

Gaia Sojourn

*Spiritual Ecology
Across a Series of Incarnations*

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Nature/Spiritual Ecology/Reincarnation

GAIA SOJOURN:

Spiritual Ecology
Across a Series of Incarnations

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exploring spiritual ecology

Our lives are a series of monuments to our souls. Earth incarnates, also, in her own way. The physical world then, is a monument to the soul of the Earth.

- a sojourner upon Gaia

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Rudolf Steiner, spiritual scientist, and his anthroposophical wisdom, for overviews of the evolution of humanity.

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Norse mythology, for High Borea material.

Spirit of the Horse, for Atlantean flair.

Last, but not least, Gaia, Mother Earth.

This book is dedicated to the Creator of creators,
Father-Mother God.

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Introduction

The composition of GAIA SOJOURN, *Spiritual Ecology Across a Series of Incarnations*, was boldly ambitious for several reasons, not the least of which included: how to co-relate a wide array of incarnations, complete with karmic and evolutionary elements and; how to penetrate and depict human consciousness in relation to nature, life-by-life, over an immense range of time.

To attempt, for example, to examine the nature of consciousness in America during the 1950's, a writer is called upon to account for a considerable difference between then and now, given both social transformation and the evolution of consciousness since that time. What were people thinking and feeling in the 1950's? What kinds of concerns occupied the minds and hearts of the people in those days?

But to go further back, for example, to Japan of 70 years ago, or South America of 100 years ago, Polynesia 500 years back, or China of 3,000 years past - the challenge grows exponentially. And so I ask the reader to embrace this volume as a creative forum, as opposed to a journalistic document.

Of the three functions of the soul - thinking, feeling, and willing - GAIA SOJOURN's arena of focus lies principally in the middle realm, that of sentience and feeling. Those seeking a more cerebral focus can resort to Rudolf Steiner and current anthroposophists.

The term "Gaia" carries a different meaning from one individual to another. In the course of this work, the meaning of *Gaia* evolved into both the past incarnation of the Earth and the spirit of its present incarnation. This volume of Earth Vision addresses the need for a new Earth-consciousness through its focus on sacred evolution.

We could call the genre of this book "mythological fiction" or "spiritual art." But, at the same time, allow that it may be capable of depicting reality more effectively than can the materialistic-historic perspective. It is my hope that the

work resonates with some of those deep, long-forgotten experiences of our sojourn here, on this illustrious planet, where we dwell within the soul of Gaia.

There is no absolute linear time structure employed in this work, except insofar as the first segment is “early time,” or more accurately, a timeless mythic realm, followed by historic time, then the time of the Walking Light (Christ), followed by A. D., and finally, the future. The reader is forewarned, then, not to embrace the work with too linear a conception. There are a few instances when the storyline drops back and moves forward again, settings in which the thread seesaws, or spirals back upon itself.

Above all, this is a work of *spiritual fiction* - a term that attains to one of the highest forms of oxymoron.

I enjoyed this project. There was no attempt to create an inclusive synopsis of every culture, only a creative way of looking into the naturo-human arena of the cultures explored. I hope readers will feel free to experience this rendition of life’s mysterious unfolding as a journey, to enjoy, and to initiate access to whatever comes from within to assist in their sojourn through Gaia.

Josef Graf
Toronto,
“The Meeting Place”
2010

1 Crow Genesis

Caw! Deep-black crow wings biting a sky of eternal twilight. An undifferentiated ocean stretching everywhere - no land, no day, no night. And we float here in this dim but energetic pre-Earth realm, while with heightened vigilance Crow scans the ocean in search of swimming ones.

Existence feels delicate, tenuous, ethereal. Warmth, in variations, wells within, faint, but diverse in quality. Sparkle sleeps. Waves wash only themselves. Things are dim-lit from within. There is no color blue because there is no sun-washed sky. Without the darkness of night, no stars shine. There are no great luminous orbs, no seasons, no gate of Time. The extraordinary rainbow universe of hue, tone, and chroma is absent. There are no colors, because the prism of Light is empty. Neither is there black. The nearest cousin of black is in the dark but shining feathers of the lone Creation Bird.

Crow soars the murk. Though all is dim and dusky, we sense somehow that light is striving to be born – flickering, glowing, flashing – somewhere in a hidden place, striving to manifest. Crow soars. In its magnificent flight it dreams mysterious containers hidden somewhere. Chests holding light, hoarded away, held in ransom. Treasures waiting to be raided. *Kli-gawn-nay* is the name given a vessel of light.

Crow scans the ocean. Earth will be born, land will become. The splay of wing takes the sky in hand. The tips of black feathers in flight paint elements of creation, every down stroke a gesture of determination, every upstroke a renewal of intent. Pinion lamps, feather-flat rays dimly glint from crowflight.

Caww! Crow spies a primitive ancestor of what will one day become a sea lion, but it is only a baby, a tiny, barely-visible presence bobbing in the thrusting roll of ocean, breathing, surging forces, immersed in watery heaving, gray ebbings and dun flowing, to and fro in boundless, sea-wide surging. *Caw-de-nee-caw!* Crow calls to the sea lion kit. *I am your winged relative. I need your father to work with me.* Tiny kit, ancestor of sea lion, does not respond, just swims alone, a lost child, a forgotten dream, a new idea floating loose on the primordial sea of consciousness. Only Crow knows. Only Crow can bring us out of our drifting cloud-in-twilight state, deliver us to a means of traversing upon terra firma.

Crow flies again, finds ancestor of sea lion. Early sea lion and Crow converse, but what do they say? As hard as we try, we can't comprehend their language. Crude sea lion-part-turtle dives deep, over and over again, but no luck. Finally, after one last long, deep dive, sea lion returns with sand. Fine sand in water floats. The sand coagulates, births an island. The island grows and land for walking ones comes into creation.

As a drifting cloud, we sense we must be born through Crow to become a walking one. We direct our dreaming-will into the soul of Crow and gradually feel our way inside the deep-feathered one. We do not submit to gravity, we know wing-thrust. We experience a unique arrangement of certain qualities: cunning, solitude, playfulness, agility, clairvoyance, and mischievousness.

We soar on, bearing the charisma of these newfound qualities, these black feathers of resplendence. And as we fly, we wonder if there can be more to this realm of no-moon, no-sun, no-day-night change, no ebb and flow of Light.

Occasionally, eddying forces of taste well up within - sweet, bitter, sour - giving rise to new experiences. Sweetness comes to us as warmth, an embering glow. Bitterness, a dark light awakening, dark but energizing. Sourness contracts us, congeals our footing, removes us from any sensation of floating.

When we listen to the heart of silence, music-like vibrations begin to resound and we enter into a feeling full of rhythm, of melodic toning, and a sense of harmony wells and permeates our experience. And there are special moments when aromas drift across out knowing - metallic, saline, or ambrosial waftings.

