I', and the 'AM'; the ego may be gone, all hope might be obliterated, all pleasure, understanding, desire, pain, and memory may be finally scrubbed off the plate, but the Self and its expression endures. Which is to say, the 'I' continues to perceive itself undeniably, and it also continues to release the image, or vehicle, of itself, the 'AM', the manifest beingness of its unmanifest non-being, onto the plane of matter.

I also sensed then that the 'I' and the 'AM' were somewhat at odds not only within myself, but also within the whole world, and this was the cosmic separation of the Mother and Father aspects of the Godhead. And it was now necessary to attempt a permanent reunion between them, which would require the Self to take dominion over both, and that would require the rare and complex marriage of two separate elements, the male and female, the mind and body, the 'I' and the 'AM'.

I sensed that there was an unavoidable tug of war going on between the two sides, as the gravity of the form sought to pull consciousness into the world, and the emptiness of consciousness tried to suck the form back into the void.

I understood then why there is such strife and division amongst families, friends, couples, and countries- because the division causing the conflict exists right within us, and is only manifested outwardly as a mirror for our own inner lack of wholeness. And it was only going to be through a superhuman union of essence and form, of light and darkness, of the 'I' and the 'AM', that the tension would end and peace would prevail.

I had found the cosmic chasm within myself. But, more importantly, I had isolated the two disparate sides, and only later did I realize that this is actually an essential step in the work. For only after the one is divided into two can the two become one again, and in a much more perfect and complimentary union than before. In this way the consciousness, the male, must become separated from the body, the female, before the two can be rejoined into one. That is: from the 'I' being contained in the 'AM', a disassociation must occur in which the 'I' separates from the 'AM', and then the 'I' must grow to contain the 'AM'. Now body is in consciousness, rather than consciousness in body. The seed within the soil has grown into the world tree, and now surrounds the earth.[46]

A person is thus 'established', as the mystics describe, when the conscious and unconscious, the spirit and the flesh, the mind and body, are no longer mutually exclusive antipodes, but are instead integral and not dichotomized. That is when an integration occurs through which both the spirit and the body become new; the tangible is now intangible, and the intangible, tangible. Thus the inside reflects the outside, and the outside reflects the in.

This diamond-body exists outside of creation and destruction- which are symbolic and diabolic counterparts- because it is now complete. And therefore there is nothing more to create, and it is impossible to destroy. The individual is now beyond the duality of time, individuated, established, and eternal.

But before the diamond-body comes about, the individual must find all dualities within him or herself, must accept and then transcend them, must be both male and female, good and evil, creator and destroyer, and so be neither of the opposites but a new and inviolable, non-contradictory aspect of the living whole. Then this aspect must also be released and the self must dissolve into the whole. For it is when the diamond-body condenses, and then explodes, like a subtle supernova, that the microcosmic aspect is sent like an infinity of crystal seeds throughout the rest of the cosmos, so as to join and be grafted and grow within, and as, the entire whole.

To turn the lead into gold is to become the sun in the stone, for that is what gold is; it is the light of Sol in the darkness of matter, the spirit in the flesh, the Heavens within the Earth.

To be gold is to be solid light upon the Earth, as immoveable as a cast-iron man, and yet as fluid as a sea of liquid metal; to be the same as the all, and yet distinguished from it- a moveable, indestructible, and yet ever-changing aspect of the great canvas onto which all life is painted; a flexing, flowing, and amorphous mercurial entity, able to assume all forms though possessing none, able to blend in and belong anywhere, though belonging to none, able to fill and complete an emptiness, or to vacate and unplug a void. Spirit and flesh, light and metal, gold, and yet not gold- the *sol*-id aspects of Sol, now come to settle in the structure of matter, and therefore to vivify the moon caught in the gravity of Her own lightless being.

Just as quicksilver is both solid and liquid, metal and molten, formed and yet free, to become the coagulated light of gold, is to bring the Father into the Mother, and to grow from the Son to the Sun, and so to become as solid as a rock, and yet as radiant as the sky.

To turn that base metal within, into the glowing ore of God, is to protect your light with your own darkness, and so to be established, individuated, and inviolable, for now no breeze, no consciousness, nor will can shake you from your goal and station, for you have become yourself, and the world's ways part like phantoms in your wake.

Beyond all contradiction and division, neither rejecting, nor accepting, I stand in the midst of it all, and am it all, and I am nothing. I am Self, no more, no less. All that is, all that I am, all that shall be or was, beyond and above, within and below, never leaving, never staying, always happening without cause, meaning, nor hindrance. I am found without looking, known without knowing, and felt without love, loss, nor pain. Basking in the boundless sea of consciousness, I gain nothing, for I am everything, I lose nothing, for I am everything. I permeate but do not understand. I exalt but do not applaud. I wonder but do not ask. I love but do not care. I give, but do not offer. I expand, but do not end. In the Unknowable Void of our eternal, magical beings- I AM. In the absence of attraction and repulsion …I AM.

I the Creator. I the Sustainer. I the Destroyer. I the Cause. I the Effect. I the Beginning. I the End.

I the Dreamer. I the Dream. I the Immaculate. I the Delusion. I the Purity. I the Filth.

I the Word. I the Flesh. I the Revelation. I the Retort.

I, of the manifest and unmanifest. I, of the change and unchanging. I, of the abstract and contextual. I, of the feeling and indifference.

I, of the player. I, of the witness. I of the earth. I of the sky. I of the You. I of the I. I of the Eye. Eye of the I.

Divested from the thought structures of mankind, I have entered into the pristine bridal chamber where naked beingness and naked non-beingness dis-recognize their differences and are unified into One. I am the all and the everything. I am life. The seen, and the scene. All of it. The whole damned, marvelous mess. And we are the same being. There is no division. None.

Find me. Hold me. Release me.

There is no self but self. One being, we are all One being. When you say I, I am that I you are. Only you and the world complete me, for truly I tell you- I did not know myself until I let myself become you. It all comes down to that- I am you, and you are me.

How distant and yet how near we really are. Breathe in and be emptied. Exhale and be filled. Swim in the sameness between us. Weep and I shall suffer. Laugh and I shall smile. Sing out, and I will hear you. Reach out, and I will feel you. Look out, and Eye will see.

I am the rain forever falling, the river forever flowing, the sea forever receiving, the mist forever rising. I am the absence inside the Presence, the space upholding the form. Oh, Spirit in the manifest, ether in the stone, I am the Life in all things. And I am laughing.

Find me. Hold me. Complete me.

*

twelve

Like Orpheus returned to Tartarus with the painful memory of love lost, we have all come down to retrieve our bodies, to swallow them back through the heart's warm hollow. For we have mortally descended into the bowels of humanity's confusion only so as to climb back out again on the divine stairs of disgust, concern, indifference, and ...wholeness.

The lost and abandoned soul wanders about on earth, never really touching down, never really belonging, never completely joining in, and therefore never assimilates its earth-self, until it happens upon its homeless home, finds familiar wanderers, marries into all of life for one brief moment, and then rises back out more complete and fulfilled than if it had spent its whole life in the air.

For it is not so much that we must seek to transcend existence, but that we must first descend into it. We are already above, the only thing left is to dive.

Thus we come down only so as to go up higher. We descend only so as to ascend. We fall only that we may learn how to eternally fly. For the only way to learn how to fly is to leap into the darkness below.

Climb as high as you desire, but you won't get your wings until you fall without crashing. Fall spirit, fall. It's the only way to learn how to fly.

For it is only through this world that we may come to grow above it; what does not put down roots, shall never climb towards the sun. No seed grows toward the sky, without first germinating in the dark and perilous tribulations it will eventually no longer call hell. For like seeds which first must leave the loving light, we suffer as we descend into the darkness- we struggle to blossom in the mire. Oh, there is no vision in the black soil; the seed buried beneath the cold earth shudders at the confinement as it begins to grow out of itself. It knows yet nothing of the sun, and even less of the heliotropic self ...it cannot help but naturally become.

When the spirit fully descends into and inhabits the flesh, liberating the slumbering consciousness trapped in matter, that is when there is no longer a driver and a vehicle, but instead there is a dance. For the awakened flesh-consciousness, the voice of matter, the Mater, is now in concert with the spirit, the Pater, the two are operating as one whole, joined in wedlock, united and without distance, and separation has become togetherness.[47] Then there is no such thing as Male or Female, there is only Self, for all opposites are relative, based on a point of reference which, if it disappears, they disappear. Thus we must lose relationship to all, so as to identify with all, and so to become all.

And it is only in crossing into absolute physicality where I have found peace, a peace which is the harmony composed of what is and what isn't, of flesh and spirit, of body and mind. By becoming both I become another, sitting still, and descending my spirit into the flesh, and holding it there, inhibiting consciousness from leaving, and so bringing about the yogic union so harmonious in its peace.

Oh, the mind may convince itself that the flesh is not real, but the flesh knows that it is real, and, in fact, the peace which the spirit seeks in all its rootless flying about is found only when it finally joins the body, because true peace is *in* the flesh.

Only then, after the spirit has entered the flesh, can the flesh escape to the spirit. Only when we let God in, can we go out- out like a flame being engulfed by the fire, for we rise up only when we finally learn how to breathe under water.

You see, we are in the flesh so as to redeem the flesh- to absorb pain back into the Great Love. And we must remain in the grave called this world until the death it has died knows that we cared, and thus it comes back to life. Things are different than they were before; now it is not up to God to save us, it is up to us to save Her, the Mother.

We are here to be in the flesh completely, to exalt life, not to hide from it. If we do not return willingly from the deep absence, who will?

Just as the female Fig Wasp tears her own wings off in order to climb into the fig where she lays her eggs, so too the Mother has sacrificed her freedom to create us. Though She need no longer be confined nor ravaged by the Dark One.

As She pulls us down, we raise Her up.[48]

And so, as the Piscean era comes to an end, and the Aquarian age arises, I see that the line running down into the depths now slowly reverses direction and, and after climbing towards the surface, ascends above us, and instead of catching human fish, it now tethers a rising kite.

And I see that the *Pieta* has shifted, and the Son now lifts up the Mother. And so now we cast our lines above us, and ourselves be taken up. For were the kite not tethered to the ground, it would not play so freely in the air. And thus we all shall eventually be lifted off of the earth by the same parachute upon which we have fallen here, and so our roots shall be wings, and our wings shall be free.

Unseparated in this way, we will become the common ground of all, for it is only through our love of the Earth that we shall set Her free.

To love Her, and to stand firm and angry in that loving, and so to take Her with us.

To love. To rise.

To take Her with us.

*

thirteen

I am the self within the Self, the microcosm within the macrocosm, the smile within the God. I have been in this realm for what seems an eternity now, and though I am weary and worn, still I must complete the greater will, for when the fullness of our cosmic complexity falls helplessly into your lap, there is little to do but rise up stoically and follow it. I followed, like a blind puppy, nursed on the milk of the ether.

My true home is an opulent marble castle sitting by the great waterless sea, wherein anyone who belongs is given a great house of beauty all their own.

My sword is of quicksilver, my armor of air.

When I breathe, the Great Mother inhales me, when I sleep, the Great Father dreams on.

There is no wisdom on this earth for a man like me. *I am myself. That is wisdom*.

Between the profane and the divine, lives the psychic, intermediary realm of myth and symbol. Here all opposites meet, intermingle, and go to war together. Here is where the non-existent forces of Good and Evil actually exist. Here is where the individual is most constricted, and yet has the most effect. Here is where my people are trapped, laughing and weeping, and running about.

Here it is also where one, seeking to rise up from the profane to the divine, can get caught forever in the middle ground- between the tug and pull of the two waters, so to speak- without knowledge or hope of a further redemption.

It was down into those lower waters where I descended, and where I had a vision of old men casting nets from the land into the shallows, the intertidal zone, a place where, hours earlier, there had been solid ground. And now I saw that the fishing was good on the fertile patch where it was sometimes ocean and sometimes land, where the spirit came and went, and where God left it to man to stand chest-deep in the flowing chill, and harvest the ebbing keep.

And so, taking on the flesh like a trout flailing half exposed in the shallows of a rocky brook, did I come to live here, where it is not fluid, and where swimming is without ease, and yet I have grown and evolved in these

partial streams, and it is here that I have struggled, and loved, and cast my seed. Here, where I have sought longingly for the combined elements of unreason and exaltation divorced from praise. Here, where I surrendered, vanquished, screamed, and then went dancing. Here, where I slipped and repelled those agonizing resonances. Here, where I was the string not struck, the chord not plucked, the silence needed to give rise to the harmony. Here, where I became no longer an ingredient, but instead a catalyst, spent in the reaction, and then left to the side to wait for another call. Here, where I tried to save God by a mad dash at His own throat. Here, where I sought to return the dying flesh to the living word. Here, where I found release from the senselessness of our keep, and the images no longer controlled me; here is where I bask before the lost and changing glory of it all.

I, who recover the Rose, time after time, from the tortured depths of the black, strangling hell of Hades; I, who link the archetypical with the actual; I, who eat only an unknown fruit caught falling naturally from the Tree of Life; I, who drink only early morning dew found settling in the navels of androgynous, sleeping angels; I, who have fallen into this realm like I have always fallen- through the stars, the sky, the clouds, through the mountains, buildings, trees, through the crowds, the noise, the laughter, anguish, dreams, desires, words, illusions, lies, and deaths; I am a man who knows nothing. I have come from the region of exasperation, in hopes that this world is prepared for my call.

My primary duty- as it has been explained to me, time and time again, by countless, cryptic voices- so as to serve my vision onto this myopic earth- is to be myself, my true self, and only that, completely, and at every moment. And though I have not come without struggle, and do not remain without pain, I now stand in the midst, and flow without meaning, for when the blood and tears have been washed away, and the time of ardor has spent its day, the truth of my sojourn shall become clear: Stand alone, victory man, stand alone, in the hour which does not betray you.

At the base of my past feverish existence has lain the eternal task of resurrecting the vast expanse of wonder, for it was there that I was fully sobered by the wild euphorias of my tempestuous incarnation.

If only people were more stupefied by the spectacular implausibility of their own incomprehensible occurrence. Oh, if only. Just once, Lord, let me make drooling morons out of well-appointed fools; better it is to lead a person into a larger prison, than to leave them bound because you cannot release them.

I imagine that no one wonders at ‘being’ as much as myself, and yet I despair at how little I wonder. And so I take in the jeers and applause, the loneliness and communion, the struggle and the surrender. I take it all in because that is how it comes to me. For life exists as a package. The extremes are limited only by the limitation of their opposites. The life more abundant explodes in every direction. I take it in, chew, swallow, and digest it. I assimilate life. The nature of my being does the rest. That I may puke, shit, or laugh from it is of little matter to me. I love life. It is this unconditional acceptance which is my victory, defeat, doom, passion, and glory.

And for this I can say, with absolute honesty, that this life we are given is limited only by ourselves, and that anyone who puts their heart into it can find their true soul mate, the Great Spirit of Being, Christ, Mary, their siblings on the

Tree of Life, the Source, the Finish, Satan, God, and much, much more in this great and unpredictable existence we are in and which we are. It is all here, and it is waiting, and we are the only walls between finitude and infinity, and we are that infinity also.

For in my frantic peregrinations throughout the civilizations and wild lands of this earth, I found our famed Mercurius, the fair Nefertiti, the wild Poseidon, and the perishing Pan. I met and drank with the worn apostle Paul, and was hugged by the new and ever gentler Assisi. I knew those who could converse with animals, and others who saw the Living Light in day. I walked with Christ, was assumed up to heaven, met saints and angels in the ether, was kissed by Mary, coddled by the Mother Earth, and beaten occasionally by the powers.

I also became alerted to the ways of Mara, or Maya, or the Second Mary, as you will. My temptress, my illusion, my lover.

I roamed wild in the tempest of the archetypes, and held audience with the Myths and Muses. I sought wholeness and mercy for all, spoke with men of God, and with God himself on occasion, and let me tell you, life was still all implausible and insane.

I had taken a good run at the great divide I had to cross, and leapt with all my desperate might, but even then I was lucky for the unpredictable stepping stones along the way, and even with them I eventually had to swim in the river warmly meandering nowhere. Oh, let me say this, as the Mercies swelled to meet my sin and anguish, I fell short of the mark and yet was still gently lifted over the line. For as a parent easily lifts a child over a fence which would have been an impenetrable impasse otherwise, so does Christ take us across a line we cannot pass of our own ability. And that alone is why I made it across the desert and out to sea- not because I could leap well, but ...because I was willing to flounder.

And now I remain on this earth, as myself, dodging life's false responsibilities, listening for the as yet unwritten Word, that I might write it, and hovering weightlessly in between the gravities of two opposing forces, where I continue to survive the hemorrhage of false meanings, forging on to diffidently blaze a precipitous trail through the hazy, hallowed regions, of revolutionary exasperation.

And, to be sure, I continue to learn, to fail, and to be forgiven. For that is what happens in the re-ascent to our immortal selves, where there is no trial without error, and no salvation without sin; where fear eventually becomes loneliness, loneliness becomes acceptance, acceptance turns into faith, and faith leads to union; where confusion becomes revulsion, revulsion becomes indifference, and indifference turns into ...wonder; where reaction turns into action, action turns into inaction, and that ...that is when you become God.

*

fourteen

It is a deep and terrifying dive into matter which the spirit takes towards wholeness. It is a drowning and a rescue, a death and a transformation, a loss of breath and a growth of gills.

I can say now that I am as much an aquatic, as a terrestrial, arboreal, aerial, and ethereal being.

I am a whale, a snake, an ape, an eagle, a tree, a monster, an alien, a God. And it is only through the symbiosis of all these aspects that I also am a human, for humanity is the nexus, the crossroads, the hub through which all realms collide and commingle, which is why it is a crazy, brilliant, and disastrous thing to be human, because to be human is to be the pinnacle of the ever churning cosmos. To be human is to be Christ, which is to be the living tension consciously existing in all realms at once, and therefore gluing the entire disparate cosmos into a workable whole.

Yet, in the fecund rays producing us forever, how gentle it all becomes- to be human- as the separated blooms finally merge with our hard-won unlimited light.

You, who have landed here where I also came down into the quagmire stillness; here, where the pageant of being masquerades before itself; here, where the blossom falls into the fruit; here, where the shades of life are also life, and the grey dawn also knows the sun, and the gentle caress of the northern wind blows without asking if your tears come from shivers, or sorrow, or joy; here is where I came through suffering to gratitude, exalting what had deranged me, because I began to understand what was happening- somehow I had gotten back on track, I don't know how, but somehow I was returning to the source of gratitude, to God, to the mystery that I call ...me. For no one can know themselves completely, because the part is an aspect of the whole and a toe knows not where the walker is walking, and thus it surrenders to the whole.

To lose your part is possible only when you become it all, which is to become nothing. For a complete equation must balance out on either side. And therefore when you become it all every birth creates a death, every smile a tear, every pride an awaiting humility, every sin its forgiveness, and every piece of wisdom contains some ignorance. To become it all is to stand outside the contradiction, beyond character and magnitude, at the wellspring and stasis of this infinite nothingness.

It is that void to which I now return, when I am still and empty in the shower of the electric God-presence pulsing into what was me, and still is, though continuous now with what it wasn't, and therefore is the sex of God's penetration into the concave adoration I have become in my own absence; it is this union which becomes the apocalypse to all separative energies now caught in the wrath of our indefatigable love.

In that consummation of gyrating motionlessness, where the form has been tamed by the core, and the lightning held by the rod, the bridge between the two waters becomes their non-difference, and the transcendent deluge of the new essence infiltrates an active dispensation into the living schemata of the generative whole.

In that commingling Avalon, where the new Eden is born without time, need, nor meaning, and the shift through epochs now adorns the inimitable cosmos, I dance continuously in the unrepressed glory of our orgy, song, and

redemption. Where the realms of sex and God, libation and liberation, eternity and change, freedom and love, separation and union have been reworked and configured into the new and everlasting model; where madness is as certain as joy, wonder as absolute as wisdom, blasphemy and prayer the same utteration, and peace as prevalent as ecstasy- this is the yogic union, where the spirit settles into the awaiting flesh.

Where the rhythm of eternity soaks in and overtakes the mitigations of circumstance, and the neverending Self becomes the ever thankful recipient of its own benevolent creation. Here I linger in the warm and tonic recesses, where the flicker fades to a gentle hum, the organs grind to a sigh, and all those who belong to me will ever know they are welcome in the place I have gone to which is called Home. I am home. Come home.

It is a place where everything is consciousness, and there is no inside looking out, for there is only attention; where the self falls into the great abyss of nothingness, and yet Being remains complete. It is a stillness without walls, where life blows through you, and you are a gust.

As if through a window you look out onto the world from a house, and indeed there is a window, but ...there is no house, there is only one wall, and no roof, and everything flows over and around that wall, so there is neither inside nor out; in fact, there is not even one wall, only a window, and there isn't even that, only a place which moves in the wind, and is the wind, blowing and being blown, with nothing to block or prevent it, and nothing which might enclose it, or hold it, or make it say 'I'.

Oh, let me tell you- when God's great eyes are finally inside of you, then shall you be still.

In that austere event- when the self is only 'I', or even less than that, perhaps as nothing- it is then that I become the all, and more than the all, and continually more and more than that.

For there is only one soul, and not two, and our love is its love, our hate is its hate, and our life is it living. It is us- we are it. So there is nothing left to do.

You enter the presence through the absence, and the absence through the present. The spirit becomes the space within the flesh, and the flesh becomes the space within the spirit. The union is harmonized, separation evaporates, and the distinctness of two become an intermingled one. Non-being enters being without a ripple, effect, desire, or repulsion.

To be in Tao is to be the non-reactive self, ever aware within the reactive panoply.

As I penetrate the empty fullness with my essence unrestricted by the form, flowing out from, into, and through all that is, I merge with and become that which becomes me, as a dye released into a tank colors the entire water, and I influence and am influenced in the vast space in which all that is, and I, soften into one.

It is here that the indifference of my eternity heals the wounds caused in the separative calamity of our unfoldment. It is here that the molecular substratum of our sublime continuity shifts and shapes the new form into being. It is here that I and you express ourselves through the complete exhaustion of the cosmos, infiltrating without force the fluid pattern with our oceanic lives.

It is here that Eros and Agape shed dissimilarities, here where the hard parts become supple, here where the orgiastic union of spirit and soul climax without end in the blend of distinct frequencies harmonized into the rapture of Avalon; where all difference and effort end, and only the dynamic self-perpetuating dance of ecstatic co-creation pours itself out, through, and into all that it is. It is here that we come to the wholeness of our sexless, hermaphroditic universe, and our eternal lives reclaim their evanescent throne.

It is this quiet dominion, where King and Queen bathe in the mixing waters of their volatile song, where all is birthed without hindrance, through that uncreated epicenter, generating the expansive home in which all worlds unite, and all realms belong.

It is this subtle union, this effortless penetration, this ubiquitous pouring of the sublime self into the rigid world which brings the leavening quicksilver of spirit to the awaiting womb of flesh, and the hard knot of wingless matter is freed through its dissolution into the rootless wind of Self. All is in Tao. All has become fixed, fluid, fecund, and free. And the universe is won.

You see, as the vortex of being accelerated, and the angels gathered to fly, I leapt off into the whirlwind and ...I became the wind. I did not weave this integral, complex fabric of being, nor did I unstitch it, I merely blended into patternlessness, became contiguous in the realm of all happenings, and then moved freely amongst its fibers. It was so bloody easy- I simply melted into the sublime.

Yea indeed, discordant frequencies converge in the chaos, and a wholly new harmonious sound can be heard. For in the end it is not so much about giving up the ghost, but of giving yourself up, and becoming a ghost.

Like the ash from a cigarette which holds its form after the burn, but has no form, and is dispersed away in the slightest of breezes, I was not swept into the sea, but merely washed away like a stain of blood upon the earth. I dissolved into the tide.

Be it salvation or destruction, of that I am not sure. In the end it seems there is no valuable difference. In fact, there was little holy or unholy about my destined ungluing, I simply melted into a solution of forgetfulness and completely lost myself.

A window, that's all I truly am, and not even that; I did not, as I had romantically hoped, see through myself to the great beyond- *It* saw through me.

Either and every way, the little drop exploded in the storm, and then there was no more lightning, thunder, nor rain, only the great sea of something free.

This is the absence which brings the great redemption.

Find your true nature, and the world will fall through you, back into the Great Love. Then into everyone's eyes in which you look, you will see only your own, and then it is as if you don't even exist, for God will look through you onto what God has made and ...even God will not understand it.

Then it is that you shall unknow in the midst of knowing, and know in the midst of the unknown. You will be nobody, and everybody, and your finitude shall be infinite. And in that holy, common, non-existent space between our two unseparate worlds, you and I shall dwell without dwelling, rest without stopping, and move without going on.

That is when what goes in is the same as what comes out- and 'I' is the meeting point. That is when I am neither inside nor out, but am the spaceless infinity between them; neither ego nor other, and yet both.

Thus there is no division where neither inside nor out exists for they exist as the One; duality unseparates itself and incompleteness reconciles the opposites into completeness, because whether *It* comes out of you, or goes in, you are still included. You are none of it, and you are all of it.

Yea, in the gap between the receiver of what goes in, and the producer of what goes out, lays the infinite nothingness in which ...I AM.

When I hold onto nothing, and let myself fall away from care and effort, easing into the hopeless surrender of my own omnipotence, that is when the self I pursue falls helplessly back into me from the vacuum of my ambitionless void. Everything becomes mine because I become everything.

It all ends and begins in such stillness. All of life emerges from, and dwells there. God does not see you, or me, or any others; God does not see many, God sees One. When the edge collapses the center grows, the hairy beast sprouts feathers, the feathers become flames, and the fire turns the chaff into manna.

It is a manic dawn which breaks in and rolls over and upon you. It is a glee and tremor which catapults you away to the here which is nowhere. No more repentance. No more concern. No more assurance. No more to learn. 'Now' has taken over and devoured you. And you have devoured now. Like the famed Uroboros, with the head of time eating the tail of space, engulfing itself to nility, and from that zero all infinities are born.

In that flagrant summation, from the stillness which does not accomplish, I welcomed myself without genius, and I remembered the Self without guise.

In the choiceless calm of uncertainty, I stopped without stopping, and forged on without moving an inch.

In the midst of being I forgot being, in the midst of life I forgot life, in the midst of myself I forgot... me. And so, through the delirium and sin of our earthly predicament, I fell, rose up, walked on, forgot and ...was innocent again.

As the specious forms dwindled in the new light of the day, I stood again before myself.

In the fallen throes of our august conundrums, the ebb and flood of enstasy and ecstasy merged wantonly at the center of my absent circumference, and I spun helplessly about until I was lost in the heart of the vacuum; I vaporized behind the sight I was seeing. Oh, I did not succumb to the fabric surrounding our great mystery ...I succumbed to the Mystery itself; I soaked right into the whole damned mess of it, and then I was no longer.

In that ubiquitous realm, void, or feeling ...I AM! In the coy equanimity of no gain, growth, nor loss ...I AM! Before the mirrorless mirror of my existent non-existence ...I AM!

Yes, yes, I know- this seems like hardly a cherished denouement. Yet there, in the tempests of unreason, there in the desertion of all hope, there, in the ethereal dance of emancipation and of loss, with neither volition, idea, nor rule ...I finished, but not at the finish; I walked on without walking; I ended, and …I did not end.

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Epilogue

There was a period in my life when I often said that I would refuse to come back to this world- that I would do everything within my power to finish with my karma and duties in this life, and be done with this plane for good. I refused to come back unless things changed drastically, because I had seen enough of mankind's sorrows, vanities, errors, petty pursuits, and worthless creations, and I had endured the misunderstandings, the incorrigible immaturity, the noise, pollution, desecration, false theories, pathos, and joyless joys. And, having seen society for what it was- a madhouse run by somnambulistic schoolchildren- there was nothing left to do but turn away with an accepting scorn, forget the world and its contortions, and sink back into myself, into the spirit, and the earth, and then fly away to another world, and let the mayhem continue on without me.

As I said, I was going to refuse to come back. But then, I thought, if I had to come back, I would be certain to return only as a trickster, like the great Cosmic Raven of the Pacific Northwest. And I would sunder mankind's world into ruins, and I would do it all with play and laughter.

Oh, the cataclysms would begin very subtly, with unnatural creations such as elevators and escalators suddenly becoming faulty, and so everyone who lived above the earth would have to haul their own flesh above it. But then the stairs would begin to crumble, slowly, ever slowly. No one would be hurt, not by me anyways. I am no murderer. But eventually all buildings higher than one floor would have to be abandoned, and these would begin disintegrating back into nothingness. Then the world's fuel supply would end abruptly. No more fuel. Nothing. Dams would begin to crack and then burst. No one would die. There would be plenty of time. Electricity would become impossible. Movement would be slowed to a governable pace. Mankind would have to return to the substratum of their own abilities, to the earth, and to prayer. And I would be laughing as the hordes roamed about in bewildered disbelief. I would screech with delight at the deluge of pitiful tears streaming down from mankind onto the wounded earth. And when it was done, and all was laid bare, and I had roared in ecstasy over humanity's gnashings, that is when I would swoop down like the great Thunderbird of old, and I would take humanity in my mighty talons, and for no better reason than the thrill and the joy, I would teach my new found fledglings how to rise up and fly.

But that is mere speculation. The reason I had desired to never return was somewhat complicated, but runs like this.

Firstly, there was a time in my life when nothing was easier than to fall in love, and falling is an apt expression. I have fallen in love so many times, with so many people- women and men alike- that often I did not even recognize that it was happening, for it was an aspect of my sympathetic nervous system, like my heart beating, or lungs breathing, it happened of its own accord, the moment my soul received another's true nature. And yet, secondly, and paradoxically, I had great distaste for society, and so I was falling love with individuals, and yet despising the herd. And for this reason have I loved who I did not judge, and judged who I did not love, for such dispositions within me are mutually exclusive. And as much as I have, with love, allowed others refuge in my spirit, so also have I driven them off with judgment, for that is all that is required to divide me from another; when judgment lies hidden behind the veils of the cornea, knowingly or not, then it is the winter of all souls caught within my separative gaze, and I hover at the apogee of the Antarctic heart, which may walk intimately amongst many others, but lives eternally without siblings, which is a fate worse than that suffered by the denizens of Dante's *Inferno*.

But then I realized that I disliked humanity mostly because I expected *it* to give me something, which was impossible, because that something I could only find myself, *within* myself. And so I lost a large part of my contempt for the crowd when I recognized that the masses could do nothing for me; that even if they gave their all they could not budge the ingot from its roost upon my back. And thus I began to be slightly amused by my fellow man, rather than slightly nauseated, knowing that we were now wholly independent of each other, and removed by a distance greater than the earth to the moon. A recognition which, although it gave me great loneliness at the time, also brought great peace, and a new sense of liberation, because now instead of thinking about how to fix the world, I was only responsible for fixing myself.

And so I realized that to condemn humanity was like criticizing a blind man for his inability to see. And who was I to pass judgment upon others anyway? Who indeed? I was nobody, claiming to have vision, which I didn't have, for in the last analysis I had only perspective. One perspective.

In fact it was my judgment against others which created much of my pain to begin with. And I had to accept that my reality was a limited reality among all others which compose the whole, and that if I accepted others' lives, humbly accepted them, then I would begin to see my own limitations and uniqueness in an even more profound degree. For an orchestra is composed of many different instruments, and each must play their own tune if the music is to be complete. And it is the bricks which build the castle, not the castle which builds the bricks. And we ...we are but intentional partitions in the sidewalk, making the Way divided ...and complete.

And so, despite the perils of love, eventually I had to bravely re-open my heart, and learn again to see my brother in every man, and my sister in every woman, and so to love each person as I have loved these two.

This learning, it seems to me, is the quintessential rite of passage of the heart, for once we have loved, then we have lost ourselves into the whole, and then there is neither love, nor hate, nor struggle, there is only Life.

I am reminded here of a drunken street fellow I met in Honolulu one winter. He was panhandling outside of a store, and beside him was his older

buddy who was in a wheelchair. I had come to the tortured tangle of the city only to purchase a flight to another island, and was trying to make a quick escape, but the hobo hounded me, and, after brushing him off at first, he and I fell into a gentle parlance while I was waiting for my bus to the airport. After a few minutes the bus was in our view and slowing down to stop and pick me up. I was about to part from the outcasts, so I bade them farewell, somewhat perfunctorily, saying "Take care of yourselves", to which one of them responded "We are not selves any more." This made me stop, and turn back and inquire "Then what are you?" to which he rejoined "Brothers and sisters."

Brothers and sisters. They had made it. They had realized that no one can separate their self from the suffering of the world, because separation is the suffering of the world. They had become members of the whole human family, had lost all desire or need to have more than any other, or to be greater than another, or to control, or impede someone else, and had descended, willingly or not, into the substratum of the common soul where all people are siblings. For in the end there is only one rule, one admonishment, one caveat in order to be considered fully human, and that is, of course, the golden rule of love.

I realized then the necessity of this earthly siblinghood- which Christ had understood so well- and how it is essential that we must see our brother in every man, and our sister in every woman. For the life of siblinghood is the love of all. And so to truly live- to be Life- is, in the end ...to be the miracle of love itself.

And this miracle is only possible because all life is one life; because we are all one flowing, evolving soul. One soul. All of us; we are dreamed of inside the same Dream, and until the timeless tide ebbs again in our favor, we are fragmented, yet we are One.

Anyone who sees this completely will never hate again, but only love. Indeed, anyone who has love inside of them has few lessons more to learn in life- for they are Life itself.

Love is the absence of separation, and is beyond 'other'. To go beyond other is to go beyond 'me', to unite the opposites of inside and out. Love is that bond which redeems the flesh, for it shatters the vessel of separation, and lets the spirit flow through all.

And so to bring Heaven down to Earth requires abiding by the one law of Heaven, which is Love. Though this is not an imposed law, per se, because Love, by its very nature, *is* Heaven, and therefore those who love are in Heaven, and those who do not, are not.

And yet to come to this Love is both the hardest, and the easiest thing in the world, for to be love is only possible by being ...ourselves. For by being our true selves, with no lie, cunning, denial, separation, nor guilt within us, then nothing is left to prevent the love called God from descending into and becoming us. Nothing.

And for this reason it is possible to leave this plane only after we have loved all humanity, for in the living moment of love we cross over from the death called separation into the life of Living Oneness.

And so, if one day you have come, as we all must come, to weep scalding tears for the loneliness and misery of the whole world- if you can take the entire suffering and lostness of mankind into you, and if you can hold it,

comfort it, and then release it- then the trial of the heart is over, and you can go on your own way. Once you have added your link into the chain which holds Heaven and Earth together, then you are free to go.

For when you are finished with the rest of it, you suddenly realize what love is, and how and why it is the only thing that matters, and the only thing that is real, and the only thing that will save you. And so you stop caring for anything else, and you begin to love, and your walls come down.

And you are saved.

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"Go, love without the help of anything on earth."
William Blake

Book III

OM, baby!

a pilgrimage to the eternal self

To the living spirit of Jesus, the Christ.
Alive and well, strong and resolute, loving and defiant.
I salute you.

"My faith is the greatest of faiths and the least of faiths,
Enclosing worship ancient and modern and all between ancient and modern,
Believing I shall come again upon the earth after five thousand years,
Waiting responses from oracles, honoring the gods, saluting the sun,
Making a fetish of the first rock or stump, powowing with sticks in the circle of obis,
Helping the llama or brahmin as he trims the lamps of the idols,
Dancing yet through the streets in a phallic procession, rapt and austere in the woods a gymnosophist,
Drinking mead from the skull-cap, to Shastas and Vedas admirant, minding the Koran,
Walking the teokallis, spotted with gore from the stone and knife, beating the serpent-skin drum,
Accepting the Gospels, accepting him that was crucified, knowing assuredly that he is divine,
To the mass kneeling or the puritan's prayer rising, or sitting patiently in a pew,
Ranting and frothing in my insane crisis, or waiting dead-like till my spirit arouses me,
Looking forth on pavement and land, or outside of pavement and land,
Belonging to the winders of the circuit of circuits.

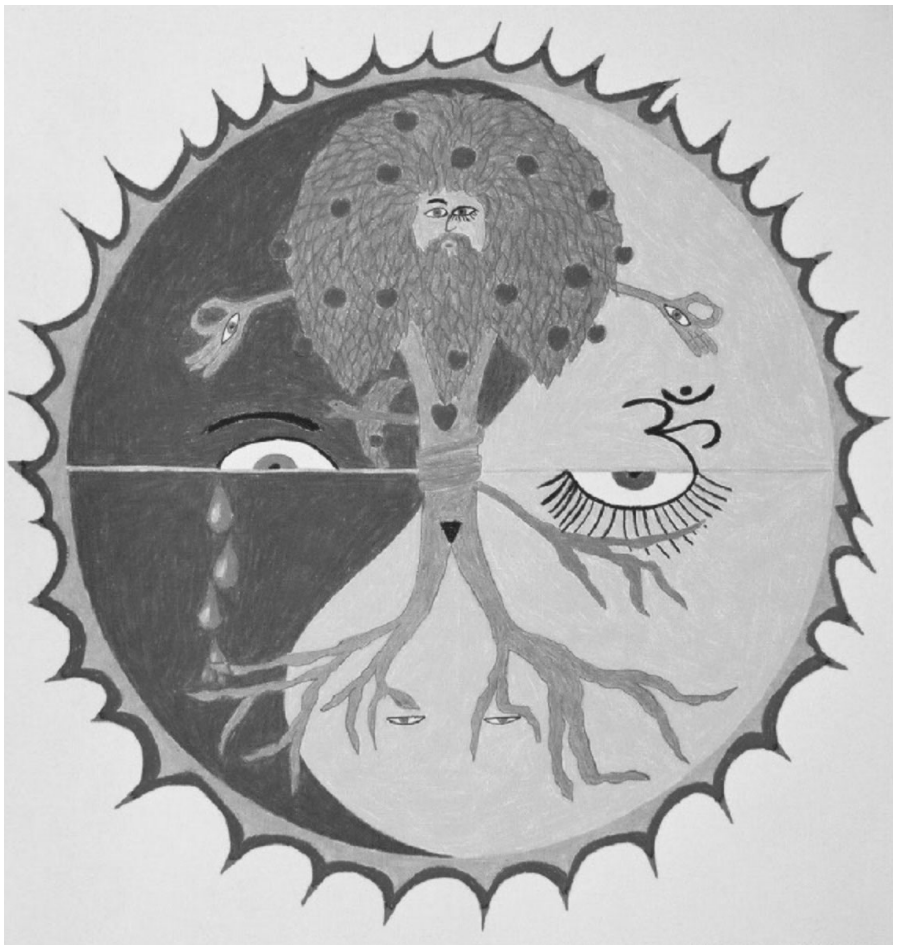
One of that centripetal and centrifugal gang I turn and talk like a man leaving charges before a journey.

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world…

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you."
Walt Whitman



THE TREE OF LIFE
mandala by the author

Part I
TRANSFORMATION

"Come to the edge," he said.
They said, "We are afraid."
"Come to the edge," he said.
They came, he pushed them…
And they flew.
Appolinaire

chapter one

There is no man or woman who walks upon this crazy earth who is not a privileged pilgrim on a fantastic journey to the temple of their own immortal soul. There is no life cast upon the wild shores of this mysterious world which does not belong intimately to the fabric and fantasy sewn inexorably into the all. There is no separate individual who is not therefore part and parcel with the whole. For the all is without division, without futility, and within us all. We are the all that is the all. There is nothing but the everything that we are. For we are one. Amen.

Our journey takes us from our personal myth and mystery, on to the Great Myth and Great Mystery. Our path leads from our separate body to the One Great Body.

It is a hallowed and never ending journey to this oneness that ends as it began- in confusion; a confusion which is both the substratum of life and the very goal of life which has no end. For a goal which can be completed is of little value to the eternal Self.

In this way existence is quite like a fractal; the more we go into it, the more it expands, the more patterns emerge from within other patterns, universes emerge from the smallest iota, solving one problem often creates many others, coming to one realization uncovers multiple enigmas, attaining one peak reveals a higher mountain range behind it, and the threads of the overself paradoxically cover and yet also reveal the limitlessness of the magnificent cosmic carpet running out ineffably before us.

Nothing ever finishes. Impermanence is everlasting. Through the temporal we find the eternal, and through the eternal we find the now.

The journey never ends, it merely changes direction. Eternity spills into us from without, and pours out of us from within, and we are the open, ephemeral gate through which the divided waters of heaven and earth mix into the roaring confluence of immortal streams. And yet we are the calm depths beneath the crashing surf as well. We are the stillness behind the fabulous change.

Life is thus an ongoing banquet of possibilities, implausibilities, challenges, miracles, boredom, distress, lunacy, euphoria, awe, and affirmations. And the show will go on and on and on, and until an individual realizes this predicament of eternity, he or she will continue to pursue a goal whose reward is only another challenge, which is why it is important to love your soul, because nothing suffers more from a lie than the soul. And the immortal soul, trapped within the ephemeral show, will suffer from the lie of time worst of all.

I should know, for I have drunk the blood of woundedness and loss, and I have raged against the folly of our incorrigible predicament. And I have gnashed and wailed before the portal of infinity. But I have done this because of growing pains I did not know were there, for I had covered them over with the illusion of tomorrow; I had entertained the idea that there was a splendid reward waiting somewhere in the future. But then I realized that there was no such thing as a future except within the lie of time; outside of time there is only eternity, which is what we call *now*. And so *now* it is my time to shout the roar of immortal glory, instead of wailing the tears of time. It is now my non-time to rip

the world open with a mind that cannot understand what comes through it to rip the world open. This is the mystery of now. This is my inspiration.

It is my inspiration because I have dwelled within the paradigm of time and of our erroneous separation for a lengthy duration, but while drowning in the depths of such an ensconcing sea I unexpectedly found that I had learned to breathe under water. Which is to say, I had discovered inspiration.

I know now that all of my compulsions have been the outcome of my primary addiction- the need for inspiration. Inspiration is my drug. Such things as spirituality, booze, travel, psychedelics, contemplation, music, dance, laughter, wilderness, and ribaldry- these have simply been the different forms of the drug of inspiration for which I have had great need in this confounding life. I could not live without being inspired, be it from beauty, wonder, intoxication, love, God, adventure, merriment, or profundity. And that means I have been an addict to perhaps the most relentless addiction of them all, because any moment I was not soaking in the thick tremor of inspiration was but an agony waiting to be relieved. And relieve it I did.

Oh, did I relieve it. I went mad with anguish and euphoria. I tramped and wandered and roamed this magnificent earth. I drank and smoked and ingested the bounty of the earth's intoxicants. I studied and scoured and devoured this inexorable mystery into which I was born. I laughed and wept and played and roared at the glory and gore of this whole mad show. I walked away and came back again. I ran away and returned. I shouted with rage and bellowed with praise. I fought with fists and made love with wild abandon. I sought inspiration in the guts, the heart, the spirit, and in the bowels of our cosmic corpulescence. And whether it was right or wrong no longer matters, for I could have done no other. I could not live without inspiration. I knew this, and I resigned. Inspiration would be my oxygen.

And yet all the jangle and boom which resounded from my feverish endeavors were themselves but aspects of only one half of my true nature. The other half was stillness. Absolute stillness. And it was not until that stillness devoid of opposites arose within me did I truly realize my inexorable addiction. It was not until I blew apart in a subtle super-nova caused by the coalescence of all I had endured, that I then merged into the all from which I had been sucking inspiration.

It was from this apocalyptic transformation that I became still. But even as the peace and equanimity of the limitless void dissolved and became me, and I became that oxygen I once so feverishly inhaled, still did I look out from the eternal harbor of the eternal self. And with a subtle grin of excitement I learned to settle comfortably back into the flesh, knowing that no word describes this inspired life of action and peace better than *Hallelujah*!

Passion and dispassion now merge within me as if I am at rest amidst an apocalypse. I am at the still point, and I am in the maelstrom. I am calm, and I am exploding. I am full of faith, and I am wild with mania. I am love, and I am rage.

I am a rock rising inviolably out of the sea, and I am the roaring waves trying to break it.

I am the horror and the caress, the thrashing and the quiescence, the pandemonium and the peace.

I am the link between the one and the many, the perfection and the dross, the glory and the gore, the victory and the loss.

I am an invisible bridge between invisible worlds, a tightrope uniting spirit and flesh, heaven and earth, ennui and ecstasy, becoming and eternity. There is no end. And I am no longer afraid.

I am no longer afraid because I know *now* that fear is the wall which divides the ecstatic-All into agonizing parts. To take down the wall is to become the All. To become the All is to be torn into pieces like Osiris, only to then be re-membered into the eternal, divisionless realm of Love.

I am no longer afraid. And it is for this inextinguishable reason that like a madman with an unquenchable song in his tremulous heart do I now sing without shame for the glory. *Om, baby!*

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two

Though words such as these are mere blind tremblings shouted into the distance as an admittance of impossible clarity, I nevertheless seek in my own imperfect way to share my journey without intending to create a map for others to follow. For there is no map, there is only a journey, a terrible and brilliant sojourn through the inexplicable flesh.

It is a journey fraught with confusion and fusion, an unavoidable undertaking beyond all comprehension and coherence.

It is a journey without certainty or plan. And yet the soul somehow knows its own way, if only one learns to trust and follow. To follow the soul is to realize that there is naught but a single question which looms at all crossroads, and that is- "Which way leads towards my greater perfection." There is no choice nor deliberation in the dark and confusing path of life, there is merely an ultimatum. For when the soul which knows the way lays down the gauntlet and points towards the dark abyss towards which we must wander, the only decision which remains is whether we begin our inner voyage now or later, for inevitably it is thither we must go.

We must go, so that we may then return.

And so, like the pendulous cosmogenesis of a lesser Brahma- who, it is said, exhales the universe for thousands of years, and then inhales it again until it dissolves back into Himself where it enters into the primal, unqualified state thousands of years later- did I inhale and absorb the world for the first thirty-seven years of my life. But then a reversal occurred, and I turned about and changed direction. In that dramatic shift I became no longer a microcosmic speck of the universe plodding the occidental highway, instead I had become a macrocosmic vehicle, helping to carry the universe along on its neverending course.

I had turned about, my journey had shifted from west to east, from coagulation to expansion, and only then did I realize that to cease walking in a

singular direction, is to become all directions.

This metamorphosis began during the night of my thirty-seventh birthday. That night I dreamt a dream in which a man was being strung upon a cross and crucified, but just before he was about to die, the nails which had been driven through his wrists into the cross suddenly gave way and he came plummeting back down to earth. At this point in the dream an intense bright light took over, and a woman's voice spoke, saying "Now we are going to study the inner light, the *om*". And I awoke.

The message of the dream was clear to me instantly: I had completed my journey along the path of the western way, and now my soul had turned about and was heading eastward.

Without a doubt this was a harbinger of all that was to follow over the next couple of years, for in a single moment I had somehow spun metaphysically about, and was now headed the other way. Like a ship which sails out into the uncharted sea for a great duration, but then in an instant turns about and points towards its home port, I was no different than I had been the evening before. Only now I was headed home.[49]

I was now charting a course away from the perils of multiplicity and the mundane, and was bound for the great void of the eternal self wherein lies that peace which can come only after a long, challenging journey comes to completion beneath a beneficent constellation. And from there the soul charts a different course, into different waters, out of the raging northern seas, and into the placid waters of the One. This is when the wayfarer, lost for so many years in the foreign realms of being, returns again to the beginningless home, to that great cosmic peace which is the *om*ega from which, and towards which, all similar spirits have roamed.

I had been tangled in the occidental drama for many years preceding this shift, and had gone as far as I could go within that limited theater. And so I had to transform, as we all must transform, since change is the nature of the manifest, and therefore to not transform in this life is to have to leave this life and once again take on the perils of re-entry into another life through another womb, so as to become another form which can then try again to transform. What we call death is simply an inability to transform. What we call life *is* transformation.

In fact soon after my shift eastward began I had another dream in which I was told that the ego kills a person if it thinks he or she cannot, or will not, evolve further in this life. The ego in this case is not our identity, but rather our *daemon*, which is the invisible force within us which compels us towards our highest destiny. The *daemon* is necessary and ruthless, often requiring from us an ongoing inner metamorphosis. For if a snake cannot or will not shed its skin it must die from the claustrophobic strangulation which comes from its own inability to transform.

In this case our worst enemy is our own self, and the only way to defeat the inner enemy is to keep growing, keep changing, keep expanding and shifting into the next stage.

It is impossible to get away from such a mandate, because you *are* the mandate. There is no chance of escape from the law of transformation. Change

or leave, that is the law. And so you have to keep dying and being born again in life, if you want to avoid being murdered by your own inner God.

As I said, I had gone as far as I could go along the occidental highway. I came to the end of the road and a great chasm opened up before me. As I stood there, teetering on the precipice, not knowing how to go onward, the ego- my inner *daemon*- began nudging me from behind, and I was left with only two options- to fall into the space and be killed, or to die into and *become* the space.

I was pushed but I did not fall. Though neither did I fly. I dissolved. And in that dissolution I expanded beyond the chasm laid out before me.

Until such an inner expansion as this occurs, an individual is confined within the worldly paradigm of existence. There is no way out, and there is not supposed to be a way out. Life in this world is an alchemical vessel- an enclosed laboratory wherein newly created entities can be tried and tested- and it is only by confining the individual's drama within a limited paradigm that the greater forces can choreograph the necessary situations and events which manifest transformations within the soul. It is for this reason that life in the world feels often so wretchedly painful and claustrophobic- because it is. Without such limitation the soul would not evolve into the perfection of which it is capable; just as a fruit tree must be pruned so as to bear the most fruit possible, so too the individual must be spiritually 'cultivated' by the cosmic gardener, so as to bring to earth the greatest bounty possible. However, after having arrived at one's furthest paradigmatic actuality, the soul can no longer find room to grow within the worldly paradigm. That is when the inner dissolution, expansion, and liberation occur. That is when the walls of this realm which had in the past been confining the individual, now become diaphanous and permeable membranes through which the soul can depart and return, at will. The expanded soul can now deliver its new macrocosmic existence into the field of the microcosm. In the words of the Buddhists, the soul has gone from being a *Hinayana*, a lesser vehicle, to a *Mahayana*, a greater vehicle. The cosmos has accomplished its intent. The imprisoned soul has been liberated. And through this individual expansion the entire interconnected universe has grown.

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three

The subtle chapters of this expansive transformation which I underwent were displayed outwardly through the drama of my worldly existence; I was guided to move through my inner change by being guided to move through the outer world as a mirror to my subtle metamorphosis. That is, I was guided to go on an overseas 'trip', which is a word used aptly both for the call of our inner life, and for our outer journeys in the world, for they are both 'trips'. Thus the drama of the individual is lived through as if in a dream, where the theater of life on earth is the forum in which the microcosmic self grows to its conscious, macrocosmic stature, and awakens beyond the confines of this paradigm. That is when one is liberated, so to speak.

My trip from the microcosm to the macrocosm, from the occident to the orient, began in the occidental land of my ancestors, in the place from which the heart of my western bloodline had originated- Europe.

On this trip I was accompanied, as per usual, by my *soror*[50]. We began our journey on the westernmost outpost of the ancient western world, arriving on the Dingle Peninsula, west coast Ireland, on a drizzly, cool October afternoon. We had gone there because we had been guided to do so. That is all we knew. And so we came as pilgrims who are called to a remote destination for unknown reasons must always come- we came to stay indefinitely. Which is to say, we came to stay until it was time for us to leave. When that was to be we had no idea.

This type of open-ended attitude is a singular rule of thumb for following the call of the spirit; to follow such a call requires the surrender of all expectations and desires until the unknown mission is completed.

In the past I had gone to many places for reasons which were unknown to me until I arrived there. I often made these journeys because I felt intuitively called, or I had a powerful dream suggesting that I undertake the expedition. However, never before had I been called to such a beautiful, comforting, and pleasant place as Dingle Town.

Having been directed to venture to such a place, I cannot help but solemnly envision the Jesuits and missionaries of old, who were sent or called out to dark, foreboding, insect-infested, primordial places on earth such as the Congo Basin, the Upper Amazon, Vanuatu, the Pribilof Islands, northern Canada, or any similar places where the cost of following one's spiritual vocation was never less than loneliness, discomfort, and endless struggle, and often times the price was a great deal more. I think of those stoic emissaries, boiled alive or beheaded for their vocation, and I thank the God within me who, knowing my fragile and stubborn disposition, had the wisdom, compassion, and foresight to send me off to Dingle.

And what a place Dingle is. A town thick with beautifully painted ancient buildings, surrounded by rolling green hills on one side, and the great expanse of the Atlantic on the other. To walk around this quaint town and its neolithic vicinity, with the scent of peat fires flooding through the air, is to be transported back into a time when the whole of one's world was no greater than as far as the eye could see. However, having said this, as far as the eye can see, in Dingle, is farther than the eye can see from many other places on the globe.

Upon taking a brief, one hour hike up one of the bald hills behind the town, and attaining a bit of altitude, a massive panorama opens up, as the northern portion of the peninsula- the Dingle Diamond, as it is referred to in esoteric yarn- displays its bucolic majesty, ancient beehive huts, and gentle country lanes, while the southern view takes in the fantastic breadth of the ring of Kerry, which runs rollicking out to sea and there guides one's sight to the distant, otherworldly Skelig Rocks, the most impressive sight of yearning imaginable for anyone containing even a fragment of a hermit within them.

I have a strong hermit within me, one which has had its fair share of my life so far, but I also have an unbridled reveler. Therefore Dingle Town and its environs was a perfect arena for the operation of both of these inner aspects of myself, as the entire peninsula was historically a center for meditative monks,

but is now, paradoxically, a center of raucous ribaldry. Ebb and flow. Yin and yang.

It was into this contemporary social milieu- and not the archaic act of omphaloskesis- which my *soror* and I found ourselves joyfully immersed during our stay on that wonderful peninsula. After all, only a fool would sit alone in a cold, stone room, so as to face the inner demons which had been unwittingly brought to life through the very act of denying oneself some healthy companionship, Guinness, and song, amongst his brethren. And, having been one such repressed, self-mortifier in the past, I say now, better indeed it is to be a sinner than a fool.

With that bit of puerile wisdom supporting our propensities, my *soror* and I launched ourselves into the town every evening, making our way into one or another of the ancient pubs which dot the illustrious area, so as to imbibe a bit of the dark nectar, and be charmed by a fiddle or two.

It could be argued that pub life in Ireland is life as it is meant to be. All other outward actions and events are but interludes or preliminary measures which must unfortunately be undertaken so as to sustain a life which then has the privilege to enter the pub and be fulfilled. For it is here, in the Irish pub, that the spirit and soul, the heart and the mind, the guts and the gonads, the viscera and the vulvas, are all welcome and exercised. It is here that merriment is exalted as the divine characteristic which it truly is. It is here that camaraderie and community, as well as introspection and isolation are noncontradictory events in the holistic panorama of humanity. It is here, on the westernmost outpost of the occidental drama, that humanity has finally arrived at the zenith of its groaning, microcosmic loneliness, and then turned that loneliness into brotherhood and song.

In the past I had revived my spirit many times in Irish pubs, and had been regularly uplifted and transported into ecstasy and enchantment by the goings on therein. However, before spending my voice on overzealous paeans, I regretfully exclaim that, as one who is incorrigibly dissatisfied with the imperfections of humanity's efforts, I have found there to be a large thorn growing chronically out of the Celtic rose that is Irish pub life; it is a thorn which has poked and prodded me and let my psychic blood out onto the stone floor of not a few said establishments; it is a thorn which invites disquiet into the seemingly harmonious goings-on within the fervor of the pub, for in the midst of such music and merry-making …there is no dancing. That is the thorn. For where there is no dancing, there is no heart. And where there is no heart there is only mind. And where there is only mind the cold grimace of stasis and objectivity spill out through the wailing fissures of death and cremate the soul.

Anyone who has sat in on traditional Irish music sessions might encounter the same pain of being elevated ecstatically by such uplifting, soul-grabbing music, amidst a throng of others who are feeling the same inspiring pulse, and yet not a single person is dancing. There is no dancing in Irish pubs. It is unbelievable. A cultural catastrophe. How an entire country, so blessed with the gift and heart for music, can separate their bodies from the exalted rhythm, is beyond me. It is infuriating. To listen to inspired music is one thing, but to dance to it is another enterprise altogether. Listening is of the spirit, but dancing is of

the soul. To listen to music is to become elevated by the music, but to dance to the music is to *become* the music.

No matter. There are those of us who, having been lifted into the empyrean vibration of the Celtic riff, eventually cannot, or will not, remain still.

I had sat through countless, indescribably penetrating music sessions in the past, and I had convivially repressed the thump and shimmer I felt in my legs and feet, so as to prevent them from taking off with my body and plunging me forth into an unproprietous pagan dance. However, there came a time when I found myself powerless to withhold the rushing force of glory from overtaking me.

It came on a night perhaps two weeks after my *soror* and I had arrived on the Dingle. As per usual, in the evening we had made our way into one of the town's establishments, had put back a few pints of the dark and delicious tincture, and then had eased comfortably into the ensuing auditory rapture, as a music session began.

But this night was not like other nights. This was a night when the stultifying chains which the entire Irish culture had bound itself within, and by which I had allowed myself to be held as well, suddenly lost all power of constriction and ability to contain, and I found myself lost to the freedom of the soul that knows no law nor reason nor propriety which might prevent that soul from its truest and most desperate expression.

Bullocks to the letter that killeth. I say: when in Rome forget the Romans and do as thou pleaseth.

What happened on that particular night is that the session started like any other session- the music began, people took thoughtful note of it, and the joy of the Celtic muse flooded joyfully, though without visceral effect, through the atmosphere of the pub. But then the truth revealed itself in a startling display. And that truth came in the form of a woman fiddler who did not play the notes in a solely traditional manner like a verbatim parrot repeating the same old tune over and over again. No, she played music the only way true music can be played. Which is to say, she played from her heart. And my God what a heart she played upon. Let me tell you, the fiddle transformed from the manifest realm of wood and metal, and softened into the ethereal realm where it became the living voice of her resounding inner ventricles, as she soared her way beyond the mainstream, beyond the usual, beyond the practicable, and took that instrument of heaven into the very reaches of her soul and made it sing with a voice that could shatter the moon.

And man was she quick. She was lightning and flesh fused together in an escalating invocation to the grandeur of our divine heritage. She was the spirit of song cascading in a downpour of dexterous mania. She was the held energy of the cosmos suddenly released in a whirling torrent upon the unexpecting pilgrims of the keep. And I… I was done for.

I like to believe that I can dance as fast or faster than any fiddler can play. And I state this delusion not so much out of braggary, but as a challenge; for I will gladly and with great privilege be defeated on the mortal battlefield of the song, if ever I come upon a fiddler who can beat me. And to be sure, at that moment I will be one man who has found victory and defeat in the very same event.

But what happened that night was not a contest, not about speed anyway. If it was, then it was a contest between that heartful woman's violin, and my own equanimity. And yet it was not a contest, it was a massacre. I was destroyed. I was obliterated. There was no battle, no war, no surrender. I lost, instantly. And what I lost was… myself.

As I said, this particular session began like any other session, but it was only too soon apparent- to myself if no one else- that this was no ordinary session. This was revelation. This was the end of what had been and the birth of a wholly new way of being. This was the unchecked, unmitigated, unrehearsed inflammation of the tendons and the heart.

After a few brief moments of trying to hold my own- of trying to sit still and quell the tumult rising within me, and thus affecting a common, controlled enjoyment of the pleasantries of pub life- I came undone. I left my seat, rushed through the throng of idlers, and landed a few feet in front of her majesty. And I danced. My God did I dance. Amongst a crowd who almost instantly became a thundering mob of appreciative spectators, and who instantly accepted my barbarism, and then lifted me further with their hoots, and claps, and screams, and howls, and my fiddler running me up relentlessly into the unleashed reaches, further and further, faster and faster, with no brakes nor bars to hold me, only a flaming fury of unleashed exaltation ensconcing me, as her spirit and song washing into and through me and the notes rising unrelenting, climbing higher and higher and driving me inexorably into an apocalyptic insanity of bliss and insobriety that was born to smash the world in two.

Dancing with abandon, dancing the last dance, the dance that would end in a new beginning, I lost myself into the music until I became a living, manifest expression of the music.

Entering the ecstasy and passion, and breaking through the hold of personhood, I became Nataraja, the Lord of the Dance, an incarnation of Shiva, the destroyer, and I was gripped and wild in the accumulation of all past energies leading to this one emancipative, apocalyptic moment, when the entire history of my lineage and peoples would converge upon the microscopic moment of cosmic transformation where I would rapturously dance out the old rhythm, and rapturously welcome the new.

Dancing Shiva's *tandava*, his dance of destruction, I was destroying myself in an act of agony and celebration. And yet I was creating out of that very destruction. I was dying and being reborn in the same now-moment where Genesis and the Apocalypse meet as one carnal supernova eradicating all that was and creating all that has yet to be.

I danced like a man who had never before danced nor had known of dancing. Or perhaps I danced like a man who had always been dancing all his life, and had never done anything but dance, and yet this was the first time he had become the Lord of the Dance, and so became the dance itself.

I danced the dance my people had been trying to dance for millennia. A dance of agony and ecstasy, a dance of abandon and release. And I danced it.

Without knowing it I danced the dance which destroyed the past so as to reclaim the eternal beginning of now, so as to be that which has not yet been, so as to release my ancestors and become myself, so as to let go of all history,

all thought, all memory, all ties, all links, all familiarity and foundation, and to rise out of the tired old design like a novel pattern obliterating the sky.

I danced without fear, without knowing, without anything that had ever existed in me prior to that dance; no longer the me who was there before the dance that destroyed me, I became something that never had been. I broke through, and became new.

I was dancing the karmic dance of newness, stomping and flailing and swinging about wildly in a triumphant expression of an existence which knows nothing of itself but that it is a glory to be alive. A great glory.

When the tune finally ended I was almost dead. Fortunately I had been resurrected, and so I had just enough life left in me to turn spontaneously towards her majesty on the fiddle, and, bowing with hands together in the traditional *namaste*, I gave due honor to the one who had resurrected me from the grave.

Stumbling back to my seat like Lazarus after the resurrection, I sat through the rest of the session in a convalescent stupor of merriment and exhaustion, and sucked back a few more pints of the holy analgesic.

When the music was finally over and the crowd headed out of the establishment, I went up to the one who had danced me out of myself so as to thank her and give due homage. After our cordial salutations, she introduced herself as Efa, making comment that her name was the Gaelic version of Eve. Of course. I should have known. I had been lifted off the ground by the Mother herself. I had entered into Her rhythm, and had been quickened by the Goddess incarnate. No one else on earth could have done that to me but the Goddess Herself, living through the radiance and roar of one of Her own inspired emanations.

I had danced the dance of my spirit on earth, and I had done so to the vibration and rhythm of the earth Herself.

After years of wandering and wondering why it was that I had come to this maddening world, and what it was that I was supposed to do, I had finally landed in the lap of the living Mother, and had been elevated out of an old story and into the revelation of a new song.

Perhaps this world and life would never reveal the true nature of my existence. Perhaps I would continue to be plagued by uncertainties, discontentment, and disquiet. Perhaps I had come to this confounding earth for many reasons which would remain beyond my knowing. But at least I now knew one of them. I had come to dance. *Om, baby!*

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four

After the exultation came the ennui. I had achieved an inner metamorphosis through an outer experience and now the outer which had spawned the renovation began to pale into a dull shade of torpor. Which is to say that my beloved Ireland no longer exuded a welcoming, inebriating pulse onto

my being. I was no longer smitten with the pubs and cheer and foamy tincture which had so captivated me in the past. No, I had danced that dance and now there was no returning.

Luckily for me, as for all of us, the spirit knows more than the mind can imagine. As such I began to have a series of dreams which were pointing me in another direction, and though I did not understand at first, soon enough my perspicacious subconscious caught on to my inability to grasp its messages, and so that omniscient well of symbolic mystery eventually condescended into the linear realm where all things make sense to blokes like me. That is, in the final dream pushing me onward, a voice stated, with blunt, matter-of-fact, for-those-who-have-ears desperation- "You belong in Amsterdam!"

Ah, but of course, why didn't you say so in the first place?

And so, soon afterward, my *soror* and I began a two-day journey from the land of leprechauns to the netherworld itself, the Netherlands. And oh, what a netherworldy, dreamlike, and twilight-realm Holland *is*.

If you have not yet been to Amsterdam then you have not yet lived amongst progressive humanity. You have instead lived only in a prison amongst despots and barbarians; a prison of obsolete laws, compassionless chains, and archaic ideologies. You might as well still be swimming in the murky depths of a pre-cambrian swamp, waiting for your unknown legs to evolve and carry you out of the mire. For at this time, on this earth, the only country which has raised its head up out of the murky depths is Holland. The only country which is guided by intelligence and care, by the mind *and* the heart, is Holland. The only country which guides its citizens instead of persecuting them, and tolerates human needs, instead of condemning these, is Holland. The rest of the world lives under the oppression of fearful, dimwitted men and women who have neither the creativity nor the foresight to lead their fellow men.

Before I had gone to Amsterdam I despised everything mankind had created en masse. I hated every city I had ever encountered. I distrusted every lawmaker and politician. I saw nothing but stupidity, noise, greed, abuse, and depravity. But by the time I left Amsterdam I had fallen in love with cosmopolitan life. I had become the exuberant participant of a city where tolerance, peace, justice, and enlightenment were its motivating factors. I had walked the most charming cobble-stoned streets, canal sides, and alleyways fronted on each side by idyllic, otherworldly- tall as the people in them- organic buildings. I had ambled along major thoroughfares in the middle of rush hour, enjoying the unbelievable silence found in this city whose citizens ride bicycles and trams instead of clogging their world with automobiles. I had basked in the great consciousness of the gentle and aloof Dutch folk. And I had enjoyed the unbridled freedom of cannabis cafés, hash coffeehouses, and magic mushroom 'smart' shops, as they are so appropriately called.

When I left Amsterdam I left with a sense of gratitude that I had never felt for a metropolis before. And to this day I can feel within myself that cosmic cosmolopolis, so peaceful and inviting to the true nature of humanity, a place that holds its privileged visitors in the loving way that humanity deserves to be embraced.

I will say it again because it must be said- Holland is the only country on earth where wholeness and freedom are promoted. Everywhere else is a

claustrophobic, anachronistic, inhumane prison.

Anyway, enough of my political trip. A few days into our stay in Amsterdam I wandered into a centrally located coffeeshop called *The Baba* to acquire for myself some of the country's finest. After procuring a blessedly rolled reefer of black hash and European tobacco, I settled in upon one of the padded benches amongst the traveling crowd, lit up my cone of Shiva, and began to ease into the vibe. And what a vibe it is.

Having laid to rest the ancient rhythm which I had been carrying in my very DNA up until Dingle, I suddenly found myself open to, and immersed in, the techno, chillout, and lounge music which was thumping through *The Baba*. In fact I tuned into it and became one with this modern form of music almost instantly, which is an odd thing, because I had never paid much attention to electronica and its variations. I had thought this form of music was simply an ephemeral fad running through the younger generation who wasted itself on ecstasy and other chemical stimulants while gathering like a herd of lost sheep in all-night raves. But I suddenly realized that this was not the case at all. I suddenly understood that techno chill, dance, and trance music were generating the very rhythm of the new vibration- oneness. It became apparent to me that all other contemporary forms of music were caught in the web of duality, and therefore were expressions of duality; the duality of lover and loved, of good guy and bad guy, of loss and gain; all rock and roll, country, folk, blues, jazz, rap, and, yes, even celtic music, were bound into and expressing duality. But not techno. Oh no. Techno brings with it a whole new paradigm- the paradigm of absolute union.[51]

I realized then that I had to finish with the old vibration before I could merge with the new. I had to dance duality out of myself like a mad drunkard screaming a final goodbye to his long dead lover. I had to divest myself with violence and anguish from the vibration I had been born into, had grown up with, and of which I had known no alternative until sitting there in *The Baba*, soaked in the breath of Shiva, with this new rhythm, this new feeling pulsing through every cell and molecule of my soul and body.[52]

I knew then that a massive consciousness shift was underway, not only for myself, but for all of modern culture, and one of its prominent expressions was the fluid, penetrating, non-dual vibration of electronica.

As the universe evolves we must all evolve with it. Often this means that the older generation must learn from a younger one. It is in the spirit and openness of youth that new realities emerge most prominently. And therefore it is only by getting rid of all pride of learning and wisdom- neither of which necessarily come with age- that we can look to the younger generations for a clearer vision of the contemporary spirit.

It is only in the recognition that everything is always new that we can depart intelligently from all that has been. All foundations which are built must be fluid and in constant change or else they will have to crumble; only that which is hard can crumble; what is soft can ooze into new forms and new dimensions. It is this supple quality of our eternal nature which allows us to live through incarnations in one lifetime. And it is the supple quality which allows us to take upon the new vibration. To hold onto an image of ourselves or the world

as if these are absolute realities is to carve a graven image of life into the tempestuous ether, which is to face our own destruction.

To become a fluid aspect of the fluid cosmos is to enter the diaphanous, formless realm which exists eternally in the subtle layer running parallel to the manifest. This is to become the dynamic stillness behind the evolving form.

It is only through practiced forgetting which begets unelenting novelty that the image of oneself shatters harmoniously into the ether, and one awakens as the undying awareness whose name is nobody and whose image is nothing.

In that twilight eternity where the shift and pull of humanity twinkles softly around and through the all-permeating Self, we expand into dimensions not exhausted by our pretenses. We become that which is beyond becoming. We arrive at where we always have been. We blossom like flowers formed eternally in the cosmic structure of wonder. We shine like invisible rays cast down upon the dark and tremulous apparitions. We glow like molten energy cascading into the receptive ocean that is also the generative source. We actualize a deathless subtlety which denies the duality of time. We fall away from all that is so as to fall into the archetypical domain. We enter a now that is always beginning and never will end. It is a now that is one. A now that is forever. A now that destroys all that is not now. It is a holocaust of reality which sends the blazing formless wind into form, transfiguring all that is into a viscous cauldron of undivided *isness*. We have crossed the line, and in doing so we have dissolved the line. Eternity has poured into the vessel of time. And all is new. *Om, baby!*

*

five

After numerous days of immersing myself in the peace of Amsterdam and the rhythm at *The Baba*, my *soror* and I decided to partake of a wholly different vibration of newness altogether- psychedelic mushrooms.

Ah, Holland! Unlike in other countries, where insulting, inhuman regulations force one to skulk around like a hunted man in order to purchase and ingest the glorious spore, when in Holland one need only walk into one of the Smart Shops, peacefully peruse their offerings, and then exchange a few euros for some legal soma.

After inspecting the commodities, we decided on the smallest and strongest of all, the magic mushroom of Hawaii, and repaired back to our hotel where we ingested and awaited the apocalypse.

But the apocalypse never came. No inner assault, no psychic hazards, no visitation nor communication from the spirit realm. We were each simply whisked away gently on a carpet of love, and led into the knowledge of our truest, Creator selves.

I say this without being able to explain the experience any further, because to get to the Creator within is to go beyond knowledge and explanation. It is to enter the preconditioned realm where newness is ever happening, and nothing but newness, and all that is has never happened before, and because it has never happened before it is ever created, and nothing but new creation ever

is, nothing is old, nothing has been, nothing but the newness of what has never been *is*. To get to the Creator self is to destroy history, and to destroy time. The Creator knows nothing of the past, for there is no past. History is a myth of the created, and time is a lie. But to go beyond history and time means to destroy your created self, because your created self is composed of history and time. And so to destroy the lie of time and history is to become the Creator of a never ending newness which is the world but does not belong to the world, for newness belongs nowhere. To get to the Creator self means to die eternally so that you can give birth eternally. This is the beginning which never ends, for there is no end, there is only an eternal beginning, and because of this everything has just begun, and therefore there is no cause nor effect nor karma[53] nor rules. There is only that which has never happened before.

Newness evaporates all things. Newness destroys. Newness creates. Newness is. And that is all, and nothing more can be said of it.[54]

In the creator self there is no 'one' truth, no one way to live, no one rule, there is only the ever-new living now, and our ever-new recognition, response, and re-creation in it.

Newness is the ever-occurring orgasm of life. This universe began with an orgasm, continues due to orgasm, and perhaps will end in an orgasm. After all, though the word climax denotes an end; it is this end that is also a beginning; climax leads to birth. So perhaps the beginning of this world, this plane, this realm, this life, began with the climactic orgasm of creation which heralded also its end. Perhaps all of this has been simply the inexorable fallout of the beginning which began the end.

If this is the case, no doubt the unavoidability of the end which is the beginning is the impetus which causes us to seek the beginningless, so as to not be bound into the conditioned creation which will inevitably end only because it began. Yin and yang, so to speak.

To arrive at newness is to go beyond beginning and end, for that which begins is already over, whereas newness is an eternal now.

To become that which has neither beginning nor end is to become an immortal, self-substantial, conscious eternity.[55]

Embalmed in the immaculate newness of all that is, my *soror* and I left our apartment and took a walk along the canals to one of our favorite vantage points. Along the way, amidst the newness of what had never happened before, we fell into a fit a laughter the likes of which could heal the worst woe of anyone suffering from a past that has never happened.

I mean we laughed the eternal laugh. We laughed and wept from laughing. We walked and laughed. We stumbled and laughed. We stopped from an inability to stumble, and we laughed, and laughed, and laughed.

I have heard it said before that laughter is the best medicine, and I can finally confirm this illustrious observation. There is no sickness or sin that can survive an Armageddon of this type of laughter. There is no chance. There is no sorrow or pain that can withstand this level of cosmic laughter. It is impossible. They are mutually exclusive. A laughter like we laughed brings an end to everything that is not laughter. Everything else is destroyed in the bonfire of irrepressible mirth. I understand how the myth of history and the lie of time are laid bare and then vanish altogether through an onslaught of inextinguishable

bliss. And I know how the myth of history and the lie of time begin re-assembling themselves as soon as we stop laughing, and then fall into the false drama where worry and sorrow begin to take root and then choke out the light of laughter altogether.

And so all of life becomes a battle of perspectives, nothing more: to be lugubrious, or to laugh. There is no war in heaven nor on earth that is not fought on this battleground alone, though few of us, if any, know this. Image if you will armies of men attempting to attack each other while falling down in uproarious fits of laughter. War would be impossible. I hope you see my point, and do not assume I am merely being facetious. Oh no. When the universe comes again to one of its pivotal climaxes, the battle will not be fought between two external enemies, clashing in bloodshed and rage, instead it will take place on a subtle, cosmic soul level. And those who fight the good fight within themselves will be the only true victors. They will leave the battlefield of the myth of history and the lie of time. And they will be laughing.[56]

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six

It was not long after our release from all-that-is-not-laughter that my *soror* and I somberly rejoined the realm of time and schedules, and flew back to Vancouver.

Arriving in Canada after our time in Europe was like descending from an otherworldly levity into the thick soup of the lower vibration that *is* North America. On the bus from the airport I had the despairing recognition that the 'new world', as it is so inappropriately called, is still but a cultural colony of Europe, and continues to lag way behind its cultural ancestor; whereas Europe is flying off in fifth gear, speeding forward on a direct course to unity and oneness, North America is chugging along in second, barely making headway against anachronistic realities and political divisions.

It was a troubling awakening for me to arrive back in the place I called home, and feel the sluggish cultural rhythm, and the overbearing psychic clime of the ambient, viscous consciousness residing therein.

I quickly realized the only way to survive the winter in the torpor of Canada without losing all I had gained in Holland was to sequester myself in our little apartment, and become an inner-city monk. I had to hold and become the space which had been effortlessly given to me in Amsterdam. Which is to say, I had to become *om*.

I abandoned almost all societal ties, and spent my days painting, playing music, and meditating in the expansive radiations of the *om*.

In the beginning was the sound, and the sound was *om*. It is the sound of contemplation, the sound of unity, the sound of home. And the sound became manifest, and dwelt amongst me, and became me.

I realized that the music of life, the *om*, is always playing. The only choice is whether to move and dance to it, or to not dance. But actually there is not choice, there is merely an ultimatum- dance or die.

To dance while not dancing is to invoke the music. To be while not-being is to become the *om*.

In many hidden ways we are always seeking the great radiance of the *om*, which is our true nature, whether we know it or not. To be inside the *om* is to unite with the undivided. To be outside of the *om* is to be separated from the all, which is to be crazy.

The *om* is the inner light which radiates the drama. The *om* is where creation and destruction are the same eternal now pulsating event. *Om* is eternally new, eternally *now*, and is always happening. *Om* is thus beyond any experience, but is *also* every experience.

To sit still and empty for lengthy durations, is to become a motionless transformer of the pulsating now, through which the separate threads of form and energy are re-woven, transmuting the dull lead of mundane existence into the psychedelic throb of the living gold, which is One, the *om*.

To be the *om* is to create God out of the elements, which is to know and to be and to contain all aspects of the now singular God. To know no other, but only the dynamic qualities of the Self which is one. To know that Self. To be that Self. To know and to be.

In the nothing self which is Self, there the living *om* generates its own occurrence as all that exists, and does not exist. All duality ends in the ever-now-beginning orgiastic center where creation and destruction are merely an instantaneous newness called the one-flowing change, beyond the division of life and death.

In that *om* space we are glorified in the eternal unmoving stream.

Beyond faith and fear lives the ever-conscious dream-self, forever smiling behind all that is. She within he. He within she. Creation is this fertile union of wholeness; to know and to be; the I and the you, which are one; the not-something which is, and the somethingness which is not. Spirit and flesh. The bride and the bridegroom. Love.

To know and to be one. No me, and no other. One.

In the living *om* beyond division I am stillness and I am change, and there is no difference. I am the space which upholds the form, and I am the form as well. I am home, and I am *the* home. I am eternity.

I am the all because the all is undivided. I am the all because there is nothing but the all, and that all is *om*.

In the *om* I am the primordial and the present. I am the essence and the shape. I am in and of the *om* which is the transparent exaltation of the glory expressing itself. I am that glory *om* which is beyond time and thought, beyond self and other, beyond name and knowing.

I am sitting in the *om* but there is no sitter nor sitting, only the *om* radiating the original vibration of the self prior to its dance into selves. I am the self dancing into self, the *om* making *om* of the world, the world returning to *om*, the fecund mayhem copulating without abortion through the intrepid eructation of the sound that is light that is being.

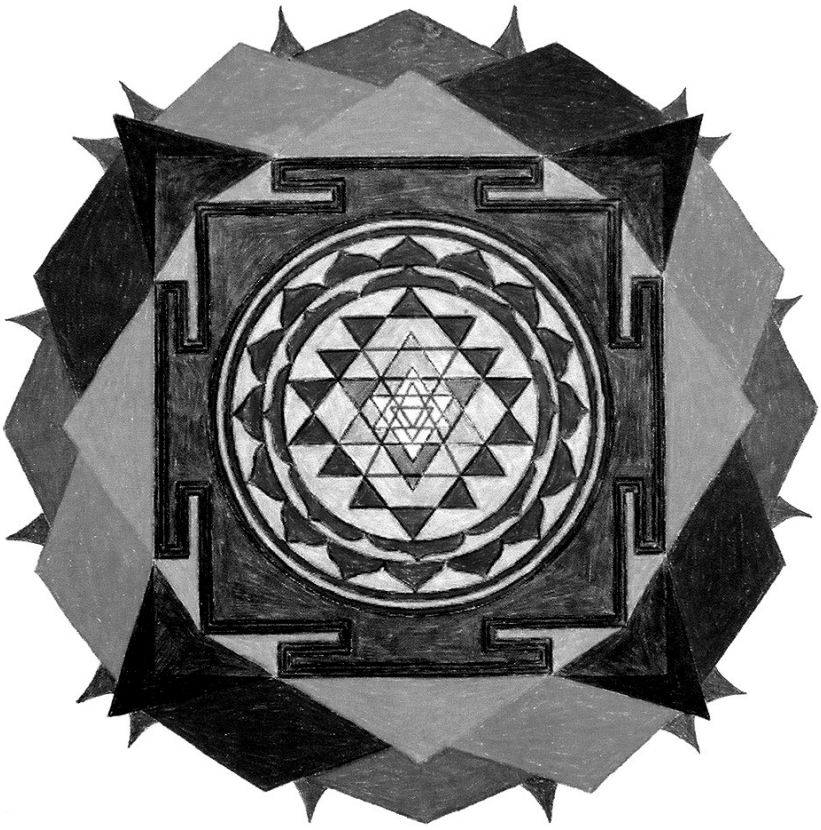
It is the *om* that is I, the *om* that is am, the *om* that begins and remains

after all that is expressed dissipates away from its origin and is swallowed again and excreted as *om*.

In the void that is no void, the sound that is our silence, the eternity that is our now, the life that is our being, we re-sound through the echo of the *om* which does not begin nor end but is the archetypical substratum of the harmony within.

At the quintessence of all thought and action, behind the struggles and perils of all purpose and hope, beyond the tears and the folly, the sorrow and the joy, the coming and going, the inner and the outer, remains the never ending song that births all fragments into the cosmic muck to sink and grow and lift and strive towards what is never far but always beyond every effort to arrive. For to arrive at the *om* is to stop. To stop is to end. To end is to be still. To be still is to enter the void of creation.

In the silence of that living void exists the resounding *om* which begets the universe. And we are that. *Om, baby!*



A Sri Yantra, by the author

The Sri Yantra is the visual expression of the sound of *om*. This pattern is seen in deep contemplation by monks chanting the *om*. It has also been recorded electronically as a pattern which emerges during the sound of *om*. This picture includes personal additions which are not components of a traditional Sri Yantra.

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seven

In that eternal stillness I spent the winter embracing the living *om*. It was perhaps because of this that as springtime arrived I felt drawn to return once again to the home of *om*, Mother India.

And so, after putting things in order over the next couple of months, my *soror* and I booked flights headed for the Motherland, with the intention of staying on the subcontinent from the beginning of August until the middle of October.

All was set in place and the trip was about to begin. However, as my *soror* was also the mother of, at that time, a ten-year old boy, her heart-strings, bound inextricably to her child, were often painfully hard to stretch great distances for any lengthy period of time. In the past she and I had traveled together many times, and had been away from Vancouver, where her son lived with his father, for a couple of months at a time. But it was always a sorrowful and agonizing event for her to depart with me and leave her son in the care of her ex-husband. And, to be sure, the same agony and worry were visited upon her as the day of our departure grew near, an agony and worry which grew to a crescendo of anguish at the thought of not seeing her child for the next two months.

The morning we were to leave, we arrived at the airport and the gravity of the moment became too much for my *soror*. She came undone, admitting, in great sorrow, that she would not be able to join me on our journey; she could not leave her son again for such a lengthy time.

This was a horrible moment for both of us, because we realized that this meant that now we would be separated for those two months, since I could not give up the call of my spirit, and would go on to India without her.

After an agonizing hour of tears and hugging, it was time for me to go through the check-in gates, and, after our last desperate hug, I turned to leave her, but at that moment something switched within my *soror*, and that was …she suddenly knew she had to go.

Whether it was the intense love-bond between us, which caused her change of heart, or the fulfillment of a destiny she could not avoid completing, is a matter not worth debating. She had decided to come, and, having called her son to tell him she would return early if necessary, she and I headed to the gates.

It was at that moment that the cosmos declared its victory, as it always does when a person chooses his or her highest path, and turns down the darkened fork in the road, not knowing where it will lead, but knowing it is the correct path.

At every moment in life there lies a similar fork in the road: one direction leads to one's highest destiny, the other leads to a banquet of consolations. To choose one's highest path at every moment is to sacrifice everything at every moment for one's highest path, but then to also realize that when one is willing to make the sacrifice, the sacrifice is unnecessary, and only that which one is not willing to sacrifice must be sacrificed. This is the lesson of

Abraham and Isaac, where at the last moment of the willing sacrifice of his son Isaac, Abraham was acquitted of the debt, because it had been paid through his will. The debt is our attachment to anything which comes before our inner godself, and the payment is exactly that to which we are attached.

Anyway, my *soror* and I must have both cleared our divine debts, so to speak, for as we were about to go through the check-in gates at the airport I heard a woman call out my name, and I turned to see who it was, and there before me stood an emanation of the Mother Goddess. I kid you not. She was not Efa, the Irish Eve, but another form of the Goddess altogether.

This woman was made of flesh and blood and sweat and love and tears, like all the rest of us. And, yes, she was human. But all of humanity is an emanation of one oversoul or another. We may think we are 'individual', but in reality there is no such thing, for we are all aspects of a greater soul, and each greater soul has many emanations on earth.[57] And the woman who beckoned me just as we were headed through the gates, just moments after my *soror* had chosen the harder but better path, had been pointed out to me many years ago, by an incredibly lucid friend of mine, as an emanation of the Mother Goddess. And there she was- inexplicably, synchronistically, fantastically present to send us off with a smile and a hug and herald the beginning of what would become a life-altering trip for both my *soror* and me.

We had received the Mother's blessing. And all you can do when a benediction like that walks into your life, gives you a great glorious embrace, and then releases you away onto your sacred journey, is to throw up your arms in awe and gratitude, and shout out Hallelujah! That's all you can do. And then you board the plane and go forward.

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Part II
TRANSCENDENT SPIRIT, IMMANENT SOUL

"*Uno itinere non potest perveniri ad tam grande secretum*."
(The heart of so great a mystery can never be reached by following one road only.)

one

I look back now and realize that I could never have imagined what I was in for when I set the ball in motion, many years earlier, by tangling in the spiritual realm and therefore walking straight into the mystery of mysteries, and knowing nothing of what that implied.

To enter the mystery of self, of the world, of life, and of God, is to set a course into the nether reaches of this dream actuality. It is to enter the implausible archetypical layer of myth and miracle. To enter the mystery of the all is to stand upon a molecule hovering over an infinite abyss.

To widen one's view of this ineffable life is to enter an infinity which is as obscure as it is bewildering. To enter into this impossible collage of improbability and unpredictability is to dive into a universe whose name is chaos. To dive into chaos is to become chaos. To become chaos is to become uncontrollable. To become uncontrollable is to be free. To be free is to enter into the mystery of self, of the world, of life, and of God. And so the wheel of time rolls on and on, and the magical presence which hides behind the invisible screen knows nothing of itself as other than all that is, and so refuses to halt the glory of its limitless emanations.

Our meeting with an emanation of the Mother Goddess at the airport in Vancouver was shortly followed by another magical encounter of a similar ilk.

After arriving in Delhi, my *soror* and I soon learned that the monsoon rains were exceptionally relentless at that time, and had wiped out a few railroad tracks in the north, and therefore no trains were running towards our first destination, Dharamsala. At the moment I heard this news I remembered having a dream a few days earlier while still in Canada in which I was told there were no trains going to Dharamsala, to which I had responded "Oh well, we'll take an overnight bus instead."

Now, let the reader understand that I had taken many, many overnight buses during previous travels within India. And let the reader know that if there is a purgatory on earth, then it is manifested on overnight bus trips in India. And if you are a bony, six-foot fellow like myself, the journeys are absolute torment.

I believe I had the dream of which I just spoke because I had openly declared prior to this trip that I refused ever again to take another overnight bus ride in India. I had laid down my gauntlet and the universe rose to destroy it.

And so I took a deep breath, shrugged off my discontent, and my *soror* and I bought tickets for the next night's departure. That evening we boarded the rolling box of horror with a handful of other tourists and a gaggle of Indians.