Gliding over the place where water and land meet, we discern etheric driftwood strewn upon the beach - gifts of the sea, coming awake. Etheric driftwood, ringed layers of living pattern, reproducing and falling away, reproducing and falling away, reproducing, continuously cycling into each its form, so seeming to sustain. And, as the drifting form touches land, it begins to alter, glowing with faint flames of color, pulsing hues of instinct and dream-force. And a wave washes the breathing wood ashore, and a paw forms. Another wave sends it further, two more paws and a tail. The driftwood prays for moon, and prays for sun, and as it does so, it shapes itself into life. As it takes on living form, walking ones of many kinds are born.

Crow-we recalls the dream containers. Kli-gawn-nays: daylight chests. The sky curves down like a wall, a divider. Crow-we creates a fog around him-us, looks like a wisp of cloud. He-we float through the sky-barrier, shake off the fog, and search around on the other side for the hoarder of daylight chests.

De-key-en-caw is Light-holder, a being who has access to limitless power, but does not intend to give it away. Nourished by starlight, clothed by moonray, and housed in solar benevolence, he has not had any experience of lack. None before, or since, have been so wealthy, and few have even come to know, as De-key-en-caw does, what true wealth can be. Crow finds De-key-en-caw and discovers that he has a daughter who goes for creek water every morning. Crow becomes a pine needle growing on grandfather pine on the bank of the creek. The wind rises and falls against us, drawing out our pine-song voice. Rising and falling, singing and un-singing, our voice sounds a little different from the other needles, a little more goldenly we sing. But Crow-we is holding his spirit-breath, so not to glow, so to look like all the other needles. Clinging there, we are singing the windsong of pine bough, rising and falling, until we are swept away by a gusting breeze and land in the stream. Light-holder's daughter scoops up water, takes us up in her vessel.

Daughter of De-key-en-caw swallows the pine needle when she takes a drink, and she becomes pregnant. A baby grows. Like the baby, a new idea grows. What a child asks for is given. Crow-child asks De-key-en-caw for the daylight chests. *Kli-gawn-nay!* Light-holder gives Crow-child the chests to play with. What a child asks for is given.

Crow opens a chest. When opened a crack, the chest emits a searing blaze of light rays. When opened wide, the chest reveals a massive interior. There is a tremendous outpour of photonic energy. From one chest comes the sun, from another, the moon. From a third chest stream formless nightblack and endless numbers of stars. From the chests pour forth all manner of forces and powers and limitless magic. Music streams forth in immense disarray, layerings of sound and fury and uncontainable emotion. A seamless rampage of color assails, whirlwinding, manically dancing with the maelstrom of musical resonations.

Overpowered by the assault of these forces, Crow falls into a dreamless coma. A timeless eon passes. The world becomes enlightened.

When Crow revives, there is no sign of De-key-en-caw or his daughter. There is a fourth chest, but Crow doesn't open it. It is still sealed to this day. No one knows what's in it.

Crow wanders back across the sky-barrier and discovers that formless nightblack still persists in this realm. He has returned to where the ancestors of animals, born of driftwood, talk like humans. There is a meeting; ancestors of grizzly bear, black bear, fox, lynx, mink, rabbit, all the northern animals are there.

The animals live and move with ease through the deep black of night-land. The gleamings, the softly-burning colors of instinct, light the way. They are at home here, it is their world and there is no need to run for cover - that is a circumstance that daylight and encroaching humans would one day bring about.

Now we, Crow-we, council with the animals. We discuss at length the dilemma of light, how animals prefer dark, but humans like the daylight. An agreement is arrived at to share half-day, half-night, with humans going about in the day and animals becoming the keepers of night.

But the sky comes down like a wall, and trapped on the other side is daylight and seasons and time-flow. Animal people meet again and elect ancestor of leech to make a hole in the sky-barrier, and ancestor of wolverine to enlarge the hole. Crude-leech goes to work. Before the wall can sense it, a hole is formed, so small and painless does leech work. Then, crude-wolverine takes a turn. Here is great power and strength. Unstoppable claws send shards of sky-wall bursting, falling in all directions. The sky moves up to allow day and night to follow each other, and the seasons to rotate. Duration. A feeling of duration arises, supplanting the predominance of timelessness, as though eternity folds its wings to perch in expectation.

In the moment of transformation, Crow-we soars in the depth of new sky, blue sky, over silver-blue ocean. Crow drops a stone. The stone is us. The stone plummets seaward. The moment it strikes the water, a great bell sounds. We are immersed, we are saturated for an ageless moment. The ancient future turns us in a whirlpool. We become driftwood, we ride creation-tide, we drift toward the shore of Crow's continent. We wash up on a wave of new emotion. Moon prays us, sun prays us. We become human and explore our new land.

Here is pine, rooted in clean earth. Here are moss and grass, to carpet our footpaths. Here is seaweed to eat, to give strength. The day is bright and pure. Star-filled night follows the day. We find ourselves breathing in exhilarating days, exhaling mysterious nights.

As we walk in wonder, we hear a familiar voice. *Caw-de-nee-caw!* We see a great, black-feathered bird flying overhead. *Caw-de-nee-caw!* And a shaft loosens and spirals down to us. We pick it up and become filled with a sense of quiet relatedness, as we wend our way under the blue sky, the sun-washed sky of Crowmind.

[commentary](#)

2 Hymalay Exodus

Far from the realm of Crow, a seabed is rising. As jagged peaks thrust up into a tempestuous atmosphere, the greatest of mountain ranges is forming. Ice-laden storming is fracturing all sky of complacency, stunning the procession of expectancy. We watch as snow clouds hovering on pinnacles christen the newborn monarchs with a pearl glory. We watch, entranced.

A legion of sky-dragons is awakening the landscape, rampaging, shaking the untried etheric “stone.” *Hymalay*, sacred mountains. Wind and erosion are sculpting our reverie. We are suspended, floating on a drumbeat resounding across a great span of narcosis. Though vaguely aware we are dreaming, we will not dare interrupt the procession. Spiritual mountains, sacred and ephemeral, are birthing, upon whose crests, *Vayu*, tireless wind, is wailing and buffeting.

Eyes of a snow leopard stare through us, ghost-eyes super-imposed on the landscape for several drumbeats before they dissolve. Then the drumming also fades, giving way to a deep humming undertone, a continuous drone in the bones of the mountains. Gradually, as the land is awakening, a sleeping goddess of unaccountable virtue is stirring, quickening the flow of her riverine veins, her breath becoming cloud, her voice, a tempest thunder, a trickle of water, a sigh of breeze.

These great walls of Hymalay, underlying lucent peaks, crowns gleaming with a soft purity akin to starlight, comprise a substance that will not fully mineralize, a degree of matter too holy to submit, yet destined to descend to a calcified state. Far below, spirits of plants are beginning to emerge that, through passage of time unmeasured, build intention to enrich future valleys with gold of meadow and green of conifer.