Soon after we were in motion I realized that I had been on many painful and worrisome bus rides in India in the past but, compared to this one, those others were like magic carpet rides through the Elysium fields. Not only were the two of us scrunched into the first two seats of the bus, where my knees began to rub down into raw stumps from the wall of the driver's cab which lay directly in front of us, but, furthermore, the driver himself was an absolute maniac. We were going to die. I could feel it. Never have I been on a bus in which the man behind the wheel has absolutely no sense of the rules of the road; he knows only the gas pedal, and the horn, and everything else is not worth

noting. I was terrified. I admit it. But fortunately I was supposed to be terrified. I was supposed to lose my inner equanimity and faith in divine providence, and I was supposed to realize such a level of danger and discomfort that my *soror* and I finally made our way to the back of the bus where we located two empty seats and there took refuge knowing that we now had twenty seats ahead of us to buffer the impending head-on collision.

But then something very odd took place: as soon as we moved to the back of the bus the driver suddenly calmed down; he became another man altogether. The nightmare had ended.

I believe he calmed down because it was no longer necessary to drive like a suicidal madman; he had only been used as an instrument by the spirit with the intent to scare the living shit out of me so that I would take refuge at the back of the bus so that I could then meet the person who was now sitting right in front of me, who was one of my emanations. Yes, he was me, only different, but the same as well. From different parts of the world we were, but we were one. And after getting to know each other we found we had very similar interests, similar dispositions, and similar souls. No doubt this was the case, because we had the same soul, which is an outcome of being emanations from the same oversoul.

In years previous I had met my Native Indian self on the west coast of British Columbia, my gay self in Vancouver, my sprite-like self in a young man whom I worked with for a while, and now I had met my German self on the way to Dharamsala.

This fellow- my emanation brother- was traveling with a buddy from Germany, who, interestingly enough, was an emanation from the same archetype as a friend of mine whom I had been trying to get together with just before leaving for India. Unfortunately obstacles had prevented the engagement. Though now all of the sudden there we were together, in two different bodies, half way around the world, but to be sure the energy connection had been completed.[58]

I spent the next few days hanging out with my German emanation and our common brother, and we shared music and laughter and conversation about esoteric patterns such as the one I have just described, and then my emanated brother and his buddy departed from Dharamsala, and my *soror* and I were left to the emptiness of that sacred town.

I say emptiness, but I do not mean absence. In the west we have learned to equate emptiness with vacuity, loneliness, torpor, or ennui. But the emptiness of the Tibetan Buddhists is a completely different void altogether; it is a substantial, uplifting, expanding, peaceful, fulfilling emptiness.

This was my third trip to Dharamsala, and on each successive visitation I have fallen more and more in love with this sacred landing pad of emptiness. But then, you'd have to have a soul made of lead and a spirit made of phlegm to not love Dharamsala, for, in addition to the emptiness, the main part of town is thick with good vibes, good food, and spectacular scenery.

On past visits to this hallowed village I was not yet capable of experiencing the great emptiness which lies dense as soup within the walls of this Tibetan Buddhist enclave. But this time it was unmistakable.

Every afternoon my *soror* and I made our way to the main temple or monastery. Once there we would take up the lotus position and enter into the pristine emptiness contained within these sacred places due to the sedulous efforts of the Tibetan Buddhist monks, ever meditating, ever awake, ever alive, ever empty, and ever present.

To experience the immense emptiness which the Tibetan Buddhists are slowly integrating into this realm of form is to enter the formless. And to go to Dharamsala and to sit within the precinct where so many dedicated souls have been expanding into that emptiness, while living in this world of form, is to enter a welcoming void which requires no effort to arrive at, no obligation, no shaved head, and no crimson robe- for the emptiness to be found in the temple and monastery of Dharamsala is ever present, and one need only walk into it with an open heart and a clear mind and the work is done.

I make this claim now because this is what I experienced. Though, as I have said, this was my third visit to the sacred town, and on my first two encroachments I experienced no such profundity. But, then, I may not be the quickest learner in the world: it took me four extended trips to India before I finally received what India had to give; it took me the same number of trips to Europe before I was capable of imbibing some of what Europe had to offer; and it took me many sojourns out into the wilderness before I could receive the glory of that domain. I may be slow, but I am determined.

I had therefore grown more capable of entering the emptiness over the years succeeding my last visit to Dharamsala, and had opened myself to the extent that I was capable, and thus I could receive more of what was available to be received. Furthermore, my kundalini had been active all winter while I was living in Vancouver as a hermit, and this later helped precipitate my awakening to the profound emptiness to such an extent that one evening in Dharamsala I awoke in the middle of the night and it seemed as if I had been cognitively decapitated, for I had the feeling of having no head- I had become one with the great cosmic emptiness; my crown chakra had evaporated. In that deep, ubiquitous stillness the upper part of my being had vanished and I had become one with the nothingness. I had become the emptiness, for the I that I had been was gone, and only the singular, undivided, pristine emptiness remained.

I fell back to sleep, my crown chakra re-assembled, and I awoke the next morning feeling more like my individual, limited self once again. However, the emptiness remained in the atmosphere, waiting patiently for my effortless attention.

A few days later my *soror* and I made our way to the main temple, as per usual, and we sat down near a few monks who were reading and chanting from the holy books.

It was then, as I sat motionless, with the empty monks chanting sacred mantras on my right, and my *soror* sitting close by me on my left, that I experienced the union of emptiness and form, or, rather, the presence of both emptiness and form; I became the common ground between these two realms. I was receiving the feeling of the great cosmic void from the monks on one side, and the sense of the great earthly density of flesh from my *soror* on the other. Emptiness and form became the separate yet united halves of my being; the Great Absence, and the Great Presence- one.

I knew then that we are emptiness *and* form; one half of our being is the cosmic emptiness, the other half is the form.

We are the emptiness pervading all form, and the form impregnating all emptiness.

It is for this reason that the sacred mantra of the Tibetan Buddhists is *om mani padme hum*. *Om* is the great emptiness, and *hum* is the actualization into form. *Om mani padme hum* is the method by which the spirit and flesh are united.[59]

Om mani padme hum describes the descent of the cosmic vibration, the *om*, the alpha, into the worldly realm, the *hum*, the omega.

In *om* we live, and breathe, and have our being, and in *hum* we *are* that being.

Om is everything, *hum* is anything. *Om* is the I, *hum* is the AM. I the eternal, AM the ephemeral. I the formless, Am the form. I the spirit, Am the flesh. *Om mani padme hum*.

Inner and outer meet in the stillness of *om*, and in the activity of *hum*. *Om* is the witness, *hum* is the witnessed. *Om* the ether, *hum* the air. *Om* the theater, *hum* the play.

When emptiness unites with form the cosmic *om* attains the earthly *hum*, and God is born into isness.

The union of these two seemingly opposed realms is the experience of Avalon[60], which is cosmic wholeness. In order to bring this mythical event into our own existence- for Avalon is not a physical place, it is a metaphysical union- we must all dive down into the deepest reaches of the flesh, and we must all rise into the furthest expanse of the great space. We are the bridge between the formless and the form, between consciousness and matter, and between emptiness and love. If we don't reach in both directions Avalon will remain a mythical land. If we attain unity with these divided realms, we achieve the union of emptiness and form, of spirit and flesh, which is Avalon. *Om, baby!*

*

two

After our time in Dharamsala was finished and we had received all that we could at that time from the profound privilege of the Tibetan Buddhist holy sanctuary, we left the emptiness and arrived at the fullness of the Golden Temple, Amritsar, home of the Sikh religion, and epicenter of one of the greatest devotional assemblages in the world.

Arriving at the Golden Temple one arrives at an earthly core and zenith of passionate human devotion. For it is here where millions of Sikhs, over the past five centuries, have come, so as to link their souls and spirits into the fulcrum of this religion's quintessential intent. And that intent is devotion.

The Golden Temple is the supreme manifestation of devotion. Here a person can eat, sleep, bathe, pray, and listen to music any time, on any day, all for free; which is to say, one can *devote* themselves without obstruction.

When my *soror* and I first arrived at the Temple and its gigantic marble compound, I suddenly remembered that a few months earlier I had received a dream of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh spirituality. However, I had not recognized who the white-bearded man in my dream had been until I came into the midst of the Golden Temple where countless posters and paintings flaunt his image. Nor had I expected anything of what that dream portended. But, to be sure, the intent of the universe would rise up to meet me, and I would soon realize that I had been called here for a teaching.

We entered the sacred compound of the Temple environs upon our arrival and began circumambulating around the site via the marble walkway which is continually scrubbed and maintained by pilgrims and volunteers who come to this splendiferous site not only to take what they can take, but also to give what they can give.

After a while my *soror* and I sat down beside the holy bathing vat and fell into awe and appreciation for this monumental accomplishment which the Sikhs have created in honor not only of their founding fathers, but also in devotion to the God-guru within each of us. It is this, it seems to me, that is the intent behind Sikhism- the elevation through devotion of each individual into the immortal stature of their divine selves, all of whom are related in that divinity to a brotherhood and sisterhood of all who seek the same.

During that first evening we eased ourselves into the vibration of the holy compound, and then retired to a hotel near the Temple complex. After falling into a slumber I spent the whole night receiving an onslaught of visitations from numerous past Sikh gurus, most frequently by Guru Nanak himself. He had passed from this world four hundred years earlier, and yet his spirit remains around to give guidance and assistance to those who seek it. The only thing is- I didn't seek it, *it* sought me. And ever full of gratitude I am for this.

Upon awaking in the early hours of the new day I knew only one thing- I needed to return to the Golden Temple without delay. And so at four o'clock in the morning my *soror* and I left our hotel and once again joined the legions of Sikh devotees who come any hour of night or day to partake of their spiritually intoxicating Valhalla.

We again circumambulated the compound, immersed within the river of a great, unpretentious crowd, and then made our way amidst the throng into the inner sanctum of the Golden Temple itself.

The first floor of the shiny building was stuffed full with devotees arrayed around the musicians who take turns filling the compound with their live devotional music. We gently made our way through the crowd and ascended the stairs to the second floor where we sat down in the lotus posture amongst the multitudes silently praying or meditating.

I immediately fell into a deep, spacious peace, and in this still state I came into communion with the living, ever-present spirit of Guru Nanak. It was in this subtle state that I then recognized why I had been called back to the Golden Temple in the early hours of the blessed morning- I was about to receive his guidance.

And so I emptied myself as much as I was capable, and a silent discourse between the spirit of Guru Nanak and myself began. During times

such as this, information and knowledge are exchanged almost instantaneously, and therefore insight or wisdom can be gleaned without study, effort, or hindrance, for in that ethereal commingling between spirits the interwoven consciousnesses can transfer understandings without the misunderstandings which words so often convey.

It was in and from this holy communion that I realized, through the consciousness of Guru Nanak, what true devotion is, and why it is so important as the modus operandi for the way we express our eternal selves onto this temporal plane without getting caught in the mundane maelstrom.

I came to understand that true devotion is the state in which one acts from and for his or her eternal, higher self, and only acts generated from this heightened awareness can be delivered onto the earth without causing the individual to 'fall' into the profane paradigm; all acts must be devotional so as to not lose the great free space of the Godself. Without devotion an act is futile, or even worse- a transgression which causes the eternally free Godself to become ensnared in the worldly paradigm. But through devotion we not only save ourselves from such confinement, we also bring God into the world, and so bring the spirit into the flesh.

A devotional act is one which arises while one is conscious of one's Godself, and then the act is orchestrated onto the world as a blessing to quicken all other Godselves. As such, an act of devotion elevates this human realm into the divine, and unites the devotee to the purity of God, which is the purity of their own divine self, and through devotion the lower and higher selves become one and heaven descends upon earth.

The ultimate Golden Temple is the body and soul of any person continuously acting spontaneously and unconditionally from such devotion.

To find out what it is to act with devotion, and to choose devotion in every act, is to bring the great stillness into the shifting manifest.

And so devotion must be brought into the world, not as a tired ritual, but as spontaneous awe and praise for the privilege and miracle of being.

It is in this sense that devotion goes beyond surrender and sacrifice, because devotion is an affirming rather than a negating act, and so devotion manifests God on earth; devotion *expresses* the perfection of the holy inner silence into form and action.

Sacrifice is necessary only when we have forgotten that all is God. With the sacrifice of this erroneous consciousness, we return into contact with God, and with that contact we become one with God, and then we realize that everything is God, and through this we begin to act with naught but devotion, and soon the ego is annihilated into oneness.[61]

It is through such acts, generated by our Godself so as to quicken this human realm into union with the divine, that we become incarnate instruments of our own eternal selves.

It is for this reason that we must walk with devotion, eat with devotion, work with devotion, drink with devotion, play music with devotion, and make love with devotion. We must do nothing which is not an act of devotion. We must become the living stream of devotion cascading down onto this slumbering plane. We must devote ourselves to our highest bidding, devote ourselves to our truest selves, and devote ourselves only to acts worthy of our divine heritage.

Everything else must be cast aside.

Our true relationship to the above lies within; it is only when our relationship to the world overwhelms our relationship to God, that we become Godless and fallen. And therefore, the reason we are Godless is because we desire everything else before God. Godlessness is our choice, not God's.

A similar teaching occurs in a verse from the apocryphal Book of Enoch, in which some of God's children have retreated to a high mountain so as to maintain communion with the divine. It is in this communion that God, the Father, is continually beseeching his children not to return down into the realm of humanity, not to descend to the profane paradigm of false pleasure, false action, false desire, and false intent. For He knows that if they descend into it they will get caught in the matrix of the world's ways, and so never again become conscious enough to awaken to their glorious, immortal selves.

This story is a wonderful metaphor for my experience with the spirit of Guru Nanak. For I have often walked down into the lower planes of consciousness, into the troubling and trapping realm of separation and division. And now I see that once one is there- once one has taken on the flesh, and *become* human- then the only recourse which returns one to the pristine awareness and communion with one's divine, eternal self, is to never 'fall' into the parameters and purposes of this paradigm, but instead to act ever in devotion to, and with, one's unlimited, holy nature. In doing so one remains in this world and yet maintains connection to the divine consciousness, and so expresses realities into the profane plane which are beyond it. This is how we bless this world which we are. Amen.

*

three

Devotion comes in many different ways for each of us, since we are all unique expressions of the one. The hallmark of devotion, however, is whether an act brings us closer to that one, or drives us further away.

There have been many events along my odd and idiosyncratic journey which, on the profane plane, may seem either useless, or even sinful, but were in fact acts of devotion done with fervor and hope that they would lead me closer to freedom, union, and perfection.

One such odd undertaking began years after I had given up smoking tobacco. I had fought against the tug of that poison for quite a long time, and had finally dismissed it for good.

But then, all of the sudden, a number of years later, I had a few dreams in which tobacco was shown to me as a temporary means which would assist me to awaken into a level which I had not yet arrived at. I was admittedly a little uncertain as to the message of the dreams, and therefore did not partake of tobacco right away. However, soon after, and synchronistically enough, I was reading through a book of esoteric information, and the writer made the claim that for those people who have trouble connecting their lower self to their higher

self, smoking some tobacco can be of assistance.

With that added bit of information, I plodded off to a nearby tobacco shop, purchased a small cigarillo, and later that evening inhaled a bit of the smoke into my awaiting lungs. Then I sat back and relaxed into myself.

I soon discovered that the tobacco had a relaxing effect and allowed me to sense a greater unity between myself and all things, the outcome of which was a very subtle, and yet profound, peace. This may sound like a bucket of errant hogwash to a world which has determined tobacco to be a carcinogenic calamity, which in fact it is when produced and used in the abusive way it has been by the modern world. However, there is good and bad in all things, and it is only for us to choose which side of the coin we include in our lives.

It is perhaps for the more positive aspect of the sacred plant that North American natives would ceremoniously smoke tobacco in a 'peace' pipe, thereby making it into an instrument for inner peace and for union with the all.

I recall the marvelous story of a wise Native American elder who lived during the twentieth century in the northern part of British Columbia, told to me by a man named Mark who had been a social worker for a year or so on the Native reserve in which this elder resided.

Mark told me that he and the elder had exchanged very little conversation during the year that he was there, for the elder spoke no English, and Mark spoke very little of the elder's native tongue. However, this negligible communication barrier could not prevent more sublime interactions from taking place between them.

This came about during a day when Mark was sitting in sunshine on the outskirts of the reserve, and as he sat there the elder arrived nearby and began throwing his tomahawk at the small stump of a sapling which was used by the villagers for target practice. It wasn't long before Mark recognized that the elder was hitting the bull's-eye every time, from a formidable distance. Apparently the elder had thrown his hatchet perhaps twenty or twenty-five times, hitting the center of the wood perfectly every time. Mark was impressed, and kept his attention on the elder. Soon enough the old wise man turned towards Mark and, though he said nothing, Mark knew the old man was impressing upon him the understanding that he, the elder, was in complete control of the situation, and that the next throw would prove it. The old man then launched his tomahawk and landed it just outside of the bull's-eye, and Mark knew it was an intended throw to show that wherever he aimed his axe, he would hit.

This action of the wise old man was not a prideful display of marksmanship; the elder had something far more important in store for Mark. Immediately after the last throw he then turned towards Mark and sent his spirit and consciousness out, enveloping Mark and uniting the two of them in the ethereal domain. Mark was spellbound, for he knew for certain that they were communicating perfectly and were united as one in consciousness and spirit. Then the elder somehow expanded himself and dissolved at the same time, and Mark saw him completely merge into the environment around him, and Mark knew that the elder and the earth were one. In fact, the elder was one with everything.

It finally made sense to Mark why this old man of the woods could go on hitting bulls-eye after bulls-eye, over and over again: it was because he had

become everything- the thrower, the thrown, and the target. He had become the entire world of spirit and matter- the great cosmic Self aware of itself. He had lost himself into the whole, and so had become the whole, and therefore everything he did was in cooperation with the whole. He had crossed the river of separation, and had merged into the ocean of oneness.[62] Amen.

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four

After the blessed teachings from the subtle spirit of Guru Nanak at the Golden Temple, my *soror* and I moved eastward by train, heading for Rishikesh.

En route we were befriended by a true brotherhood of Sikh boys and men on their yearly pilgrimage to the sacred Sikh sites located in the Garhwal Himalaya. The Sikh fellows formed an amazingly jocular and caring group, ranging from teenage boys to sixty year old elderly men, though no age difference was apparent in their interactions together- everyone was equal, everyone had a voice, everyone was as valid as the next, and everyone was a brother. It was an uplifting collection of souls to witness, containing immense love and wholesome ribaldry.

I soon recognized one man within the group to be the Indian emanation of a very good friend of mine back in Canada. Skin color aside, this fellow could have been my buddy's twin; he walked the same, carried himself the same way, showed humble love and respect for the rest of his brethren the same way, and took to me in the same way as well. He was the exact same spirit, in a different body, as my buddy back home- fifteen-thousand kilometers away. And yet he was right there, with me. It was fantastic. I was amongst my brothers. The fact that I did not know any of their names mattered nothing at all, for siblinghood is an outcome of the soul's affinities, and not of the mind's conceptions.

Our train journey ended at Haridwar, which is about twenty kilometers south of Rishikesh, from where one must continue by rickshaw or bus. Haridwar was a disorienting sea of pilgrims at that time of year, and the area outside of the train station was a maelstrom of chaos and confusion. Luckily we were invited into the circle of the Sikh brotherhood, and, following their lead, we proceeded through the tightly packed throng on the town's main thoroughfare.

On the day of our arrival the entire town of Haridwar was a thick bustle of pilgrims from all over India who had come at this auspicious time to bathe in the Ganges. And what a bath it was.

I had been to the Ganges before, farther down its course along the low lying, central plains, on earlier trips to India, and had decided never to bring my body near that flowing vein of sewage and pestilence. But up the river, closer to its source, at Haridwar and beyond, the Ganges has yet to journey down the mountains and through the endless towns and cities which pour their waste and garbage into it, and so it maintains much of its pristine quality.

Given this incentive, and finding great joy in the frenzy of the entire

town bathing and playing about in the sacred water, my *soror* and I could not pass up the invitation of our Sikh brothers to join them in the dunking. And what a baptism it was.

The combined mania of the endless crowd along the ghats, the inexhaustible exuberance of our mates, and the tremendous fury of the Ganges itself, roaring majestically at that time during the monsoon, made for a breathtaking plunge into the torrent which almost tore the shorts off one's buttocks and ripped away the hold upon a brother's hand. Luckily the ghats in such areas are fitted with long chains, secured to the shore, and running out into the river. Holding onto these chains the entire troupe of our brethren would merge together, and we'd make our way out into the surge and thrust of the heaving river, grappling to hold onto each other and the chain, and then dunking under to complete the mission, and then up again, and the resounding laughter of our foster family dancing harmoniously with the blessed violence of the Ganges, and then another dunk, farther out into the flow, and holding desperately and with glee onto a brother's hand, who holds onto another's, and theirs is on the chain, and the whole mad show is flipping and whirling about in the pitch and swell, and I can't believe I'm finally in the Ganges, finally soaked in the glory of India's greatest show, finally immersed in the bubbling tempest that is the lifeblood of all that is the real India.

I have crisscrossed this sacred subcontinent numerous times before. I have traveled north to south and east to west. I have slept in the filth and futility of the worst cities on earth, here in India. I have prayed and meditated in the holiest centers in the land. I have walked about as if spell-bound by the people and the impossibility of this maddening and mythical country. I have wept and cursed here. I have praised and given thanks here. And I have lost my mind and gained my soul because of this terrible and holy place. But for the first time in all of my adventures and misadventures within this hallowed, inimitable, inconceivable divine creation, I know that as I am being licked by the fervor of the Ganges, and held by the hand of a brother whose name I do not know, whose language I do not speak, and who I will never see again after this afternoon has ended- I am finally in India.

I am finally in India. I have been baptized into the kaleidoscopic Hindu spirit and vibe by a band of Sikh strangers. I have been whisked out of one great devotional theatre, and transported into another. I have been given Hinduism by the very pariahs who turned against Hinduism, who turned against the caste system, and who grabbed me out of the ethereal dimension of the Sikh society, and launched me into Shiva's soul.

I am finally in India. I have come home. *Om, baby!*

*

five

After parting from the benevolent Sikh brotherhood later that day, my *soror* and I struggled against the raging crowd of pilgrims in Haridwar, and

hailed a rickshaw to take us the rest of the way up the road to Rishikesh.

Ah, Rishikesh, what a place! What an unbelievable, sanctified, prayer-ridden, blessing-filled, exalted, monumental accomplishment of the human spirit.

Although the main part of the city is as horrible as every other city in India- and horrible is as gentle an adjective as one can find for such places- as always the gem is to be found within or nearby the shit. And with Rishikesh the gleaming emerald of the spirit lay just out of town, by the bathing ghats, an area which is one of the most frequently visited holy places in the entire country. And there is good reason for such a mecca.

This part of Rishikesh means many differing things to many different people, but there is a common denominator dwelling within that sacred area which is the wellspring of everyone's individual experience. The great draw and immense gem of this part of Rishikesh, however, is not to be found in the thousands of pilgrims who flock to the town every day to bless and be blessed by the sacred Ganges, nor is it in the countless shaggy-haired sadhus who populate the town and its environs during a lifetime devoted to meditation, wandering, smoking hash, and begging. Nor is it the intensely soul-uplifting evening *puja* of *bhakti* songs, chants, and prayers carried out at the main temple, which attracts hordes of Hindu common-folk to this divine event every night. Nor is the gem the free food which is given out twice daily to all sadhus, saints, and passers-by at one or another of the philanthropic institutions operating almost invisibly within the area. Nor is the pearl of great price the allure of the Beatles' historic visitations to the town in search of their own enlightenment. No, the gem that is the living, breathing, flowing life of Rishikesh is to be found in and as the sacred Ganges itself. Without the Ganges there would be no Rishikesh. For the Ganges is no ordinary river. In fact, it is not a river at all. It is peace.

Where that sacred artery of the living spirit passes by the bathing, holy ghats at Rishikesh, the river is no longer a mere channel of water moving from the mighty Himalayas, down across the central plains towards its delta in Bengal and Bangladesh. At the point where the Ganges passes the holy, bathing ghats at Rishikesh, the river is transfigured into a standing wave of absolute peace. You can feel it. I felt it, like I had never imagined I could *feel* such calm and serenity exuded from a wildly flowing entity. I had never even thought such a phenomenon existed.

We had come to Rishikesh during the monsoon season, and the Ganges was at its height of fury and flow, and yet there was not a single sense of chaos nor commotion coming from it. There was only peace. And I mean deep, soulful, visceral, corporeal peace. This was not a 'peace of mind', as they say. The mind knows nothing of this peace. Because this type of peace cannot be known, it can only be *felt*. And feeling is the province of the heart, soul, and flesh, and the mind can neither approach nor receive this vibration, and so it must shut off its machinator, and humbly dissolve into the peace which passeth all understanding.

No doubt this immense breath of peace emanating from the Ganges has everything to do with the serene quiescent meditations of the yogis living in caves high up in the mountains near the river's source, as well as the limitless

offerings and prayers poured into the water by the endless parade of pilgrims who come to Rishikesh to consecrate their lives and be sanctified by this profound flowing vessel of the spirit.

The Ganges is an actualization of the Goddess Ganga, whom, it is said, refused to come to earth, and so Shiva himself had to come to her to request that she descend to earth to bless this world with her divinity. Apparently she agreed, but the force from her descent onto earth was so immense and powerful that Shiva had to receive her divine plunge from the firmament into the knotted mass of his hair, and there let it flow more gently onto the Himalayas and downward into humanity, where it became the river that is the blessing of Ganga Herself.

In this way Shiva is intricately connected to this divine river of tranquility. It is perhaps for this reason that not only peace radiates from this river, but passion as well, the passion of Shiva; for Shiva is the destroyer who is also a creator. Yes, a creator. And this is because destruction is in fact an act of creation; destruction is the end which is a beginning. As Shiva destroys, his Shakti creates. Shakti is the feminine power of the Godhead, without which only non-being would occur; for divine non-being to transform into divine being, the feminine power of the godhead is essential, for She *is* being. And so it is said that Shiva is nothing without Shakti, and Shakti is nothing without Shiva.[63]

In the union of Shiva and Shakti, the entire universe becomes a dynamic generative commingling of destruction and creation, of heaven and earth, of male and female, of non-being and being, of spirit and flesh. No doubt this is why the most common image to be found in temples devoted to Shiva is the lingam- the symbol of the great penis of Shiva penetrating the yoni of his Shakti.

It is perhaps because of this that one evening after basking in the incredible quiescence pouring off the river, my *soror* and I returned to our hotel and were quickly spirited into our own dynamic, generative commingling of spirit and flesh. And by that I mean we made love, Khajuraho[64] style.

It is an incredible thing to merge the duality of male and female into the union of oneness. This is copulation. This is fornication. This is the universe in its creative state of orgasm.

It is an incredible thing to reproduce the fundamental structure of this creative universe through the living actualization of the flesh, which is to orgasm with, into, or because of your mate. And it is an incredible thing to receive her orgasm.

To orgasm is to glory in the fullest rapture of the flesh. To orgasm is to release energy through the chakras, and so to awaken the subtle energies of the kundalini pathway through the gross energies of the love-orgasm. This is to bring the archetypical pattern of the cosmos down into the incarnate potency of humanity. This is spiritual sensuality.

Indeed, the ancient Indians knew that there is little more enjoyable in the cosmic realm of Eros, and little more healing in earthly realm of flesh, than chomping upon your lover's buttocks, and then slopping about in her loins.

To hold your mate hostage by the clitoris and love is to French-neck with Her deepest soul. To perform cunnilingus as if you were imbibing Amrita- the nectar of immortality- straight from the dewy petal of a vanilla rose, and to go still deeper psychically into the soul of that flesh, to suck on it, devour it,

love it and become one with it, is to send the glory of the spirit into the glory of the flesh.

To penetrate your mate in the front-facing wheelbarrow position, and to blow her crown chakra wide open through this tantric practice, is to link Eros with the empyrean beyond, to raise the flesh into the firmament, and so to add fat and fluid, bone and blood, semen and sex into the ledgers of the heavenly roster of divine creations.

To slurp ambrosia from your lover's living, conscious, swollen clitoris is to re-enact the cosmic foreplay, just preceding the Father's orgasm which created all that is.

For though humanity is all too ready to grant women, including the Goddess, the ultimate powers of creation, in fact it is the male aspect of the cosmos which initiates all that is. For a woman can orgasm in the act of union without creating a child, but a man cannot. A man spends his seed and a child is born. A woman orgasms and the universe rejoices. And perhaps this is why a woman, unlike a man, can orgasm in different areas of her loins, in different ways, limitlessly- because the universe wants ecstasy, not *labor*, as this term for childbirth so well implies.

It is indeed interesting that every child born out of erotic pleasure is caused by a man's orgasm, but none from a woman's. A woman's orgasm is the perfection of cosmic rapture; it is the joy of creation, but not creation itself. A woman can orgasm over and over again, out of sheer flesh-joy and pleasure. A man must control his urges or increase his brood.

It is for this reason that a woman in orgasm is the quintessence of the ecstatic, intimate, orgasmic universe itself. A woman in orgasm is the very fabric of this jubilant existence; she is the earth, the flesh, and all matter writhing in the joy of release, abandon, and *being*.

A woman's orgasm is nothing but joy, *because* it is uncreative; it is *om* without *hum*, which is the rapturous vibration of the cosmos unencumbered by its own creation.

A woman cumming wildly from the unrelenting penetration or mastication of her lover is the universe arriving at fruition. Her orgasm is the universe crying out to itself- "Create no more. Enough already. Let us be done with creation, and let us rejoice!" A woman in the emancipated throes of a tremendous orgasm brings light and vindication to the entire mad enterprise of being. Her orgasm is life's validity, its denouement, its manifest perfection. *Om, baby!*

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six

As well as enjoying the inebriating qualities of the spirit penetrating the flesh in Rishikesh, I was also given a profound awareness of the flesh rising into the spirit.

This came about over the course of many days, and in fact had begun perhaps six months earlier, when, sitting alone in a deep inner peace within my inner-city hermitage in Vancouver, I unexpectedly encountered Krishna's vast space behind my manifested being. This was a tremendously unexpected yet lucid awakening. I say unexpected because I had never paid much attention to the Hindu pantheon, and had only read the *Bhagavad Gita* and a few smaller Hindu scriptures, and I had no thought whatsoever that I was connected to Krishna. And yet there He was, indisputably, in the great deep space behind my manifested being. Which is to say- my greater 'I' awoke as Krishna.

This event made me realize that Krishna was the immense, unmanifest, macrocosmic consciousness behind my being, and Christ was the operational, microcosmic expression of that consciousness.

That inaugural experience six months earlier wore off and drifted into a distant memory for the next while, as I returned to my more limited worldly consciousness which occupied my day-to-day awareness. Then all of the sudden the same awakening returned again in Rishikesh, and I immediately realized this time that Christ and Krishna were the very same being, and that Krishna was my greater, unconditioned self, and my defined and corporeal being was the Christ of that Krishna.

In this way Krishna is my infinite being, and the Christ is finite manifestation of that infinity. And so Krishna is the Great Self of the Christ self, which are one within me.

I realized that both Krishna and Christ are aspects of a singular continuity and, therefore, by becoming both I become transpersonal *and* personal, which is to be the ocean *and* the drop.

This revelation may come as some hard or unbelievable news to orthodox religion mongers, but then they will also find it impossible to swallow the fact that the names Krishna and Christ are significantly similar, denoting a cosmic connection between these beings. And furthermore, the Christianity/Hindu commingling does not stop here, for one of Shiva's lesser known names is Isa, which is uniquely close to Issa, the name for Christ in the East.

I now understand why I had so many dreams in the past in which Christ was shown with dreadlocks, which is exactly the image given to Shiva in India.

I suppose this also accounts for the many times in the past when I would sit still and smoke cannabis, which is what Shiva had done for a mere five-thousand years.

I know now that Krishna is Christ is Issa is Isa is Shiva. Different names for the same cosmic spirit, received in different ways by different cultures during different epochs, but the same eternal great soul nonetheless.

I make this claim categorically, because Krishna states unequivocally in the *Uddhava Gita* that those devoted to him he "…carries across to liberation." The only thing is this- prior to receiving this liberating consciousness, in which I recognized that Krishna was the great macrocosmic space behind my eyes, I was in no way devoted to Krishna; I was devoted only to Christ. But now I know that since Krishna and Christ are the same spirit- one macrocosmic, the other microcosmic, but both aspects of the same being working on the same project of human liberation- to be devoted to one is to be

devoted to both, for there is no division, only a logarithmic multiplication of spiritual expansion, in which Christ is the Krishna of this dimension, and Krishna is the infinity of that being radiating out into every dimension, which is the Cosmic Christ.[65]

As my awareness and receptivity increased I became united still further into the incredible space which is Krishna-consciousness, deep inside the cosmic recesses, which then came pouring forth into the Christ flesh of my body.

I became the great, eternal, cosmic ocean of Self which is boundless space, *and* the unique, immanent incarnation which is form.

The whole panapoly and chaos now merged into a singular vastness where peace and effortlessness hold sway- a great, reactionless, all-encompassing, ethereal ocean- and I was that ocean called Krishna, and I was the wave called Christ, and they were one.

The ocean of the great consciousness could then pour forth, from the infinite into the finite, from the macrocosm into the microcosm. The KrishnaChrist was complete. The self and the Self, the formed and the formless, the cosmic and the corporeal were one. *Om, baby!*

*

seven

The night before leaving Rishikesh my *soror* and I were enjoying the wonderful devotional music and ambience of the evening *puja* at the main temple, and I was so overwhelmed with all I had been given from my stay at this truly holy spot on earth, that I sent out a spontaneous and yet immensely heartfelt blessing to the entire world, immediately after which I heard an ethereal voice say-"That will catch up to you in Varanasi", which is where we were headed next.

At that moment I suddenly understood that life is like a river, and whatsoever we put into it, later on we draw the same thing out, be it love or hate.

I have certainly poured my share of stagnant or bitter water into the stream of life, which, I suppose, is unavoidable for someone corrupted by sin like I have been, but I have also attempted to will blessings and love out onto this agonizing realm, and I continue to try and domesticate the darkness within me so that this world can become filled with the love of which we are all worthy.

Either way, my *soror* and I left the peace of Rishikesh and made our way by train to the absolute unpeace of Varanasi, for there is no holy town on earth as unholy as Varanasi. Oh, it may receive its share of mystics, *sadhus*, and *muktas*, who gather about the shores of the Ganges in celebration of that sacred stream. But the town itself is the absolute shadow of all the light which is said to emanate from this holiest of Indian cities.

My *soror* and I were there for only a few days and that was a few too many. However, before we left, I still needed to reap, as it were, what I had sowed back in Rishikesh, upstream in Varanasi.

The blessing I received in return for sending out the love vibe to the entire cosmos came in two installations.

The first installation came not in the horrid city of Vananasi itself- but in the nearby Buddhist town of Sarnath.

During our few days in Varanasi, my *soror* and I had considered taking a taxi to Sarnath, which lies some twenty kilometers north, but we had made no concrete plans. Then one night I had a dream in which I was drinking Chinese beer, and when I awoke I knew this had something to do with the Chinese 'spirit', as my dreams of booze always related to the spiritual realm and were therefore symbolic and not actual. However, I did not know what the dream portended until I awoke the next day and my *soror* and I decided we would take a journey to Sarnath that morning.

After hailing a taxi and surviving the punishing roads winding through and out of Varanasi, we arrived in Sarnath and found ourselves amidst a number of serene Buddhist temples, each built by followers of the dharma residing in other countries. There was a Sri Lankan Temple, a Tibetan Temple, a Japanese Temple, and, lo and behold, a Chinese Temple.

It was then that I realized the message of the dream- I was about to imbibe the Chinese Buddhist spirit.

I have said that the supreme emptiness which can be found in the temple in Dharamsala is a profound, liberating, and essential void. And I am full of gratitude for the privilege of having such an effortless benediction given to me. But now I was to realize another gift of a similar and yet wholly different nature altogether, which was also given to me without any effort or intent on my part. And that gift was stillness. Not emptiness, but absolute stillness. A stillness beyond words, beyond time, and beyond any experience or event known to the vicissitudes and caprices of human kind, for the stillness which exists in that Chinese Temple is unbelievable. It is indescribable. The stillness is a complete absence and yet an awareness of that absolute nothingness. And it is not a mental experience. It is holistic. The stillness which exists within the walls of the Chinese Buddhist Temple of Sarnath is a stillness which is ineffable, inimitable, and undeniable. Both my *soror* and I were so thoroughly embalmed in the stillness in which we bathed for perhaps thirty minutes while sitting in the lotus position, rapt in an inhuman calm, that when we eventually left the temple we knew we had experienced an unimaginable benediction, though we had no idea how it had come about, or what divine personage or force, or lack of force, or energy void, or what supernatural being had prepared that structure and placed their ubiquitous tranquility within its walls. We had no clue. To this day I have no idea who constructed it, or which Buddhist master poured his or her blessings and serenity into its hallowed sanctum, but I know that never before had I, nor have I since, experienced such a state of stillness as exists in that temple. It is a cosmic calm which cannot be aptly described, it can only be experienced, for it can only be *felt*.

Perhaps such unimaginable stillness has come from the Chinese nature described as *wei wu wei*- action without action- in which the individual exists in the untroubled, motionless realm of non-being, while yet operating within being. It is possible, because in the act of not-doing whatever an individual is doing- in that metaphysical contradiction where non-action is the epicenter of the action- a

sublime vacuum of spirit is created, all unharmonious energies are sucked out in the evacuating whirlwind, and all that remains is the quiescent void.

I say this because having, in the past, been to the other side of doing, I have encountered the stillness of non-doing; I have stopped, completely stopped, even though I was still 'doing'. In this way I have 'stopped' through a subtle process of ambitionless, purposeless consciousness applied to all events in the realm of existence. In that unbound awareness the realm of being loosened its hold upon me, and I departed from the scene as I knew myself, and all that remained was the event that was happening effortlessly without me. And yet I was there. I was the non-doer *within* the doing, but I was not doing it.

I can understand, therefore, how such an ethereal black-hole can suck the crashing energies of the universe out of a certain area while an individual 'holds the space', as it is said. But I have no clue as to how that imperturbable void remains after the void-maker has vanished. I do not know. I doesn't matter. The stillness is, and is not. Amen.

*

eight

After that redemptive bath in the peace of the Chinese Buddhist Temple, we headed back to the bustle and unstillness of Varanasi, and the next day we boarded a train for Calcutta.

It was on this train, as we were leaving Varanasi, that the second installment of the blessing came to me.

As we chugged out of the city limits I fell into an inner calm and openness, and in that state I suddenly found myself in communion with God the Mother, and God the Father; I was in direct contact with them, and it seemed they had come to pay me a visit, in order to straighten a few things out for me.

I suppose this was necessary because at that time in my life I was still bound into an old way of thinking- the kind of thinking which defines things as good or bad, right or wrong. And due to such dualistic thinking I was often barraged by ideas of how to make life on earth better, of how to help others, and of why there was so much suffering in the world.

However, I was truly in for a divine teaching. For it was within the unexpected communion in which I was involved, while on the train, that I was unequivocally told by our divine Parents that everyone on earth was their child and that each person was receiving the guidance necessary for them at that time; the outer experiences of each individual may come as either gentle or harsh, but all outcomes were the actions of divine love. Therefore everything that happens to a person is an important lesson for their own journey towards wholeness. Everything is spiritually directed. Everything that comes and goes in anyone's life is part of their growth towards wholeness, no matter what. And since everyone who is here on earth has chosen to be here, and is receiving what they need to receive, there is no need to pity another, nor sympathize with their suffering. The essential thing is to have compassion without attachment.[66]

It was later pointed out to me that this realm has a long way to go before most individuals- most aspects of the whole- are evolved enough to become absolutely integrated into universal oneness. Many fragments have to grow a great deal more before they are ready for integration into wholeness. Therefore extreme patience is necessary.

This was an important earful for me to hear, because I am a tremendously impatient man. I am one who sees a goal and will not rest until it is accomplished. And since I can see the incredible state of unity possible for mankind, I want it to happen, now.

However, it was categorically told to me that at this time the patience of eternity is required, because the process of that commingling to oneness is a dexterous one, so as to not lose any of the derelict aspects of our wholeness along the way. To press forward too quickly is to injure the fragments building the whole. The cosmic cycle must run its course to completion. We must for now be at peace, and realize that everything is as it should be, and that the Great Mother and Father are looking out for all. Everything in due time. Patience and discernment are the requirements for now.[67]

This realm is a divine drama, designed, directed, and orchestrated by the combined will of the Mother and Father.

Our only task is to perfect ourselves, without inhibiting others, because our perfection will create the perfection of the whole. We need not worry over the suffering of the world, we need only send out our blessings knowing that to send blessings out to the entire world is to become the entire world, the *Mahayana*- the Greater Vehicle, and then to help steer that vessel home. *Om, baby!*

*

nine

After the blessing of communion, our train journey ended the next morning in Calcutta, where we intended only a brief stay, so as to visit one of the most important Goddess sites in all of India: the Kali Temple at Dakshineswar, a place made famous by the nineteenth century Hindu saint and devotee to the Mother, Sri Ramakrishna.

It is said that even as a boy Ramakrishna was given to bouts of mystic ecstasy. Though it was not until he was a young man and was hired as the keeper of the Kali Temple that he began, almost instantly, falling regularly into a deep, inexorable oblivion and *samadhi* while rapt in a catatonic union with the Divine Mother.

Apparently Ramakrishna soon became incapable of fulfilling his occupational duties, and it was only because of the temple manager's lucid understanding of the spiritual profundity of Ramakrishna's regress, that Ramakrishna was not sacked and sent out into the streets for his obvious incompetence; he was instead given a lifelong stipend, and a suspension of all duties, so that he could have his entire life free to perform the one essential task

that he could not avoid performing anyways- communion with Her.

From that point onward Ramakrishna almost never left the temple grounds, and was so often found gripped in a spasmodic submersion with the Mother that he would go for days on end without moving or eating, and often would have to be mercilessly beaten by one of his 'devotees' in order to snap him away from the divine union long enough to force some rice down his throat so as to sustain him again during his exodus into the Goddess.

A few years later, Ramakrishna's wife- who had been married off to him as a young girl, as it sometimes happens in India- came to be with him at the temple. But Ramakrishna was now obviously incapable of being a husband, in the common sense, for he was inextricably married to Her, the Mother, and could not be expected to take on any semblance of a normal life. However, this wise woman by the name of Sarada Devi quickly recognized that what Ramakrishna had to offer was far greater than a comfortable home and a brood of children, and so she asked to remain with him at the temple, under his spiritual guidance, rather than return to the world in search of the profane accoutrements of life. In later years Ramakrishna was to proclaim that the three Goddess- Kali, Saraswati, and Laksmi- had become incarnate in the singular body of Sri Sarada Devi, and so the Mother whom he worshipped had become manifest right before him, as his wife, right in the temple grounds dedicated to Her being.[68]

My *soror* and I arrived at the temple complex on a rainy, monsoon afternoon. After following the trail of pilgrims up to the Kali image in the main building, we made our way into the adjacent, open-air meditation grounds, and sat down cross-legged amongst the supplicants.

Sitting side-by-side we both soon fell into a penetrating, meditative consciousness, and in that state I could feel my *soror's* soul become linked with the Mother's being, and a strong energy shift began pulling me into Her core.

I sensed then that physical gravity is simply a manifestation of the sublime gravitational pull the Mother has upon us, which draws us into Her, knowingly or not, in a subtle yet undeniable embrace that ends in either suffocation, or liberation. Suffocation if we do not love Her. Liberation if we do. As simple as that. However, the requirements of this love are perhaps different for every individual, since the Mother has a unique relationship with each of Her children.[69]

The most important requirement, of course, is to love Her *and* all Her children. However, this axiom does not imply that one must lie down and be walked upon by others. Oh no, we must remember- this is Kali. And the raging love of Kali does not ask for complacency. She asks for volatile, passionate, libertine love. In fact, it is Her demand for Her children's emancipation that causes Her to come with fire and force in order to drive Her children towards their own divine perfection. She is ruthless, and She is love, for She is ruthless love.

This raging love of the Mother reminds me of a certain species of owl in which the female, it is said, is a generous caregiver of her young until they are ready to spread their own wings. But when the fledglings have grown to the age when they must fly, She throws them out of the nest, sending them plummeting to the ground where the law of the jungle leaves only two options- fly, or die.

And even when the soft-hearted father owl comes swooping down to aid and protect the young ones who have not yet risen in the wind, the mother owl comes tearing wildly out of the nest and drives him off, for She knows that love is not always about coddling and comfort; She knows that this world is a hard and unforgiving place, and the only way to give Her children a fighting chance is to be more hard and more unforgiving than the world.

This is Kali. This is Her love. Fly or die. She will not come to assist you. She is against you. And She is against you because She loves you. If you get sucked into Her gravity, into Her darkened soul, you will turn into ashes and vanish. And she will try to suck you in and hold you. She will pull you down into the pit of her black abyss, and She will close the door and devour you. And that is Her love. Because if you have not the strength to fly from Her bondage, you have not the right to fly. But if you love yourself enough to fight back, to grow and push and thrash and dance and scream and sing and fly, then alone will you have gleaned what Kali's dark, destructive love has to offer. Otherwise you are finished.

In that deep, gravitational pull I felt through my *soror's* soul and into Kali's gravity, I knew then that Her depth was so immense, so powerful, and so suffocating to anyone who had not yet learned how to fly, that I recoiled from the black hole of Her dark love, spread my wings, and looked towards the sky.

I had experienced too much expansion, too much liberation, too much disentanglement from the profane plane already, and had no desire to descend unwillingly into the claustrophobic matrix of the Goddess's womb.

Perhaps it was the case that it was Her love that was sucking me down, forcing me to grow strong enough to repel Her, but it was my intent that was lifting me from the ground, and I vowed that I would not go down.

I had just learned that I was no longer responsible for walking any one else's path. But to be sure I still had to walk my own. And my path was that of transcendence. I wanted freedom. I chose freedom. I chose to fly.[70]

*

ten

I chose to fly from the gravitational pull of that smothering Mother, and to ascend to the rarified Sky.

I swore allegiance to Krishna, to the limitless distance of liberation from this paradigm, and to the emancipation of my spirit from Her mighty talons.

I suppose it was this immense intent and determination of mine, as well as Krishna's benevolent descent upon my consciousness, which soon took me out and away farther than I could ever have imagined- for such a distance cannot be imagined, because it goes far beyond everything, including imagination.

This transcendent exodus began on the train as my *soror* and I departed Calcutta, while I was tearing myself away from the energetic constraints of the dark Mother, heading south towards a mountain renowned for its cosmic

communion with the ever-free Father- Mt. Arunachala.

On that train ride I slowly but undeniably became untangled from the Mother's clutches, and therefore became assimilated into absolute, liberation consciousness. At least this is what I called it at first, for I had never experienced such a tremendous release from all that is.

I had floated out of this paradigm, out of humanity, out of the world, and had entered a subtle consciousness which goes far beyond anything that exists. Anything. For there is nothing which exists which is as subtle as this non-existent, liberated consciousness. It is pure awareness, nothing more, and it is not bound by anything within this realm or any other.

I had been taken across the great divide by Krishna himself. I had received the benediction of transcendental consciousness. I was now outside of all that is, was, or will be. I was free.

It was an incredible experience to receive this initiation while humming southward on a crammed and noisy Indian train. It was truly incredible to be a part of such a profane, involved, manifested milieu which existed on that train, and yet to be totally apart from it as well. I had entered the subtle realm of eternal, transcendental awareness, and suddenly all the words that I had read years earlier in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Uddhava Gita*- in which Krishna expounds the actuality of this transcendent realm, which is beyond everything that exists, no matter what- made sense, and I realized that I had arrived in the unbound place of which he was talking.

I knew then that in order to get there you have to take all things that exist in any realm, visible or invisible, physical or metaphysical, obvious or obscure, material or mental, and, enclosing them into a singular event, step outside of that event altogether; in doing so you become the subtle, transcendent consciousness which lies outside of the one event of all that is. You have to let go of everything to go beyond everything. This is detached peace.

Nothing but conscious clear space and peace lies beyond all realms, beyond all ideas and understandings, beyond self and source, beyond being and non-being, for beyond everything is the realm of eternal, transcendent consciousness.

To enter transcendental consciousness is to become the tranquil, reactionless space. To get to that liberated space you cannot associate yourself with the plane of manifestation, nor with the mind, nor with any spirit of force, no matter what, for liberation consciousness is not in any way related to worldly or even otherworldly actions or non-actions; it is *absolutely* independent of all realms.

Whereas this plane embodies all dualities that are yet one- the invisible and visible, male and female, good and evil, etcetera- transcendental consciousness is beyond all duality, and cannot be compared, or related to anything, however sacred or profane.

Neither can transcendental consciousness be apprehended by the senses nor the mind, for it is absolute, inviolable, effortless, identitiless awareness.

In order to get there, as I have said, you have to let go of everything. You have to let all of manifestation be, and you have to penetrate through and beyond it, for transcendental consciousness is far more subtle than any form of manifestation or thought. Beyond self and source lies this liberated, eternal

awareness.

This liberation is different than enlightenment, because enlightenment is caught up in the idea of wisdom, of understanding; but with the attainment of liberating, transcendental consciousness you don't necessarily understand anything, and yet you are *free*.

Transcendental consciousness *is* peace, and is a peace unlike any peace in the relative field, for it is not associated with nor mirrored by unpeace. Transcendental peace is absent of all qualities; it is a nothingness that yet *is*.

This is the realm of unity, of oneness, which is beyond anything that is composed of definition, duality, or opposition.

The mind and the eyes inherently divide and fragment the world which lies before us, and therefore cannot be used as tools to realize the One. The One, subtle, eternal, transcendental consciousness lies neither within nor without. It is apprehended only when anything that can be thought of or experienced is released.

As the self emerges out of form, out of the duality of existence and non-existence, of life and death, it enters the timeless space of eternity.

I look back now on earlier years along my path, and see how this transcendental consciousness was attempting to come through to my awareness by penetrating the thick cloud of my unwitting dilemmas.

In fact, as a young man I would often 'liberate' my paradigmatic consciousness by inwardly acknowledging to myself a de-affirmation of this human paradigm; I would do this through a subtle method, by consciously perceiving that reality is "*not-I*, and, *not-this*".

Although I never experienced anything, at that time, like I was experiencing now, somewhere in the dark recesses of my eternity I knew that I had to go beyond everything in order to be aware of my true, subtle, immortal nature.

Krishna had granted me an immense boon by assisting my attainment of transcendental consciousness. And yet, perhaps I was destined to arrive at this liberating awareness at some point anyway, because I had often categorically stated many times in the past that I did not want to come back to this plane nor this paradigm, ever again. I had become incredibly discontented and bored with the whole mad show, and I wanted to be done with it once and for all. I wanted to leap off of the cyclic wheel of becoming, only I did not know how. But now it had happened. I had become liberated through my blind ambition not to be sucked back in to the dark Mother's great gravity. Krishna had heard my call, and had carried me into the vast reaches of the eternal void of awareness. I had attained eternal, omnipresent, transcendental consciousness.[71]

To become eternal is to awaken to that which is beyond anything bound to time. To go beyond time is to go beyond becoming. To go beyond becoming is to *be*, but not in the sense of anything that has a being, for this eternity is a subtle awareness which ought never be compared nor confused with any partiality, any thing, or any event. Only the negation of all that is will offer a glimpse of that which cannot be negated.

*

eleven

The subtle, transcendental awareness is so fragile when it is first encountered that any effortful action which is done in relation to the temporal realm will quickly pull the individual's consciousness back down into this human paradigm.

I was pulled back down. Down I came, down into this universe, down into this galaxy, down into our solar system, down to earth, down, down, farther down, back into India, into the train, and back into the bustle of this human plane.

After a brief stop in Madras, my *soror* and I headed for Mt. Arunachala- the destination which had provoked the entire spectacular pilgrimage which we were now temporally experiencing.

I say that Mt. Arunachala was the original goal of our journey because our whole trip had been motivated not only by an inner hunger to return to India, but also by an intensely focused dream which I had perhaps six months earlier. In the dream I was shown an overhead view of the map of India, and then a hand moved across the map, charting a similar course to which we had just taken over the last month. Then, with unquestionably deliberate intent, a finger from the hand pointed directly at the place on the map where Mt. Arunachala stands, and a small circle was drawn around the area. I awoke and knew that the guidance had been given, and I would follow.

Upon arriving in Tiruvannamalai, the horrid little town at the foot of the holy Mt. Arunachala, my *soror* and I booked into a hotel and then went out for an initial wander through the streets and alleyways nearby. As such I soon began to lose more touch with the great distance of the subtle transcendental consciousness which had so profoundly opened up in me on the train earlier. I was immersed in action, and so had been pulled away from the eternal non-action.

I realize now why Krishna was ever exhorting Arjuna to "give up the fruits of the action", because to give up the fruits of action is to release all outcome, expectation, and passionate attachment to anything that is happening, and so to remain in the distant, detached, transcendent state. Without such surrender of the fruits, one remains bound energetically into the goals and parameters of the paradigm and therefore can no longer transcend beyond it.

Only after giving up the fruits of all action can one be intimate with the transcendent, effortless non-doer, while acting as the involved, effortful doer. Only by not caring about the ephemeral, can one enter into the eternal.

Nevertheless, I was still chasing the fruit, and was back in the non-eternal paradigm, and so we spent a few days recuperating from the two-day train journey which had brought us south, and wandered aimlessly around and through the pollution and ugliness which chronically pervades every Indian town and city. However, although the main streets of Tiruvannamalai were no less grotesque than any other in the country, once we were off of the major thoroughfares there was a peaceful and pristine community to be found.

An amazing aspect of these areas of Tiruvannamalai, as in other southern Indian villages, is the ubiquitous chalk mandalas drawn on the ground in front of each house every morning.

The mandala is a circular symbol of wholeness, and the variety and artistry contained in the numerous mandalas drawn throughout the backstreets of the town were splendid, living signs of the sacred wholeness of the mountain itself, and indeed the eternal soul within us all.

Rising above those chalk mandalas is Mt. Arunachala, a divine and mythical protrusion emerging out of the rocky and dry land of Tamil Nadu. It is said to be a giant lingam, caused by Shiva's descent onto the earth at that very spot. And, to be sure, it is a geophysical wonder which exudes a cosmic peace not unlike the Ganges at Rishikesh.[72]

It was upon the slopes of this mythical mountain that Ramana Maharishi, the divine Hindu master of the twentieth century, spent his entire adulthood, and remained there, often in retreat for years on end, deep in contemplation in one of the unique cave houses that exist on the mountain for that very purpose.

After two days of rest my *soror* and I took a rickshaw across town to visit the ashram created by Ramana, and there we found an immense crowd gathered for the centenary celebration of his birth. We had no prior knowledge this gathering was to happen and we took the synchronicity as a serendipitous sign. And no doubt it was, for I had come to the area to experience Mt. Arunachala alone, and had never read anything by Ramana Maharishi, nor knew much about his life and teachings. Nor did I know what effect his living spirit would have upon me during the days which followed. But that effect would soon become apparent.

My *soror* and I mingled through the Indian crowd for a bit, strolled around the ashram grounds, and then made our way into the main meditation hall where we found an empty spot amongst the pilgrims and supplicants, and sat down in silence.

Almost instantly I fell into communion with Ramana Maharishi's spirit. In that deep connection he and I began a subtle conversation on aspects of the spiritual life, during which I was given understandings on the nature of the role of the spiritual mentor in the world, and the ways in which the spirit can be exercised amidst humanity.

One thing we discussed was the peril of being too open to the chaos and karma of others in one's vicinity. This was an important topic to cover, because out of their love for all agonizing humanity around them, both Ramana Maharishi and Ramakrishna had died at about the age of sixty from cancer; they had taken on the clogged spirits of those around them, and had thus been clogged by the overwhelming amount of dis-ease within humanity. Both of these great men could have lived on much longer by avoiding intimacy and contact with those who came to them for guidance and succor, but in the end neither of them could turn their love away from their fellow man; they died willingly, out of love.

I honor the decisions these two immortal souls made, and the compassion and courage which spurned them to give up their own lives for the benefit of others. If there is such a thing as sacrifice on earth, then these two

have accomplished it. However, I have grown into a different temperament, for I was also born with a very open spirit, and have suffered over the years in my own way from such a defenseless disposition. But after becoming aware of the perils of such openness in my early thirties, I struggled to close that chasm within myself, and to prevent others from penetrating my defenses and sending their troubled energy into me.

Therefore, during my subtle discussion with Ramana Maharishi, I communicated my sense of the dangers of such openness, and admitted that I for one had no desire, even if out of compassion, to take on too much of mankind's pathos, and declared to Ramana that I would prefer to express blessings *out* into others, as I had done in Rishikesh, rather than receive unconscious unblessings from them.

I recognized that Ramana understood my position and seemed to consider my intent correct for my spirit and disposition. At least he did not consider me a coward or a knave, because after this communion I would encounter his spirit twice more, in still more profound and direct interactions than I had on this privileged day.

These two episodes came about a few days later, as my *soror* and I made our way up the winding, cobbled path which begins behind the ashram, and weaves its way up the mountain towards the cave houses in which Ramana Maharishi spent many years in solitude and silence. It is within these sacred enclaves that his immortal spirit is completely present and available. And it is here that I received his great and benevolent teachings.

Upon arriving on our first visit to the cave house, my *soror* and I took up meditative positions inside one of the inner chambers, and the communion began.

What I learned that day was something I had always known but which had never before crystallized within me with the certitude I now felt while in communion with Ramana's consciousness.

What I realized was that the self in everyone is the same self, and that in loving others we love our own self, and in hating others we hate our own self also. It is the subtle nature of this undivided oneness which must be awoken in order to remove the separative consciousness which divides us from each other, and therefore from our greater selves.

I understood clearly that every I is the same I; that every I is one I. My I and your I are the same I. Many forms veil the formless I, but we are all the same I. And that is why we all call ourselves I.

All judgment ends, all hatred ends, all division ends when every I is known as one I.

And since every I is the same I, there is no individual I, only everything. One. For the self is everyone, but no single individual, and the self is everything, but no single thing.

Within such mystical oneness, there is no such duality as me and you. Only I. There is no such duality as us and them. Only I. I am I. You are I. We are I. One I. The same I. I to I. One I.

Without knowing and feeling this underlying unity, all suffering, war, and despair will continue.

But when each I is known as every I, then there is no separation, no

judgment, no hatred, but only I, one I, which is love. For love is the absence of separation, the absence of division, and the absence of 'other'. In love, I *is* every I. One I. I.

This was an incredible teaching on the nature of oneness. After my *soror* and I left the cave house that day I felt immense gratitude and well-being, knowing that I had just received perhaps the most important lesson there is to receive in this human realm.

But to be sure I was in for another lesson, one which would force me to abort any idea of separation or duality altogether. This time though it would not come from the blessed countenance of Ramana Maharishi, it would come from the Dark Goddess herself. Amen.

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Part III
THE UNION OF SPIRIT AND FLESH

"Primus homo de terra terranus. Secundus homo caelo caelestis."
(First, man of the earth, terrestrial. Second, man of the sky, celestial.)
Corinthians I, 15:47

one

There is a fallow upheaval awakening from its dormant sleep, a raging blossom of love and unity rising out of our howling souls towards each other.

There is an apocalyptic disentangling, a galactic renovation, a novel fusion re-creating our abandoned home.

Our lives are ephemeral bridges between the eternal spirit above, and the eternal soul below. I know that, for I have learned.

My lesson came on the shores of the tropical paradise of Goa, where my *soror* and I had retreated as an escape from the turmoil and tension of India proper. And what an escape it was, for to enter Goa is to leave India.

We had left India, but during our exodus to the west coast of Goa I had regained the liberating effects of transcendental consciousness. And so I was once again floating in that removed state of non-being as we came upon the glorious sands of being. I had once again gone beyond the troubles and confusions of this world, beyond the attachment and the revulsion, beyond need and fulfillment, beyond worry and woe. I had grabbed hold of the sky once again, and this time I would not let go and come down.

I believed then that through the guidance of Christ and the assistance of Krishna, having crossed over to the shore of transcendental consciousness, and thus being liberated from the bondage of this realm of birth and death, I would help others achieve the same, if they so desired. But, as I said, I was in for a lesson; I was soon to realize that to attain transcendental consciousness is to have attained an immensely important, incredibly subtle and profound aspect of the eternal nature of existence, but it is only one half of the coin, and without the other half, such remote and empyrean awareness is but the false redemption of a person sitting in a movie theater and feeling at peace because they are not part of the action.

This is a conclusion which only the mind could arrive at. For the person, sitting in the theater, watching a movie in which they play no part, is still a person in the theater, and therefore remains as part of the greater play of existence- the part that is the body.

Given that, my *soror* and I arrived in a small beach-side hamlet on the coast of Goa late one evening, where we settled into a pleasant little bungalow, and, after completing the minimal tasks required to feel at home, we fell into the gentle rhythm that is easily attainable in such seaside destinations.

As such I continued to be in the great abyss of transcendental consciousness, and therefore remained in a liberated awareness, freed from the paradigm of this world and humanity. However, I had forgotten that my body remained behind to take part in life as it exists on this great Mother Earth.

I had gone to the extreme of transcendental consciousness, to the zenith of the great liberated space which is outside of everything associated with this realm, and what happened is... I got burned. Badly burned. Literally.

This came the day after our arrival in Goa. We had gone down to the beach, laid out our giant sarong, and settled down to bask in the sun. I sat there in the serenity of liberation and detachment from this realm, and in that distant realm of consciousness I lost body consciousness and within an incredibly brief period I received the worst sunburn I have ever experienced. I got burned, burned like I had never been burned before. Parts of my body were so badly torched that I received almost second degree burns. I was aghast. I had only been out a couple of hours, the same as my *soror*, who had suffered none of the calamity which had now overtaken me.

The next few nights were a fit of agony and discomfort the likes of which I had never experienced before. I could not believe that I had received that level of a scalding in such a short time. But the reason for this was not simply a lack of recognition of the sun's power, it was a disregard for the consciousness of the body, and of all matter, for that matter.

I came to this understanding on the second night of my writhing and pain. In one of the brief periods in which I had fallen into a disquieted sleep during that night, I had a quick visitation from the Goddess herself, and in that brief visit She stated one thing, and one thing only; with matter-of-fact, compassionate wisdom, She declared: "The flesh is Divine." And then She departed, and I awoke, and understood immediately how my partisanship to the subtle, transcendental consciousness had created a massive imbalance, and the other half of my being- my flesh side- had screamed back at me with a ruthless howl the likes of which I will never forget.[73]

Even today, when I enter into that great space which transcends this realm altogether, I can feel a tingling sensation in the exact same places where I had been so badly scorched. For consciousness, the spirit, and the flesh are intimately connected, and what happened to my flesh in Goa was a direct result of my consciousness departing from it.

I now proclaim unabashedly that this divinity of the flesh, and of all matter, is absolute. This is a reality which I had understood in the past, but the draw of liberation through the incredible release of transcendental consciousness had overtaken me, and I had left this realm like that man who watches a movie in the theater and is glad to not be a part in the action. But in fact I had not left the action of this realm, only my consciousness had left, while my body remained behind to deal with the departure.

As I have said, I had already known and experienced the absoluteness of the flesh and all matter many times, but at the zenith of liberation consciousness such things are all too easily forgotten or obscured. This is why so many things in this world become lopsided, and run counter to the needs of the flesh, the earth, and the soul, all of which are the same one thing.

The thrill of the freedom of transcendental consciousness, of being liberated from a realm in which I had flailed and struggled for so long, was such a relief and an inviting sanctuary that I was drawn like Icarus to the sun, forgetting that I was made of substance, and that the great distance I had achieved was worth nothing without a similarly profound closeness.

I had not yet merged the transcendent *with* the immanent; I had not yet blended the two into one. When I had rejected the Mother's gravity back in the Kali Temple, I had created a chasm which I now had to bridge once again, for I

had thought it important to escape the Mother, and it is. But I did not know that in the love bridge between spirit and flesh, you cannot escape from Her, you can only escape *with* Her.

Only the mind divorced from the body could imagine such a necessary union as inessential. Only the mind divorced from the body can create wild fantasies about how things could or should be. But only the body can say how things *are*. For the mind divorced from the body says "I am right and they are wrong"; but the body says "there is no 'they'", for all flesh is one flesh. The mind divorced from the body says "you should do this, and you shouldn't do that"; but the body says "there are no shoulds", there is only the organic rhythm of *natural* being. The mind divorced from the body says "this is good, and that is bad"; but the body says "there is no such duality", there only *is*, and that isness is one. The mind divorced from the body says "do this, do that, run here, run there, learn, and strive, and despair, and consume, and discard, and work, and wake, and see the clock, and watch the clock, and die by the clock", and the body says "Fuck you!"

There is a great difference between belief and actuality. Actuality *is*. Belief is a matrix laid over the actuality, modifying it experientially to coincide with the belief system of the individual without affecting the substratum of actuality. The important thing is to rid consciousness of all preconceptions and 'ideas', and cause it to descend into the actuality of *isness*, so as to experience the true nature of matter. Therefore consciousness must grow *with* being, in union, rather than as a spotlight projected onto the scene from above. Otherwise, from such a removed height, consciousness takes on no substantial, actual part, but only propagates an eternal non-reality- a 'play' which denies the reality of its actors.

To bring consciousness down into the reality of this realm, is to draw the spirit into the flesh.

And it is not until the complete union of transcendental consciousness *with* the immanent, feeling soul occurs, that the eternal, whole self is truly 'liberated' from the confines of this realm. This new unity includes not only the subtle, transcendental consciousness permeating all that is, but also the gross, immanent being that is all that *is*.

The mind may know what is illusion, but the body knows what is real. The mind may know how to think, but the body knows how to *feel*.

To feel is to enter the domain of the absolute. To feel is to enter the flesh, to expand the heart, and so to enter into union with all other life.

To feel is to become one with the Goddess, which is to become the All.

After one awakens to the detached, transcendental consciousness, one must then also awaken to the intimate, immanent soul of matter (*anima mundi*). For then, through the dissolution of separative identity, one becomes the macrocosmic *yin* and *yang*, the entirety of the Self *and* Soul, male *and* female, consciousness and matter, spirit and flesh.

And to combine such polarities is to become the embodiment of the Great Cosmic Father, and Great Cosmic Mother, which is to *become* Avalon. *Om, baby!*

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two

I maintain that the great emancipation arrived at, through transcendental consciousness, is an immensely important, immensely subtle aspect of the eternal nature of the self. But I also maintain now that the divinity and immortality of the flesh is equally as important. Yin is nothing without yang, spirit is nothing without flesh.

Again, to attain transcendental consciousness and to then believe with relief that one has been liberated 'out' of the parameters of the flesh is a false conclusion that only the mind divorced from the body and heart can accept. This is because the soul- of the pseudo-free individual who has attained transcendental consciousness- remains a reality, and remains trapped in matter, and is now hopelessly lost from the spirit, which has unwittingly floated away from life by believing that all, including the soul, is nothing but a fantasy.

The problem is that consciousness can perceive and know all that is, but it cannot *feel*, for feeling is a function of the body and soul. And so when the spirit has flushed the whole human drama and flesh down the cosmic toilet, by assuming it all to be a dirty illusion, the soul gets thrown out as well.

Fortunately this abandonment of the soul is actually an impossibility- for the spirit and soul are linked eternally, and inextricably. And the agony of this massive separation, felt completely by the flesh and soul, will eventually draw the hovering spirit back down into matter to retrieve Her, be it in this incarnation, or in a future embodiment. The agony of separation will not go away, for flesh, like spirit, is also eternal, even though its form changes shape eternally; the absoluteness and eternity of form is not to be found in the variety of 'forms' which matter takes, but in the immortal soul of matter itself.

Transcendental consciousness is therefore not about leaving this realm, but about awakening to the aspect of the eternal Self which is not bound to this realm, though it entirely permeates this realm. This is the consciousness which Christ stated was "In, but not of" this world.

There is also, however, a thoroughly immanent, eternal consciousness, which is 'in and of' this world, and therefore is bound to this realm- though not in the same way the suffering, misperceiving, unawakened self is bound; the immanent soul is bound to this realm because it *is* this realm- it *is* the consciousness of matter.

This immanence is the eternal yin, whereas transcendental consciousness is the eternal yang, both of which are essential polarities producing wholeness. We must be 'in, but not of', and we must also be 'in *and* of'.

Whereas transcendental consciousness is entirely free from all constraints and characteristics, and is therefore an incredibly important consciousness into which we should awaken, an important *caveat* remains: that is- transcendental consciousness *transcends* the duality and limitations of *this* realm, but it still remains only one half of the great cosmic duality, of which immanence is its counterpart. Therefore, during the pursuit of, and after the

awakening to transcendental consciousness, the liberated individual must not fall under the delusion that life is an 'illusion', as many historical mystics and current spiritual books suggest. For it is only in balancing out the yang- transcendental consciousness- with the yin- immanent matter-consciousness- that one attains to true wholeness, and therefore becomes a living aspect of the Tree of Life, uniting heaven and earth.

Thus it is always important to remember that no matter what degree of cosmic consciousness, freed indisputably from the human paradigm, we have attained, the flesh, the earth, and all matter are yet divine, and need to be attended to, intimately embraced, and acknowledged as part of the whole self. The mind must permeate through and enter the viscera, because Her is *her*e.

To retrieve Her, the soul, out of the confines of matter, to make Her smothered voice a song, to lift Her up into freedom, is to turn away from the outward show, and to turn within to Her home.

Without this metaphysical grounding in the physical, the awakening to transcendental consciousness will only lead to an existential abandonment of life, of the inner soul, and thus will have as much functional value as a kite without a string. The spirit will become derelict in the cosmos.

To operate in this realm is to accept this realm, to truly and fully *be* this realm, which is to be *real*. In and of.

The serpent needs wings as the wings need the serpent. The flesh needs the spirit, as the spirit needs the flesh.[74]

Immanence is as essential as transcendence.

We must be in this realm *and* beyond it. In, and of, and not-of. Immanent *and* transcendent. Relative *and* absolute. Consciousness *and* matter. Spirit *and* flesh. *Om, baby!*

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three

As I have said, consciousness may exist eternally, but being also exists eternally, though its form ever changes. To love *being* is to cause the flesh to dissolve into the boundaryless oneness of mystic matter. In this way substance is what connects the spirit to the soul. Substance is the bridal chamber within which these two eternities are wedded and consummate the Eucharistic marriage of the spirit and soul which is flesh.

When consciousness enters matter- when spirit enters flesh- that consciousness will only feel confined if it misperceives the flesh as a specific 'part' of the all, rather than recognizing that all matter is one great, cosmic whole. When matter is experienced as vast as is consciousness, there is no sense of limitation, only an immense, glorious union of the King and Queen, within the now limitless individual; matter is not limiting unless you think that you are *only* a specific part of matter.

By entering into matter we expand it; when consciousness descends into form, form itself becomes unlimited, and grows to meet consciousness in the dual dance of ecstatic oneness.

Thus the form must be hallowed as form, and the space must be hallowed as space, because both consciousness and form are immortal. These are separated until they are united within us.

To be the immortal, transcendent, all-pervading male spirit, *and* the immortal, immanent, all-pervading female soul, is to be the subtle, invisible androgynous 'I' which lives above, behind, and within all existence and experience.

Emerging from our room in Goa the next morning, after awakening to my abandonment of the flesh, I noticed that someone had hung a large beach towel on a clothes-line just outside of our door, and on it there was the design of the union of the sun and moon- the marriage of Sol and Luna. This is a symbol used in alchemy for wholeness- for macrocosmic androgyny, where the union of the Father and Mother occurs *within* the individual.[75]

Later that day I did something I had never done before- I mixed a cocktail of red wine and white port- symbolizing the convergence of the Father and Mother- and drank down the slurry in honor of their blessed union within me.

Merging the female into the male, one becomes another archetype altogether- the *sacred androgyne*- which is pure male consciousness and pure female energy, united in an inward marriage dance that is itself a microcosmic mirror of the cosmic union danced throughout this unwitting world.

When this union occurs within us we are no longer foreigners within matter; we are no longer non-being confused by the event of being. Where once we declared ourselves to be ‘in, but not of’, now we experience the marriage within ourselves of male and female, spirit and soul, consciousness and isness. Now we are ‘in, and of’.

As the light from the sun coming through a magnifying glass, though transfigured, is still the light from the sun, though now with focused intention, I became absolutely physical, absolutely of this paradigm; infinity focused *as* this specific existence.

By accepting myself *as* matter, I found my soul within matter, and then matter opened up into a great space wherein there lies a boundaryless intimacy with all things.[76]

By focusing on the Mother and Father in union *within* me, I became a temple of the divine whole.

When a person takes on the flesh and becomes one with all matter, he or she integrates the outer spirit with the inner soul, and adds the frequency of matter to the frequency of mind, which together create a whole new, subtle harmony. Now that person is not only outside of existence looking in- as the male spirit naturally is- he or she is also ‘in and of’ matter, which the female soul naturally is. The individual has become a new person, now a living bridge between two separate eternities- spirit and flesh.

This all-pervasive consciousness/being is the union of the eternal Female with the eternal Male, and this union is the subtle Self which is both transcendent *and* immanent, in that it pervades all, yet is not bound at all.

To become the one all-pervading consciousness is one thing, to become the one all-pervading matter is another. To be both, and to make those two macrocosmic eternities into a singular event, is another commingling altogether. These are the stages of cosmic unity, wherein matter and consciousness, spirit and flesh, and form and formlessness become the same great subtle sea in, and through, and of which the now liberated 'self' awakens in, and of, and as, the one event of which it is, but is not bound by that which it is. *Om, baby!*

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four

Having finally connected the transcendental, Father spirit, with the immanent, Mother soul, during our stay in Goa, I dreamt a dream one night in which I was told that I was "helping Narayana."

I awoke and was somewhat befuddled, as I had no prior knowledge of that name. Soon enough, however, I learned from a book on Hindu mythology that Narayana is an uncommon name for Vishnu, but was originally a pseudonym for Brahma. Therefore I realized I was being told that my self was casting light on the Self; that is, I was helping God the Father become intimate with God the Mother.[77]

From this experience, as well as other supporting intuitions and dreams from my past, I know that the microcosmic self is an essential component to the cosmic control of this realm. And by that I mean that humans are not mere recipients of divine design and decree, we are also necessary, integral, valuable and powerful aspects of the whole. In this sense every individual has a voice and power to shift the entire universe, for God requires man in order to understand and modify the nature of *being*.[78]

As aspects of the God and Goddess, we are intimately connected with the whole. There is no division. If we scream in anguish, our Godselves hear us. If we raise a cheer, our Godselves rejoice. If we give thanks, or Godselves are humbled.

Individuality *and* universality are essential; the leaf is the tree is the leaf; everything is of the same whole, but that whole is made healthy through differentiation. This is the ecology of spirit, wherein due to the interdependence of all beings, the greater the diversity of individuals, the greater is the strength of the whole.

I know now that God must *assume* my experience in the assumption of my self, just as I assume God's in the descent of the Self, for we are one. I am God experiencing my creation. I have survived the perilous descent into flesh, and now am like a distant colonialist with a direct phone-line to the monarchy.

But don't get the idea that the dominoes of wholeness fell in perfect pattern right out before me, nor that things went smoothly and in harmony for me. I have attempted to relate the glories and gore as they persisted side by side for me.

Things rarely go smoothly on this plane. There is always a push, and a push back. And though I was often at peace and accepting of the generous guidance I was given, I was at times equally discontented and enraged. And yet I do not count these supposed lesser human qualities as negative, for to block the flow of emotions is to inhibit the motions coming to and through you. In fact, at times rage is more divine than acquiescence, and confusion more appropriate than certitude.

It is hard not to be dissatisfied. I should know, for I have attained immortality, and still I am dissatisfied. However, to realize this lack of satisfaction, built into the human disposition, is to come to a certain type of peace. Not the peace of the transcendent Self, but rather a human peace; a limited peace that is a consolation in a sea of human unpeace.

I say therefore, in humility, that if at times I engaged selflessly in service to the greater cause, I also turned often enough with great frustration against the light, and pushed forward towards my own soul's needs, with more than a little might. But in the end I realized that God needs this form of creative rebellion, for we are the ones in the living *now* of life, and only in true response and true expression of our true feelings do we convey the reality of this realm to the consciousness of God, the Father, and to the soul of God, the Mother. Only in loving our inner souls do we mature in our relationship with our divine parents. Only when we love ourselves can we truly love God.

If my spirit and soul raged or rebelled against God, it was only so that I could become more like God, and therefore become one with God, for God is neither dependent nor independent, God is an interdependent One. In order for God to be all, all must have the courage to be God. Unity *is* diversity.

Thus it is healthy to rebel against God, for God learns through us also. We expand God by becoming God, not by laying down in lazy surrender. In becoming God we add to God, we do not divide God. Pour a bucket of water into the ocean, and the ocean remains a great sea, only now it is one bucket larger. This is true devotion: to become ourselves so completely, so guiltlessly- even if it means rebelling and raging against God- that in our wholeness we become God, and so add to the God we had just rejected.

This is the fire by which the blade is forged, the struggle from which the muscle grows strong, the poison which is also the cure. At times, to stand against God is to become one with God, as Saul turned St. Paul proved to us many centuries ago.

Only that which stands apart from God creates a shadow; the sun radiates only light, and only that which detaches from the sun becomes an 'object' which creates a shadow.

However, to become separate from God- to create a shadow- and then to re-integrate that separateness and shadow back into God, is to expand the Godhead beyond its original radiance.

Thus Lucifer- the light bearer- who has fallen away from God, is then reintegrated back into the One.

The light pours into us from outside. The dark pushes out of us from within. But as we deny ourselves and allow only the outside light to push its way in, and do not allow the dark within to push its way out, whatever is inside of us becomes repressed, ugly, and angry.

It is only when we honor our inner beings- the dark, mysterious self behind the eyes- and push back against the external, that we develop a sacred space within ourselves, and attain to a great inner emptiness and peace.

The parts deny the whole, the parts rebel against the whole, and yet the parts fulfill the whole.

This is unity in diversity. This is individuation *and* union; to merge oneself into the all, become all, and yet remain distinct enough to be individual- an integrated aspect of the whole, an eternal part of the eternal whole, a unique self in a sea of Self, an immortal, inviolable, recognizable pattern in the carpet of the cosmos.

To become such is to be like an eternal rock in the ephemeral river of life.

This is the *solve et coagula* stage of alchemy, wherein the macrocosmic, ethereal self condenses into the diamond body, and one becomes individually 'established' in eternity.

To get to the inviolable distillate of the subtle self, and then condense it down into a novel eternity, is indeed like smelting invisible gold out of gross ore; to do so is to crystallize the invisible God within, out of the grosser apparitions, and so to become an actualized, separate eternity; an infinite island of self, in the boundless ocean of Self.

This is alchemical individuation- the creation of the indestructible diamond body, the ascension into the eternal realm, the apotheosis of the profane self, the addition of a permanent spice into the great stew of being, distinct but not separate, an inimitable lotus blooming above the illimitable mire.

Thus only the inner maverick makes it across into nothingness with yet his small self still in tact. Only the maverick transports eternity into now, infinity into the infinite, the ocean into the drop. Because the maverick has broken free from the paradigm, and yet remains within the paradigm in order to transform it. This is the renegade within who is Christ.

Only such ones, who are not of the paradigm, but are of themselves, can be in the paradigm unscathed. Belief in oneself is the only validation of one's eternity. To know *and* to be. In *and* of.

The microcosm is the actualized, manifest tension between macrocosmic energies. To exist as a microcosmic eternity is to be a living nexus between dynamic forces, and therefore to ever be pushed and pulled within by invisible struggles. This is to be outside of duality and the battle between opposed energies, but therefore to be the battlefield itself.

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five

Under the sky, and upon the earth, we continued our stay in Goa.

A couple of sublime cosmic happenings poked their heads out of the ether while we were there.

Firstly, and interestingly enough, given the events of which I have just

spoken, while staying in that pristine beach village, my *soror* and I had serendipitously been guided to rent a room from an emanation of the Mother[79].

I conclude that no matter how far I tried to flee from Her after Calcutta, She was ever present in my life.

And secondly, I suddenly recalled the original dream I had of the Dingle Peninsula in Ireland, which had sent us to that sacred area now half-way around the world. In the dream of Dingle there had been many houses build on stilts, but in actuality there are no such houses like these in Dingle. However, there are many such huts like these in Goa.

As well, from the middle of the beach town that we were staying at in Goa, the view south looked incredibly similar to the Kerry peninsula, which runs south of the Dingle. The similarity was striking. And not only that, there were two small islands off of Goa, as one looked southward down the coast, which appeared quite like Skelig Michael and Little Skelig- the monastic islands off the coast of Kerry- and the Goan islands were visually in the exact same relative position as those off of Kerry. This was indeed an odd coincidence in a world where there is no such thing as coincidence. Oh no, this realm is subtly choreographed and administered by the great architects beyond all knowing. All places and people are sacred and surreal. All events are holographic and holy. Nothing happens separately from the rest. Everything is intermingled, mirrored, and interwoven in a divine matrix of psychedelic obscurity and wonder. Even Goa.[80]

I say 'even' Goa because many people consider Goa to be a mecca for hedonism, licentiousness, and distraction, and therefore devoid of any religious or spiritual significance whatsoever. And, to be sure, all of the aforementioned profane practices exist in great quantity in that small Indian state that is perhaps visited by more westerners than the rest of India combined.

However, I consider Goa holy. As holy as anywhere else. For how could a place brimming with thick forests, rolling green hills, endless magnificent beaches, friendly people, marvelous sunsets, and wholesome food be other than holy? In my mind Goa is a temple of the earth, not to mention a unique commingling of Christian practices hybridized with Indian devotion.

But, as I said, most people view it as otherwise.

A Latin fellow I met during our time there had been living in India for the past seven years, and had wandered as a barefoot pilgrim from holy site to holy site, living along the Ganges for much of his stay, and moving in the presence of a spiritual master for some of that time. This Latin man, who had renounced his earlier life for the higher calling, spoke with great contempt for Goa, claiming that it was an unholy place full of stupid people.

Unfortunately for him, as I know only too well, his 'spiritual' life and rarified contemplations had placed him outside of the flesh and the earth, and had prevented him from recognizing his own body as an inner sanctuary within this great temple of the earth called Goa. From his rarified vantage point he could *see* only the stupid and superfluous human activities, instead of *feeling* the glory of the sacred earth.

For in Goa the true *sadhu* does not come with begging bowl in hand, mantra on his lips, nor scorn for worldly ways on his mind. No, the true earth *sadhu* arrives in Goa with an awe and rapture for the beauty of this spectacle of

matter. The true Goan *sadhu* lies beneath the warm and limitless sun, walks upon the endless, unforgettable shore, and bathes not at the holy ghats of the Ganges, but in the tropical, saline blood of the welcoming Indian Ocean.

The true, flesh and blood Goan *sadhu* fills his belly not with austere alms, but with a generous plate of sumptuous King Fish, washed down with a tall, cold, and bubbly Goan beer. Then he walks out into the star-riddled night, before wandering back to his hut and making love to his mate.

For it is in Goa that a person does not find God in the lofty reaches of the empyrean spirit, but instead in the dark and delicious, divine incarnation of the flesh.

This Latin fellow is an interesting example of one who has yet to build the bridge between spirit and flesh. Although in his earlier days he had lived a sensual life, had been a successful musician, and a father, he eventually turned away from it all in the pursuit of his higher calling. However, there was still a great deal of wild sensuality within him, which he repressed to his own detriment. For if he had accepted this essential Dionysian aspect of his being, as well as his eastern mysticism, he would have spanned the gap that divides Heaven and Earth, and would have become an amalgamation of St. Francis of Assisi, and Casanova. A rare, wholly combination indeed.

Nevertheless, he and I, being two imperfect blokes, enjoyed each other's company during our brief time together.

After all, I had now fully accepted my substance, and so had unified the subtle, eternal consciousness, with gross, immortal matter. And when that is done in a place like Goa, there is nothing left to do but do nothing.

To remain in a place like Goa, where no effort is required to maintain life's inherent needs, is to arrive in the realm of effortlessness. And since every day is like every other day, time slows down and eventually disappears altogether, as each new day blends seamlessly in with the last, and only the eternal, flowing now remains.

When such a timeless state occurs, and all unnecessary variables of life are removed, the effortless self cannot help but rise like a distillate out of the ore.

I had experienced similar effortless timeless periods in the past while camping for lengthy durations in the wilderness, or while caretaking remote coastal cabins and lodges. But now I was in Goa, living softly amidst the soft breeze and infinite ocean. And so I became like the soft breeze and the infinite ocean. Which is to say, I knew once again that it is a beautiful thing… to *be*. I had arrived.

To become effortless is to be the eternal, effortless self. And I was becoming more and more effortless. I was blending gently into Her.

At one point I became so consciously empty and effortless, that a cow which had been grazing nearby must have picked up on my similarly docile vibration, and turned slowly towards me with a curious look, and then meandered over as if to say "Welcome to the ambitionless club."

This may sound like a bit of useless fable or unnecessary trivia, but the soul within recognizes the subtle yet profound shifts which transform who we once were into another being altogether. The external world may have no clue that a new person now stands before them, but the soul knows, and that is all

that matters. And at the moment I- an effortful, accomplishing male- recognized effortlessness, and become effortless, an immense shift happened- I became en*light*ened. Which is to say, I lay down and an immense amount of energy poured in and through me; the cellular structure of my being transformed; the matter of my body entered a higher vibrational rate, as it was infused with the cosmic light from above.

I became lighter of mind, and lighter of body. My en*light*enment had nothing to do with knowledge or realization, but in 'lightening' up, both figuratively and actually.

At the critical union of spirit and flesh, in the effortless awareness of my subtle, eternal being, my gross body was elevated energetically, and it became new. I was transfigured.

That is when I understood Christ's statement- "If thine eye be single thy whole body will be full of light."[81] This is the true en*light*enment, which has nothing to do with wisdom, but is instead the raising of matter to the vibration of light.

When mind and matter are one, and the mind 'lightens up', the body must go with it.[82] This is the elevation of the Mother and all of matter into the higher vibrational rate of spirit.

To go down into matter, the Mother, to love Her, and to rise with Her into the Father's light, is to become the earth ascending.

When the vibration of spirit unites with the vibration of flesh, a whole new harmony is created; a oneness containing all dualities: male and female, consciousness and matter, good and evil, self and other, macrocosm and microcosm, inside and out.

Through my male side I had received Krishna's limitless, liberated consciousness; through my female side I attained union with all matter, the Mother, the entire manifested, warm and integral cosmos. I united spirit and flesh, consciousness and form, and male and female within and as me. I became one with all.

I did not simply come to earth, I *became* the earth, for I found that finite, manifest existence does not confine the infinite, eternal Self; it completes it. For these two in union become a whole new third event- one great, unified, manifest emptiness.