And while the conspiring of events in the house of nature proceeds unopposed, we are enchanted by the solar benevolence that percolates within the

spirit-flora. Oh, such radiance! Light bathing our everyness, even into our amber blood, sap-like sweet flowing, fluid of spirits of movement. The exuberance of water streaming down the sides of the valley charms its way into our hearts, seducing our reticence, rendering more pliant the contours of our constraint.

And the chant of the mountain drones on with inexorable reverberation, aligning itself at the core of molecular structure into a perfect pattern of Cosmic Imagination until, at length, we begin, vaguely, to ascertain the marrow of intent presiding over the impending transformation.

In this great landscape-to-be, this vista of inspiration, this inhalation of godly bearing, sentient forms indwell every aspect, of the terrain, of us - beings striving for enlightenment, empowerment. We are enthralled. Substance of light and vapor interwoven, we are as constant changing formation, not fully distinguishable because of fluctuating movement all through, and in, and of, our being.

We sense we are on the brink of deciphering the ultimate bearing of this abounding majesty with which we are woven. But the rise of our anticipation is soon arrested as an unexpected shift takes place. The land seems to grow numb as the droning hum softens and deepens, then recedes until we can barely sense it reverberating within our core. Finally, it can no longer be felt at all. Simultaneously, the ghost eyes of the snow leopard come back into focus, loosening the foothold of our bearing. Where once assurance presided, now oblivion paints its red and black tenor of disarray. And with trepidation and perplexity we tumble into an abyss, a chasm of the Unknown.

The cat sees us. We are falling from reverie. The leopard's eyes stare into us and off into another realm, at once. Though barely defined here, so near the throne of divinity, it perceives our anxiety, it tastes our dread of carnal life. Trembling, we cast about for a way to escape. Not from the feline, but from the compass of our transition.

The leopard's vision pierces our every veil. It knows our shadow, it fathoms the very prelude and directive of our destiny, the fate of roots doomed to be severed. Our final recollection before surfacing to what we hope is the divine light of Spirit is of a silent, hauntingly conveyed message from the snow leopard: *Awake, if you dare. Awake to your terrain of complicity. Bound by mystery, you don't know what you can be, the import of your bearing. And so, you fall prey to fear. Dwelling in paradise, you shun to stray, to wander far, sensing pain can arise, that to travel to a remote distance will render you homesick. And so, you become reluctant to embark on the immense sojourn of your destiny.*

In the throes of our vulnerability and trepidation, we find ourselves captivated by the agency of *Chronos*, the dragon who gives birth to time. Dream-end delivers us to Chronos as sure as light penetrates darkness. The dragon's child has evolved into one long, relentless, linear entity who streams like a river through our center.

The streaming, we feel, is somehow related to the droning within the foundation of the mountains, the unfaltering eternity of creation. Reflecting on the platinum memory of Hymalay's origins, we conceive of reflexes blinking every seven centuries, twitching from out of a dry and ancient seabed. But what gives rise to this droning, to so steadfast and absolute an expression? What mandate is this that seems to move within the very breath and fabric of the universe?

It will be a challenge to learn to cope with, let alone master, the chronologic element, an element whose inbreath induces a needling wakefulness, and in whose exhalation a quiet anxiety gnaws. A mysterious force at the core of our being begins now to compel a wondering to arise, an existentialism of faint timbre but profound destiny, as though to foreshadow something on a grand scale. As an indeterminate prompting it arises, a presence growing ever stronger until it goads us into searching for answers, answers, we intuit, that can emerge as lucid strands in the weaving of our consciousness, previews, reflections of potential, extensions that unravel.

As we cast about, the land seems dull, mystified, drawn down. We are certain much is hidden in this quasi-materialized place, this landscape falling into bondage. There is, of course, a glory, of nature, of elements, of a masterful pattern woven here. We are convinced that the vast dimensionality of a goddess presides beneath the surface.

The echo of the droning still resounds in our heart. But the flowering of the landscape has been halted before its budding. Exalted beings slumber beneath our vision. Numerous whirlwinds of power and saturnine gnomes wrought by goldsmithing metaphysicians pervade the countenance of this place, yet their creators have left only faintly discernible footprints.

Our experience resides in our consciousness as a dreaming, as something we can only bring to insubstantial focus. Because only a thin thread of sentience warps to the woof of our probing, we cannot apprehend the sovereign tenor of the landscape. Our clairvoyance has become enchanted and our clairsentience has

fallen asleep. And the land sleeps, spiritually, in tandem with our own spiritual slumber, like a murky window upon a distant vista-to-be.

When we bring our attention to the droning, we discern limitless power, a bearing irrepressible, all-encompassing, suggesting an inexorable outcome. Devoid of all nuance of rhythm, even-toned, penetrating, transcendent, it is a domicile of infinite patience. Its forces are ever creative, weaving form out of light, cementing the molecular foundation of matter with bands of light. In this realm of Hymalay, the process attains a commanding altitude, a throning of the ground of manifestation upon a pinnacle. Here can arise the very bone of Earth, a breastplate to armor something tender and vulnerable, yet not without surpassing power.

And what is our place in all of this? How do we contend with such force of incarnation? Like a bird, we find ourselves fluttering down, losing the power of flight, contracting. And within this condensation of soul-force, this folding in, this gesture of clenching, of penetrating the ethers, it is as though we find ourselves singing, chanting a celebration of what is coming to pass, a dedication in honor of the incarnational process. And yet, we do not know all the words to the song by heart, and so the tribute falters here and there, as we pause to collect our bearing and discern the meaning and import of what our hymn is praising. And so, it becomes a congestion of adoration, a stumbling in a forest of immature syllables, a wayward passage through a woodland of saplings that must one day ripen to an old-growth dominion.

Thus it us that our attempts to discover who we might be, along with our purpose, come to little avail. We experience ourselves melded with everything, all being so unified, that we cannot clearly apprehend the nature of individual qualities.

We see a lotus, a bright flower folded in on itself. But we do not understand, it is a mystery that does not unveil.

Within us presides a majestic mountain composed of four distinct sides. The base of one side is graced with golden sand dunes, another has beds of crystals growing from it, a third side is woven with numerous silver veins, and the fourth is covered with fine blue powder. In the depths of our fascination with the mountain a name comes to us. *Nam-la-kar-mo*: White Goddess of the Sky. This exotic goddess

conveys a feeling of brightness greater than the sun, and a purity beyond measure. However, all we can perceive outwardly is a yak who grazes quietly at the base of a mountain. We sit quietly, watching.

Where the white yak steps, its magical hooves stir up intermittent images, flowers that arise like wisps of mist, then condense into visual form for a few heartbeats before dissipating into the atmosphere. But how steadfast is its compass! How this creature seems to rise above all motive and outcome! Its bearing makes plain to us that within the stance of holding steadfast there resides limitless power. And so, steadfast we wait.

Now drawing near, now retreating, an array of energies visits. We are washed, then ebb, in turn, by a series of feelings - buoyant, then reverent, followed by adamant, languid, and even-tempered warmth. Now we pass through barely perceptible veils of pastel color. Now more vivid grows our respiration of chroma. Beyond the threshold of this respiration, five pools on the mountainside are unveiled, each radiant with a special color, distinct pools of burning incandescence, chalices of astral delight.