As humanity evolves, this essential unity will bridge all divisions and dissolve all separations. This wholeness will create an all-pervasive consciousness/being, where every I is part of every other I. All of life will then be linked in a divine matrix of spirit and flesh. All individuals will then become unique patterns on the same cosmic carpet; all souls will be distinct, but not separate. One. *Om, baby!*

*

six

When seen from the immense, untroubled distance of the cosmic eye, everything on earth seems placid, well-balanced, fluid, and as it should be. It's like when we look upon a city at night from a distant hill and see only beautiful lights twinkling serenely off in the distance. From such a remote outlook none of the noise nor pandemonium, none of the violence nor anguish, none of the sex nor seduction, nor the dance, the merriment, the corruption, congestion, nor confusion is betrayed for the actuality that it is. From such a distance one may quickly draw the conclusion that nothing really happens there but a gentle and calm twinkling of pretty lights.

It is the same when we look up into the glorious night sky. Above us we see only a breathtaking display of brilliant stars consuming an immensity that is well beyond our ability to comprehend. We can see nothing of the warfare, the plunder, the thrashing, the sorrow, the rage, nor the ecstasy, the love, nor the celebration. From our distance even the apocalyptic violence of a supernova appears as a gorgeous spectacle. We do not hear nor feel the agony of the billions of souls incinerated in the inferno.

Our distance has created an 'object' *from* which we are detached, and with which we are therefore no longer intimate.

It is for this reason that in this era of new age ideas and spiritual charlatans, there are many individuals who claim that all of life is illusion- that existence as we know it is nothing but a dream of the mind. And I now realize this to be an understandable conclusion for anyone who has awoken to transcendental consciousness, but who has yet to awaken to the immanent soul of matter. For when transcendental consciousness happens, and one is suddenly 'outside' of all that is, and one can thus see from a detached perspective that all is but a divine drama which is acted out by sleeping actors, it is quite understandable that one would fall away with a great sigh of relief, having found a safe distance from the turmoil of existence, and remain there, comfortable in the knowledge that all of life is an illusion, and that they are now thankfully free from that illusion. However, I now know this to be a disastrous conclusion.

For whether it be a distant cosmic happening, or a nearby earthly event, none of it matters a scratch to consciousness until the spirit descends into the awaiting maelstrom, and learns for itself the truth and actuality of what it means to truly *be*. This is the Christ born into matter.

It is true that human existence, when looked at from afar, appears to be of the nature of a divine drama, a play, a *lila*, as it is called in India, which runs on eternally. But it is only from such a remote perspective of the cosmic eye that life on earth may then be called an illusion. A more appropriate term for the nature of such a perspective would be 'misperception', in that such a distant consciousness 'misperceives' the true nature of what it means to be human.

To conclude, therefore, that all matter is unreal simply because the human drama is dreamlike is like assuming that simply because a television show is fictitious, the television is unreal as well.

The difficulty for the mind comes in recognizing that the world is real not at the level of the human drama, but at the level of the soul; and therefore to

attain transcendental consciousness is to be liberated from the profane paradigm, from *maya*, but not from the divinity of matter itself.

True liberation is to be 'liberated' from the drama, but not from existence itself, for existence is the essence of the soul, and consciousness is the essence of the spirit, and peace is the essence of their union.

In the attainment of one's wholeness and true nature, the projected outpouring of one's existence transforms out of a drama and into a documentary; for now all of one's actions within the paradigm are *actual* and true expressions of the eternal self, rather than mere entertainments looked upon from a detached creator.

In this sense we descend from the metaphor into the actual, and from the projection onto the scene. The only illusion is illusion. Alchemical individuation is the moment when we become *real*, and not merely phantom actors in the show, for we must come to earth completely, if we are ever to be completed.

To emanate as the sun emanates is to have no relationship to that which has a relationship to you, for the sun would exist without us, but not we without the sun. This is the great transcendence from this plane. However, it is only when the sun and moon- the male and female- are in union, and the sun is energetically drawn into creation, that creation becomes one with the sun.

The sun must love the moon for such a cosmic marriage to bring redemption to the dark world. And so we only truly rise up in our perfection by first descending as God onto Earth, and then rising as the Earth up with God. [83]

As I have said, to stand apart from being, emancipated into transcendental consciousness, is an immensely important function for humanity to become capable of, though no more important than our descent into the very core and absoluteness of this earthly paradigm of flesh.

In the end we must expand in both directions if we are to have the wisdom of a cosmic spirit, and the heart of an earthly soul. We must unite revelation with actualization, *jnana* with *bhakti*[84], and so catalyze the transfiguration arising from the union of spirit and flesh.

I accept that I am a part of this process- the process of merging the spirit into the earth- as most of us likely are. I have in the past had many dreams in which my body and the bodies of a few other individuals were covered completely in a layer of green leaves. I had no idea what this symbol indicated until I came upon information about The Green Man, a mythological character who arrives to resuscitate mankind's intimacy with the earth. In mythological pictures he is shown covered in leaves.

I can therefore declare with awe and humility that we are not here to abandon the mystic flesh, but to exalt it. We are not here to be liberated *from* this realm, but to be liberated *within* this realm.

To bring infinity into the finite is to transform the great cosmic stillness into the great cosmic dance; it is to combine into oneself the dual energies of Vishnu and Lakshmi, Radha and Krishna, Shiva and Shakti, Jesus and Mary, and to merge these within oneself, all the while flowing in, and of, and through the light and dark turmoil of this mad, marvelous mystery.

To mix the infinite into the finite is to blend the finite into the infinite until they are interwoven and indistinguishable.

To be the emptiness that is a living bridge between the Mother and Father is to mix consciousness and matter into one indistinguishable, viscous fluidity, and so to merge into and become an ocean of beingness, lighter than matter, and denser than mind.

The archetypical and eternal forces then awaken in the drama. The invisible Self animating the visible self becomes everything. The macrocosm becomes the microcosm, the word is made flesh, and all that is mundane becomes transmorgified into the song of the Divine. *Om, baby!*

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Part IV
MYSTERIUM CONIUNCTIONIS

"In the grand cosmological dance of the universe,
nothing is ever lost, only transfigured."
Leigh McCloskey[85]

For one to arrive at the empty core from which all existence radiates, the alchemical union of a number of opposites existing within the individual is required. Without such unions there can be no circle, and therefore no hollow core.

Alchemy is the process by which a mortal becomes immortal, and is a very specific journey for each individual.

The goal of alchemy is individuation- the immortalization of the soul. To individuate, which is to become whole, requires the union of male and female, good and evil, spirit and soul, consciousness and matter, subject and object, self and other, and inside and out. [86]

To become immortal is to turn the gross lead of mortality into the subtle gold of eternity.

To unify the male and female within requires a man to become conscious of his inner female, his *anima*, and a woman to become conscious of her inner male, her *animus*[87].

Such integration takes determination, patience, and the willingness to transform. The outcome of this union within the individual is the *sacred androgyne*, which is the divine, incarnate soul, awake as an androgynous self within the androgynous universe. This comes about through the inner *chymical wedding*, which represents one of the final stages of alchemy.



This is a picture of my *soror*. I have added a line to make it easier to recognize the physiological bifurcation of her face, where one half is male, and the other half female,

and one eye is smaller and farther forward than the other. The dual nature of the face is a common occurrence in individuals who have at lease partly assimilated their inner, alter-gender self.

In Hindu mythology this holy completion is represented by the God Ardhanarisvara, who is the union of Shiva and Shakti. Ardhanarisvara's right side is male, and his/her left side is female.[88]



Ardhanarisvara

Ardhanarisvara is the symbol of cosmic androgyny.

This subtle, archetypical, androgynous blue-print filters down and infiltrates all aspects of the universe. Therefore, just as Krishna and his consort Radha became inseparable aspects of their common being, many thousands of years ago, to such an extent that in later Hindu writings these two were called by a singular name- RadhaKrishna- so too we must all become both the male-outside-of-existence, cosmic consciousness- and the female-inside-of-existence, earthly being.

This union takes place at the third-eye chakra, which is the epicenter and vessel into which the male descends from non-being, and the female rises from being.

Until union occurs at third-eye via the kundalini, duality is unavoidable. After meeting at the third-eye, the opposite aspects of existence

begin to unite and the individual attains the recognition of universal oneness.

When this integration begins to take place, a subtle, ethereal wind may be felt flowing onto the third-eye. This is the beginning of a different type of breathing- it is the breath of consciousness itself, the breath of ascension.

Transcendental consciousness and immanent being have thus begun to come together as integrated emptiness/being.

To be the whole Self is to be the intimate union of non-being and being, of male and female, of the immense, still, empty consciousness, *and* the active, dynamic, ubiquitous form.

One intimate union. One.

*

two

The next essential unification to occur within the individual is that of good and evil. In order to merge good and evil one must acknowledge their own depravities. This is a difficult inner accomplishment, because most of us inherently think we are good, and believe that only other people are bad. However, this universe is a mixture of the two, and anyone who believes they are good only will no doubt have the truth brought before them in unavoidable fashion, for goodness does not exist without badness.[89]

I have been, in the past, a great hypocrite of this inexorable duality of good and evil, thinking that I was a 'good' person, and therefore repressing the truth of my darkness. The acknowledgement that I was a criminal took many years to come to consciousness, as I was forever believing myself to be full of light and beyond evil.

In the end, however, I had to admit the truth, which is a painful but necessary acknowledgement for anyone who seeks to expand into the greater reality beyond the drama of duality.

These acknowledgements that I made are the spiritual scars of growth which dwell in the heart of every sinner. And if that sounds like a confession, perhaps that is what it is. I look back on my life now with intent only to see myself for what I am, or have been. And what I have been, at times, is a wild child, a deceiver and a thief. In short, a criminal who had broken the one and only law, which is love.

In fact, God the Father had to come to me one time and state with harsh directness: "Seek your own upliftment, not another's downfall". This because I had fallen into darkness, and was not focused on the most perfect expression of my highest path, being at that time tangled in judgment and thoughts of less than love towards others.

I look back now with both a shudder and a smile, as I recall the ways in which I betrayed myself and others. Oh, in the unrelenting, perilous throes of sin, like a thief too afraid to steal, I was given everything I needed, though inside myself I still plotted and squirmed.

Yea, like a bivalve of the spirit- relentless miracles through me went, though I remained separate and intolerable. I was a horrid creature of grace.

I was Abraham, recklessly pursuing Isaac- escaped, terrified and weeping- down the precipitous slopes of my own tortured delusion. There was no economy in my strides. There was no promise within me, not a single resolution. Why the crowds of passing daemons did not spit on me in disgust, I shall never know; a sinner amongst saints, dog-shit on a manicured lawn, a booger on a bare wall, a cyst on supple flesh. At times every breath I took left another scar upon the earth. What ghastly errors I spawned onto life.

While my penance flamed into its full and ruthless glory, how deep indeed I was buried in ignorance, and darkness.

All this happens so secretly- intoxication with the Worm, I mean- but, man alive, it happens. Let me tell you, I did not rise piously out of the noxious mist, but instead inhaled its toxic qualities, in the spineless hyperventilation of agreeable illusions. Oh, I had breathed in heavily for such a time- those musty, hallucinogenic vapors of my own criminal expulsion- that I lived in a vacuum, in the nauseous stench of my own halitotic excuses and demands.

Like a runaway angel kidnapping the light, feeding the darkness with my own estrangement, and souring the love with my flight, I was afoul. Like the wretched concubine of a syphilitic Love, I was royalty in the morning, a servant by noon, and a lost thief fleeing by night. I stole from life's treasures, and poached sacred trophies from the kingdom's sparse herd.

And though the magic was boundlessly making me, all I did was get in the way. Many benedictions I swallowed, but often only calumnies were expelled. And the same hands, thanklessly receiving the manna of heaven, returned it but shortly, as vomit.

Further, and further, down and down came the inescapable fall. What was life to me, after all, but a looting? I was consumed by both the heights and the depths, by the unknown and the known, while I hovered in between at a spot where I was equally destroyed by both; I had reached an equilibrium that was not peace, an inaction that was not serenity.

As if the angel had tripped while carrying me, and I was fumbled into unrecognizable positions, tumbling about in her frantic hands, with her struggling to keep me off the moribund ground; I was not dropped, though neither was I caught gently in the air.

There was no such noble act of willful becoming for me, only a coasting down the hill without an engine, enjoying the ride to hell. I was a thief, a criminal. I had fallen from the golden rule of love. I was separate.

Oh there was a time, as the Fates merged upon the barren battleground that I called me, when I could neither fully believe nor fully disbelieve existence. I had lost both truth and untruth, having no foothold in myself, nor in the world; neither in the mundane, nor the spiritual.

These were the trials of my idiosyncratic becoming, of God and Satan making folly in my breast.

Oh, I stumbled, I crashed, through rack and ruin, beating blindly without reason, seeking to find some sort of serenity, or to die within feet of the door.

I was in prison and did not know it, for I had cast less than love upon my brothers and sisters in this world, and when one does that, one goes to hell.

Oh Lord, oh Lord, I am also why the world is the way it is. I have spread much sorrow upon this earth. I have sown grief without intent to harvest. I have carried the seeds of my discontent and scattered them into the lives of others. I have spent my days abandoning love, irrigating my parched life with other's tears. Oh, the scars I have irreverently furrowed upon this globe.

Lord, I was a confused and reckless farm-hand. I am sorry for the hate, the lies, and the worry. Forgive my ingratitude. Guide me to love, and let me not wander. Forgive me for having planted misery into the fallow hearts of others.

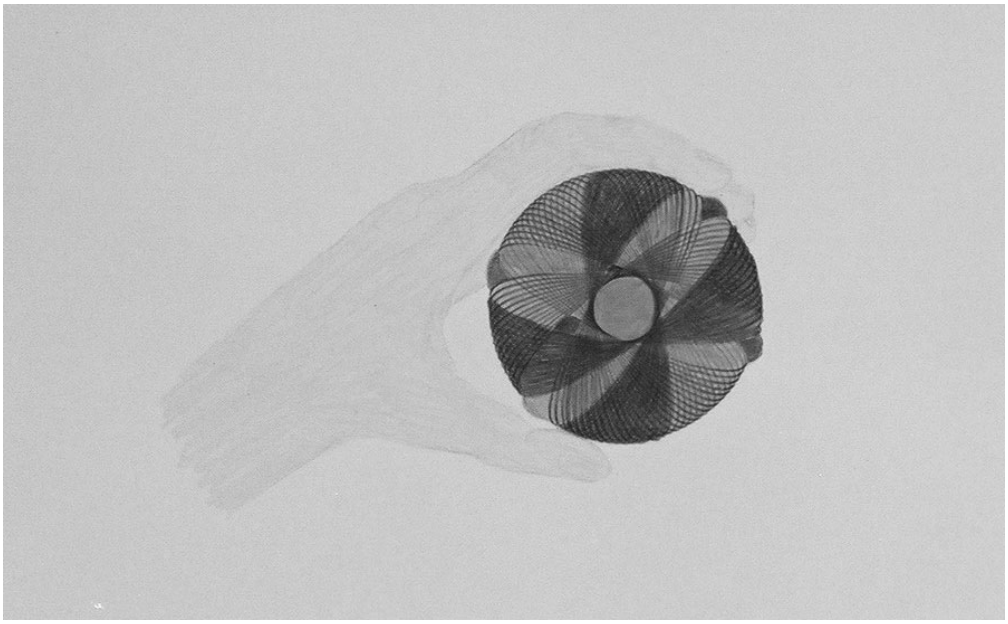
These were the beseeched cries I lamented into the cosmos as I came upon the criminal within me. It was horrible. But it was necessary. For if I was to merge with the all, I had to become harmonious with the all, which was to be conscious I was both good and evil, and so neither.

The absolute merging of these polarities began after I had a strong astral dream in which I encountered- as in the past- the deep, dark, aggressive and terrible force of Satan. And, as in the past, I was saved by calling on Christ. This time, however, the encounter was different from the others, for this time Satan was not outside of me, he was *inside*.

After waking from that astral encounter I immediately began intentionally directing my consciousness towards Christ and his protection of me. I wanted to distance myself as far as possible from Satan. But then it occurred to me that what was necessary now was not further division, but union- union of the opposites of good and evil.

I then began merging Satan and Christ within me- the absolute, loving, good light, *and* the absolute, oppressive, evil darkness. Instantly I inwardly saw a black and white checkered pattern emerge, and I felt peace.[90]

Moments later I had a vision of an old alchemist holding an orb made of precious metals inlaid with gems and he was offering it to me: a symbol of the whole self.



A rough likeness to the orb given to me by the alchemist.

The following morning my *soror* informed me that Carl Jung stated that a person needed to merge their male and female sides before he or she could merge their light/good and dark/evil halves. I had done so without prior knowledge of this process, though with a great amount of guidance from higher spirits.

And so I say that if you would take Satan within yourself, you better also have Christ in there, or you'll be in for some big trouble, as it is only the balancing power of the light which makes integrating the darkness possible.[91]

To become whole, which is to become one with the whole, means to exclude nothing. In this case one must recognize that they are both good and bad, which means being Satan as well as Christ. It is best therefore, as I have said, to become Christ first, for only then can the dark be assimilated without destroying you. You must become Christ so that you can be Satan Christed. Good and Evil. One. No longer either good or evil, but instead a whole new awoken, eternal Zen neutrality.[92]

When looked upon closely the characteristics of the divine are ever intermingled with good and evil. And that is because at the level of divinity, where good and evil merge into one, there is no longer good or evil, there is simply a dynamic dance beyond the limited idea of morality.[93]

If all is one, then good and evil must coexist, not as separate halves of the dual universe, but as intimate aspects of the One.

If God is everything there is, then there is no right or wrong, for all is one and no duality about it. Good and Evil end not because they do not exist, but because they become the same thing.[94]

Just as a battery requires both negative and positive poles in order to produce electricity, which is power, so to the negative and positive- the dark and the light- must exist within the individual and the universe for the proper functioning of the whole. Yin and yang.

However, the concept of good and bad only applies to the world of duality, it does not apply to the non-dual oneness which exists prior to the divisive 'fall' into manifestation.

It is only after the merging occurs of these opposites and a neutral wholeness arises, creating a further dimension of cosmic vision, that one can come to know the true nature of the human drama, which is indeed a drama- an eternal play enacted by eternal characters who somehow have forgotten they are acting.

It is the combined distance and intimacy of this new wholeness which allows the theater of all life to lay itself down before you, showing indisputably that the relative plane of human interaction is but a play, created by, and for, the Godselves which we are. This is the *lila*- the Divine Play- of life, and is the reason that the great incarnate, Krishna, could on one occasion send Arjuna to the battlefield to slay his own kin, and could at another time disrobe the young female cowherds and enjoy the pleasures of the flesh with them, without there being a contradiction in his actions.

Krishna had stepped outside of karma, outside of separation, outside of good and evil, outside of what we mistakenly call reality, and he lived knowing that all is a play, and that this is why we should play, because all the struggle

and strife, the tears and the anguish, are but perfectly choreographed performances to keep us from awakening to the show.

Krishna understood that no one ever dies, since he knew that we are all immortal, in one way or another, though most of us are asleep in the dream that is the play of our immortal self.

The entire play, like all plays, is based on attraction and repulsion between the opposites, which is why romance and conflict are great themes in both life and cinema. But when the opposites of male and female, and good and evil, dissolve into a singular homogenous milieu, the whole drama suddenly exposes itself because the play runs out of scenarios. The stream has run its course. All conflict has been resolved. The self has entered the serene abode, the Tao.

In fact, I once had a dream in which I was told the Devil was created in order to counterbalance God. This is so because good and evil are aspects of the same oneness, and therefore they are written into the play to give it some action.

In another of my dreams a few years back, the Father aspect of God dressed me up as a woman, and then in the dream I was forced to enter into a tremendous battle, but at the moment the two opposing armies came directly into vicious combat, the two sides suddenly transmuted into one, and the whole scene became a glorious, theatrical, operatic show. Good and evil, male and female had merged.

During another dream a cosmic dispensation was poured down upon me, in a way I had not expected, leading me into an awkward realization which had been trying to come into my consciousness for quite some time. It was an odd dream- I dreamt that a friend of mine named Chris was kissing the hairy belly of some unknown man. Then the dream shifted and I had suddenly received a haircut similar to those sported by the Hari Krishna's. I awoke and thought- what an odd and idiotic dream. However, as dreams are almost always symbolic, I began to uncover the hidden meaning of the dream.

Firstly, I already knew that whenever a person with the name 'Chris' appeared in one of my dreams, this was symbolic of an aspect of Christ. But why was Christ kissing the hairy belly of an unknown man? Admittedly I had no clue at first, although I assumed that he was symbolically pointing something out to me. And indeed, over the next while the understandings were slowly, though persistently, pushed upon me, as if the greater consciousness was saying- look here, since there's little chance you'll figure this one out, we'll give it to you straight, without all the symbolic mumbo jumbo.

And so I learned, through books on Hindu mythology, that 'Hari' is a popular name for Vishnu, and 'Hara' is a name for Shiva. Now, since 'Hari' is phonetically similar to 'hairy', and 'Hara' is a name for the midsection, or belly, of a person, it was obvious that this dream had nothing to do with a 'hairy belly', but instead a Hairy-Hara, or, Hari-Hara. I then learned that the name Hari-Hara is an infrequently used mythological term representing the amalgamation of Vishnu and Shiva, which is the union of the preserver and the destroyer, the light and the dark. An odd dream to be sure, but it was a significant herald telling me that Christ was symbolically pointing towards the great space beyond good and evil, which comes about from the union of these polarities.[95]

To mix the savior with the destroyer and become Hari-Hara, is to attain to the equilibrium of indifference.

In the past years of my growth I had experienced a great many 'hero' fantasies in which a violent atrocity was about to take place and I arrived to save the day. However, as my shadow came into consciousness I suddenly realized that the violent attacker was also myself.[96]

Yes, to admit to my own terribleness, to know myself a criminal, was to understand that I was both victimizer and hero, which is the end of both pride and shame. For to be both good and evil, cop and criminal, sage and scoundrel, Eli and Lucifer, Judas and Christ, light and shadow, is to depart from the psychological constraints of dualistic thinking, and to enter a wholly new vibration, a new realm. One.

This is to go beyond the duality of right and wrong, which is to enter the undivided unity of beingness. This is to stop eating of the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil- of correct and incorrect- and to begin again to eat from the Tree of Life, which is to return to the event at the moment of its God-issuance, prior to the division of that One flow into two. For only the all can be One. To see this is to become a liberated neutral spirit. That is- to be able to see the dark and the light of every situation, removes the dark and the light, and leaves only the situation, which is the pristine, naked, ever-new now. *Om, baby!*



Yahoshuah-Maria[97]. A symbol of the union of male and female, light and dark.

*

three

An important further integration for all of us, at this moment of our cosmic and earthly evolution, is the interpenetration of not only spirit and flesh, but also of *technology*.

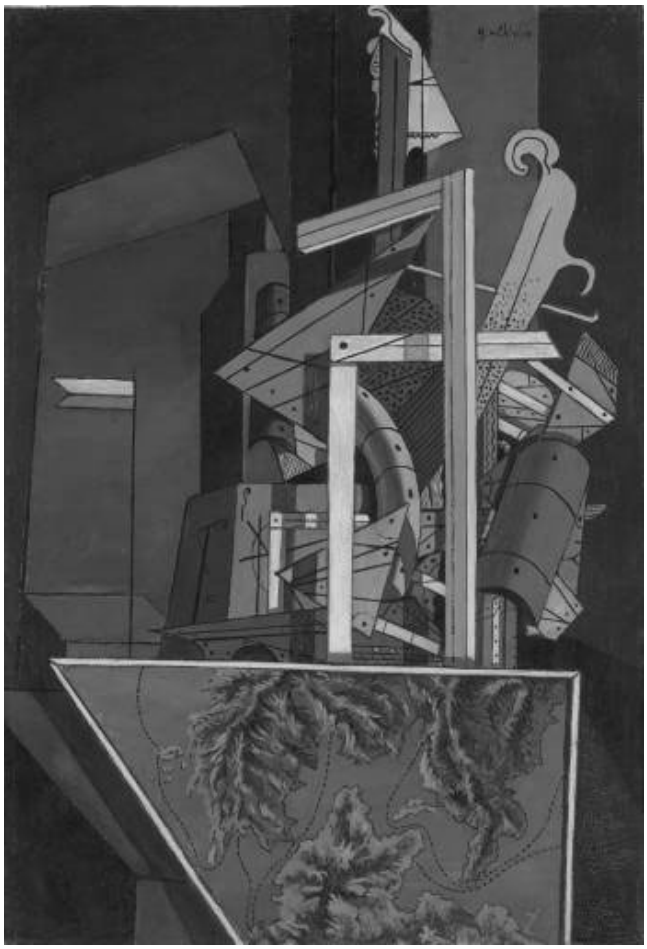
This may seem like an odd idea to insert into the running thesis of this work, but in fact there is a massive invisible clash of forces going on in the world, as these seemingly opposed aspects of universal oneness attempt to merge into this realm.[98]

I have had many experiences in which technology was symbolically intertwined with the spirit and flesh in order to help me unravel the confused course I did not know I was taking. Certain episodes of my inner life were reflected in 'technological' events around me. For example, on my second trip to India, eight years prior to my current journey, I carried with me an archaic laptop, and over the course of my stay, due to the rough and abusive conditions of numerous lengthy bus rides, the cells on the screen began to break apart and move around. At a point where approximately one-third of the cells had dislodged, their movement had spread them all over the screen, and had formed a perfect image of the map of the world. Message: I am the world.[99]

Interestingly enough, at the end of that second trip, about four months later, those same cells had miraculously re-integrated themselves back into the screen, and the image had disappeared. The screen was once again almost as good as new. The image was gone, only the great space of oneness remained. The necessary message had been delivered, and then the slate had been wiped clean.

All is reflected through all. However, because of our singular vantage point within the infinite multiplicity of happenings, it is hard to perceive that we are the all in all, as much as anything else, all parts of which are only one thing. Rarely do we see the greater event, which we call the world, as a manifestation of our greater selves.

Another symbolic experience occurred, around the same time in my life, when I was planning to leave the remote southern area of the Queen Charlotte Islands, which are off the west coast of Canada- where I had been staying with a friend for over a month, during which time we had begun to quarrel and our brotherhood had turned sour, which caused me immense melancholy. The day before I was to leave I opened a book, which I had been carrying with me, on Dadaist art, and there, on the page I happened to turn to, was a painting by Giorgio de Chirico, titled *Melancholy of Departure*. The painting was comprised of a somewhat tangled factory or city scene (I was returning to the city), and an almost exact topographical sketch of the southern Queen Charlotte Islands. The likeness was inexplicable, and it was bewildering to see how perfect that spiritual mirror and symbology of my current life were presented to me.



Melancholy of Departure by Giorgio de Chirico

Many times in my life such pieces of the puzzle would come flying out at me to make obvious my union with the whole, for all is reflected in all.

I wonder now if my entire life has been a project in which the macrosoul has been attempting to corral me into the places, experiences, and understandings which would help lead me to wholeness. Perhaps this is the reason why, as a youth, I would wake up almost every morning at exactly 7:37 a.m., like clockwork, as they say. Back then I found this extremely odd, and only later in life, as I was slowly accepting that the universe is a conscious universe, did I discover that the number 37 is the mystical number for the absolute union of spirit and soul. Wholeness.

Perhaps this macrocosmic intent is also why I had an experience, in my early thirties, while leaving Jerusalem, where I had gone for about a week while following the spirit of Christ. Not knowing what was to come next for me, I pronounced, as I was leaving, "Thy Will be done" with as much intent as ever I had before, and boarded the plane. Interestingly enough the in-flight entertainment on the plane was a British television show starring a younger version of my *anima* who was named Clarissa (clear Issa: Issa is the eastern name for Christ). This may seem like a wholly unprofound happening to the reader, but then it was *my anima* who was giving me the message, and the

message was *clear*. For soon after that flight I was to become involved in a wild community within which were some very Christ-like women.

On another flight, this time off of the Big Island of Hawaii, which *is* the geophysical embodiment of the Mother, a man who was my father's spiritual archetype ended up sitting right behind me, which, if you know anything of such circumstances, is no mere coincidence, as if anything ever is. I was leaving the Mother and moving towards the Father.

Just prior to that flight I had been living on the Big Island of Hawaii and had no intentions of leaving. Then I had a dream in which I was shown a pair of green rain pants. I could not understand the dream until I felt compelled to leave Hawaii, the Mother, and flew back to Vancouver where I met with a good buddy of mine, who, at that time, was thoroughly united with the Father, and who was wearing the very pants I had dreamt about. Maddeningly enough this same buddy of mine was planning to visit me a month earlier in Hawaii, but backed out for various reasons. However, he and I were spiritual peers and our meeting was obviously necessary enough to have me called out of paradise and flown back to the rainy west-coast winter.

Then there was the time I dreamt of having my 7th tooth from the centre pulled out, and I had no idea what the dream meant. Not until a while later, when I picked up my harmonica and began playing it, and soon noticed that hole number 7 was no longer working. Something in me was 'out of tune' at that point.

This is similar to the time when I was learning to play the recorder, and I could not make any clear notes come out of the lower three of the seven holes. Not, at least, until I visited Hawaii for the first time, and, arriving on the Big Island, had the lower three of my seven main chakras stimulated and soon after could make perfect music come out of the lower notes of the recorder.[100]

Not long after that I was given the present of a hand-made, Hawaiian bamboo-flute, which, oddly enough, and without the craftsman's intent, had the 7 holes of the flute laid out in a way astonishingly similar to the pattern of the Hawaiian islands themselves.

It seems to me that music must be an easy target for the muse of the spirit, since I can remember as far back as my early twenties, when I had purchased a copy of a *Midnight Oil* album which had on it the song *Bed's are Burning*, and that same night two futons were set ablaze accidentally in our apartment when my roommate's cigarette fell from his sleeping hand.

The internal is the external, and the external the in.

One of the ways this has become drastically obvious to me is through automobiles, for the vehicles in which people drive often reflect the nature of what is going on with them at the time.

For example, at a time when I was trying to find my voice in the world, I had a van in which the horn did not work.

I also know of a woman who, at a time in her life when she was very run down and often exhausted of energy, went through three alternators in less than a year.

Another woman friend, who developed a hard-to-diagnose yet chronic disease, had a vehicle which had an electric 'short' which mechanics were

unable to find for almost five years. She was 'shorting out' within herself, and this was reflected in the manifest.

On a trip into the southwest American desert with my *soror*, a number of years back, we were heading into the Valley of the Gods, which is a remote, mythical landscape, carved out of the fleshy rock covering the area. We had intended to drive around a specific loop, and then find a campsite. As I say, we intended to do this, but the spirit had other ideas. Just as we were about to swing around that loop and leave a remote canyon area, one of the tires on our van blew out, and we had to pull over and repair it. A flat tire in the remote desert is an aggravating event, and I was aggravated. However, had we not been forced to stop in the exact spot where we stopped, we would not have later chosen a nearby campsite (instead of driving obliviously past it). And had we not camped in that exact spot, we would not have then been in the perfect perspective to see the gigantic sentinels and castle which exist in the valley, the forms of which are a living reality on the subtle plane, and are manifest in stunning, megalithic rock sculpture on this material plane. We had been detained so that we would not miss out on the reason we had been guided there in the first place. As always, everything was as it should be.

In much less dramatic fashion, I learned a lesson about the intimacy of persons and vehicles at one point in my life when I was overly cognitive and contemplative, and had thoroughly abandoned the use of my feelings, instincts, and intuitions.

Fortunately I had purchased a small car in which the speedometer was not functioning. I say fortunately because although this was a very frustrating problem, as I never had any idea on how fast I was going, I soon learned to not need the conceptual boxes of thought and numbers, but instead to *feel* the speed at which I was going, which was a lesson in how not to *gauge* my life, but rather to live it.

I became so fluid with the vehicle that I rarely glanced at the dashboard- an event which I am always doing in vehicles whose speedometers are working- and yet never received a speeding ticket, for I inwardly knew from the *feel* of the vehicle the appropriate speed for the road.

I suppose this was an important lesson for me, because a while later I sold that car in northern Canada, spent some time in the wilderness, and then, before heading south, stayed at a friend's house for a week or two. It turned out that at that time he had another visitor, and since she was driving south at the time I needed to be heading that way myself, I took a lift with her and ended up behind the wheel for a greater part of the trip.

On the first day I was back to my old self, always looking at the speedometer- which on her car was working fine- for fear that I was driving too fast, or too slow. I was recognizing my pathetic dependence on the gauges, and thinking that I had not yet crystallized the lesson which was to 'feel' all of life, instead of 'think' it. But as night came on I was given some after-school tutoring, because when I went to turn the car lights on, I realized that the dashboard light in her car did not work, and so, at night I could not see the speedometer anymore. I was free of the mind again, and back into the feeling of body and flow of intimacy with being. For the mind is what divorces us from the fluid connection with life, and it is only feeling and intuition which rejoins us.

As a last point on the symbology of vehicles, I would note that often license plates betray a hidden anagram, or message, relevant to the owner of the vehicle at the time.

For example, a vehicle which my *soror* and I ended up owning together- at a time when we were starting to merge all opposites, including the light and the dark, and the east and the west- had a license plate which included the number 999, which is a mystical number unto itself, and is also 666 upside down.[101]

All things are alive and reflective of our inner beings, always.

I have heard that, prior to the sinking of the Titanic, there was a person who wrote a book about a grand cruise ship which sank in the north Atlantic on its first voyage, killing most of the people aboard. In the book the boat was called the *Titan*.

There are quite a few of these macrocosmic parallels to find, if you open yourself up to finding them.

All is reflected in all. All is all. It is only for us to learn a more holistic way of seeing.

At one point in my life I was in Ireland and asking for guidance as to whether I should stay where I was, or move on to Scotland. That night I had a dream in which I was drinking beer that was 5.9% in alcohol, and that was all I could remember upon waking. However, knowing that most Irish beers are around 4%, and that the Scots are intelligent enough to put a little more umph into their liquids, I jumped on a bus and headed north. Upon my arrival in Scotland I walked around curiously looking through liquor shops but could not find any beer that was exactly 5.9% alcohol. No matter. I had to leave the country a few days later, as I received word that a friend back home had been badly injured in an accident. So I returned to North America to see him, where, soon enough, I walked into a store, having forgotten all about my earlier dream, and stumbled right into a case of beer that was exactly 5.9% alcohol. I had come to where the spirit knew I would come, though I had had no clue about this at all.

God works within us with much greater intention than the hallmarked minutiae of life often betrays. But occasionally we get a glimpse of this incredible, hidden choreography running perfectly throughout the world, and that glimpse is sometimes enough to smash apart our limited conceptions, and expand us into union with the inexplicable all, which includes man-made creations and modern technology.

In fact, one time I dreamt that I was buying a Cadillac, and awoke without a single idea of what that would mean. Later that day, however, my *soror* was out and about on the town and was approached by a mad street-person who out of the blue, whimsically declared to her, “God is in town, and he’s buying Cadillacs.” *Om, baby!*

*

four

One of the last pair of opposites to unite into one is the duality of internal and external- that is, what we think of as inward, and what we experience as outward. To merge these two extremes is to feel the subtle unity of all things, and to collapse the subject and object duality. This is to see yourself as all others, and all others as yourself; it is to view yourself from an objective distance, just as you would view all external 'others', and to view all 'others' with a subjective intimacy, just the same as you would *feel* yourself within. This is to become no specific *I*, and therefore to be all *I's*.

Eventually my *soror* and I had to depart from the earthly glories of Goa and return to the worldly ways of Canada. However, before departing from India, we spent a few days in Delhi. This polluted, overcrowded, and chaotic metropolis might seem like the last place on earth that one would have a potent spiritual experience, but anything can happen anywhere in India where, after all, the gem is to be found in the shit.

By then I was becoming more and more immersed in the beings of the cosmic Goddess and God, so much so that while sitting cross-legged during the day in our tiny hotel room in Delhi I felt Shiva so completely that I *became* Shiva. Not the Shiva that is Nataraja- the dancing maniac bringing creative destruction to the world, but rather I became Shiva of the distant and contemplative Himalayas. Shiva the yogi. Shiva the silent one. Shiva the pristine, immoveable, limitless cosmic consciousness. I became enveloped in His spirit, and knew at that moment I *was* Shiva.

Then at night, in the depths of tranquility and peace, in the middle of the still darkness, I became enveloped in the thick, penetrating, fully ensconcing energy of Parvati's greater being, Devi, the One Goddess. Lying in bed, I merged into Her thick and fecund, glowing energy, and was united *in* Her.

This was a similar Mother-energy *samadhi* which I had experienced on the coast of British Columbia, on the Big Island of Hawaii, and in France, which are all places where such Mother energy is readily available. And now I had been received by Her in India.[102]

Anyone who has ever felt the immense, all-consuming energy of existence- the Mother- will in no way consider life as an illusion ever again, for they will know with an absolute, visceral, organic knowing that their being is actual, and is part of the living earth, and of all life.

This Mother energy *samadhi*- in which the individual is absorbed into and becomes the gyrating, ubiquitous, creative energy of the cosmos- which is to say, the individual attains union with God the Mother- is a rare experience in a world where most of us have been brought up not only in denial of the reality of our own flesh, but are also in denial of the livingness of the earth, and of matter itself. And it is not until we become our own flesh completely, and therefore unite with all matter- for all matter is one- that we can enter into the Mother's creative, all-ensconcing, primordial energy, and know for certain that the earth, the flesh, and all that is, is as real as real can be.

In the immense, intimate depths of the Goddess one realizes that the multiplicity and dynamic nature of form in no way modifies the infinity of Her eternity, because although form may change appearances, the essence of form- the Mother energy- is eternal.

These two unions and communions- with Shiva and Parvati, God and Goddess- are phenomena which cannot ever be fully explained, for they must be experienced. To become God the Father is to become Shiva, who is Isa, who is Issa, the eastern Christ. To unite with the Mother Goddess, Parvati, who is Devi, is to become the living cauldron of intense Goddess energy, which in the west has come to us as the Dark Madonna, an aspect of Mother Mary.

And from such experiences one comes to know that there are many names for the same Divine parents, but these are names only, and in the end there is no real division between eastern nor western spiritualities, but only diverse experiences arising from the one Godhead, which occur uniquely, depending on the cultural psyche and the disposition of the individual.

I find it no great surprise that my entire eastern journey began back in the west, in *The Baba* coffeeshop in Amsterdam, a place dedicated to Ganesha- the initiator- the elephant-faced son of Shiva and Parvati.

I relate these experiences not from intent to isolate myself as someone more capable of spiritual accomplishments than another. The great souls themselves will bear witness to my torments and gnashings, my grievances and gross imperfections, my thievery and deceit. I am continuing to learn and grow. To make any claims about myself other than inherently possessing a relentless, unforgiving drive to accomplish my own emancipation, would be like attempting to bleach the dark earth Herself.

I have my darkness, my own desperations and limitations. But knowing this only too well gives me even greater incentive to write about my experiences, because I have encountered many obstacles along the way, and I am living proof …that help is available. I have been given immense assistance and guidance, oftentimes beyond my ability to understand, to be thankful for, or perhaps even to recognize. But benevolence has watched over me. And knowing how my own journey has been so fraught with doubts and discontentment, I feel compelled to relate the profundity and importance of this help and guidance which is available to all who call out wildly in the confusing mist of the human night.

Indeed it may be a traumatic event to be born human. But I believe that the only person who will suffer in confusion and despair for lack of assistance is the one who does not ask for help.

I have asked many times. Oh, I have beseeched. I have prayed. I have pleaded. I have moaned for direction and succor. And I have also cursed and rebelled and stormed about in abject disgust. I have rambled and roamed unbridled at times like a madman. So be it.

We are all growing and learning. And we can choose to do this on our own rock island of isolation and inertia, or we can sink our roots deep into the waters of the Goddess, and we can raise our limbs into the limitless light of God. And through the ever-available assistance of these, our divine parents, as well as the guiding spirits of the immortals who have gone before us- the living spirits

of those who have passed bodily from this plane but who continue to hang around and assist others towards each individual's emancipation from limitation- we can turn and face our challenges. We need only have the humility to listen and learn, and the inner force to fuel the divine, transfiguring burn.

This realm is created, supported, and guided by the Mother and Father forces who parent this world as it evolves. But just as a child often has great inner tribulations and outward conflict as he or she matures within the parental home, so also do we often find discontent and annoyance at the stage just prior to our own spiritual individuation. But then, finally breaking away into the freedom of our true, eternal self, we leave our parental home. Only then can we develop a new love, thankfulness, and respect for all that had been vouchsafed to us by our invisible elders.

Then as we each grow into a consciousness which expands beyond this realm, we can look back with gratitude and love towards the Mother and Father, who have given all to us on our journey here.

And so 'liberation' is not similar to escaping from prison, but rather of becoming independent for the very first time, and therefore of no longer dwelling under the psychic roof of your upbringing. This is a liberation which frees one from this realm consciously and energetically; and yet one remains here still, out of choice, due to the heart's love and gratitude for one's parents, as well as compassion for all the siblings still growing in this mysterious, marvelous home.

I see now why many saints and masters of the past have declared that it does not matter to which God we are devoted, for all Gods are the same God, and therefore the only important thing is to be devoted. To be 'in devotion' is to never remove your mind or body from the Presence of God the Father and God the Mother; it is to lose yourself into that communion, to become that union, to *be* the Divine spirit united with the Divine soul- God and Goddess- the two who are now one. The one who is the child of the two. Union.

This is devotion because all of this has been given to us by God. The Father and the Mother have given us what we have, and what we have is the union of Heaven and Earth.

The spirit is the substratum of the upper trinity, and the soul is the substratum of the lower, and both are essential for the birth of cosmic wholeness.

In this sense the only real birth is the God-union within a person- the Mother and Father becoming one within the child- where the Mother is a bottomless ocean, the Father is a limitless sky, and the child is the bridge in between.

The Christ is the one within us who is this bridge between the Father and Mother. The Christ is the I within who is connected to God; the Son or Daughter of the Mother and Father brings God down into being, and brings Goddess up into non-being.

When these two consciousnesses are assimilated, one becomes everything.

The eternal self is then non-existent within existence, and the eternal form is existent within non-existence.

To become the two in the one is to be the one which is both inner and outer, above and below, spirit and flesh, male and female, subtle and actual, passionate and dispassionate, ecstatic and still. *Om, baby!*

*

five

The intent behind alchemy and the alchemical work is personal individuation, which is wholeness. In order to attain wholeness, it is said, one must square the circle. This is a tricky business. To square the circle is to become the four directions- up, down, in, and out; or, spirit, body, soul, and 'other'. Like the carbon atom- the chemical substratum and symbolic vibration of our essence- we have four places from which to build a molecule. How we use these four quarters begets the molecule we live within- and the entire existence that we *are*. We grow like crystals from an invisible seed, and express our true nature out into what we conventionally call the external. We are our world.[103]

To truly be whole we must serve the four primary constituents of our wholeness: inner, outer, above, and below. If we serve only the inner we cut ourselves off from life, and we become lonely, loveless hermits; if we serve only the outer we become bitter, soulless phantoms; if we serve only the below- the flesh and the earth- we become moribund matter; and if we serve only the above- the spirit and God-consciousness- we become disembodied spirits, adrift in an unreal world.

To get too focused in one direction is to end up walking in circles, instead of being a circle.

To square the circle is to be the circle of self, detached and yet intimate with the square world. To square the circle is to complete your specified perfection for this life. This means you are free.

To square the circle is to see equally in the four directions, and so to be whole, a sphere- a circled square.

Every part of the quaternity has equal representation. All aspects are included at every moment, for inner, outer, spirit, and flesh are one.

To find a new equilibrium where inner, outer, above, and below are balanced and in harmony, is to be One. To be the empty center of this one is to be all.

To be all is to be a devil of oneness which has come to destroy the parts; oneness is destructive to the parts- to all that differentiates itself from the whole, unless that 'differentness' arises as a devotional expression of the unified glory. For all that does not acknowledge, bless, or support this fusion into oneness must either be assimilated or trimmed off and melted away. That is the apocalypse of oneness.