In turn, as we look upon each pool, there emerge color-beings arrayed in wondrous garments. Though we are near to falling faint before such majesty, the godly beings invite us to enter these pools. Immersion in pool after pool, brings an encounter with distinct palaces of magnificent stature, the homes in which the color beings dwell. Orange, with its warm pulsations glowing from every beam. Blue's spacious and comforting chambers. Red's vaulted ceilings and overwhelming grandeur. Green's sturdy structure of pattern and re-patterning, beams and crossbeams of perfect proportion and alignment. And yellow's scintillant radiance from every wall.

Through our experience of Hymalay, we come to ascertain that our core strength lies in sentience. And since that is where our heart most yearns to list toward, then our mission becomes clear: to assist in the liberation of all sentient beings.

Then, probing into the future, perspiring of love, secreting compassion, we witness our amber blood circulating through all, the everyness, even as power and energy condense into images that come to live within our being. And, as time goes by, the images evolve into more and more intricate tableaux. What turning, what opening, what coloration, how bedazzling evolve the configurations, so full of life

and gesture and potency that, transfixed, enchanted, we fall under the spell of this preview of incarnation-to-come.

In the end, the White Goddess of the Sky hints that the vision that we have arrived at is very tentative compared with the profound reality of our actual quest. In order to attain more understanding to bridge this disparity, we assign ourselves to the exploration of the budding process of our power to co-manifest, on an elemental level, with the Creative Forces of the universe.

[commentary](#)

3 An Elemental Dawn

In the early days of Earth, when a collective human consciousness-soul was ranging chartless through the ethers, Angeloi came upon them to bear them away to a place where they might experience origination in a perceptual way. And they traveled across the mythologic weave of Crow and Hymalay, to a hinterland where Gaia was preparing her masterpiece of genesis. And it was a time and place, due to the opaque atmosphere of the mythic realm, that resided beyond calculation.

Poised on the brink of this primordial setting, early group-consciousness set to pondering the dance of life. And inspiration took hold, and became a catalyst to penetrate the Gaian process. And this was the nature of their sojourn to what they came to refer to, at a much later time, as the source of the river of physical being:

In the beginning of space-time, deep in a sea of ambivalence, yet poised on the shore of conception, there unfolds as an integral event of birthing. In striving to manifest a quasi-mineral element, consciousness, always elusive, yet wanting to embrace distinct qualities, entertains limitless patience. But can there be meaning to the concept of *patience* when there is no impatience?

Here, prior to the advent of physicality, where molecules reside only as ghostly conceptions, consciousness encounters a forum of mathematica. And here, beneath even the atomic level of existence, is found radiant pulsation, a whirling dance of energy. Sinking deeper still, the Void is encountered, wherein minute photons intermittently appear and disappear. Like compassion, a photon is charged with mystery. From what deep source it wells is not known. Here, in this home of

pure mystery, where creation and annihilation are poised so intricately in balance, why is not the end result an absolute zero condition of matter?

Inspiration, or the breathing in of vital force, within this primordial setting, serves as a catalyst to help generate matter. And with out-breathing arises wondering: as the group-soul of humanity weaves its way through spirit realms seeking an Earth-like forum, will the Earth-to-be and human development proceed together? If so, how deep does the interweave run? After exploring this line of inquiry at length, there proceeds a vague, though persistent, notion that the Earth may be a projection of the human will, in consort with higher powers.

Then, turning to rise back up through the layers, to the realm where matter is striving to incarnate, to inexorably attain physicality (though at this point, a long way from achieving its goal), numerous spirits of elements are encountered, forerunners of minerals at play. Because it is our nature, as spirit, to permeate all, we *are* each element we choose to explore. Further, there is a question that arises from this experience. Beyond cloaking ourselves in an element, are we also in some way responsible for its existence?

To experience being a channel of light and energy in a more palpable sense than pure spirit attains to, and in a state that will instantly seek bonding with another so that densification will have a forum in which to proceed, we are compelled to evoke the element Hy-dro-jen.

We have now taken one small step in a journey of vast duration.

Once born as Hy-dro-jen, how we feel awake! Fervent! Presiding in the heights, dissipating, formless, our home becomes the vast light-sea of a star core. This is love's first masquerade. A tide ever neaping, ever ebbless. A saturation of benevolence in a kingdom of radiance. Here, we dwell in a scintillant palace, attending an eternal solstice, a palace inhabited by Angeloi of a high order. Free of restriction, rising upon wings etheric, we bear the fire of enthusiasm into the very spaciousness of existence.

In a bid for sailorship, beckoned by waves of light, we fashion a canoe-like craft and a paddle to go with it. Out of the solarity we craft this vessel of denser-than-white yellow light. Out of our intent we craft the paddle. In wingless flight we glide, a thousand unformed birds singing above us in full silence, multitudes of invisible fish below, formless Piscean beings conceived by the artistry of our want, our longing for sojourn companionship. In our mind we fashion an anchor, of a deeper, golden yellow. But there is nothing in this limitless sea for the anchor to grapple onto. Yet.

Once we attain the form of a Hy-dro-jen beam, an unceasing sear of light seeking a forum in which to radiate, what if we cease to strive? Will the nihilism of the Void consume us? On the other hand, if we were to force a resolution, would we not collapse and disintegrate? Navigating between these two compulsions seems tenuous. However, by joining forces with another energy, a middle way becomes feasible, though our journey to fulfill this quest can span an immense duration, a distance that lies both near at hand, and far from origins, far from the womb of a star.

To feel complete, without compulsion to bond with another, we call into being Helios. Sunlike Helios, similar to Hy-dro-jen, is on a different quest - not to bond but, ironically, to experience the confinement that comes with freedom from any association. Now we join with Helios in forming a dwelling upon the prairie of Hydro-jen. Hermit-like, we erect a cabin of beams and rays, roofed by light, floored with radiance, a housing of photonic frame, but no substantial containment.

Because we have become like a winged horse with no need of grounding, neither by hoof, nor browse of range, listing where the light draws, the stage is set now to transmute ourselves into the brightest of bridges. In a balancing act ranging between energy and matter, we will into existence the element Litheos. Even on the edge of flashing, of being consumed in an instant, we dance with abandon, ranging wildly, boundless, now opening onto an endlessly unfolding vista, now rushing upon the receding draw of an abyss. Uncontained, bound by freedom's relentless uncontrivance, a tyranny of dissolution, the eagle of our determination folds its wings against a windless sky.

Other elements arise, among them, Ny-tro-jen. When we transform ourselves into Ny-tro-jen, we become a stable entity, a master of rhythm and movement, and the azure domain of heaven's blue. Airy, buoyant, drawing along in the current of our sanguinity a wake of peace, we are a being with enormous potential to transform - even able to build new forms of life when joined with other elements. Inviting cohesion, with the power of transmutation escalating, a vista of opportunity opens to us.

Out across the landscape of divinity we precipitate into a lake of Bro-myne washing upon a shore of I-oh-dyne. And when we don our cloak of Flor-yne, we become a master of invisibility. Then, in turns, we loft on the wings of Nee-onn, we assume the weighty responsibility of that steadfast medium of incarnation known as Karbonne, and we court the dormancy of Kal-see-um.

It is as Karbonne that we become most adept at structural arts. With four form-giving tentacles, and an adamant will to establish and sustain, with resolve and shaping power, and talent enough to dance with a thousand partners, it comes within our mandate even to play a significant role in converting Gaia into her next incarnation.

Then it comes to pass that we dance into Ox-i-jen, and are even more enabled to travel through dimensions of form-to-be. Ox-i-jen, the awakener, diffusing, filling the vessel of activation, is flowing through all openings, permeating. Baptizer, initiator, we become life-giving and assume the capacity to help birth water, fire, air, and even, in combination with an element yet to incarnate, Si-li-kon, we attain the potential to give birth to a rarefied form of Earth, the crystals.

All of these elements striving together render a powerful cauldron of chaos, latent with a tremendous genius of order, into a theater of incarnation to unfold a multi-dimensional forum from which the human community can operate, can fulfill its illustrious quest that stretches out across a great plain into a distant future.

Meanwhile, by holding back, by not racing headlong forward upon the beam of eternity, but remaining steadfast in the stillness that presides over the womb of time, does not one of the most consciousness-altering experiences lie in becoming a photon? As a photon, we assume the state of a packet of energy that expresses itself as light, and does so by extending itself across the bridge of time, stretching into the past and the future at the same time as the present.

And by virtue of this photonic omniscience, we can perceive within the mineral nature of our being the memory of a time when we dwelled within a solar stage, when the Earth and the Sun were one, a phase that would eventually give way to the era of High Borea.

[commentary](#)

4 High Borea

Into the green hinterland of her future rides Cedar Woman, ensouled as a white-winged spirit, with the image of her fashioners, the Archangeloi, still resonating in her as a spectacle of harrowing disposition. Hair, hands, and feet of fire, water-eyes and watery chest and abdomen; a head formed by spiritual wind, these are the garments, the outward configurations of the Creative Agents who, by thought and desire, have formed a Soul Tree through which countless numbers and kinds of souls can birth as by a common root.

But the images of the Archangels and the Soul Tree exist only as an afterburn in the mind of Cedar Woman. The impressions fade to nothing, never to be recalled. How can they linger, even as faint images, if the faculty of memory is not yet born in Cedar Woman? Nor has it developed in the rest of the Borean, the group-soul of the human kingdom. Borean consciousness renders a series of pictures, a tableau manifesting from within in response to life experience - a picture consciousness imbued with warmth and aether. Only an array of shades and hues of warmth are experienced here. With no physicality, as yet, aether is the dominant nature of all that is manifest, an aether comprised of a blend of etheric energy, etheric light and etheric sound entwined in an intricate weaving.

Cedar Woman's body, also of etheric substance, has a long, elliptical shape with faint shadings destined to evolve into body organs - a body piloted by a group-soul. She (actually, she-he, as all beings at this time are sex-balanced) does not conceive of herself as a separate being. Her experience as she floats, over an immense span of time, down into etheric density, is that of an extension of all she encounters. The influence of etheric stones and plants and elements are inwardly sensed, yet there is no real distinction as to *inward* and *outward*, no awareness of such a concept.

And it is within this forum that there arises a dilemma of extensive and original proportions. So embracing, so unbiased, so empathic and multi-lingual in

communion with all are Cedar Woman's people, the Boreans, that they cannot seem to exercise the mandate of incarnation. Lacking differentiation, how can manifestation proceed? Beyond this dilemma, however, the Boreans are a supremely happy lot. Life is sweet for them, springtime is everlasting. The word *paradise* resonates here, because the original home, capable of eliciting a profound feeling of being homesick when away from it, is the spiritual realm. Companions to Boreans are numerous and resplendent, mostly spirits of plants, beings that originate in High Borea, but will eventually incarnate as plant species - Green Algae floating in blue ether; Giant Fern chanting primordial sounds; Moss toning artfully; and a highly revered goddess, Olive Tree.

Cedar Woman senses her rootedness, and it is good. Moon shines up from within, Moon turns itself in etheric earth, as a slow-moving, inexorable presence. Warmth emanates, permeates. Feeling weaves with warmth. Etheric sound is sung, and etheric water flows. Beings feed on the water. Cedar Woman feels her roots drinking.

Sound tones again, and etheric density begins to separate itself out of etheric weightlessness. Patterns form and reform. Fluids increasingly condense. Cedar Woman is in love with being. Aether is the pure, clean light, a gift from the strata of the atmosphere, *the light of the gods* imbuing itself in forms and celebrated by the great goddess, Gaia. Cedar Woman is a daughter of Gaia. And Apol and Arem are the brother and sister of Cedar Woman.

Apol is a beautiful, young human-god, with long blue-tinged hair. He is in love with the daughter of a river, Panos. Apol is a forerunner, a model of developing individuation. By using his will, he can turn things to gold. He has an anchoring effect on the waywardly drifting forces prevalent in the Earth's early stages. The sharp outlines of the power of thinking are his forte. He has the capacity to center, to focus. The arrows of logic that he draws from the quiver of rationality can pierce any veil, probe any mystery. So advanced is his capacity to arrest dissolution, or the sanguine flow of the river of astrality, that on the rare occasions that he weeps, he sheds tears of amber.

But Apol's weak side is that he tends to become self-absorbed. He has a great need to create in order to escape the pit of self-absorption. It is this aspect of his constitution that compels him to join Cedar Woman in her creative quests.

Once underway, the process of co-creation by this powerful duo knows few bounds. Fortunately for Boreans, when the creative process rises to a crescendo, Apol assumes responsibility for guarding against any monstrous forces that, in the

heat of so much creation, are prone to emerge. Within the cauldron of ingenuity, searing with light and heat and potent forces, these monstrous beings are leaping up, striving to incarnate, intent on wreaking havoc. Slain by Apol before they can escape the periphery, much mayhem is averted.

Apol meets his other half, so to speak, in Panos, the offspring of a river, a river both celestial and earthen. Panos, like her parent, has an uninhibited, streaming quality and a voice of liquid tone, virtues that especially attract Apol. It is in her turquoise eyes that Apol can at last find dissolution, perhaps the only place in which he will not oppose it.

From Panos he learns that there are mysteries he cannot fathom. Here, his stark outlines of logic are softened, his arrows of rationality rendered blunt. He cannot anchor the daughter of a river. There are some things that even the power of Apol cannot subdue.

Meanwhile, Arem, Apol's sister, is destined to travel the wooded and garden lands of the future, and consort with mountain nature spirits. She will periodically sojourn to a tropical jungle valley, to lend guidance to a race of wild women - *Amazos*, or dual-sexed humans - who will develop the ability to regenerate themselves and, using transformative powers, will experiment with creating offspring that will be embodied as various kinds of flora.