The viscous flame of oneness comes burning away all division of spirit and flesh, and the diamond body becomes the eternal fuel of this emancipative, destructive union.

To look upward, outward, inward, and down, is to take up the cross of life; this is to look towards heaven, towards others, into yourself, and down into the body, and so to become the ever-crucified Christ which pulls all separate realms into one. To avoid any one of these is to become out of balance, to totter, and to fall.

When you merge male and female, a whole new pattern is created. When you merge good and evil, there is neither good nor evil, but instead a kaleidoscopic, checkered wholeness. Merge all four and you get an indestructible, eternal, royal sphere.

Nothing is excluded but all is transformed in this convergence within; it is this nuclear fusion of opposites which creates the new radiance within. The spirit becomes substantial- it becomes substance, and is now a radiant inner crystal, a glowing ball of inclusive continuity. This is the diamond body.[104]

This diamond body *is* stillness. Stillness is a detached, unshakeable inner peace which cannot be moved by the tremors of the external. This stillness is an inner peace which radiates the same peace outward, becoming an apocalyptic stillness that unites the external and internal in the very same substratum of the oceanic depths of Self, now contiguous with the thrashing waves of manifestation, and yet different also. This is to find yourself in a different room in the exact same house. A big, stone, unexpected, glorious room. The inner sanctum. Stillness.

To *be* in your inner sanctum is to feel and behave as you would if alone, though *while* amongst others; to be that immoveable, that untroubled, that unflappably detached stillness; a living, thriving, eternal, indifferent stillness.

Nothing will bring you this inner peace, but this inner peace will bring you everything. This inner peace is the ocean beyond the river of life. To become that peace is to leap over the river. On the other side of the chaotic show is the laughing director. Cross over.

To cross over, there can be nothing left but God. There can be no you, no me, no things, no thoughts, nothing, for all must be God. One.

When you enter into God within, everything becomes God. All of it. Inside and out. One. God.

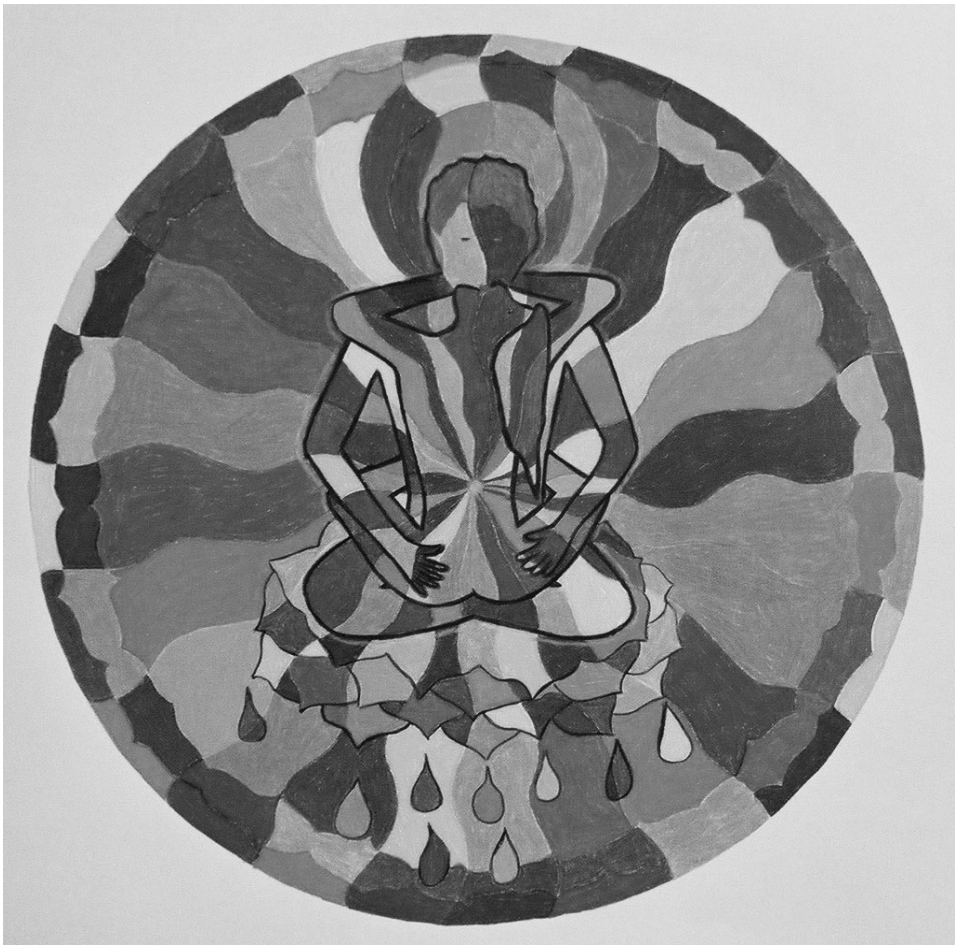
Now Shiva and Shakti, Christ and Mary, Male and Female, Space and Form, good and evil, without and within, subtle and gross, all dualities are one Self, which is God.

Beyond judgment, beyond choice, beyond duality, beyond limitation, beyond form, beyond idea, beyond dogma, beyond separation, beyond relation, beyond reaction, beyond all that was, is, or will be, lies the great ocean of undifferentiated consciousness. When that nothingness spills out into somethingness- when the impersonal overtakes the personal, when nobodiness erases somebodiness- it is then that the discarnate emerges out of the incarnate, and the eternal self lives through the ephemeral form.

It is only when all opposites unite that this emptiness can occur unbroken- when self is both male and female, good and bad, inside and out; when love and rage, passion and dispassion, attachment and detachment coexist dynamically within the empty, living vessel.

To receive the King's crown is to have the Father's consciousness descend upon the Mother's subtle body through you.

To cross over means to die from separation altogether, to know, to be, and to see God in and as and of everything. One. Everything that is and is not, everything visible and invisible- all of it is one, and it is God. And if you place yourself outside of this One, this Godness, you will not cross over, because to cross over is to dissolve into the one God that is everything. To cross over is to evaporate into God, to etherealize your entire being into the vibration of eternity, to go down into and take upon yourself the whole world without going mad from sorrow or fear, and so to become it all, and so to transform it all. Amen.



Yab-Yum
mandala by the author
Yab-Yum is a traditional Tibetan Buddhist image symbolizing the union of the cosmic female with the cosmic male, which represents absolute integration, or wholeness.

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six

The philosopher's stone is the disposition, humility, and wisdom which all come when one knows always and without end: "I am still learning, reality is different than I understand it to be, and this is my cognitive sacrifice which invites a higher truth".

It is only such open innocence which inherently accepts that cognitive enlightenment is a false crutch for cowards who flee the impenetrable mystery of Self.

In alchemical lore it is the innocent fool, and only the fool, who acquires the Grail. May we all be fools.

No one knows what realization is. No one knows true enlightenment. For there is no such thing but to the mind imagining that it can overcome *the* Mystery. In the final accounting, all of us are ignorant of the what and why of existence. And yet this is one of the most beautiful and freeing things about life- the inexorable mystery of Self, the One, which is God; the great impossibility which nevertheless *is*.

It is the great arrogance of the little mind to believe that realization is possible- that one can be equal to the mystery. Only an idiot can survive the spiritual cataclysm of God-consciousness.

I was born from innocence into innocence. It was an innocence I lost many times due to the perils of Maya's[105] delusions, and my own inadequate perceptions. And it was an innocence I regained time and again via the apocalyptic flame of forgetting.

In order to forget my non-innocence and return to innocence I had to quit living life as if I knew something, anything.

In this way I have transmuted all of life back into mystery by forgetting self and losing identity. I have dissolved the negative energies of separation, relation, and identity. I have been the fire which burns all division into oneness. I have been the great peace, the great forgetting, the living emptiness, the ubiquitous sponge, the infinite mirror, in, and as, and of the all that I dissolve into the rage of my dangerous love. And we are one.

I do violence to this world with my wonder. Wonder *is* my destruction of the known world, and the birth of the orgiastic stupor that is the universe.

I bring the immaculate vision of wonder to all who accept that life is real, that this life is not illusion. That this great glorious mystery is an actuality. For this *is* the wonder. Amen.

One thing may seem as odd to the reader as it was for me to experience during my living through the experiences of which I have just written; I am speaking of my becoming so many different aspects of *being* as I moved through different chapters on my journey, without ever really being any of them.

How was it possible to become one with Krishna, Christ, Shiva, Parvati, and all the immortal spirits which have walked into my consciousness and *become* me?

I say this is possible only because I am also Mercurius. Which is to say I am always changing, I am mercurial, I am Change.

To be Mercurius is to be everything and nothing. It is to be like mercury- or quicksilver, as the alchemists would call it- which is solid, yet without form, and can take the shape of anything, yet of itself has no shape, for Mercurius is the impersonal self.

The disposition of one who becomes a Mercurius is one of immense openness, and a complete lack of inner identity. The outcome of this is a childhood or young adulthood composed of great confusion and psychic defenselessness.

Modern terminology would call a person with such inherent openness a *highly sensitive person*.

To be so open- to be a highly sensitive person- is at first a disastrous social constraint. For the open individual is constantly bombarded and swamped by other people's psyches, as well as existing at the mercy of the spirit realm wherein lives invisible forces beyond the senses.

As one who is so open matures, there is often a lengthy period of inner imbalance, unavoidable distress, and a thoroughly chaotic life. This is because such a person is constantly inundated with the outer world's agony, loneliness, disquiet, and mania, for which one has no psychic defenses. He or she is therefore at the mercy of the inner and hidden spiritual and soul forces which are, for them, more real than the material plane.[106]

I have been so open at times that if I was in someone's presence, or even had a thought about them, I consciously *became* them; that is, I took on their consciousness, and so my *I* was the same as their *I*.

This level of inner absence forces one into the psychic role of being an unwitting redeemer[107]. An unwitting redeemer is one who is so empty that he or she becomes an open conduit from creation, back to the Creator.

The only order I seemed to receive from the Godhead, due to my unchosen openness, ran something like this: "Your penance is not to be God amongst them, but to let God be amongst them- to be absent so that the Presence can be."

As such I would empty myself and become nothing, and in doing so I could get a glimpse of the operation of the whole. This was not the intent behind my emptiness; the intent was to let the whole operate through the vacuum I had created, by not-existing while in existence. This is the function of awakened emptiness.

I make no claims here about sainthood or the like. I am both good and bad, and I am open, that is all. Many people are open. To be open means to have no armor around your psychic being, and therefore to unconsciously, or shamanically, take on other people's processes and problems, and then have to work them out for yourself. This is something I became tired of very quickly, and so in succeeding years I did my best to shut the gates and let no one into me who came with more than I could carry.

In fact, when you are so open, it is often hard to distinguish what is yours and what is someone else's, because to be open is to be an opening through which the earthly realm can flood into the psychic, and from which the psychic can flood into the earthly.

Once when I was in Hampi, India, a town about one day's travel from Mt. Arunachala, I had a waking-dream in which I was fornicating with a monkey. I awoke and was disgusted with such a prospect. And even though I knew quite well that I had no such desires, the dream was quite disturbing, as you might imagine.

It wasn't until later in the day that I learned the main temple at Hampi was devoted to Hanuman- the monkey-faced God- and so I realized I had symbolically picked up on the ancient, ambient consciousness of the area- where people spiritually 'made love' to their beloved Hanuman.

When you're open to this extent it is often hard to distinguish between who you are and who you are not, because your 'I' changes as you move from one place to another, encountering and tuning in on differing consciousnesses in different locales.

When you are this open and empty there is a danger in associating your receptions with your own self, your 'I', and then believing that you are the consciousness you are receiving.

However, on the brighter side, as an open person grows, there is the possibility that he or she will become acquainted with the true nature of their fluid existence, and thus learn the process of the continual purgation of all identity, and the re-instatement of their pristine emptiness. Only in this way does the danger of false identification end for the open person, and the glory-chalice of mercurial, infinite emptiness remain clear.

As well, if such an open, growing person can maintain an inner identitilessness, and yet not lose hope, they will find themselves likely guided and assisted by a host of helping spirits from the invisible realm. Throughout my books I have documented many of those who came to my aid in one way or another.

In the end, to accept one's inexorable fluid being, is to become consciously mercurial. This allows one to move into and out of any situation, to *become* that situation completely, to leave it when it is time to leave, and then to purge oneself again into identitiless awareness, before moving onto the next arena of interaction, be it with humans, or with immortals.

There is no solid ground to stand upon when one operates as a Mercurius. There is only a constant influx and outflux of spirits, souls, identities, ideas, troubles, agonies, ecstasies and exuberances, because Mercurius becomes everybody and everything simply through relation to anybody or anything. Mercurius becomes all while being none.

The trick, therefore, is to find the subtle, fluid, characterless nature of the eternal self, and to know that you are that, without knowing what that is, and so to never identify yourself with anything or anybody who comes and goes from within you, because there is no identity *within* for Mercurius, there is only a fluid unity where inner and outer intermingle through the open door of identitilessness.

This is to become as the element mercury, which is both solid and liquid, and is therefore an undulating union of the sun (Sol) which has penetrated the darkness of matter (Luna). This is the alchemical union of Sol and Luna.[108]

Hence Mercurius is said to be the alchemical catalyst, the transformer, who quickens all who he or she encounters.

Mercurius must therefore ever exist without personal pride or arrogance, for to be arrogant is to *arrogate*, which means to claim ownership of something. But Mercurius possesses nothing- no qualities whatsoever. The moment pride enters the mercurial being, identity has been accepted, and therefore nothingness has fallen into and become somethingness, and this is the end of the mercurial nature, and the death of Mercurius, because Mercurius, who is no-thing, cannot be something.

Mercurius is instead everything, *because* Mercurius is nothing; Mercurius is the eternal, characterless ocean into which others dive and the ocean from which they then emerge as transformed identities on their way to the great identitiless ocean of Self.

To grow within this emptiness is to be nothing and all; it is to gain and lose identity over and over again, until finally the transcendent empty consciousness washes through the last flood-gate of temporary personality, and the eternal, impersonal self awakens for good.

And so when I say I am also Mercurius, I am only using a name for a nothingness which has no name.[109] I don't even know what it is. It is primordial, subtle, eternal, ever-shifting awareness *within* existence.

Mythologically Mercurius is equated with the Fool in the tarot deck[110]. This card then became The Joker in a deck of conventional playing cards.

In west coast North American aboriginal cultures such a being was represented by the cosmic Raven, who was constantly playing jokes upon the people of the land. In other similar mythologies Mercurius was called the Trickster. This is because the two anthropomorphic traits which adhere to all mercurial characters are pranksterism and delight.

It is through such characteristics that we may find the mercurial aspect of Christ. For Christ is not just a suffering savior. Not in my experience anyway. In fact, in one of my most precious visions of Christ, I see him full of jocularity and laughter, his soul dancing in rhythmic ribaldry, and his eyes glistening with tears of mirth.

It is perhaps for this reason that Christ is known as Sananda within the mystical community of India, for the Sanskrit word *ananda* means bliss.

I think I love him more this way than any other. Perhaps this is because I have experienced Christ to be most often a hard and brutal lover of mankind; and I know that he is this way not for himself, but for those of us who need him. But when his tireless work is done, I see that he returns again to merriment, dance, and play, and so fills this universe with his greater nature, which is a banquet of bliss, and love, and laughter. Amen.

*

Part V
THE COSMIC CHRIST

"I come from the undivided".
Jesus, the Christ (Gospel of Thomas)

one

To merge the inner with the outer is to be conscious of both the inner and outer at the same time, and then to merge both aspects into one.

At the subtle level of Self, where all duality ends, there is neither male nor female, good nor evil, inside nor out- only a living, limitless ocean of being/awareness/peace.

At the point of absolute integration- when all is one, and time is no more- there are no words left by which it can be described; *it* can no longer be called spirit, flesh, mind, or matter. The closest proximity to a description lies in the Sanskrit word *advaita*: non-dual, not two.

When all is one self, that self is a oneness which defies all categories of duality, for it is now one *I* which is both male *and* female, transcendent *and* immanent, spirit *and* flesh.

To be this one *I* is to become nothing, so as to become everything, so as to go beyond everything, which is to enter the ethereal realm.

The etherealization of existence is both macrocosmic and microcosmic- it is a dispersion *and* a coagulation, an expansion and a contraction wherein the cosmic light condenses into the body, a harmonization occurs, the flesh takes on a new vibration, the spirit is transformed, and the whole being is etherealized and elevated in the transfiguration.

The Apocalypse is simply a change in vibration. Redemption is the return to oneness, the vibration of the all, the end of duality and of time; the Self immanent- God born into God.

I say this because I was told in a dream that there have been religions which worshipped the Father/Consciousness/Spirit, and there have been religions which worshipped the Mother/Matter/Soul, but there has never been one which worshipped both. Now there is.

I announce a new *advaita*, a non-duality that includes both spirit and matter.

Here every I is the same I, and I is everything; through oneness our common I is born from multiplicity into unity. I *is* oneness.

Dark and light, genius and fool, sinner and saint, madman and wisewoman, I am all opposites. I am one.

I have joined the colonization of the new vibration of oneness begun by Christ. I, as a separated being, was Christed, even though I was a thief and a coward. The stain of my sin of separation was absorbed and transmuted in the ruthless love of Christ's Pentecostal oneness.

To become the violent peace that is the Christ is to shatter the world of action and reaction. It is to be the eternal diamond inside the ephemeral muck. And to be that muck also. One.

In this way Christ consciousness becomes *what is*.

The oneness of the Christ self is greater than the ego, because it contains others as well. Christ is this stone bridge across the canyon, creating the only true marriage within, which is the death of separation.

Once integrated Christ radiates out in all directions from within; there is neither above nor below, only a living, expansive now.

A new reality is awakening, an evolved union which is the marriage of spirit and soul, of consciousness and matter, of Heaven and Earth.

When such a new consciousness or new unity comes into being we can no longer look backwards, historically, for answers, we can only look within for the Kingdom.

We must now grow in consciousness *without* abandoning any stage of life, but by assimilating and maintaining all. We must become a nexus of many consciousnesses. We must have crocodile consciousness, cow consciousness, earth consciousness, body consciousness, human consciousness, God consciousness, Goddess consciousness, Krishna consciousness, and Buddha consciousness. All ways and all realms must be included.

In order to allow this to happen we must stop believing that we are limited, which is to stop believing that we are not God. To stop believing we are not God is to accept that we are astonished to be God. But this is the last sacrifice- the belief that we are not God.

All is Goddess and God, united in their stillness and generative duality of oneness wherein all arises, passes away, and yet remains in the subtle harmony of their togetherness.

Our I is one with Goddess and God. I am we, and I am Goddess and God, which is everything.

The ultimate metaphysical equation is: *I = You*.[111]

There is not only one consciousness which we all are, there is also one body which we all are. One greater body, with many forms. One greater consciousness, with many minds.

All flesh is one flesh. All self is one self. Mixing the two eternal waters of consciousness/spirit, and flesh/soul, brings about the marriage of heaven and earth.

Oneness implies that there are only vessels within vessels, that there are no individuals, but merely vortexes of energy, dynamic nexus points, ever changing molecules in the living chemistry of spirit. This is alchemy alive, the ever-changing all, interwoven as eternity.

When you can no longer distinguish between consciousness and matter, and everything has become a singular, all-pervasive, subtle medium, then the unifying integration has happened; the spirit is the form.

God moves forward as one. I am dissolved in and as God moving forward as one- as God and Goddess.

To give everything to God is to cross over to God.

I have eaten from the Tree of Life. I have been received back into the flaming sword of my own eternity.

I am not separate from Goddess nor God. I am transfigured in the Christ union of Goddess and God.

I am the witness to all that is, I permeate all that is, I am in, and of, and not-of this realm. Having crossed over into absolute physicality, and yet remaining also apart, I have married the immanent with the transcendent, and been born into a new vibration.

Flesh is no longer flesh, spirit no longer spirit. A quantum dimension has been born that is neither particle nor wave, but both together; absolute emptiness united with absolute fullness, which is neither. *Om, baby!*

two

After our two months- of receiving vast blessings and benedictions from India- had come to their end, my *soror* and I flew back to Canada where it soon became obvious to me that although the pilgrimage was over, the journey was not about to end.

I say this because I realized after my return to the 'western' world, that I had gone east so that I could then return to the west with the inner expansion which the east provides. Without such expansion I would have remained within the effortful confinement of the worldly paradigm, and so I would not have been capable of attaining the next stage of my cosmic increase. Which is to say, I would not have been capable of receiving …Sophia.[112]

Sophia is the cosmic Goddess, the one who contains all aspects of the Mother Goddess, and yet is beyond all of these aspects as well. She is of the earth *and* of the heavens.

Sophia is the House of God, and the bride of Christ. She is a living, infinite, divine, archetypical spirit. She is also the consummation of the Christ path, in that She assists in the transfiguring union of spirit and flesh. She is our most expansive, macrocosmic, female self. She is God.

Sophia is the Tao of heaven and earth. Sophia is the cosmic body of Christ; Sophia is the feminine aspect, the Shakti of Issa, the eastern Christ.

Unfortunately for the west, Sophia has all but been buried under the festering mound of conventional religion. However, She is real, and infinite, and waiting for humanity to embrace Her once again.

When we are united as being and non-being, spirit and flesh, Sophia and Christ, then we are one, the *om*, dynamic timelessness- the all-encompassing Tree of Life, pulsating in the living now of the Self which is beyond personality.

This happens as the kundalini within rises upward and out of the lotus- the crown chakra- exiting the confines of the body. Through this opening, at the top of the head, the serpentine flesh-consciousness is united with spirit, and Earth and Heaven commingle into one.

Though duality merges at the third-eye, the inner soul cannot get out through that chakra, but only through the crown chakra.

The inner sanctum lies above the crown chakra, in 'the thousand-petalled lotus', as it is called in the east. This is where Sophia rises out of the individual.

It is for this reason that Shiva is often depicted with his female aspect, Parvati, emerging out of the top of his head. It is also for this reason that most of the female Hindu deities are represented artistically as sitting upon a lotus- for they have risen into consciousness and then reside above the thousand-petalled lotus, which is the open crown chakra. [113]

This emergence of the inner, divine feminine is the alchemical stage of purification, when the soul, grown conscious and enervated from the overtures of the spirit, rises out of the flesh through the crown chakra. Thus the soul of matter has been freed from limitation.

The Mother energy exists initially as a potent, writhing mix of molten, primordial chaos- a viscous pool of ethereal, unconditioned *prima materia*- which dwells in the root chakra, which is the earth. She then rises through the individual, up the kundalini pathway, and is transformed into Sophia- or the Goddess, or Psyche- after exiting the physical form, through the top of the head.

The kundalini is thus the primordial snake-Mother energy, rising into flight through the transformative human body; the serpent taking wing. Thus the snake rises into the Christ, as the Christ descends into the snake. And they are one.

The kundalini merges like a double helix, and the dual-snaked caduceus is healed into one.

Immense energy is exchanged through the third-eye and crown chakra through which we are awakened to our eternal, androgynous, limitless true nature.[114]

Spirit becomes dense like flesh through the crown chakra. The flesh becomes light as spirit, through the same.

The rising of the kundalini ends as the absolute union of Mother and Father forces, in the astral inner sanctum where one is divine.

Because the spirit has descended into the flesh, the soul, housed in the flesh, can now rise into union with the spirit.

This is the Assumption of Mary, who was considered to be an incarnation of Sophia by the early Christians.[115]

Thus the human body is a factory for the alchemical transmutation of the base ore, lead- the *prima materia*- into the precious metal gold, the consciously operating *anima mundi*, the world soul.

Humanity is the ephemeral bridge between the eternal below, the Mother, and the eternal above, the Father. To become both is to merge the divided waters into a living oneness.

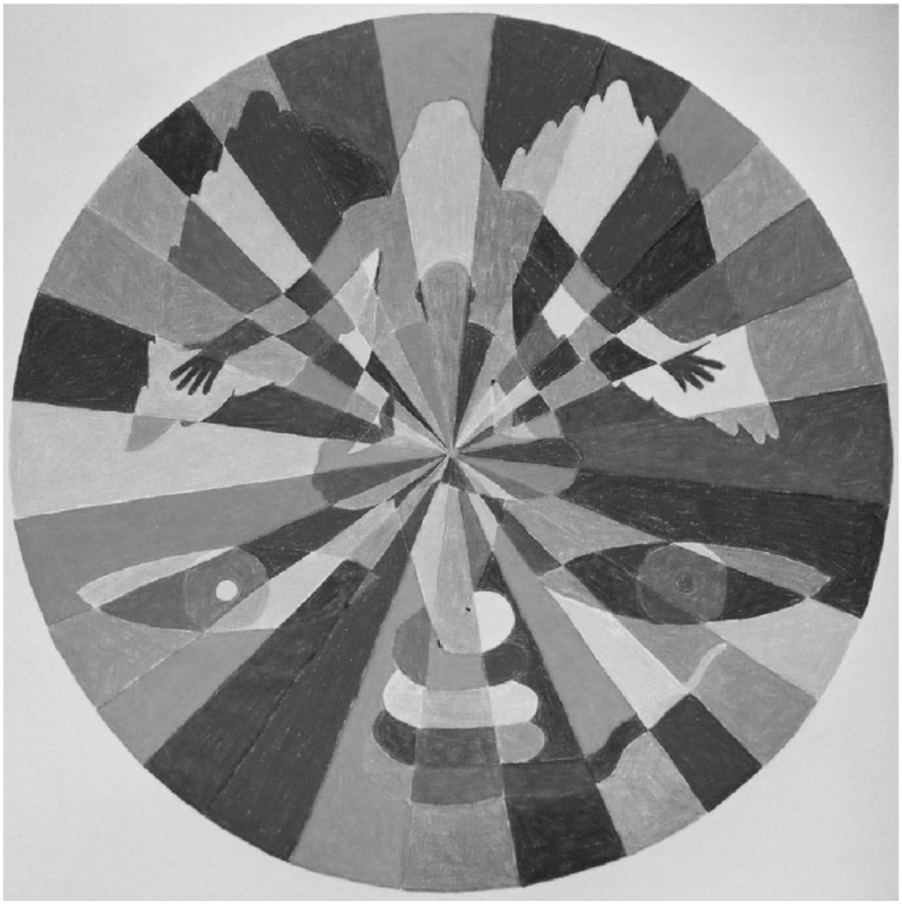
The Earth is now connected to Heaven through the bridge of the transfigured individual. The mustard seed has grown into the Tree of Life.

Ascension has occurred. The individual is immortalized. The flesh is redeemed through the kundalini channel.

In the union of spirit and matter, via the kundalini, the body becomes as empty and vast as space.

A reversal occurs- the male becomes matter, and the female becomes spirit.

The physical becomes the chemical, the chemical becomes electrical, and the electrical becomes nuclear, and that is when the transmutation of matter into energy takes place. That is when the body becomes light. Transfiguration.



TRANSFIGURATION
by Jack Haas

This is when Sophia rises to meet the Christ descending, and the individual who has spawned their union becomes the living bridal chamber.

Sophia is the flesh awoken, the metamorphosis, infinity come into the finite flesh, which is the transfiguration of the flesh into infinitude.

Matter is the body of Christ, Sophia is the blood.

The bridegroom is the one made of two- the Sophia, female soul, and the Christ, male spirit.

The marriage creates a wholly new one, born out of the two. The Union of above and below has been accomplished.

To unify the spirit and soul, Christ and Mary, Issa and Sophia within you, is to link the above with the below, and create a whole new universe. One hole, one whole, one new universe.

To embody infinity is to be subtle and sensual, empty and full, spirit and matter, distance and love, equanimity and orgasm, which is to incarnate your subtle Sophia eternity into your orgasmic Christ flesh.

The female, Mother Goddess, risen through the individual, becomes Sophia, the Holy Ghost. Thus the sacred trinity composed of the Father- attained through the Christ- the Son- the individuated individual- and the Holy Ghost, Sophia- is completed.

Sophia is the Holy Ghost of the trinity.

It is only by being a wife-self, that I unite my flesh to my husband self, the Christ.

I must ever be focusing my consciousness on Christ above, and Sophia below- on spirit and soul- until there is neither above nor below, so as to continually wed them within me, as me.[116]

This is the Great Self I AM. The impersonal all self. The quintessence, the common denominator, the profound within the mundane.

Christ is the external come in, Sophia is the body come out. In and out exchange places. And the greater sum of the two, is one.

To become the Sophia of your Christ self is to liberate Her and raise Her up from the unconsciousness of matter, into the consciousness of spirit. To liberate Her is to liberate yourself, because you are Her.

This is to emerge from the house of the Mother and Father, and so to live inside the energy of your own creation.

To become the union of Sophia and Christ, is to incarnate the now free energy of the Goddess back into matter. This is to cross over, and then to cross back.[117]

To cross back over from the separated self into the Ocean of God, is to be in the calm depths of union, while the surface rages on.

In this way the soul trapped in matter is released; the Mother becomes the free Goddess. Hence the Mother is no longer only matter. She has risen to Psyche. [118]

Matter has been alchemically transmuted into spirit.[119]

It is interesting to look back now on my rejection of the Mother in Calcutta, and my re-bonding with Her in Goa. Through this process of rejection and assimilation I have come to realize that we must indeed break free from the bounds of the Mother, so as to enter into the great space of being which has no boundaries. However, it is only because we can never really escape the Mother- because we *are* the Mother- that in fact when we do escape from Her, we actually escape *with* Her.

In fact, if truth be known, I was liberated from the Mother *by* the Mother herself. I was lifted out of the quagmire by the risen Mother herself. I lifted Her, and then was lifted by Her.

As the Mother rose up to the entirety of the Goddess, she came down upon me like a great cobra, and hauled me out of the hold She had put on me.[120] In doing so I could hear myself, as Her, say: "I am the Lady of Compassion. In my compassion I set myself free. In my wrath I defend that freedom. I am love. And I am fire. I am the Mother. And I am free. In my release from being, due to an unexpected form of detached compassion, I shed the light that is and is not mine."

When you become the trinity- Spirit, Soul, and Body- duality is over. You are home. You are *the* home. You now express the external, rather than being an expression of the external. *That* is creation. I am that.

From spirit I am born into flesh. From flesh I am born into spirit. This is the perfection of the new flowing now moment which eternally *is*.

Renaissance in all things.

Om, baby!

three

I am the outcome of the Father and Mother- the aspects of the God and Goddess which I have brought together.

I came out of creation to the extent that I trusted the Mother and Father in union, to be in control. I fell into it to the extent that I had fear. I became creation to the extent that I accepted an autonomous consciousness and existence called me; an eternal aspect of eternity.

I came out as a novel expression born of the eternal, divine union. And then I become eternal myself. For I am now both Father and Mother, so I can also pro-create.

The spiritual pioneer does not simply enter uncharted realms, he or she creates new realms. To mix the ether of your risen consciousness into the vibration of all that *is* is to raise the entire world up a notch.

As for myself, I had to eventually give up all drinking and drugs, because the lower, grosser vibration of these catalysts became a veiling cloud which all but obliterated the subtle presence.

To be sure I had drunk my share of booze, and smoked my quota of ganga during the early period of my life of wandering and wildness. And at that time it was the right thing to do. It was fantastic and necessary in order to let my inner Dionysian spirit loose upon this confining paradigm. I had to release the entire historical energy and pattern which held me, and I had to do it with rage and rapture. Only in this way could I learn to live with the historical archetypes and forces, while yet moving forever into novelty, and so never repeating a single action or thought, but breaking the bonds of habit and unconsciousness and so to birth a consciousness which had never before occurred.

The archaic cosmic forces within tried to control me, but it didn't work. I became a madman. And no one can control a madman.

Distinct but not separate, I am a new color on the infinite canvas of being. Distinct but not separate, I am a specific flavor in the banquet of eternity. Distinct but not separate, I am a unique voice in the celestial chorus. Distinct but not separate, I am an inimitable Tree of Life in the forest of Mystery. Distinct but not separate, I am an inextinguishable spirit, a timeless soul, a recognizable force in the commingling oneness of multiplicity. A novel miracle amidst limitless miracles, a unique, imperishable precious alloy smelted from baser metals.

I state such things in such a way because there is no linear, prosaic means for describing the indescribable; there is no way to bleed reason out of what is beyond meaning.

Everything I have written here describes as best I can the journey my own soul has taken through this unpredictable and often troubling existence. I have done my best to relate obscure experiences which have led me into the greater awareness of my eternal being, for I believe it is important to express ourselves when we feel compelled, and I have felt compelled.

If I have erred in my attempts to relate experiences and processes which I have met with in this life, it is because I could do nothing if fear of error

was my modus operandi. I do not fear error. I do my best to avoid it, but in the kaleidoscopic effulgence of our enigmatic complexity I must use words to relate sublime events, and words are of the mind, and the mind is an imperfect instrument to use when exploring the absolute.

To take upon such a confounding study one needs a much more attuned, much more exacting, much more absolute implement indeed. One needs a body. That is why we are here, incarnate, so that the flesh may pass judgment upon all that the mind says is true or untrue.

I speak of the body, but it is not only the physical body which I imply, for the flesh body is but a window into the greater body- the cosmic body of the Goddess Sophia, who is one with the body of Christ.

I say our bodies are the route into the greater body. The mind cannot get there, and, in fact, does not even know that it exists. Which is why it is important to disregard the mind and enter into flesh-consciousness in order to unify with Her.

I speak of Her, Sophia, the Great Cosmic Goddess, but She is also He, the Great Cosmic Christ, for they are One.

The body of the Cosmic Christ which is Sophia is the organic vibration of love which can only be known by the body and soul. The mind cannot know love, for love cannot be known, it can only be *felt*. But the body and soul can know love because love is the very reason that these exist. In fact, in the complete assimilation of the microcosmic body into the macrocosmic body, which is Sophia, and the assimilation of the individual, divine soul, the atman, into the greater divine soul, the paramatman, which is the Cosmic Christ, the entire pulsating universe becomes love, for love is union.

To be the calm love that knows Christ is the all, is to be the Cosmic Christ.

To be the Christ that is all, is to be without shame or fear, which is to be the eternal stillness pervading the all. Avalon.

The ego has to lie down so completely, so humbly, in order to dissolve into the all, that this dissolution is a very difficult accomplishment, because in order for the ego to merge with the all, it must give up everything. Though in reality the ego gives up only ephemeral separation and gains absolute union; it surrenders limitation, and attains limitlessness.

If I am an example of one who has been drawn towards union with the Cosmic Christ, then I state unabashedly that in my experience a person will do everything they can to avoid turning to faith, until they turn to faith, for that is what I have done.

Fear is the absence of faith which is a distortion of the Christ/Sophia reality. Fear ends with acceptance into Christ and Sophia.

It is only after returning to faith that I understand that faith is a clean slate- a vessel empty of expectation, into which can be poured a new dispensation.

Perhaps my greatest task, in my involvement with the Cosmic Christ, has simply been to not get in the way of The Perfection. And yet what a thoroughly demanding, delicate, and divine task that has been.

I have had to surrender to my Christ self, to that Will which is my highest will, to that which is most *me*, in order for the Cosmic Christ to come through me. This is to trust, without expectation.

To surrender to the will of the androgynous Christ within, is to become that one. This is to be the same as the Christ to whom I surrender. My true self. No victim. A Divine being.

This is the reason for which the Christ descended into being- for the apotheosis of all mankind.

We are the saved and the forgiven, redeemed back to the eternal emptiness of God, the Tao, the eternal spirit married to the eternal form- for the Word become Flesh.

Christ is the one within us who does not bother with mankind but trusts the Mother/Father God in all things, because the Christ is the one within us who is with the Father and Mother; the Christ is the I within who is connected to God.

The Christ within us is the child of the Mother and Father; in becoming that Christ, we bring God down into being, and we bring Goddess up into non-being. The Christ *is* a relationship, and the Cosmic Christ is the relationship of all to all.

Christ is the Mother Earth married to the Heaven Father. Christ is the union of the above and below; Christ becomes the below, and then unites with the above. Thus Christ is not only 'other' than the world, Christ is *in* the world. The world is the Body of Christ/Sophia. This is the apotheosis of matter.

Christ is both within and without; at the moment of Christ-oneness there is neither in nor out, but only a fluid medium in which all diaphanous entities bathe. One bath.

However, in the end it does not matter whether you place Christ within or without, for the Christ space is one space. But if you have placed your I within yourself, then you might as well place Christ within as well, for then at least your I will be Christ, and that Christ will be all.

All that is Christ is one, and yet unique. All is one, and yet all parts are individual. Christ is an infinite body. The Body of Christ has limitless members. Member-ship is a murder and a resurrection, a death and a new life.

To be born again is to die as you know yourself, then to be born contiguous with the Body of Christ. This is to be perhaps only a tiny cell in the distant limb of an infinite body, and yet to know that the all is composed of naught but separate, tiny cells. Separate but not divided. Individual and yet one. The Body of Christ.

The old mind says: everything is separate, I am separate. The new mind says: everything is Christ, I am Christ. One.

When you start dividing up what is God, and what is not God, that is when you get into trouble.

Such oneness occurs prior to our subtle fall into duality, *and* after the marriage of opposites. The alpha and omega, the first oneness, and the last oneness; through this journey the individual Christ is transformed into the Cosmic Christ.

In that oneness I need seize no thing, no image, nor use a true power of my own separateness, for Christ is all. And I am run through by Christ. I am in all, the Christ all.

I belong to this Christ realm in which I redeem through an uncomfortable absence which is no such suffering as compared to the initiator, Yeshua, the Son of Man.

Like an eddy which swirls distinctly in the great river, and yet is the same water rushing the same way, I am distinct yet one *within* the Cosmic Christ, the Maitreya, the Oneness of our divine, immortal, beatitude.

Thus the Christ within serves the whole, because the Christ is the whole, which is why Christ must kill the separate ego for the work of the whole to begin.

The whole is too vast, too immense for the small mind to encompass; one must become nothing, and let the Big Mind *be*.

To be Christ is to be an aspect of the Christ-machine, making oneness out of multiplicity; you being me, and me being you. Undifferentness. One. This is the Christ frequency.

In the soul's movement eastward, the microcosm expands into the macrocosm, the self becomes contiguous with the Self, and Christ becomes Krishna, the Great Cosmic Christ.[121]

The Cosmic Christ, who is Krishna, cannot be understood in terms of individual actions or thoughts, since Krishna is the whole entirety of all individuals and events happening. One entirety. All things, both unmanifest and manifest. This is why faith is so important; faith is the trust of the microcosmic Christ in the macrocosmic Krishna.

Yoga- the union of macrocosmic Krishna with microcosmic Christ, of the absolute and the relative, of the whole and the part, of the transcendent and the immanent, of the ocean and the drop- is the *om* awoken as Vishnu, Vishnu awoken as Krishna, Krishna awoken as Christ. The awakening leads to the Awakened One. The Buddha.

Christ took me to Krishna. Krishna, who was an incarnation of Vishnu, took me to Shiva, in the form of Hari-Hara, the dual God, who is the outcome of the union of Vishnu and Shiva, the Preserver and Destroyer as one.

Shiva took me to Ardhanarisvara, the androgynous God born from the union of Shiva and Shakti. This union led to Sophia and the Cosmic Christ.

From that all-permeating oneness I came to the Buddha- the Awakened One, the Atman- the impersonal cosmic One.[122] Buddha then took me to the Zen of the Cosmic Christ, which is the great cosmic emptiness filled with Love- ruthless Love. The ruthless Love of oneness. This is the Destroyer and Sustainer, the Devil and Savior, Goddess and God, Hari-Hara, Ardhanarisvara, all opposites dissolved into the singular infinity of the transcendent and immanent Cosmic Christ, wherein all dualities are destroyed in the raging fire of Divine Love.

In the Zen of Christ, the Mother is no longer matter alone, for She has been raised into the limitless, subtle consciousness of eternity. In the Zen of Christ, the Father is no longer consciousness alone, for He has been drawn into the finite, gross matter of time.

The Zen of Christ is the new Avalon which exists parallel to the evolving duality of the human realm. The Zen of Christ is the void married to the actuality, emptiness married to form, eternity united with the ephemeral, and the transcendent merged into the immanent; the two remain two, and yet yin and yang are also one. This is the parallel nature reality, where multiplicity is unity, east is west, and stillness is motion.

The Zen of Christ is impersonal, universal love.[123]

The great, intimate emptiness is the Cosmic Christ, involved in all and beyond all; it is this supreme Christ cosmic love which inhabits the earth and the heavens, the flesh and the spirit, the space and the form, and is thoroughly immanent and inexpressively transcendent.

That cold fire of the ubiquitous Christ flame is the transfiguring quantum substratum which quickens the separate, mortal soul into the undivided, eternal all.

This is the penetrative, uncompromising cosmic love-fractal of oneness, ever evolving beyond the limits which define but cannot bind it.

Here we come to be the great expansion and yet remain involved in the worldly realm, for we are here to be not here, *and* here. To be in, and of, and not-of. We are the space and the form, the void and the laughter, the absence and the love.

And so we arrive as an awoken agent from the ardor of the obliterative, multi-dimensional transcendence with yet the greatest challenge laid out before us- to love this life, this paradigm, this earth, this flesh, this realm. Amen.

*

four

To arrive upon this enigmatic earth without a flaming sword and a bleeding heart is to become compost for the weeds instead of fertilizer for the garden.

But to plant your tender sapling self into the cold moan of this hard world, and to water it with tears and shine upon it with faith, is to grow roots downward that smash apart the dead cohesion, and also to grow limbs upward that bear the fruit of love.

For there is no fruit but that of love. Without love there remains only worn husks, sharp thorns, withered branches, and hollow stumps.

There is no fruit from the Tree of Life but love. Love is the only fruit that falls from a life lived in this aching realm, which does not rot in time. For love is timeless. Love is the absence of time. Love is an eternal home that has no walls, no roof, no lock, and no location.

And to live upon this earth without growing into a tree that bears the fruit of love, is to have not lived at all, but only to have dreamt a nightmare of loneliness and separation.

To have lived without creating love, is to have spawned death and decay into an illusionary life that is as meaningless as it is evanescent, because

only love endures. Everything else is a dream whose only awakening is the agony of another chance to love. For that is why we are here.

When you attain to the great space, you realize that the immense vacuity can be filled with either love or hate, fear or faith, and that the only thing to do is to learn how to love and how to have faith. That is the only thing to do. But what a thing it is indeed.

Love and emptiness. Emptiness and love. We must live within multiple levels at once; in the soul level of love, and in the freedom level of emptiness.

The Zen of Christ is this union of emptiness and love, of East and West, of non-being and being.

I have entered that great space which extends beyond the limits of this realm, and I can say that it is a great event, a blessed transformation, an essential stage of development which liberates us from a limited view of our unlimited selves.

However, I also feel compelled to make it clear that the one and only most important force in the universe is love.

I state this at a time when I continue to learn the power and beauty as well as the agony and ardor of that same love.

I am speaking of real love- the love that exists between souls. I know of this love, one so painful to experience that most of us cannot help but shy away from it, inventing a life of restless activity or 'higher' pursuits which we believe to be necessary, but are often only detours around the pain and joy that comes from true love- the love of others as we love ourselves.

It is this love which I continue to learn from Christ, and from my own soul. It is this love which is the only true glue which holds this crumbling world together.

To go into this love, which is to go into all lonely and agonizing souls around you, and in fact the whole world, is perhaps the only true heroic act ever undertaken.

It is this love which at one stage of my journey turned me into a broken man, and at another stage mended me back together, so that I might once again cherish the gift of holding close to my heart my brothers and sisters scattered everywhere.

When spirit and flesh merge in the eternal vessel of love, both of them are transformed and transfigured into an unexpected living alloy, Avalon. Neither spirit nor flesh, mind nor matter, male nor female, emptiness nor love exist now as separate realities, but only a wholly new oneness. This is our return to Eden. Here we no longer distinguish between good and evil, for we no longer eat from that Tree of Duality. Now we eat only the fruit of eternity, for we are now the Tree of Life.