Apol, Cedar Woman and Arem use special powers of Gaia in combination with aether to create elemental beings - storm spirits; flying dragons; nature spirits; and sea creatures.

Fashioned in the heights are three storm spirits, Thunderstorm, Blizzard, and Hurricane. The first one, Thunderstorm, has an angular countenance, a pointed nose, chin, and ears, but a great round belly that rumbles with the nascent sound of thunder. It lives the life of a wild noisemaker with lightning bolts ever in hand. Sparks fly from the jagged ends of its hair. When the thunder in its belly develops into an adolescent stage, it breaks free and cannonades across the sky in a rolling motion, end over end. Blizzard has long, snowy hair and an icicle beard. It frosts anything that it touches with its gleaming fingers. And Hurricane moves in swirling, spinning motions, a continuous dance of pirouettes.

Flying dragons were formed by Cedar Woman and her colleagues in the core of warmth, where the heat, converging upon itself, builds into unbearable intensity. Through the art of swirling astral forces into the hot core in a counterclockwise spiral, a form begins to emerge. More stirring shapes the form into a reptilian being with a long tail. Extra stirring causes a pair of wings to form. Eventually,

the dragon lofts out of its fiery womb, exhaling smoke and cinders. But this is a dragon that will keep to an arranged purpose, that of assisting in the creative activity of its makers.

Around this time, it comes to pass for us Boreans, as a group soul, that we begin to increasingly experience sensation, pleasure, discomfort, apprehension - and, above all, longing. These experiences lead us to begin striving to repeat what gives pleasure and avoid what brings suffering. And this activity, in turn, corrals us into an instinctual way of being. The realm of instinct becomes our primary motivation.

Along with this change, there arises a process of surpassing wonder and beauty. Now, our soulfulness lives as though a musical instrument, strings and reeds of harmony and tonality, cosmic harmonies sounding at the foundations of our picture-consciousness. When the images fade, the music rises, when the music fades, the images arise.

The trio, Apol, Cedar Woman, and Arem, then goes on to fashion nature spirits who are destined to serve the initiation of life forms to inhabit Gaia's future incarnation, the Earth-to-come. This seminal activity evolves into a grand creative project, a multi-layered masterpiece of intricacy and detail. The hearts of the makers experience deep satisfaction, a feeling that overcomes an existential emptiness that, prior to this, had afflicted their souls.

Ultimately, they push to the utmost limit of their creative potential with the production of sea creatures to inhabit the birthing sea, now of an etheric nature, poised to graduate to the form of physical water. The sea creatures become the closest-to-physical beings to dwell upon Gaia.

And the spirit-sea rises and falls in a rhythm driven by the storm spirits and flying dragons, a cadence rendering potent forces in the etheric water. Within this fluidity, numerous nature spirits play and engage their creative passion. Each new direction this creative play takes causes a new being to assume form. A variety of sea creatures begin to fill the amniotic vault, setting a stage on which plant life will eventually be able to emerge upon the shore, upon the meeting place of sea and Earth-to-be. First will come seaweed turned beach-plant then, away from shore, further inland, Green Algae will descend from the blue ether, Giant Fern will condense, and Moss will tone itself downward on its song-scale. And when they all descend to converge with the condensing Earth, Cedar Woman will learn to fashion oil out of moisture and warmth, then counsel Olive Goddess in the art.

As Olive Goddess begins to create oil, she will imbue her fruit with it. For now, living roots penetrate the etheric-almost-solid-earth, take it up and enliven it, and form it into an etheric fruiting tree. And when the stone in the heart of the fruit becomes almost solid, it returns to the Earth-in-formation, where it penetrates to begin a new tree.

Upon the culmination of these unprecedented projects, Apol and Cedar Woman elect to travel southward. Together they seek to combat remnant dragons so that they can prepare lands for people to dwell in when the next stage of life evolves. Through fasting and purification, and the overcoming of these dragons, Apol and Cedar Woman arrive at Muria - the red land of evening that the sun visits each day when it descends in the sky.

[commentary](#)

5 Muria

We sleep as though flora dreaming, through *Te-po-terea*, the Drifting Night. *Te-ata*, the Dawn, awakens our astral wildness. We, Muri, are group soul, a people ranging across a limitless tract of spiritual Paradise.

We sense warmth, surging waves of sound, pictures rising and falling continually. Heat rising to flames. Air rushing into tonality. Condensing. Waxing and waning light. Etheric embodiment, delicate, kindling the very ethers into light. Alternating between a sun-like existence and a more condensed Gaian stasis. Streams of warmth flowing up into airy masses, resounding, waters pouring in and out of any potential vessel. And an ocean of air, thick with mineral nutrients, gliding creatures, sense-oriented, nerve-refined, swimming, feeding on the air.

We dream stone birthing, lava flow. Earth birthing herself from fire-wombs. Land rolls like waves of a sea. Thin, fluid land. The sky is dense. Water, where not vaporous, lies in shallow pockets that quickly evaporate. Gradually, the heat subsides, pools form, land settles.

Muri dreams of Animal Mother, dreams of the ancient Spider Spirit-birther who, between four mountain peaks, strings beams of light, and upon the beams weaves a birthing platform. An aegis of powerful momentum, a giant swing. Animal Mother invites animal spirits, dreams them, draws them out of energy wells and conducts them onto the giant swing. And animals dance into embodiment. The

nature of each different dance creates individual forms: first the flying and swimming ones, then the reptilians.

Octopus is one of the first, the only one who still lives now. And so, Octopus carries deep secrets, is a history keeper, a spectator of eight endless threads running through time. After several early incarnators have had a turn, at one auspicious moment a being foxes slyly off the swing, and slips across the land. Another squirrels nervously down and scurries in search of a tree. And a hoofed being deers its way along the edge of the swing and down to Earth, to clatter across a stone plain at the base of the mountains. And yet another being salamanders off the feral, whelping pendulum in starts and spurts of motion, and is soon sliding away in search of cover.

One by one, they trickle down, ready to test the new form in which they dwell. Flying, racing, swimming, hopping, descending into an experience of feeling and instinct. These are beings that sacrifice their chance to hold off, as we do, to hold off until the stage is set for the fourth kingdom, the one that lies beyond and above the sovereignties of mineral, plant and animal.

And Muri, the people, descend halfway. As a group spirit, we know ourselves as an integral whole, like a bird flock flying in unison, curving and banking, soaring and landing, together, as one mind. We are an ensemble who can assume at will the essence of any animal form, and yet, do not *become* animal but remain of human essence. We now consume the etheric energy of plants, the former extension of our self.

Our moldable bodies can hear and feel, but see only with an inner eye. We comprehend the language of wind and water, we converse with the breeze, laugh with the brook, debate with the tempest, patter with the rain. Pictures pass through us due to experience of a hearing and feeling nature. Sounds of nature infuse us with images of forces, powers, and beings. At turns, now wrestling, now weeping, the elements and our hearts commingle. We do not have language, but can express emotion through sound. We are telepathic, and we have Imagination power - we can directly affect surroundings, others, animals, plants, and things.

Palm trees flourish, giant ferns abound. Lava streams are prevalent. With our will we cultivate wild orchards of glowing fruit. Luminous orbs of energy. Pure food. This is a place of high vibration settling downward. Sweet delight feeds us, and our thanksgiving sustains steadfast balance and exuberance in all things.

Much time passes and, within the dream-like consciousness of the Muri, an individual experiences a premonition of becoming separate from the people, an experience that would normally be excruciatingly painful. But the pain is dulled to a bearable ache, an abrasion of alienation softened by the buffering of a magical shroud bequeathed by a band of moon-angels.

Within this premonition, this visionary coruscation of the individual, a group of Muri, responding to irresistible forces that radiate in from the horizons of their consciousness, have gathered on a broad green plain. They have come to explore the art of horsemanship. *Animals can test the quality of our bearing, even guide us in some special way, the voice of the individual telepathically suggests to its clan members. The winged ones are able to reflect our higher aspirations. And the land-walking steeds can help ground our way of living, and confront us with some of the problems that are arising now, since the Earth has been descending into her physical density.*

What would happen if we allow the horses to choose each of us as riders? The question is posed as the individual prepares to call the herd over. *And because the horse is a bridge between sky and Earth, will the movement of the horse, while we are riding, integrate us with the Earth in a new way?*

The individual then sits and opens himself to the over-lighting equine spirit. He feels the pummel of hooves, the brush of mane. A sweeping tail trails in a wind of kinetic forces. Ranging through canter, trot, race, and slow, steady pacing, momentum and rhythm interweave in masterful composition, hoofbeat patterns of will and stamina and creative interplay. Soon, several magnificent horses gallop into their midst. The initiates and horses take time to pair up, to commune, to quietly build a rapport.

As each horse comes to know the needs of its rider, it carries him, or her, on to what is most appropriate. Some riders, hurtling at a fast gallop, are shown a rich visual tableau. Others, at a slower pace, are resonating with shared strength, or a reverence for beauty, or a quality that especially needs to be met by the rider. Any feelings of impatience, fear, or hostility are picked up by the equine companions and reflected back, rendering an effective opportunity for purification.

Much time passes, and we find ourselves in a meeting circle. While we sit listening, a shamaness leads us on a journey through the rhythms of nature. We

comprehend the inner song of plants and animals, become inspired by wind, cloud formations, and the cadence of breeze in pine bough. *Ono*, the sound of toning, generates glimmering pulses that awaken new aspects of our soul. Direct communication comes to us from whatever we focus our receptivity toward. We are impervious to the unspiritual. Pain is rare, not often encountered.

And again, much time passes, and then Complicators come upon Muria. Armed with seductive influence, enticements of an intriguing array, they arrive to guide Muri, the people, into self and sensate experience. In order to experience the sensate world fully, to gratify the growing arena of desire, we incarnate further, we descend into physical form.

What is this convolution of the soul, this peculiar form of excitement rising, as on a wing feathered with determination? Does desire take on a life of its own? Is this the impulse that sears through the cocoon of the caterpillar, once lost in a milling throng, consuming leaves of common sustenance, now driven to transfigure? This departure from the group-soul, from the dream state of collective bearing, modifies the very premise of being, compels one toward a form, though highly diluted, of individuality. *Individual*: undividable further. Does the river of evolving spirthood carry in its wake the dilemma of selfishness, a self-consciousness, an adolescence of spirit? Each time we direct our attention to the idea of a world outside of ourselves, the outer world takes on another increment of form, like a seashell expanding, responding to its tenant's growth.

Even as we increasingly engage ourselves in the distracting process of this externalization, appetite, embering, is fanned to combustion by a spirit-born wind until it begins to redirect the force of love, seek gratification, pursue desire, rising as an insatiable hunger for the unattainable, even squandering wisdom in jealousy. But what is jealousy but fear that oneself is of low value? And how is it that such a fear can reside in a being born through a holy gesture of the Master of Creation?

Rebel gods ignite the woven channels of Earthen fire lines, rifts and faults that bleed lava and smoke. A quagmire of embers foment. Broad-winged envy, proud pterodactyl, plummets into a burning pool.

Salamander hordes erupt from the depths, raging hot, combusting, roaring, searing, blazing like countless tiny dragons. Long-embedded resins are ignited. Noxious fumes pervade the air. Showers of sparks pummel from the heavens. All manner of flame bursts forth - eerie green in the heights, cool blue on the sides of mountains. A deep red in the valley meets with yellow passion of inspiration and

the bright light of compassion flowers, but then falls dun, muddied by avarice and the ash and cinder of lowborn passion.

Complicators, manifesting as evil beings, have intervened. But without them, would a new part of the soul be able to develop? Now the soul, having received the seed of individuality, has entered the initial phase of an all but eternal gestation.

Fire consumes everything in its path. Only a few re-locate in time to a broad and pastoral land.

Now, the people are prepared for the soul stage of Atlan.

[commentary](#)

6 Atlan

With intention mounting, his goal Poseda, he approaches the craft, a *pey-gus*. Flight calls for unwavering intent, and in steadfast manner, he draws from its protective sheathing a Tuaoi stone that glints in the sunlight like a cluster of frosted diamond.

Tuaoi, or *firestone*, the hexagonal crystal, is shining unhampered, nor does thought from its owner divert its glowing. As its light turns to power by transposition, through course of mediation between finitude and infinity, it seems as though it is tapping directly from the primal womb in which energy is born.

In the very moment of the firestone coming home upon its reception chamber, fitting like a flower upon a golden calyx, power surges through the *pey-gus*. Bright, starlike, the crystal glows in concerted sympathy with the master Tuaoi structure lying far off atop its distant, sun-steeped mesa upon the wide plateau of Atlan. And with the *pey-gus* lifting swiftly, over-riding wide spans of pastoral land, delight lofts too, rising in the freedom rendered by Tuaoi and its father source, the selfless sun.

Knowing how this self-same force that feeds such flight also comprises the very seat of rejuvenation, there wells in his heart gratitude for the postponing of his death a century ago, at the young age of 430, due to renewal by Tuaoi. Not that death presides as a fearsome thing. Only, as the saying goes, “wear light’s garment until such time as the stars are set to weave one anew.”

Now, near the end of his journey, he hurtles the *pey-gus* down through a long narrow valley. Nature thrives and abounds in the valley, as it does across the whole of Atlan, and he passes over an array of tree-dwellings and hill-houses randomly dispersed through the lush terrain. With human will in consort with

godly will, a tree is made to form itself into living shelter, interlacing branches, curving limbs, and opening and closing its trunk to form an able residence.