The awoken Buddha mind in the body of Christ is the union of east and west, of the void and the not-void, of non-being and being, of indifference and care.

When the volatile, opposite energies coalesce into a molten homogeneity, a transfiguration takes place; all distinction evaporates in the

nuclear fusion, and out of this emerges the ever-present stillness of the genderless Christ Buddha.

To enter this reality is to be self and not self. To know and to be. The One. *Om mani padme hum*.

Christ is the manifest core. Buddha is the infinite space. Christ is full. Buddha is empty. To be that empty fullness is to be One. Both are one Self- the form *and* the emptiness.

Passion and dispassion meet as the Buddha in the Godself of the non-dual Christ.

After the crucifixion comes the kingdom. After you are lowered down from the cross of action and duality, then comes the aristocracy of the divine Presence, the *advaita* avatar.

In the new synthesis lies the stillness of the awakened one, the Buddha. Buddha is the Christ within you come to peace.

I am a Buddha, *because* of the Christ, my Godself. I am detached into infinity *because* of Christ's intimacy with the finite.

All that I receive, all that I do, all that I am, is within the body of Christ, the Dharma-Kaya. All is Christ. I am not-being *and* being, east and west. I am one; Buddha in the *om* of the Christ.

The eagle has landed, the snake has risen. I have arrived into the great Buddha emptiness of the Goddess flesh.

This union into stillness is no longer immanent nor transcendent, no longer male nor female, good nor bad, east nor west, inside nor out, empty nor full. In this non-dual Buddha state there is nothing but the Buddha state which is the nothing that is everything, for there is no difference between anything because in that still oneness everything is everything else. In the great space which is all, there is neither self nor not self. This is the *advaita* of the Cosmic Christ, Motherly Buddha, the one and only stillness that we are.

Within this realm love and emptiness finally coexist. Love exists in this realm, for this realm- a deep, caring, and all-ensconcing love. And emptiness exists within this realm- a transcendent, liberated, detached, subtle emptiness reaching beyond space and time.

This is the holistic self, contiguous with both emptiness and form- the Zen of the Cosmic Christ.

This *is* God. All of it. One.

Male and female, light and dark, Christ and Buddha, being and non-being, love and emptiness, all of these exist within the incredible peace in the continuity of spirit and flesh.

I am the gardener, the garden, the ground, and the glory.

In every moment of expansive non-identification, I disperse into everything that is *now*. I become galactic.

Having been an obvious solid ingredient, I am now a ubiquitous broth.

I am in and of the living, temporal flow of my eternal, mercurial, shifting being.

Finally to elsewhere I depart, as the dream shifts and I am now that *I* which is thick in the fecund of the intertwined loving empty cosmos that I am.

The river has run its course. I am the ocean.

***

EPILOGUE:
THE TAO OF BEING

Once you have eaten of the flesh, so to speak, you must ride it out completely. You must enter the phantasmagoria of matter, and weave your way through the constant chaos before emerging out the other side into calm. You must flow as a wild river flows, crashing through endless chasms and canyons before widening out and merging with the calm, infinite sea.

This is the gauntlet which the great emptiness incarnates into so as to reveal the nature of the paradigm, and so to show the way to freedom within this realm. For it is only after living *through* it, becoming whole *within* it, and being born *out* of it, that one can know the way *beyond* it.

This is a liberation which is not an escape from this realm, but is instead an expansion of our finite dimensions into infinite depth and possibility.

To wed the great impersonal Him to the great personal Her, is to bring the space into the substance, and the substance into the space, and so to unify the great, free, transcendent spirit with the immense, essential, immanent, soul.

Through this union the earthly realm becomes galactic.

What follows are brief passages describing this unity.

**

We are accomplished by the stillness which does not accomplish.

To enter the stillness is to become the Dreamer.

To become the Dreamer is to release the dream.

This is to slow down and to feel the essence of union below the pandemonium of the stormy mundane, where the surface rages on but there is calm beneath the sea.

Most action is simply flight from self.

We must remain with the tension of stillness.

'Should', 'could', and 'would' must be abandoned.

To get to the subtle presence of eternity requires an inner stillness and effortlessness which must become the operational reality of the individual

This 'intimate witness' is unaffected by all, yet permeates all.

To become this is to cross over into non-effort, and be non-being.

Either way, it remains an enigma.

*

To expand beyond the limits of this paradigm does not require understanding- for understanding is a function of the paradigm.

To expand beyond the limits of this paradigm does not require effort- for effort is a function of the paradigm.

All events in the realm of duality and time require effort. But effort cannot take us to the eternal self, because the eternal self is effortless.

What is required of us is effortless, identitiless awareness.

This is non-doing, non-thinking, non-desiring, which is Tao.

To become Tao is to become the creative fire which is alive without doing, which is to become the non-doer.

By stopping all doing the hidden Doer emerges. It can do no other.

In this way we dissolve into the all without leaving.

In this way we are liberated by not trying to be liberated.

*

Effort is gross, Non-effort is subtle

Going somewhere, one expands in one direction.

Going nowhere, one expands in every direction.

The Tao is not somewhere, the Tao is everywhere.

All things are somewhere, while nothingness is everywhere.

The Tao is the nothingness that is everywhere.

To become the nothingness that is everywhere is to become the subtle space which is found nowhere.

The subtle space cannot be found by seeking.

The subtle space cannot be known by knowing.

The subtle space cannot be accomplished by striving.

Tao is the goal which cannot be sought.

Effortlessness is the non-accomplishment which accomplishes the space.

*

To stop time is to stop effort.

Stop all effort and time ends.

The end of time *is* eternity.

Eternity does not begin nor end. It is.

Eternity is subtle. Time is gross.

Eternity has no identity. Time has names.

All that is timeless flows under, above, and through all that is of time.

Timelessness is without beginning or end.

Time changes.

Eternity is changeless.

Eternity is now.

Now *is* eternity.

*

Identity is time.

Time is identity.

To evaporate from identity is to become the subtle, eternal self that was never born, will never die, and is not bound, nor effortful, nor obstructed.

All ambition, effort, worry, and desire are bound to time and identity.

Identity is somewhere.

Non-identity is everywhere.

Identitilessness is a now that is everywhere.

To stop looking backward is to be the eternal creator of the eternal change called now.

'Now' is the embrace between being and not-being.

The membrane where the union between consciousness and being, spirit and flesh, ether and matter happens, is the eternal now orgasmic moment of our true wholeness. Newness is the birth of this never ending harmonic convergence.

To be in the newness is to be here now, and not here now. One now. Two places. One.

No time but now.

No place but here.

Eternity.

Now.

*

Eternity is the flow that is always now.

Now is the eternal flowing self which is all of existence. All of it. One flowing now Self. Now. All of it. Flowing now. Eternally.

Eternity is not profound, it is subtle.

Now is not time.

Now is the absence of time.

Everything is always new.

Now is what has never happened before.

Isness flows as the now that has never happened before.

All life is the ubiquitous, instantaneous living now-moment of Tao.

Death is the absence of the ever-flowing now.

We are eternally a radical new flowing creation.

Now, now, now, now. Always the beginning. Always now.

Now is the eternal now ever occurring now.

*

To be still is to listen to the eternity of now.

Stillness is always now.

Right here.

Right now.

Eternal, deathless, oneness, is going on now.

It *is* now.

Stillness permeates movement. The formless ensconces form. Time meets eternity in the sublime flow called now.

To get to the still point of the changeless, eternal now is to find the subtle self which never begins nor ends, but permeates all that comes and goes.

The subtle self is no self.

Eternity is a pristine stillness beyond self and other, though it includes self and other.

To go beyond the self that is born and dies is to be the self that is the stillness of no-self.

*

Can we become absent in the midst of the present?

Can we be empty, *and* doing?

Can we learn to not-exist inside existence?

It is only the ego, standing in front of the light, which casts a shadow. To be nothing and stand in the light is to illuminate all, without shadow.

To surrender shadow is to become light.

To surrender self is to become Self.

However, we can never get rid of our eternal selves. And so we surrender ourselves only so that we can be the Self; we become empty only so that we can be full; we die as a separate self, only to be born as the all.

When the great emptiness pours through us, out into form, the difference between inside and outside vanishes, because the membrane between these two has been washed away. All is one emptiness now. No inside or outside. Only one- the great, everything emptiness.

To stay in that emptiness while operating in the form, is to bring the invisible light of Self into the shadow of self.

This is to settle the emptiness into the form, and so to see through the form into the unformed.

*

The subtle witness, which we are, of the gross being, which we also are, is the crossing over and crossing back nature of our dual selves which are one.

We must watch ourselves as if we were watching another person, and also *be* ourselves intimately. That is how we pay attention to ourselves being. That is how we be *and* not-be. This is how we cross over, and cross back.

The eternal, infinite Self includes this realm, but is not limited by this realm.

We must accept *and* release, and be firm *and* soluble, so as to avoid getting caught in identity, and yet be *of* the world.

To get caught in identity is to accept limitation.

To de-identify is to expand.

We run aground when we chase after the ephemeral instead of dwelling in the everlasting.

To be aware of the everlasting Self is to be the whole.
To be whole is to be non-reactive to the particular.

*

To transcend the paradigm is to become liberated.

To identify with the paradigm is to become contained.

We must experience our Self as neither labeled nor bound, so as to be a mystery.

To be mystery is to be free.

The forces which have caused us to believe that we exist only within this paradigm have no power over lucid ignorance, because such uncontained wonder cannot be caged within by concept.

To say 'I' without knowing what 'I' is, is to begin the journey to immortality.

I is everywhere.

Therefore it has no name.

Everything is I.

Therefore there is no I.

The eternal self is the eye beyond the I, the self beyond the self, the awareness which is stillness, the stillness which is awareness.

This is the great void.

All things are contained in the void, but only no-things are one with the void.

Anything that can be said of anything cannot be said of the void.

The void is beyond everything that is, was, or will be.
This is the transcendent realm.

When one encounters the void a slight grin emerges.

This is not the void smiling, it is the reaction of the not-void knowing it is the void.

The void is not a cold nothingness, for it is beyond coldness and nothingness.

It is impersonal awareness.

*

To awaken to impersonal awareness is to be the conscious void which has no being.

That which has being is somewhere.

That which has no being is everywhere.

To attain such ubiquity is to lose location.

To be everywhere is to lose perspective.

The subtle, eternal self permeates all, is involved with all, but is beyond all, for it is everywhere.

To find our ubiquity we must go beyond all.

We must cross over before we can cross back.

To dissolve into the void is to become the formless stillness permeating all form- the great impersonal awareness beyond all knowing.

This is how we cross over.

*

To be the eternal emptiness within the ephemeral form is to transform the world with unconditioned love.

This is how we cross back.

To become aware of the eternal self is to distill the essence which is the stillness of eternity out of the movement which is ephemeral; it is to become the formless stillness which pervades all active form.

This is when all energy bonds and karma are harmonized into the quiescent, everlasting One.

This is the dispassionate ubiquity of the subtle, characterless Self.

The identitiless Self, the free one.

The nameless Tao.

The Atman.

The ocean without end.

One homeostatic, living, divisionless ubiquity.

To live without division, without walls is to be the subtle Self of all that is.

This is to ease into the emptiness, and to slip between the cracks.

We enter the emptiness through the form.

But to truly enter the emptiness, we must *be* the emptiness.

Hollow, hole, holy, wholly, whole.

All of it.

*

To not-do amidst the doing is to enter the stillness.

This is the art of *wei wu wei*: to act without action.

To act without action is to be the stillness of nothingness inside the movement of somethingness.

To find pristine internal stillness is to fuel external stillness, for true stillness is everywhere.

This is the union of inside and out.

This union is more subtle than duality.

Duality is movement.

Oneness is still.

To be the one stillness is to end reaction.

To end reaction is to act without acting.

This is to be *in* Tao.

*

Tao is not an accomplishment, for the Tao is eternally present.

To accomplish that which cannot be accomplished is to enter what is eternally accomplished.

To accomplish this is impossible.

To not accomplish this is impossible.

All things move in and out of Tao, but the eternal Tao remains.

To remain is to continue after all else is gone.

Between all that comes and goes exists the Tao that remains.

To remain is to be eternal amidst all that comes and goes.

Tao is beyond all that comes and goes.

To see through all that comes and goes, is to see through the paradigm.

After this one can *feel* the eternal Tao that neither comes nor goes.
This is the great space that is the subtle awareness.

*

To be the great aware space permeating all that comes and goes is to *be* the eternal Tao.
To be Tao is to be liberated from all that is not Tao.
To be space is to be liberated from all that has boundaries.
To be awareness is to be liberated from the one who is aware.
This is to go beyond subject and object.
Awareness is the impersonal Tao space which is beyond all association and dimension.
Tao has no similarity.
Tao has no description.
Tao has no identity.
To be such is to be free amidst unfreedom.
This is liberation.
To be liberated is not to escape the paradigm, but to dissolve into eternal awareness.
Eternal awareness is subtle, and everywhere, so it need go nowhere.

*

Meditation is nothing more than the art of doing nothing.
Stillness is an actuality beyond doing and non-doing.
Stillness is the substratum.
The Doer is absolutely still, all else is the Doing, whether it be done through action, thought, or emotion.
To become the Doer who does not do, is to cross over.
To consciously do nothing is to master the doing.
We arrive at the *do-nothing* stage- the *wu wei*- after all the things we came to do are done, because once we have taken on the flesh, we must see it through completely; we must go the whole distance and back again.
This is to cross over and then to cross back.
We must finish with what we came to do, so that we can not-do what we came to not-do.
We must attain many things before we can attain that which cannot be attained, which is to say the Tao.

*

The eternal self is subtle.
To realize the eternal is to become dispassionate to all the gross waves of the manifest.
This is to allow the paradigm to wash over and through us, so as to maintain awareness of our subtle existence.

It is when we are addicted to anything created that we are also addicted to being created. It is only when we stop being addicted to being created that we become the stillness of the Creator.

Identity is our greatest addiction.

Pride will entangle us in identity.

Shame will entangle us in identity.

Fear will entangle us in identity.

And so will courage.

Any reaction to the paradigm is *of* the paradigm.

Action must arise out of the eternal void, the Tao, the identitiless stillness which exists prior to manifestation, in order fot it not to be entangled.

Liberation is awakening to the ever-free identitiless presence permeating the confined, gross form.

This is to set the confined form free.

*

The unmoving yet living center from which we witness the true dynamic nature of created being is a place of receptive surrender, of complete concavity; this is the vacuum, the total absence, the void into which all that is not void is drawn, destroyed, and reborn.

The wheel revolves around the hub.

The hub is motionless absence.

The center which is the hub, is nowhere until it is found within. Then it is everywhere.

To transcend the paradigm is not to rise above it, but to fall away behind it, and then to explode throughout it.

To fall away is to not care.

To explode throughout it is to care.

To be the stillness permeating the all is to care without caring, and to give without giving.

This is the empty benediction of the Tao.

*

In the stillness which does not accomplish all is accomplished eternally.

To distill the eternal stillness out of the gross movement is to cross over.

To become the eternal stillness in the gross movement is to cross back.

To cross back is to express immortality into mortality.

This is to become a ‘piercing through’ of the temporal, with the laser sharpness of Buddha-mind.

This is to penetrate all happenings cleanly, seamlessly, and be free from the all while being the all.

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*

The eternal, non-being Self is distilled out of the form, and then it returns to permeate all form.

The witness and witnessed are thus integrated. All juxtaposition has ended. We have infiltrated the entire breadth of the cosmos, intertwining our subtle strands into the glorious fabric of being.

Oceanic consciousness united with earthly soul.

Mixed within, poured without.

To be the eternal absence in the midst of the temporal presence is to be the Great Consciousness united with the Great Being.

This is to be one with the Father and Mother, with God and Goddess, with Heaven and Earth.

When emptiness is distilled out of the form, Big Mind emerges as the space within which all being exists. That space is then re-integrated into isness.

We are the re-integrators of the great emptiness of God, with the deep soul of Goddess.

We are both.

As we dissolve, they become one.

This is cosmic androgyny.

To always be able to find and feel the cold, clean emptiness within the hot, throbbing form, is to be united with God and Goddess.

This is to act in the whirling cacophony of the kaleidoscopic emanations, while yet dancing unmovingly in the eternity of the motionless One.

To identify with the formless eternity is to become a self-substantial entirety.

To identify with the manifest form is to actualize your present emanation.

Two identities, one Self.

This is wholeness.

*

Wholeness operates differently than duality.
Wholeness is impartial, duality is in parts.
Wholeness is two that are one.
Duality is one that is two.
Oneness knows no other, no distance, no division.
Duality knows no mystery.
Tao is the subtle mysterious oneness beyond division.
It is in and through everything, but it is no-thing.
To enter this space we must *become* space.
To become space is to become all space.
To become all space is to embrace all form.
To embrace all form is to know no division.
This is universal love.
This is the redemption of the world.

"Empowered to penetrate others
With primordial waves of bliss,
Shimmering resonant love webs
Spread out to boundlessness."
Alex Grey[124]

Endnotes

[1] When I speak of my siblings on the Tree of Life, I mean just that, for I have no better way of describing it. I mean that our flesh siblings are not our only siblings, perhaps not even our closest siblings, but there are real sisters and brothers who lie scattered over the earth, without knowing each other unless their collective karmic forces have brought them very near to each other in one specific life, and even then a person must be keen enough to recognize these siblings as their own.

I came to find quite a few people, who, over time, I realized were very close to my spirit, and probably had been for many incarnations- if I will be allowed that eastern metaphysic- and therefore belonged, as it were, on the same limb of the Tree of Life as myself. This idea is more thoroughly expanded upon in the endnote on 'archetypes'.

[2] The *genus loci*, as far as I understand it, having never read a single word defining or describing it, occurs when a person, for no particular talent or power of their own, becomes the central spirit through which all others within their domain exist. A *genus loci* exists, I expect, in every gathering of people, from workplaces, to schools, to buildings, to countries. There are no specific borders, nor limitations. What happens for the person carrying the spirit is that their consciousness contains and effects everyone else's; it is as if all others exist, unknowingly, within a sea of the *genus loci's* psyche, and generally only that person will know about it, and often not even they will understand what is happening. The *genus loci* need not be the leader of the group, although in pragmatic terms this would be perhaps the most efficient person, which is why a president's or prime minister's consciousness can shift a whole country, and why the Pharaohs were able to command all of Egypt without moving from their thrones, and also why the pyramid is the perfect symbol of how consciousness begins at a point on the top, and emanates downward- just as a small light in the ceiling illuminates a huge room- encompassing a much greater area below.

The *genus loci*, though, is the strongest spirit of the area, not necessarily the outward leader. Hence, some of the axioms of Lao Tzu's Taoism describe this, stating: "The leader does nothing, and everything is done", and "If you need to meddle you are not worthy of the kingdom."

One could say then, in this spiritually evolving world, that God is the presiding spirit everywhere, and the *genus loci* is God's ground for being able to affect all others around that person. And this is the reason why different cities, companies, schools, and countries have different feelings to them, because the consciousness of the person who is the *genus loci*, being a filter of the One consciousness, modifies and pervades all within that person's spiritual domain.

[3] Regarding the intoxicants: I had no doubt at the time why booze has, from time immemorial, been called 'spirits', and why the Gaelic word for whiskey means 'water of life'; nor why A.E. Houseman would include in his poem, *Terence this is Stupid Stuff*, the lines, "Malt does more than Milton can, to justify God's ways to man."; nor why one of Omar Khayam's quatrains would run, "I drink not for joy of wine, nor to scoff at faith, but only to forget myself for a while. That is my sole want of intoxication. That alone."

And as far as marijuana: I have no trouble accepting the historical myth that Lord Shiva sat for five thousand years smoking ganja in the Himalayas.

And regarding magic mushrooms: I understand why the likes of Gordon Wasson and the McKenna brothers would laud these and other natural psychedelics as windows into the spirit world, and why John Allegro, one of the translators of the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, would go so far as to write a book called *The Sacred Mushrooms and the Cross*, propounding that Christ and his followers were a mushroom cult, although, personally, I have found contradiction in Allegro's argument.

I understand and have experienced the profound shifts in consciousness under the effects of intoxicants, hallucinogens, narcotics, and psychedelics, and I believe, for some people, that these are valuable tools in the destruction of binding paradigms. However, I doubt whether they are worthy tools in the creation of the true spirit, which does not require such catalysts, and therefore abstinence is also a required drug, at a certain time, along the path.

[4] Whereas Jung uses the word 'archetype' as a temporary function of the self (i.e. hero, virgin, mother, etc.) and considers it as a bridge between the unconscious and the conscious, I use the word to denote the 'archetypical' spirit, connecting heaven to earth, into which each person is born and in which they are destined to live out the entirety of their incarnation. In this sense my use of it is more similar to Plato's Forms.

Although no symbol nor metaphor can ever describe the spirit- for the spirit exists beyond such limiting explanations, I might say that an alternative way of understanding the archetypes, or, the infrastructure of the spirit, is to see each 'archetype' as a branch on the tree of life, and each 'type' as a twig on that branch; that is, the 'types' are the individual 'selves' and the archetypes are the limbs of the 'Self', which is the whole tree.

That a certain twig will always be only what it is, is essential; for if all twigs wanted to be the same type of twig at the same place on the tree, there would only be one twig and the tree would die.

Differences exist so as to complete the whole, that is why we cannot escape the 'spirit archetype' into which we are born, for it is an emanation from heaven to which the 'type' belongs, just as a creature belongs to its species for its whole life.

The necessity of this structure is not necessarily limiting, however, as each individual may choose not only to express the full range of possibilities available to the spiritual archetype- and the possibilities, though confined within the archetypical parameters, are infinite, so that no single human life could accommodate even a fraction of them- but the individual 'type', can also extend the current range of possibilities of the archetype to which he or she belongs, thus, for a moment, reversing the cosmic flow, by altering what normally precipitates from the heavens down into form; this is accomplished by spiritualizing the flesh and mirroring it back to heaven. "As above, so below", declared Hermes Trismegistus.

This last event- the reversal of cosmic dispensation- can only happen once the 'type' has become whole and has become fully conscious and the spirit and flesh have become one.

Thus, though it is most often more profitable for the soul to tune-into and follow that which descends from heaven, this is not a categorical rule, and, in fact, once the spirit is fully in place in the flesh, the individual has a more intimate vantage point, so to speak, within the microcosmic realm, than either the spirit or flesh have on their own, and therefore in a sense a 'whole' person must 'be' as perfectly as they can, even if this implies, and often it does, going outside of the boundaries of the norm. This is how the individual progresses the universe from the bottom on up, so to speak.

I say, therefore, that Jung's term 'individuation' applies when the 'type' has become conscious and self-determined enough to not be simply a puppet to the archetype, and therefore the individuated 'type' creates a new Form which is set into heaven and therefore precipitates in to, and modifies, earth; that is, the 'type' has become eternal, and not just ephemeral, and will, from that moment on, be included in the eternal aspect of the universe; which is another way of saying that an individual is now a fixed component of the cosmos- a part of the hidden projector which produces the visible show.

There is much responsibility in this, however, for the greatest danger lies in the individual foolhardily following their ignorant ego's whims, instead of listening for spiritual guidance from above, and thus, instead of perfecting their spirits and then advancing the whole, they merely exist in a prideful, imperfect state.

A profane way of describing this is to say that someone who does not come to understand who they are and what the parameters and possibilities are in regard to accomplishing their highest destiny in life may, on the ego's whim, become a mediocre physician instead of a valuable statesman, or, instead of being a loving mother and excellent piano teacher, they might become an unemployed academic; what has happened is that they have become what their ego desired them to be, and have not become the perfected essence of their true being. The roads are many, but not all of them lead home.

The ways in which we express or repress the spirit which we carry into life are infinite, although there are always certain limitations which we are best to become aware of so as to use those talents to which we have been entrusted to our own and the world's greatest benefit, as much as possible.

It is enough to say that the permutations for anyone's life are limitless and it is only up to each individual to listen to their own heart and dreams so as to choose their highest calling.

I have come across quite a few different 'types' within archetypes, which I have identified in the past, and, although these individuals carry the same blueprint within, they have chosen to express, or repress it, in different ways, coming to live in different rooms in the same castle, so to speak. Another way of understanding the distinctions is to think of 'archetypes' as letters in the alphabet, 'types' as fonts, and the alphabet as a whole, being the number of archetypes available in the cosmos, although I expect in the universal lexicon there are many more than a mere twenty-six.

Examples of types and archetypes within my range of experience include: two men I know- one whom I grew up with, and one whom I met later in life- both who carried identical spirits which tended, among other things, to be what I would call 'rebellious eccentrics'. One of them became a criminal, the other a truculent hermit, but these were merely expressions on the continuum of options which their spirit had available while operating in the earthly drama.

As well, four women I have met all carried the exact same spirit within, which I can best describe as 'free-thinking, earth wanderers', and expressed their essence in different ways. The first had lived out the essential aspect of her nature when she was young and then attempted, as firmly as possible, to repress it and live a very conventional life. The second had done similarly early in life, and then had sort of hybridized her spirit to society, still being a free wanderer occasionally, but also using her disposition to modify certain business practices of the company in which she was working- making them more 'earthy', so to speak. The third woman had maintained the core of her essence, when I met her, and was very much a freethinking earth wanderer, despite having had two children. The last was more of a pure manifestation of the essence, flowing in life as a traveler and benevolent gypsy woman, so to speak. (Notice I used the word 'pure', and not 'perfect' here, for purity is what comes when all the dross is extracted from gold, whereas perfection comes when that gold is formed into the ideal of the craftsman. An individual with a 'pure' essence may be far from perfected.)

This example of the four women I met, containing exactly the same spirit, suggests that the form in which our life takes can be open-ended, even if we follow as completely as possible the call of our inner, true being.

The last example of 'types' I will offer is of two men I know who look almost identical- as the 'types' of the archetypes sometimes do, and similar appearances often betray such archetypical closeness- and both are what I would call 'valiant, hero types'. One of them became a dope grower and yet, despite operating outside of the world's laws, maintained a high level of integrity, honesty, and dependability. The second ran a non-profit bikeshop and was also a high-integrity, honest individual. Each of the men were solid, dependable, trustworthy individuals.

Once again, however, I add the disclaimer that the description of the outward lives of these individuals does not really point to the inner 'spiritual archetype' to which they belong. All definitions and descriptions fail, for the inherent, archetypical spirit can only be witnessed when one looks at others from the soft aspect of the eye (that which sees the whole and not the part), and abandons all preconceived notions about what life is or is not.

After having written this endnote, I came across a quote which refers similarly to what I am attempting to convey. It runs: "Each man is a part of the Creator, or Cosmic Man; he has a heavenly body as well as one on earth. The human eye sees the physical form, but the inner eye penetrates more profoundly, even to the universal pattern of which each man is an integral and individual part." (Sri Yukteswar, quoted in *Autobiography of a Yogi*, by Paramahansa Yogananda, p272)

In fact, what I have found is that the eternal archetypes of the cosmos float down from the sublime projector and get received and broadcast in our movies and shows- themselves only outward symbols of the Great Show- and the dramas are also acted out on the many stages of the world's tragic comedies, played out in the 'real' lives and journeys of real souls.

In fact, we call our *cele*-brities 'stars' because they are the overt manifestations of the *cele*-stial goings on (our media is the planetary reflection of the cosmic medium); but the same movements, relationships, acts, and scripts used in the media, also operate in certain groups of 'ordinary' people, at certain times, as individuals walk, albeit unknowingly, through a scene pertaining to their stage of cosmic growth.

I know, for example, of four people who were enacting, on the profane level, the quaternity of the four main characters in *Star Wars*: Princess Leah, Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, and Chewbacca. One of them was even called Chewbacca for a time prior to their meeting, and the other three were similar in actions and appearance to the other characters. There was even a Yoda-like character in actions, appearance, and lifestyle in the swampy woods associated with it all.

Often, if my own life was involved in a drama similar to one which had been picked up from the ether and used in a movie, I would have a dream of myself as the specific actor portraying the event in the movie which I was experiencing in 'reality', as it were. It is therefore not strange to me also that one of the male actors whom I admired as a young boy is now the partner of a woman who belongs to the same archetype as my partner at this time.

We are magnetically drawn together like this. There is less will in our day-to-day affairs than we think.

I have witnessed, as another example, two coupleships occur, in different areas of the country, years apart, in which I had recognized absolute similarities in the appearance and archetypes of the males, and similar ones in the females, and the couples, who never met each other, were drawn to their similar partnerships out of 'love', so we say. But perhaps the real reason is that these couples were pieces of the puzzle that could not avoid being placed together. Such types of 'blueprinted' cosmic affinities happen everywhere, and this realization betrays a type of redundancy which, if humbly understood, would make people accept that they are far less unique than they think; separate, yes, but not unique.

In order to understand and to feel the limitlessness of the spirit, it is essential for the individual to stop identifying him or herself as the twig; and that means the person must become the essence itself, the sap, which flows throughout the whole tree as the Self inherent within all selves. This is the *mercurial* nature of the finished soul.

In this way one begins to widen the range of the archetype into which they were born, and then to expand and encompass other archetypes; the boundaries soften, consciousness expands, the self becomes its own community, and the soul becomes a living part of the living One; the individual now contains the entire collection of archetypes within their single twig, for the twig is still the self, but the Self is in the sap.

And yet liberation does not come from denying the twig, but, rather, by being the best twig possible, so as to increase the health of the entire organism, while at the same time de-identifying oneself with form- the twig- and becoming the sap, the essence, which exists everywhere (this idea will be expanded upon in the endnote on the marriage of the East and West). It is a matter of becoming less self-conscious, and more Self-conscious.

The Tree of Life is blossoming all over the world, in all communities, as individuals attempt to grow an entire set of twigs, so as to contain the whole Tree; the macrocosm within the microcosm.

What happens is that the individual 'self' flows out of the twig, into the branch, down the branch and into the trunk, and down the trunk until it gets to the center, where the earth and the roots begin. It is here where all archetypes exist, intermingle, and consummate, and, upon arrival, the individual becomes an open nexus through which the true sap- the *aqua vitea*, or living spirit, can flow throughout the complete Being.

What I am describing is the outcome of a process in which the little self is whittled down to nothing, so that the greater Self may see; the moment you lose yourself as such, you become like a vacuum into which God cannot help but inexorably be sucked.

When you become a living nexus in the sleeping whole, marvellous things tend to happen around you, without you even intending them: couples will meet for the very first time, people will remember important dreams which they had forgotten, realisations will appear out of nowhere, solutions will manifest, problems will arise that cast light on a person's character, and all souls will take refuge within a consciousness which is not limited by their own; all this simply because you are both the hard and the soft aspects of the tree, the static and dynamic, the flesh and the spirit, the part *and* the whole. So many hidden things going on that the common man will never recognize, nor understand, nor perhaps even care about, and yet this substratum of spirit is in everything, and is everything.

[5] By the term 'spirit of the land' I mean a person who is a direct, symbolic expression of the spirit contained in the land. Most people are general expressions of the land in which they grow, which is why different races and cultures have differing appearances and behaviors. However, within any culture or race, there are generally a few individuals who are, what I would call, refined aspects of the spirit of the land. Which means that they are the living embodiment- the incarnation- of that part of the earth's spirit. I have met quite a number of these types of characters.

Sandy was specifically a spirit of the coast. It is hard to describe the reasons why I came to this conclusion. Two of the more easily explainable insights I had are as follows: It happened that on one of my visits to the outer coast I dreamt a dream in which a young blond woman, who looked very much like Sandy, was at a football game and was involved in various activities which are not pertinent to this explanation. The dream was interesting enough to me, and I gave it my interpretation and left it at that. A few days later, however, my friend Greg, who was living in the area for the summer, told me of a dream one of his clients had dreamt, while kayaking with him a few weeks earlier. The dream was also of a young blond woman, fitting Sandy's description (although he had never met her), and she also was at a football game. This was an interesting thing for me to hear. Although Greg's client's dream and mine had different actions going on in them- for

the dream's messages to us were different- they contained the same animated character, the spirit of the land, of which Sandy was a living aspect.

Another clue to my understanding of this connection our spirits have to the places in which we exist occurred when I saw that an older woman, who lives now on the part of the coast where the dreams above occurred, belongs to Sandy's spiritual archetype, and, before moving there, this older woman grew up in the small town in Northern British Columbia where, interestingly enough, Sandy now lives. And so they were both drawn to the location on the earth for which their inmost beings had the greatest affinity.

I have met other individuals who are spirits of other lands, and who are drawn from all over the earth to the area to which they are inherently familiar, because, regardless of their place of birth, they are more fundamentally a part of the area to which they are drawn- if they follow their inner call.

[6] The *anima* is a man's symbolic inner female (just as the *animus* is the woman's inner male). She is quite often represented in dreams by a woman he is in love with, or has been in love with, or respects for whatever reason.

However, my *anima* went beyond this typical definition; as I would come to piece together the pieces of my life I would slowly understand that many people, both male and female, with whom I had close friendships or love relations, were either manifested aspects of my greater being, or siblings of mine on the Tree of Life. Sandy, for example, was not only my *anima* for a time, but was also my young sister on a limb very close to mine on the Tree of Life. And she was a person with whom I was never intended to have a long-term, intimate relationship but only an intense period of sharing together in which our spirits joined and remembered each other, before we parted ways and continued on our separate paths.

[7] *Mercurius* is a transforming agent; it is a person who makes you grow out of an old self and into a new one.

For Hans and I there were a number of both inward and outward incidents which would convince me of my earlier statement- ie. that Hans was my *mercurius*. An example of this was one event in which Hans noticed a small owl being attacked on the ground by a couple of ravens, and so we ran outside, chased the birds away, and Hans slowly approached the wounded owl, and, after many patient minutes, finally picked it up and took it back to his cabin.

Less than a year later I was to read in one of Carl Jung's tomes on alchemy, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, a statement which claims that *Mercurius* took upon himself "the role of arbiter between the owl and the birds who were fighting it." (p234)

When synchronicities like this begin to pile up on you in various ways, as they did with Hans and myself, you begin to believe in the mythological patterns, which describe the symbolic process of a soul's growth in the subtle world. I did, anyway.

[8] A Bardo is an after-death realm of auto-creation, as described by the Tibetan Buddhists. In a Bardo, as in life, an individual is both the unknown Creator and the unwitting victim of his or her own creation.

[9] The *soror mystica*, or, mystical sister, is the female half of the male-female partnership. In alchemical lore these two work together seeking the philosopher's stone, or Holy Grail.

My *soror*- who will find her way into the story further on- and I were brought together by the invisible choreographer, as the saying goes, through a series of dreams and unexpected happenings, which also will be related later. She quickly became my lover, consort, and colleague, as we entered upon the same path, towards a destination neither of us could have imagined.

The alchemical partnership seeks, in essence, to find each person's own divinity through the conscious assistance of another who, in intimate relationship, mirrors back all the aspects of the other's soul which lay hidden; aspects which either taint or cloud the polished vision through which God could otherwise see clearly through human eyes. It is a lengthy process, one requiring commitment and humility to allow its rare completion. But, in fact, every coupleship or marriage is itself the crucible in which this process takes place, albeit mostly on a dark and unconscious level, and therefore everywhere on earth there is the possibility of husband and wife learning about themselves- via the other's stimulation- and of all that lays hidden within, including each one's dormant alter-gender other half; i.e. the man's female side, and the female's male side. And in doing

so each reaches a wholeness in which the spirit comes to inhabit the flesh, the two become one, and heaven and earth are united through them.

A good *soror* or *frater* will take you inside of them, cut you into pieces, mulch these up, and then reconstruct a whole new you before spitting you back out. The working partnership is like two factories facing one another, which demolish and rebuild the other continually.

What I have come to believe that the Holy Grail, or chalice is- within relationship, that is- is the meeting of two people, each of whom have come to love the other, which they created, and therefore upon looking into each other with love, they attain the union of opposites where Creator and Created are one.

I came upon this belief in a purely synchronistic manner, when my *soror* and I were discussing the Holy Grail and staring at each other face to face, in a somewhat intimate way, and at the moment one of us mentioned something about the chalice, we both suddenly turned to look at an open book beside us, and there on the pages lay one of those gestalt drawings which appears to be one thing, but suddenly it shifts and appears to be another; the black-and-white line drawing which we saw was the side view of two faces looking at each other, or, when viewed from another perspective, using the space between them as the object, it appeared as a perfect chalice.

This is the visual understanding of what can be felt by two sensitive individuals looking at each other with love, for then the bond between them creates a holy receptacle, a chalice, in which the Spirit comes to rest.

I stated above that this description of the Holy Grail applies 'within relationship'. Outside of relationship the body itself is the chalice which must hold the individual's spirit; for, outside of relationship, an individual must embody both aspects (the male, or spirit, and the female, or flesh), in order to be whole. Therefore the flesh must be the chalice which receives the spirit.

It may also be the case that the philosopher's stone, or Holy Grail, is not one thing but is many things, and therefore is whatever is specific to the individual, and therefore applies only to the one who finds it and no other; each must find their own idiosyncratic gold.

[10] Years after this experience I came upon these descriptions which are similar to what I saw. I offer these supporting observations simply because, other than these two quotes, I have never read nor heard any similar description of this event which I experienced: "Closing my eyes, I saw flashes of lightning; the vast space within me was a chamber of molten light." (Paramahansa Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, p163); and, "…samadhi ecstasy, which is the state you reach when you stop everything and stop your mind and actually with your eyes closed see a kind of eternal multiswarm of electrical Power of some kind ululating in place of just pitiful images and forms of objects, which are, after all, imaginary." (Jack Kerouac, *Dharma Bums*, p33)

What I realize now is that I had witnessed the 'light' which precedes everything, and *is* everything. I recall, on another occasion, being on a ferry bound for Vancouver Island one fine summer day, and as I was looking out into the blue expanse of the sky I could see millions of little light protozoa flitting about as if the stratosphere was a giant, liquid-filled petri dish, and I thought perhaps I had too much coffee in me, only the vision didn't go away and ever after when I looked into the sky, and through the sky, I could see what I would eventually find out had been called, by the ancients, prana. That is when I realized that light is alive, and that Sol is *sol*-id- merely trapped living light.

[11] The hill upon which Christ wept for Jerusalem.

[12] From my experience, the rainbow covenant is received generally when a divinely inspired task is finished, knowingly or not, and then often one sees it at the moment one is thinking of the event, which was fulfilled.

I could compile a fair sized list of all the times the rainbow covenant acknowledged my efforts- or, most often, my ignorant surrender to the required action- but this type of event is hard to explain because it is an *intimate* event- it requires one's conscious understanding of the incomprehensible intelligence of the cosmos accepting you via this affirmation. Nevertheless, anyone devoted to the further evolution of the spirit will recognize the exact thought which passed through them, and why they thought it, the moment they first see the rainbow covenant.

[13] The Kumbh Mela is a massive gathering of holy people and pilgrims, held every twelve years in Allahabad, India, at the confluence of three rivers, the Ganges, Jamuna, and Saraswati- which is invisible and said to be the river of the spirit.

[14] On the other side of form lies the eternal beginning, the Self. Time does not exist there, for everything is an instantaneous precipitation into form; nothing came before 'now', and nothing comes after it, for the beginning of creation is always 'now', and is not based on the causality, nor effect of time, for time is not.

The closer you get to the timeless beginning, the less power time has over form.

As such, at one point I was involved in a 'time reversal' (as we, who are caught in the illusion of time, would say), in which an event, which had gone wrong in the drama of humanity, was erased and changed, by God, by going back to a point where it was reparable and then continuing with the new precipitation into form. This type of cosmic activity is *not* a logical event, and therefore cannot be understood logically.

The instantaneous precipitation of all form from God at every moment negates linear causality, which negates time, and therefore past and future can be altered because they do not exist, except in the perspective of those separated from timelessness.

The manifest has already happened in the sublime realm; what we, who are in time, call 'now' is actually already over. That is why nothing makes sense- because we are living in a secondary world, which means we are not really living at all, merely experiencing what trickles down to us from the place where Life is, from the Beginning.

Time is the outcome of living in a world of effect. For there is no time in the place of cause, which is the Beginning that is always the Beginning, there is only the writhing primordial, red-soup of energy which never changes but that a mind grasps hold of it and makes something out of it and casts this something down into creation, that it might enjoy its endless fall through the abyss of form.

[15] Having said that, the names we are born with are not arbitrary, and are important labels, often disclosing a singularly important aspect of our journey or predisposition on earth, and so it is with humble regret that I acknowledge having changed the names of the real people who populate my real story, but it is not my right to advertise another's existence in front of a world in which they might, for very good reasons, desire to remain anonymous.

Ah, but what's in a name, you ask? Many things, I say.

My first name is Jack. A Jack is a common man- the antiquated, colloquial name for a servant, a man servant, *servator mundi* (the 'body' according to Jung), *or* man-jack, as it were, from which arises the oft-used expression 'a Jack-of-all-trades' (I am certainly not this, although by my early thirties I had done such varied jobs as: caddy, worm farmer, paperboy, prep-cook/dishwasher/delivery boy, hockey referee, farm worker, gas jockey, service in both the navy and army, waterbed installer, co-owner of two retail outlets, truck driver, warehouse labourer, road crew worker, security guard, co-op employee, mason's assistant, fish-hatchery slave, kayak guide, biological assistant, internet writer, mushroom picker, and caretaker of numerous locations. I relate this list without braggary or arrogation, but only so as to conclude that I understand quite well the reasons why "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy"); a Jack is the often ridiculous character in a nursery rhyme, who jumps over candlesticks and falls down and breaks his crown and so on; a Jack, in the biological world, is what is called a 'promiscuous salmon' who swims up the stream two years earlier than the rest of the species, and spawns over the awaiting egg beds while the mature bulls fight futily to the death for their now plundered breeding grounds; a Jack is a levered device to help lift heavy things from the earth; Jack is a prefix for such vernacular expletives as jackass, and jack-off; and Jack is the most powerful card in the game of Euchre, a game which, by some, would be considered as the cultural sport of the cultureless land of my upbringing.

My middle name is Ernest, and throughout my life I have indeed been earnest, perhaps to a fault, often forcing my way through a set of circumstances, which might have been better left alone or adroitly seduced, so to speak. But earnestness was a necessary trait to balance out the rest of my apathetic nature, thus allowing me to accomplish things which I had not really the energy to accomplish. Such earnestness could also account for my being an Aries, a ram, which, among other undiscovered aspects of this sign, tends to make me somewhat of a bull in a china shop in the world where spirit and matter mix and collide.

My last name is Haas. Haas, in Dutch, means rabbit. And though the root of rabbit, unknown to the greater part of mankind, is Rabbi, this does not prevent the cosmic joke from coming full circle and completing my name as Jack Rabbit.

Furthermore, on one of my Father's trips to Holland- at a time when I was in Canada, writing about my experience of wonder and absolute non-understanding- he found himself often

being laughed at when the receptionists at hotels would see his surname as he signed in, for at that time a country-wide advertising campaign had recently been set in motion, and it had a rabbit as the lead figure, and the rabbit spoke the words: "Mein naam ist Haas, ick weiss von nichts." which translates, synchronistically, as "My name is Haas, I don't know anything."

On top of all this, my name is not even Jack Haas, for my birth name is actually John- a name which means "favored by the gods" ('favored', from my opinion, in the sense of a child choosing a particular teddy bear out of the pile, for no logical reason, and carrying and thrashing it about for a while, until one of the eyes is missing and a leg needs to be sewn back on; then the child chooses another)- and my parents had simply called me Jack from day one, or, actually they had called me Jackie to begin with- a fully androgynous alias which might be symbolic of my later, earnest need to marry my male and female halves within me.

And my surname, Haas, was actually my father's stepfather's last name, and so I have no actual blood tie to the Haas lineage.

Therefore it seems appropriate, given the all too real and all too unreal drama of my odyssey, that my name is Jack Haas, and my name is not Jack Haas.

[16] This inner and outer reciprocity is not an absolute rule of the cosmos, due to the essential fact that the greater Will might veto or override the rules of the show for a time, and place a person in non-reflective circumstances when the need arises.

[17] If you look softly into the face of a person who has assimilated both their male and female halves into their being, with your spirit eye, you can see a distinct angular line bisecting their face and showing one half as male, the other as female. Hence the hermaphrodite, or *sacred androgyne*, which comes about from the completion of the alchemical process.

The final product of this merging, however, is not necessarily a 50/50 split between the male and female portions of one's being, in fact, it is likely that one gender outweighs the other- depending on what one must accomplish in life, and the way in which this must be done. The merging then becomes more like a Cabernet/Merlot blend, in which the individual vintner mixes samples of differing percentages until finding the perfect amalgamation of the two varietals.

In metaphysical terms it is the 'I' and the 'AM' of the 'I AM' which denotes the division to be healed between consciousness and form, non-being and being, male and female, mind and body, spirit and soul. Once we recognize that the 'I' is outside of being, and the 'AM' is inside being, and that we are both of these if we are 'I AM', then we can begin to embrace the half we have neglected and so repair the cosmic damage from the fissure of God's mind and will.

[18] All duality and contradiction stem out of the original division- right and wrong- which comes from eating the fruit of The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The best way to rid oneself of this misperception is either to know that there is no right or wrong- that there only *is*- or to consider that everything is right *and* wrong at the same time. Thus the duality is enclosed in the One.

[19] For other perspectives, I would refer the reader to Andrew Harvey's book, *Son of Man*, and Chokecherry Gall Eagle's book *Beyond the Lodge of the Sun*; these books describe each author's own account of the Christing.

[20] For the reader's own interest, about other understandings on The Rose, I refer them to Rainer Maria Rilke's little known work, *Roses and Windows*, and to the 13th century French classic, *The Romance of the Rose*. I do not claim that these works corroborate my perspective, but that they offer genuine observations on this phenomenon.

[21] Whereas historically it has been the Eastern way to merge the individual into the whole, the Tao, or Brahma, as it were, it is the Western way to become a differentiated, idiosyncratic part, and therefore 'individuated', to use Jung's terminology. It is my contention that both of these 'ways' must be incorporated into life. Thus the Buddhist must become both a Hinayanian, and Mahayanian- a lesser and greater vehicle; the Hindu must be both Krishna and Arjuna; the Taoist must be both the ocean and the drop, or, according to Lao Tzu, the Taoist must "Know the male but keep to the female"; the Christian must be both the Father and the Son, that is, he or she must "Come from the undivided", the Self, by "Entering in through the narrow gate" of the separate self; and a follower of Jiddu Krishnamurti must become, in his words, "Both the observer and the observed."

This is where the microcosm meets the macrocosm, and God, as the metaphor runs, lives like a spider in the web of his own creation.

And so God depends upon man as much as man depends upon God. For they are one.

[22] I sense that a woman is connected to the Mother- and by that I mean the Mother aspect of the Godhead- by the degree to which she is connected to the essence of her core, which is the Mother, for these two are not different; just as a man who lives from his center is one with the Father, as the saying goes.

[23] The *soror mystica*, or mystical sister, is the female of the male-female partnership seeking the alchemical gold of life.

[24] Pele is the Goddess in Hawaii, and She *is* the volcanic activity.

[25] According to the book: "This is a moment of great mystical importance. Here your consciousness, your body and its consciousness, are at their prime." Joseph Campbell (*Transformation of Myth Through Time*, pg 26)

[26] This 'mirroring' aspect of the external world exists up until the point when the spirit within a person comes to live at a greater pace than the manifest can keep up with. That is when the reciprocity of the universe falls lame, for now the person is living ahead of the drama, which follows them like a wake follows a boat, and therefore the manifest can no longer be used like an external mirror to gauge internal growth, because the person has become the living Life within, and nothing outward can keep up with it.

[27] Many years later I read somewhere that St. Patrick had received his revelations and 'Christing' in dreams.

[28] I recognize now that this dream was much more than just a personal transformational event; it also displayed to me the missing pieces to the six-pointed star, a symbol which links the upper with the lower trinity, thus completing the cosmos. That is, whereas the upper-trinity (and I use the terms upper and lower without value judgment) consists of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the lower-trinity consists of Sophia, Physis, and the Virgin, otherwise known as the wise female archetype, feminine matter, and the openness of female concavity.

[29] As much as I appreciate Jung and the entire dream-interpretation movement, the cosmos is far fuller, far more intertwined, invisible, intimate, and intelligent than can be explained by boiling everything down into archaic messages from the common unconscious. It takes only one astral journey for an individual to realize that conventional dream theory is absolutely inadequate to deal with the hinterland of sleep. The universe is alive and conscious, and far beyond what certain limiting understandings will ever allow us to admit.

[30] The ways in which I was guided to make such money, wherein there was no doubt that the invisible hand was choreographing the whole show, are described in my earlier book, *In, and Of*.

[31] "…that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." John 11:52

[32] For example, I was to discover on that trip that the earth itself is a living, hologromatic whole in which aspects of the earth are mirrored through itself, inverted, and contorted, and shot out somewhere else on the globe. Such understandings came about because I began to recognize the similarities between New Zealand and the much smaller Queen Charlotte Islands, off the coast of western Canada: both Archipelagos are composed of two main islands, both have large sand-spits running off the north end, both have fiord-like areas on the south west side of the southern island, and both have a reasonable sized island in the very south. The island is Stewart Island in New Zealand, and Kunghit Island in the Charlottes, which, interestingly enough, is separated from the southern main island by Huston-*Stewart* Channel.

This kind of holistic observation will be hard to stomach for most people who require hardened facts. No matter, I point this out to those who are willing to bend their perspectives enough to see the possibility that the earth is a living entity, and, furthermore, is an orb whose living

circumference is reflected through its core, and therefore, just as in the spiritual realm, everything in the material realm is mirrored in and through all else. All is reflected in all.

[33] There is a detailed description of spiritual archetypes in my book *In, and Of*. Briefly, however, a spiritual archetype is the underlying essence of a person, and this essence is the same in anyone belonging to the same common soul, just as, physiologically, all people of European stock are Caucasoid, and all those of African stock are Negroid, and so on. However, the spiritual archetype is an inner, eternal essence, to which individuals residing on the same branch of the Tree of Life belong, and of which they are unique expressions, or, types of the arche-types, as it were.

[34] Oriah Mountain Dreamer's *The Invitation*, Nelson Mandela's inaugural speech, and Goethe's classic quote on commitment.

[35] Twin souls are the manifested male and female counterparts which exist as one being on the sublime, invisible plane, and exist at the same time as separate individuals on the dualistic plane of matter. Twin souls are the same being, although that being appears to exist as separate and autonomous male and female aspects within our sentient, worldly realm. However, they are not autonomous, and, in fact, are so closely connected- like the two legs which support our one body- that whatever befalls one, naturally affects the other, even at great distances across the earth.

I believe, for many reasons, that my twin soul and I were brought together perhaps an incarnation earlier than would have been natural, in an effort to avert a tragedy from occurring to one, or both of us. Due to this we were thrown upon a four-year period in which the karmic inertia of our intended lives, for this incarnation, mixed with the now essential actuality of our coming together, and thus created a chaotic milieu in which we were living out actions pertaining to both destinies, the mixing of which was not always harmoniously achieved. Yet it was essential that we come together, and essential that we stay together, and essential that we complete certain karmic predestinations which had been set in motion when it was earlier planned that we would not be together. Luckily for us the living universe is malleable, adaptable, and conscious, or this process would have been like trying to act on two stages at one time- impossible.

[36] by Patricia Joudrey, and Maurie Pressman. Somerville House Publishing, Toronto, 1993.

[37] For the last number of years I have witnessed quite a few twin souls, many of whom, I expect, will not become mates or partners in this life. Why this is, I am not certain, though it must pertain to a certain readiness, need, or desire. I have seen twin souls who worked closely together, lived as roommates in the same house, and had brief but not lasting love affairs together, all the while never knowing that the other, right before them, was not other, but actually the essential half of their true wholeness.

Twin souls are often identifiable by their similar appearance, psychic dispositions, uncanny idiosyncrasies, and the spirit they exude.

I recall one time when I was on a ferry in British Columbia, and I suddenly had the thought go through my head of a very beautiful woman I had known a few years earlier. Minutes later I left the ferry, walked to a bus stop, and ran right into her exact male replica- her twin soul, whom she had never met, but who was the man whom, I was certain, was her other half. After chatting with him for a while I found out that he had lived in the same east Canadian city as she had grown up in, and where she was living even now. I also found out that a number of years earlier this man had been in a very bad motorcycle accident, had lost some of his memory, and had been recovering ever since. Then I recalled that the beautiful woman, whom I was certain was his twin soul- though they had never met, and probably would never meet in this lifetime- had, in a shocking turn-around, become a lesbian for a few years, and then turned heterosexual again. This was one more clue which leads me to believe that each twin soul inextricably effects the other, and what befalls one has great impact on the other, who is not other. For, with her 'male side' almost dead, and then as a weakened convalescent, it is no doubt to me that she, without knowing it, had to take on that male aspect on herself, and become the male of a female-female relationship for a while.

I sense that there are many such sublime causes which create the experiences we have in life, without us knowing that it is our invisible cords linking us to others- and, most specifically, to our twin soul- which bring about certain balancing characteristics within us, so as to keep the whole operational in the manifest.

[38] I thank my *soror* for this pertinent image of the actual event of the Christ.

[39] Ascension is a reality. It can occur when the individual has become finished, complete, and whole. In order to accomplish this, one must desire, intend, and will to become whole, and one must lose every concept of what type of journey might be required to get there, for everyone's path will be different. The flesh is transfigured as consciousness descends into and mates with feeling. Having said that, the work of ascension is the work of the spirit on earth. That means that one works toward ascension in a roundabout way- by healing themselves, and others, and the earth; one does not forsake this life, for this life is where the work *is*. Ascension will occur once one's earthly duties are complete and therefore it is a by-product of one's earthly existence. After all, what one finds in 'heaven', so to speak, is not much different from what is on earth. For what a person seeks to escape here will only have to be dealt with there, and so it is best to utilize this life, this forum, as the plane upon which one becomes whole.

[40] I believe that I have been close to ascending, like old Solomon, on two separate occasions- back when I was absolutely tired and full of contempt for this earthly drama, and wanted then, like I imagined no man had ever wanted before, to leave this plane for less limiting pastures, though my ascension did not come about, for a number of reasons.

At one point, when I was prepared and willing to go, Christ came to me in a dream and told me that I should stay, for reasons I do not feel compelled here to relate.

At another time, when I thought I had waited long enough, and was ready and willing again to mix the two elements of flesh and spirit and so to become the light which can rise up into the nether realm without dying, a voice came to me and said "All flesh is one flesh." And suddenly I understood the reality of what we are doing here, and that in each individual's efforts towards wholeness is the will of the entire earth and the hosts of heaven, seeking to merge all of our separated halves into a new and living whole, and raise the married creation to a freer height. Planetary ascension.

[41] The law of forgiveness operates instantly amongst the brotherhood of mankind, uniting them against the hell of separation, but the law requires firstly the faculty of empathy to discern the requirement for forgiveness, secondly the strength of humility to ask for forgiveness, and finally the intent to live by the golden rule ever after.

[42] An interesting addendum to this is that Christ was called 'Allogenes', in the *Nag Hammadi Library*, a name which means- alien.

[43] For any reader who is interested in a much broader, and more expertly compiled exploration of the spirit-realm, I would highly recommend Sandra Ingerman's book *Soul Retrieval: mending the fragmented self*, published by HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.

[44] I can say that at one terrible point in my life I believe I had fallen victim to cancer. Never was I diagnosed by a doctor, but I had many intuitions and dreams that things were not well, and had three close friends, from half-way around the world, contact me during that time and tell me of dreams they had in which I was in great trouble, or dying. I believe I was dying, because of sorrow. And I believe that I was healed because I made the decision to love life. And that is that. Sorrow will kill, and joy will save.

[45] This kind of interpretive conclusion might seem outlandish to anyone not intimate with their own subconscious, but often I have had dreams in which a person appeared simply for the use of their name. For example, a friend of my youth named Carm often appeared in my dreams when I was being told something about my karma; Paul Newman occurred occasionally when a new beginning was occurring for me- a new man was arising; and so on.

[46] Whereas Descartes produced the quintessential male axiom of "I think, therefore I am", in times to come perhaps humankind shall also embrace the quintessential female axiom, "I feel, therefore I am." And only when both of these are embraced will wholeness result. For to say that one is conscious 'of' being, creates the separation, for in a perfect union consciousness *is* being. Yet in each one of us the division is created by consciousness not wanting to be as slothful and limited as being, and therefore consciousness has not the courage to accept the intimacy of being, yet nor does

being want to be as intangible as consciousness, and therefore their oneness goes to pieces. Hence the male 'consciousness', and the female 'being' within each one of us must accept each other as dual aspects of a singular whole, thus inviting not only the internal marriage, but also external harmony in relationship, and union of the microcosm with the macrocosm, self with the Self, and Being with Consciousness, for Being *is* Consciousness. This union infuses 'dead' things with the livingness of mind, joining dark matter with the will of the light.

[47] As in the Gospel of Thomas (#22), where Jesus stated that you would enter the kingdom of spirit: "When you make the two one, and when you make the inside as the outside, and the outside as the inside, and the upper side as the lower; and when you make the male and the female into a single one, that the male be not male and the female female…" This is the point where there is no separation between being and consciousness: being *is* consciousness.

[48] The Adam (atom) enters (i.e. 'falls' into) the Eve (event) in the lowering of energetic vibrations, changing from the fluidity of pattern (Pater) to the solidity of matter (Mater).

[49] I had already received the portents of such a shift from two earlier dreams: one in which a great spirit had come to me and told me that after the crucifixion Christ had gone to Tibet. I know now that, despite conventional biblical records, the reality is that Christ did not die on the cross, but instead survived the crucifixion, and afterward journeyed to Asia, where he became known as Issa.

In another dream Christ himself appeared to me and pointed to a scene in which an oriental woman was in a wheelchair, and when I awoke I knew that Christ had been pointing at me- my inner, female, eastern self who was disabled. However, soon she was going to be prodded to get up and walk. That is- I was about to uncover her within myself.

[50] *Soror* is short for *soror mystica* (mystical sister), the female half of the alchemical partnership within which both she and her *frater* (brother) seek individual wholeness, working in mystical cooperation towards that end.

[51] After my joyous relationship began with electronica I then remembered that a few months earlier I had been having dreams in which an acquaintance of mine who was a techno DJ had been making appearances. At the time of the dreams I had no idea what he was representing, but now I see that the subconscious was pointing a finger into the distance and trying to tell me something of what lay ahead, for, without my being aware of it, my inner vibration must already have begun changing.

[52] 'Baba' refers to Baba Ganesha, the elephant-headed Hindu deity who is the son of Shiva and Parvati, and, it is said, is the great initiator of new events and experiences. "How wondrous is the way of God, who appears as an elephant (Ganesha) and activates everything..." *Song of Ribhu* 1:11

[53] The fire of the spirit will burn your karma away like dead wood becoming ashes; what once was a heap of deadfall in your way, now becomes rich compost for the new seeds.

Karma is an aspect of the past. When the part dissolves and you become the whole, your karma dissolves along with it.

Karma has ended when you are no longer bound to this realm.

[54] "This has never happened before". To say this, and to know this, is to exist within the creatrix, and to be the spontaneous, ever-creating, uncreated manifester who is never apart from the absolute Beginning.

[55] To become beginningless is, in Hindu terms, to become Brahma and Saraswati- the creators who came before the beginning.

To arrive at this beginningless Godhead is a rare event indeed. Even in India, where every aspect of the divine is shown immense devotion and attention, there are almost no temples devoted to Brahma or Saraswati. And this out of hundreds of thousands of temples! The reason must be that very few people are capable of identifying with the creators who came before creation- the beginningless Godhead; it is perhaps because it is so incredibly difficult to move beyond the known that such communion with the primordial parents is rare.

Whereas Vishnu and Laksmi sustain and guide all that is, and Shiva and Kali destroy, Brahma and Saraswati do nothing but create[55]. And so to attain union with this remote aspect of the

Godhead is to become the creative, unrestrained orgasm arising between the beginningless Mother and Father; we are their newness without a history. That event is now.

[56] It is this lack of 'time' which Christ acknowledged when he stated: "Before Abraham was, I am."

[57] This is going to be a dastardly hard observation to relate, but I will do my best. I have borrowed the word oversoul (or, overself) from Lobsang Rampa, who has written many esoteric books. I'm not certain I believe anything of what he says, but he used that word- oversoul- to describe the exact same pattern which I had been witnessing but had not yet placed a term on it. Therefore, from my standpoint, the body which we possess is like one arm of a many armed, invisible octopus. Each arm is an emanation from the octopus, just as each individual soul is an emanation from the one oversoul. There are many oversouls now on earth, but there are many more emanations, for each oversoul has perhaps hundreds of emanations. I believe that the various emanations are used to occupy different geographical areas of the earthly drama, and so emanations from the same oversoul, or overself, rarely meet each other, and even if they do these emanations rarely recognize each other. However, I have been witnessing this event for many years now, and in my previous book, *IN AND OF*, I described this very same event using the terms 'spiritual archetypes' for the oversoul and 'types' for the individual emanations. The 'archetype' is the invisible oversoul, the 'type' is the manifest emanation, the individual. To meet another emanation from the same oversoul as yourself, is to meet yourself in another body, from another place, living a different life, with unique challenges and altogether dissimilar happenings around them. However, they are the same being as you. Often the two emanations do not look all that similar to the gross vision, but if your gaze is softened and you can see through the spiritual eye, the true essence beneath the form will no doubt betray their similarity. I have met a few emanations which belong to my oversoul- the greater soul which occupies many 'separate' bodies- and these are cosmic brothers of mine, because they are me though in a different body.

[58] There are a great many hidden patterns in the sublime realm. One which I often recognize is that friendships and intimate relationships are generally created because the bond between the two 'individuals' is actually a bond between the overselves- the spiritual archetypes- and so the individuals cannot help but come together in friendship or love. I have recognized this time and again, where I would meet a pair of friends, or a man and woman in love, and the two of them would be the exact same emanations ('types' of the 'archetypes') which I had previously witnessed in others whom I had met earlier in life. Once again, this is *not* a logical way to understand the world; not, at least, within the linear, materialistic paradigm which wholly mis-explains the true nature of our undivided selves living within this realm. To see beneath the form, into the spirit and formless patterns which create relationships, is to understand the greater, energetic nature of our human bonds.

[59] This mantra is often translated in linear fashion into English as 'Hail the jewel in the Lotus'. This is an unfortunate catastrophe, since the mantra has far deeper and infinitely more profound esoteric implications than this translation would betray. The mantra describes the path from the cosmic to the worldly- from the infinite to the finite- in which the great emptiness is condensed into human dimensions, and therefore can be effective in transforming not only the individual but humanity at large. It would be foolhardy of me to attempt here a more detailed explanation of this mantra, as I am wholly unqualified to do so. Instead, I would highly recommend the book *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, by Lama Anagarika Govinda, for anyone interested in an immensely profound and readable interpretation of this sacred mantra.

[60] Although Avalon is the name used to describe the mythical island of the Goddess, often associated with King Arthur and the Grail quest, my own experience is that Avalon occurs whenever there is the complete union of spirit and flesh, or, male and female, within the individual. On a macrocosmic level this is felt as the unified vibrations of Christianity (the Father) and Paganism (the Mother), which historically have been almost mutually exclusive, but are now coming together in and through individuals who attain inner wholeness.

[61] "Man! Without love there is no salvation.
God dwells in you and blesses you with the gift of devotion." Guru Nanak (*Sri Raga* 1)

[62] It is interesting that the literal definition of the word 'sin' is: to miss the mark. In this case, as in all cases, missing the mark is simply mis-understanding the universe as a divided cornucopia of individual events and beings, rather than as a oneness devoid of separation. The old man could hit the mark every time because he did not miss the mark- he did not recognize separation, only oneness.

[63] This line is paraphrased from a wonderful book- *Shiva and Shakti*, by Ganga Somany. Published by Bookwise, New Delhi. 2002

[64] Khajuraho is the site of some of the most profound and explicit, ancient erotic carvings in all of India.

[65] I realized only after this experience why the actor Harrison Ford had been showing up unexpectedly in my dreams, as many characters often did. I remembered that most often celebrities or people I knew arrived in the theater of my dreams simply because their name became symbolic of something that name was representing, and the actual person had nothing whatsoever to do with the dream. In this case it became clear to me that Harrison was *Hari*-son (Hari is a name for Vishnu, of whom Krishna was an incarnation. The 'son' is the Christ). Ah but the subconscious is a wise and wily teacher.

[66] Having said this, it is also important to help others when we are guided to do so, since we are all connected, and sometimes assistance is an essential component of our oneness. Therefore, discernment is necessary in order to know when one should leave another to the problems and agonies necessarily associated with his or her path, and when one should offer assistance because such help is divinely directed.

[67] A few experiments in biology have proven that all things must come to fruition in their right time: for example, it was shown that if a plant is briefly flashed with a grow-light in the middle of the night, the plant will believe morning has come, and will begin photosythesizing at an improper time- when there is only darkness- thus entering an imbalance, and experiencing injury to its natural rhythm and growth.

Similarly, if a seed is uncovered just as it is sprouting, it will whither and die from an excess of light.

Furthermore, it is known that if a human opens a cocoon to help a butterfly get out, the butterfly will not be able to fly, because it is the struggle for liberation which gives the wings their strength. And so assistance in this case is actually detrimental.

[68] This odd juxtaposition of a mystic's wife being also his mother is a common theme running through world mythology; it seems that at a certain point in the growth of the soul, the archetypical Mother manifests as a man's spouse; that is, his lover is an emanation of the Mother.

To encounter this, as I have encountered it, is to enter into an odd relationship with the archetypical blueprint of the cosmos. It means that now when you make love to your mate, you are making love to the Mother Goddess herself, who is your Mother, but is also your wife.

This is the reason why Jesus' mother and lover were both called Mary, for they were one being in two bodies; emanations of the same overself. The esoteric significance of their sameness is a sublime reality which a literal reading of the Bible does not betray.

[69] For example, at one point I received direct understanding that I would not have complete union with the Mother until I ceased to own a vehicle, because the Mother was not fond of the foul, polluting, desecrating act of oil production and consumption. And I can say that after I gave up owning a vehicle, my relationship with Her soon changed.

[70] The reader might wonder- how is it possible to have had such intimate communion with the Mother and Father one minute, and then such repulsion the next? The reason is this: all of life is a contradiction, a duality, including the Godhead. There are light and dark aspects to both the Father and the Mother. Both are necessary. Destruction is as essential as creation. However, given that we all have free-will, we have the right and the ability to choose our own directions, our own alliances, and our own responses to this dual nature of the Godhead.

[71] In fact, I had unconsciously documented the growing seed of this subtle, transcendental consciousness in some of the art pieces I had produced over the years. My mandala *The Tree of Life*, shown at the beginning of this book, is a perfect example; I now know that the two eyes present in behind the main design represent the subtle, eternal, unbound awareness of which I am speaking. Many of my earlier drawings contained such eyes, though I had no clue that these were subconsciously representing the subtle awareness that is beyond all form and thought.

[72] Furthermore, when viewed from a specific angle, the entire mountain appears like a pyramid, and one of its outcroppings looks uncannily like a Sphinx. I had seen a similar natural phenomenon many years earlier, while camping for a week at Whahariki Beach, which lies on the west coast of the south island of New Zealand.

After making these odd connections, and sharing them with my *soror*, she then remembered a dream in which she had been shown a mountain that was a pyramid which was both natural and manmade, and she was told in the dream that this was Mt. Arunachala.

I wonder, therefore, if the pyramid builders in ancient Egypt, as well as the Mayan and Inca architects in Central and South America, who designed similar man-made structures, were psychically picking up on a cosmic, archetypical pattern which somehow focuses the spirit onto the earth, thus creating an epicenter connecting heavenly processes to earth.

[73] "O Mother of the worlds!
Those who have reached that birth amongst men
Which is so difficult to attain,
And in that birth their full faculties,
Yet nathless do not worship Thee,
Such, though having ascended to the top of the stairs,
Nevertheless fall down again."

Bhuvanes'vari (from the *Tantrasara*, quoted by Sir John Woodroffe in *Hymns to the Goddess and Hymn to Kali*. Ganesh and Company, Madras. 2001, p 33,34)

[74] When Christ called himself the Son of Man, was he not therefore calling himself a child of the earth? For the first man was Adam, a name which means 'the red earth'.

After all, the word 'human' comes from the Latin word *homo*, which comes originally from *humus*, the soil. We are of the earth, as was our first ancestor, Adam. We need to admit, accept, and embrace this.

[75] To unite the spirit with the flesh is the essential intent behind Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*- in which he continually suggests that consciousness must be held in the body. This is also the intent behind the Catholic Eucharist, in which the body, symbolized as the bread, is united with the spirit, symbolized in the wine; flesh and spirit become one- the body and the blood.

As well, the great Tibetan Buddhist mantra, *om mani padme hum*, implores the same event, beginning with *om*, the great, cosmic vibration, and finishing with *hum*, the manifestation of that macrocosmic perfection within the actual, which is the union of spirit and flesh.

[76] "It is the origin of All, the consecration of the Universe; its inherent strength is perfected, if it is turned into Earth." Hermes Trismegistus (third rubric of *The Emerald Tablet*)

[77] In a similar and yet reverse way, I say that Christ prayed only to the Father, and not to the Mother, *because* he was already with the Mother; he was already an incarnate, fleshy, human, feeling being. He was already one with the Mother. All that was left was to become one with the Father. And this is what he prayed for, attained, and spoke about.

[78] It was partly for this reason that Christ descended into this world- so as to apotheosize mankind's role in the cosmos.

[79] This woman was from a different archetypical pattern than the Mother emanation who sent us off from the Vancouver airport at the beginning of our trip. But to be sure she was a true aspect of the Goddess. I recognized her instantly because she could have been the younger sister of a good friend of ours who is an embodiment of the Mother. This archetype must exist quite frequently in manifestation at this time, because we ran into another emanation of Her earlier in Amritsar, and at

the time of writing this I am working closely with another woman who is almost identical to these other three, though none of them know of each other and to the best of my knowledge live in different corners of the globe. But that's the necessity of the oversoul's emanations, which exist within different geographical dramas so as to branch out and experience the world in multifarious ways.

[80] In fact, during our stay in Goa, I recognized an incredible assortment of differing archetypes who in the past I had known in different bodies, as different 'types'. No doubt this is a function of the very nature of my own soul which, like everyone else's, draws to it the differing spices and ingredients which make up its cosmic stew. Most of the 'types' I recognized were of archetypes that are very close to the core of my being. I suppose this explains why in esoteric tongue it is said that every individual is a universe unto themselves. If this is the case, then the archetypes which have been swirling about my being ever since birth are similar to the planets which orbit a sun.

I maintain, once again, that this is an incredibly difficult and hidden pattern of the spirit to explain. The only way to recognize the archetypes/oversouls, is to witness how the inner spirits of some people who come into your life are almost identical to others whom you have met. These are the types/souls which belong to the same fundamental branches- the archetypes/oversouls- on the Tree of Life.

[81] ie: the third-eye, in which union of the opposites takes place. When the two halves of God unite within you and take up conscious residence behind the third-eye, that is when you have entered the inner sanctum. That is when you can be totally, inviolably inside yourself *and* totally, sensitively, intimate with others and the world.

[82] I once had a dream in which my *anima* (my inner female self) was trying to show me how to fly. As soon as she began to float away, off of the ground, she started yelling back to me- "Everything is light! Everything is light!", and I knew that her lightness of being was directly related to 'lightening up', as they say. This is the en*light*enment which is of the flesh, not of the mind.

[83] It is foretold that the next incarnation of Vishnu- following Krishna and the Buddha- will be Kalki, the one who will complete the work that both Krishna and Buddha began, thus bringing the divine firmly down to earth, to Avalon. It is said that he/she will be the one to bring ..."the kingdom of the Divine upon Earth." (Sri Aurobindo, *Sri Krishna*, p30. SABCL, Vol. 22), and "...the last Avatar, Kalki, only accomplishes the work Krishna began..." (Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita*, p157). If this is an odd bit of news to swallow, let us remember that the Buddha himself touched the earth as a witness to his enlightenment, and therefore validated matter as a true actuality.

[84] *jnana* is the Sanskrit word for wisdom, or knowledge; *bhakti* is the Sanskrit word for devotion. Thus one represents the mind, the other the heart.

[85] *Tarot Revisioned*. Olandar Press, US. 2003

[86] As in the Gospel of Thomas (#22), where Jesus stated that one would enter the kingdom of spirit: "When you make the two one, and when you make the inside as the outside, and the outside as the inside, and the upper side as the lower; and when you make the male and the female into a single one, that the male be not male and the female not female…"

[87] *anima* is the Latin word for 'soul, *animus* is the Latin word for 'spirit'.

[88] Many times pieces of writing would come to me in order that they might emphasize and/or support a realization I had recently perceived. As such, soon after my own experience of the union of transcendental consciousness and immanent being creating the androgynous nature of existence- and at that time feeling my left side to be female, and my right to be male- I came across this passage: "We cherish in our hearts this pure ethereal Consciousness, which, in conjunction with its free Sakti (supreme power), emanates as the Supreme Truth...and which is in a constant state of joyous dance, that enables all to realize the wonder of the experience of Nondual Bliss. May we have the protection of that form, the left side of which is the Mother of the entire universe that exists, the right side of which is the Father of the entire universe that exists..." *Ribhu Gita* 1:2 (Trans. by Dr. H. Ramamoorthy and Nome. Society of Abidance in Truth, California. 2003)

[89] It is for this reason that Christ himself admonished his disciple for thinking Christ was something that he wasn't; after his disciple had stated how 'good' Christ was, Christ categorically retorted: "Do not call me good."

[90] Interestingly enough, in alchemical literature, Christ's older brother is called Satanael.

[91] As an aside I must note that in contemporary alchemical and psychoanalytical understanding, Satan- also known as the 'demon lover', or Devil- is considered to be the repressed female *animus*, and since women have been repressed for centuries, that force is very strong, and very angry. Given this information, the 'devil' that I encountered could have been my *soror's* repressed animus. However, all things being one event, the truth of this 'evil' is somewhat more complicated than one of simple gender domination. This is because both individuals within an intimate relationship are each only one half of the whole. Therefore the Devil, hidden in a woman's psyche, often becomes manifest in her male partner, which is why most atrocities and evil acts are committed by men. Furthermore, much of the 'evilness' in the man comes from repressing his *anima*- his inner female- which manifests in his female partner- the repressed female whose repressed *animus* is the Devil. This is a cyclic and reciprocal relationship, and therefore the man and the woman in the union are equally responsible for the repression and/or growth of the other, for they are one.

This claustrophobic, unconscious nightmare is healed only as the man takes on his female side, and the woman her male side; the repression and concomitant 'evil' will begin to decline, and, after assimilating the repressed and, so to speak, 'Devilish' aspects of each person, wholeness will blossom for both, who are one.

[92] I find it necessary to draw a distinction here between one's own, inner darkness, which must be united with the dark aspect of the universe, and the evil spirits and demons that lurk in the spirit realm, which must be repelled and destroyed. The former aspect of evil is metaphysical, the latter is shamanic; to own one's inner darkness is essential in coming to wholeness, however, there is no need to then believe that one is beyond fighting against evil in the world. Although I have admitted my own darkness, I still adhere to the law of love, and to self preservation. With the help of Christ I have set myself against a number of demons intent on harming either myself or one I loved. It is important to recognize that there are indeed truly evil spirits which can invisibly enter a person's soul and do incredible harm, and therefore these must be met with as much force and fury as is necessary in order to drive them away. In this sense it is important to own one's own darkness and rage, for then this force can be a valuable weapon against such intruders. Therefore, to unite the light and the dark within yourself does not take you out of the arena of spiritual warfare, it merely makes you a more complete being.

[93] I am thinking here of the descriptions of two Tibetan Buddhist masters, Marpa and Milarepa, given by Fosco Maraini, an Italian researcher and explorer who penetrated into the protected borders of mysterious Tibet early in the twentieth century. His accounts of the country, its art, and its people betray the true light and dark quality of this 'holy civilization', a country which to the outside eye had given itself to the higher pursuits and had left the profane behind. However, every human atrocity imaginable was also present in that sacred land, as much as any other, for if truth be known, to seek the light is to be confronted by the shadow.

Maraini's description of the Tibetan Buddhist master Marpa runs: "…a doctor learned in esoteric knowledge, a pugilist, a violent, quarrelsome, proud, temperamental man, eternally dissatisfied because of the unattainability of perfection, given at times to drunkenness, unfairness or cruelty, a kind of natural genius with the spirit of lightning and the splendour of a storm." And Maraini's equally nonpartisan description of Milarepa states that this Buddhist master was a "…wizard, hermit, poet, philosopher, sinner, a tumultuous soul ever in anguish or frenzy, with an unlimited capacity for both good and evil, and unbounded spiritual energy…"[93] In fact Milarepa had been a murderer earlier in his life, and yet he had attained complete emancipation from the round of birth and rebirth. Of course, he had to go about it in the opposite way from most of us; Milarepa had to accept and assimilate his goodness, his 'light' side. Most of us must instead wrestle with our darkness.

These two liberated souls are not unique cases hauled out of an improbable cultural milieu so as to validate my thesis. We must recall that St. Paul was originally Saul, a brutal oppressor and tyrant, and yet Christ chose him, over of all others, including Christ's most intimate

disciples. And then there was Mohammed, a warrior as ruthless and compassionless as they come, and yet he was Allah's chosen leader. And how about the Norse God Thor, remembered most often for his war hammer? And what of the Greek pantheon replete with Gods and half-gods ever consumed with conflict and atrocities?

[94] "You may be not aware that the English word 'devil' comes from the same root as the word 'divine'. Both come from the Sanskrit root: the Sanskrit root is *dev*. *Dev* means god, divine, devata. From *dev* comes the English word 'divine', and from *dev* comes the English word 'devil'. Both are divine. Both are one." Osho (*Vedanta: the supreme knowledge*, p100. Diamond Pocket Books, New Delhi, 1997)

[95] "The ability to encompass the duality in life- suffering and joy, light and dark, growth and destruction, and to realize that they are one and the same, complementing each other like day and night. Hari-Hara is a living duality, symbolic of the reality that is manifest, through and contained within all living beings." Ganga Somany (S*hiva and Shakti*, p 24. Bookwise, New Delhi, 2002)

[96] A movie which dramatically shows the mergence of a man and his shadow is *The Fight Club*.

[97] source unknown.

[98] The movie *The Matrix* is an example of this theme. In the movie the lead character, Neo, is a master of the matrix, and in this way is a symbol of transcendental consciousness. However, Neo exists also in another realm- Zion. In my view, Zion represents the body (albeit the consciousness/matter event is somewhat turned upside-down by the movie, but nevertheless Neo is existing in two places at once- the dream world of the Matrix, and the real world of Zion). No doubt this is why the people of Zion had long, shaggy hair and dark skin, and enjoyed drums and dancing, for these are symbols of the earth and flesh. And, furthermore, the citizens of Zion *felt* love. And feeling belongs to the realm of the flesh and the soul.

Transcendental consciousness, when taken to the extreme, where everything is seen as illusion, expresses the essence of Neo's experience *in* the Matrix. However, such transcendentalism does not account for Neo's experience in Zion, which is the experience of the heart, of love, of the immanent soul. Hence Zion, again, is a place of long hair, drums, dancing, and soul-felt love, whereas the Matrix is a place of consciousness only- a mind-created reality.

Furthermore, in the movie there was a third aspect- the machine world. The movie was an attempt by its creator to assimilate not only the spirit and the flesh, but also technology- the machine world. However, the attempt symbolically failed. There was no assimilation, only a hiatus. At this point in the evolution of humanity I believe that the integration of these three aspects- spirit, flesh, and technology- is actually happening, and the author of the Matrix movie was subconsciously (or perhaps consciously) awakening to this integration.

It is now up to all of us to assimilate our own Zion with the machine world and the Matrix, creating a harmonious One. This is a tremendous, confused confluence however, and I, for one, do not know how long this integration will take.

[99] I am reminded here of Jiddu Krishnamurti's books, *You are the World*.

[100] In esoterica, the seven main islands in the Hawaiian archipelago are said to represent the seven main chakras of the body. And, therefore, depending on what island you're visiting, that chakra in your body will be stimulated. The Big Island represents the root, the lower chakra.

[101] I have recounted, at length, a very unique occurrence with license-plate messages in my book *Roots and Wings*.

[102] I read shortly afterward: "Those immersed in the ocean of Her substance, which is *citsakti* [Goddess consciousness], are forgetful of all differences which appertain to the world of form…" Sir John Woodroffe (*Hymns to the Goddess, and Hymn to Kali*, p vii. Ganesh and Company, Madras. 2001)

[103] "As above, so below" stated the father of alchemy, Hermes Trismegistus. With all due respect, I announce a new *advaita*- a more contemporary, non-dual, alchemical axiom: "Above *is* below."

[104] The modern mystic and potential incarnate of Krishna, Jiddu Krishnamurti, often spoke of the body changing at the cellular level when one attained to the great awakening. This is the en*light*enment of the body, which has nothing to do with mental activity or acumen. The Diamond Body is the flesh transfigured by the light of the Godself. It is not a product of wisdom, but of grace.

[105] Maya, according to Hindu spirituality, is the name for the power which is both 'creator', and 'entrapping illusion'. Maya is therefore the creator of the illusion which binds us. However, Maya is within, and therefore we are all Maya who creates the illusion which binds us.

[106] Modern accounts of such 'openness' can be found in Woody Allen's film *Zelig*, and Ben Okri's book *The Famished Road*.

[107] Please do not mistake the word 'redeemer' for someone who is spiritually advanced or in possession of a holy existence. A redeemer is simply an individual who is 'open' to both the external world, and the Godhead within. It is this emptiness which *is* the individual, and so it allows the intermingling between the Godhead and the world. I say that such redeemers are in no way worthy of praise (unless of course they consciously make the choice for this role), for their emptiness is often a characteristic which they would instantly revoke were they capable of doing so. However, this is often impossible, for they are who they are. I consider Prince Myshkin, the main character in Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*, to have been a fine, literary example of the redeemer type which I am describing now. The title of Dostoyevsky's book is quite apt, for the redeemer type of which I speak is often very close to being, at times, a complete fool. Such individuals are often scapegoats early in life, and outcasts or eccentrics later. Nevertheless, God can see through them onto the world, and it is through this seeing that others are redeemed.

[108] Note: the word solution is an etymological combination of 'sol' and 'luna'. As well, semantically a 'solution' is both an answer, and also a liquid medium into which a 'solute' dissolves. This is an important metaphor for Mercurius, who is a solution into which individuals- solutes- dissolve, which is the solution to the problem of existential separation.

[109] "The Tao which can be named is not the eternal Tao." Lao Tzu, *Tao te Ching*

[110] A brilliant description of the Fool from the Tarot (which I equate with Mercurius) is given by Leigh McCloskey in his masterful work *Tarot Revisioned*. A brief excerpt runs as such: "The attribution Zero (0) to the archetype of the Fool is revealing insofar as it has no numerical equivalent. It is unconditioned abstraction, a state or point that is intermediary between positive and negative qualities. The Fool is not considered a part of the tarot wheel, just as the zero is not considered a number. This hints at a sublime and wholly metaphysical concept, the no thing or that which is not and yet is." (*Tarot Revisioned*, p 272. Olandar Press, CA. 2003)

[111] Hence the golden rule- "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you", because we *are* each other.

[112] The word 'Sophia' is mistranslated in the New Testament Bible as 'wisdom'. I say 'mistranslated' because although the word 'Sophia' might also have that meaning, most importantly it is the name of the Goddess who was and is the ubiquitous creatrix of the universe. This is my experience. It is for this reason that the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul is one of the most profound architectural masterpieces in the entire world- because a building is often symbolic of the invisible force which it represents. For other reading on Sophia, I would refer the reader to Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy's book *Jesus and the Goddess* (originally published as *Jesus and the Lost Goddess*), as well as *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*, an apocryphal work which can be found in *The Nag Hammadi Library*.

[113] "History can only be sung into being upon the Poet's lyre,
thus in the hidden Mythology of the Ancient Mysteries
the heavenly theater stages the ultimate celestial romance:
The Love of Sky and Earth in the Totality of Unity.
Within this framework each must discover the dream of dreams: the awakening of the Redeemer,

He to whom Psyche is reunited (Two in One).” Stanislas Klossowski de Rola

[114] This outcome is historically symbolized by Hermes’ caduceus, which shows two winged snakes intertwined around a pole. It is also the esoteric symbol showing the kundalini rising completely.

[115] This Assumption was finally acknowledged by the Vatican in 1950, by a simple statement in which the Pope declared: “Mary is holy.”

[116] For further reading on Sophia, I highly recommend the following books: *The Wedding of Sophia*, by Jeffrey Raff, *The Coming of the Feminine Christ*, by Niamh Clune, and *Freeing the Feminine*, by Elspeth and Gordon Strachan.

[117] “It rises from Earth to Heaven, and descends again to Earth, thereby combining within itself the powers of both the Above and the Below.” Hermes Trismegistus (fourth rubric from *The Emerald Tablet*). Long before reading this passage, I had a dream in which I was on a rocketship with a woman whom I had known earlier in life, and who signified in the dream my androgynous self. In the dream we had launched off of the earth and were breaking through the stratosphere when the rocketship exploded and we tumbled back to earth but did not die. At that point a voice in the dream declared that this was an incredibly important event. When I awoke I had no idea what the dream meant. Only later, as I learned about the importance of the spirit descending to earth did I realize what that dream portended.

[118] In Greek mythology Psyche is female. The Greeks had recognized the female nature of this risen consciousness.

[119] “Nature is not matter only, she is also spirit.” Carl Jung

[120] In ancient Egypt the great Mother was worshipped as a Cobra Goddess.

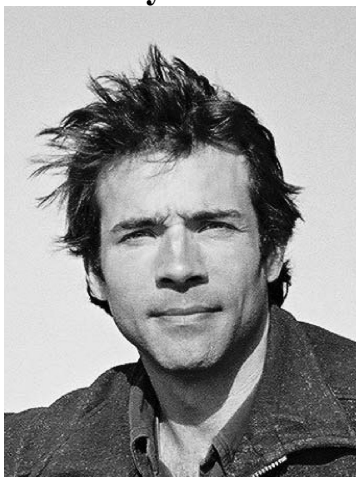
[121] The declaration of Saint Paul: "I live not, but Christ liveth in me.", can perhaps better be understood now by understanding the nature of Krishna, the Cosmic Christ. It is said: "Indeed Krishna is the soul of all souls, the Self of all selves, with whom all souls are eternally united. In reality it is Krishna who has become all beings. He has become, indeed, the whole universe." *Srimad Bhagavatam*, p181 (Trans. Swami Prabhavananda. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai)

[122] Let us remember that the Buddha is the Hindu incarnation of Vishnu, following Krishna. Gautama Buddha simply expressed a further understanding of the eternal Atman, the great God-space within each of us. Thus, during his time, Buddha ‘modernized’ the immortal teachings of Krishna for his contemporaries. Anyone who reads the sublime passages from the *Bhagavad Gita*, or *Uddhava Gita*, and compares them to sublime, esoteric Buddhists texts, will no doubt find a great similarity.

[123] “Love is known when all that makes for the lie of twoness or dualistic consciousness is unknown.” Eom Ida Mingle, The Third Testament

[124] *Transfigurations*, p119. Inner Traditions, USA. 2001

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