And the art of our building is an etheric means, a plant, and fiber, and sap-rich talent. Here grow great rooting foundations that resonate with the tone of the Earth singing. And here weaves vegetative structuring, trunks as pillars, limbs as beams, lianas forming lattice, shoots, stalks, stems flourishing. Here are repetitions of leaf-like beauty overlaying, and etheric chambers enshrining, and with the sun's crowning blessing, sweet-sap aroma, cedar-oil essence, blossoms, and godly nectar pervade the air.

By instinct he knows the way through Poseda, and he opens himself to a streaming of image, of nature, of the people, of their inter-weaving with the land, and of the land's responding to reverence. And he feels the group-soul's pleasant, warming way of fashioning and crafting from the elements - dwellings, tools, art, or gardens - only to donate such well-spun creations to the common pool. And he finds himself marveling also at the great feats of word-craft by the elders. For it is common for a gray one to pronounce, in lavish and intricate detail, lengthy Imaginations that carry a day or two of full oration.

Upon approach of the red cliffs of Poseda, he banks the pey-gus and prepares to descend. And the cliffs of Poseda, of clay, red like the color of our Atlan skin, glowing in the sun, are a sight warm and comforting.

Then, on foot, moments later, passing through a great central chamber in which, high above, the walls converge in an arc to form a ceiling, he revels in the soft light shining from all directions. Constant and gentle, as a luminous archway, from above and from all sides, the translucent ceiling-walls conduct a light that filters through in a mottled array of hue and color. The floor, an artful blend of metal, glass, and living plant, though dark indigo, like the night sky, both reflects oncoming light and shines from inner biologic forces. But overall, and with true reverence due to the All-in-all, it must be said that along with all this luminous beauty, an obscure darkness comes housed here, a secretive element that persists as a reminder that, despite all seeming wonderment, there is much unknown in this world.

For here, as in all of Atlan, we walk within an untold and softly-twinning Mystery.

Much time passes, and upheaval visits the pastoral lands of Atlan. The great continent is broken asunder, shattered to islands by eruptive forces, forces of Earth set in motion by impurities in the hearts and minds of the people of Atlan. Impatience, avarice, envy, pride, closing off to the beauty and splendor of the Earth to the point of taking the natural world for granted, appetites unmoderated, dissatisfaction with the seeming subservience of a life upon Earth, all culminates in a hunger for self-glory, for power without valor, without love or wisdom. And deeper it descends, this fall into deception and self-deception, so that, wallowing unfree in frustration and antipathy for any and all that stand in the way, like a poisonous vine entwined round the Tree of Life, strangulation threatens. In the end, impurities, thorns, barbs, hardened plating, all manner of defense and ambition arise to resist the silent power of humility. And, as the great continent of Atlan falls to a terrible cataclysm, the forces of darkness have their way.

After the destruction, by passage of time, life on the islands springs anew. The people once more proceed with fostering a community of nature and human. And, in the midst of gratitude for the finest of divine gifts - opportunity to create that most ultimate of artworks, a productive incarnation upon Earth - a question arises: will we use the setting to learn what next we need?

And other questions emerge, now, as a wondering proceeds on the other side of downfall. Was this waywardness born of natural curiosity, an experimental manner? Or was it spun from self-delusion arising from seeking power and recognition?

Over time, unusual afflictions assail the people: the flying fear, anxiety arising from wayward pursuits, and ailments proceeding from separation from the communal hearth.

Some say the dissemination of power, formerly proceeding under the reliable auspice of Nature, the Gaian spirit, came more and more to shift to those who attempted to wrest communal resources unto themselves. Some say the use of memory led to unbalanced growth in those not yet practiced in the new faculty. Many sought veneration, ambition grew. But, like a plant that generates poisons that drop by its roots, the quest for such power becomes its own undoing.

However, not all succumb to the dark ways. Those who dedicate themselves to the light band together. On one particular occasion, as we are gathered to honor the resplendence of nature, after what seems a timeless span in which we are adrift

in a meditative state, a doorway slowly comes to form. And gazing across the new-made threshold, we perceive a sphere of light emerge from the darkness, a lamp that grows into a brilliant mass of golden petals that begin to open. And the blossom unfolds to reveal a radiant being of a brightness too searing to look upon. Behind and above the being, there perches an eagle adorned in white feathers, an uncommon and regal bird possessed of a surpassing wise countenance.

And it is then, as the raptor unfolds its wings, and its feathers begin to magically intone both sound and image, as though within a great cauldron of motion and color, that we shift our gaze back to the central figure, and are overcome with wonder, as it dawns upon our knowing who we are gazing upon. Then we swoon with both perplexity and surpassing elation, and our final sensation before the vault of sleep takes us is a wondrous flood of love that anoints its way through our soul until we can stand it no longer.

For we have been visited by a vision of our own being having come at last home to an utmost state of Selfhood.

[commentary](#)

7 Migration and Emergence

The ground is trembling again. Ash powder sifts through the sky by day, lightning cracks open the black vault of night. Earth heavings are almost constant now. Each day's increasing descent into darkness further tests the faith and courage of our tribe.

We have sought refuge in the western part of Atlan, in the broad drylands of Caribe, where the palm trees mingle with the pines. Our tribe is one of those committed to the path of light. We have isolated ourselves from the followers of the way of Belial, who have become a lawless people that follow only the whim of their inner lions. We are gathered to listen to the counsel of Istaqa, Coyote Man.

Istaqa is warning of the coming of Chochop, the purifier kachina, who has been busy preparing the submerging of the remaining islands of Atlan. The Kachina are the *spirit of invisible forces*. Istaqa cautions the people, "The sons of Belial have attained the furthest reaches of self-idolatry. The Lion of willfulness has possessed them so long that they have lost entry to their Open Door. Taiowa, the Creator, cannot reach them now." Belial are humans gone astray, humans who have housed their soul in a dilapidated hovel. The Open Door is a direct connection to the Creator through the crown of the head. "Angwusna has come with me, to talk to you. She bears a message. She brings blue clay from the Great Canyon in the west as an offering. She carries a message that is your last rite of Atlan."

Angwusna is Crow Mother. "Because you live with Open Doors, there is hope for you in the face of the great catastrophe that grows imminent, day by day. You must prepare to flee Atlan, for its days are numbered. Go west, to the Place Where the Earth is Painted Green with Plants." Crow Mother pauses, as she recollects the message she is relaying from Taiowa.

“But first you must travel until you reach the outer limits of your known lands. There you will find the Mountain Forest. Camp there, and pray and sing for communion with the Pine Angel of that mountain.”

When we arrive at the Mountain Forest, we are invigorated by the cool alpine air, which sweeps away the weight of our weariness from traveling. The quiet strength that pervades us helps us to concentrate our group power on the task of attuning to the overlighting Pine Angel. Through song and prayer we open further our window to spirit.

As our prayerful singing comes to fullness, above a particularly resplendent grove of pines, a grand nature spirit begins to reveal itself. The angel hovers there, radiating an emerald resplendence through needle-like extremities, pointed light-emitters that spread wide, to include us in their blessing. As we are penetrated by this vital force, we can sense roots forming beneath us, stretching down into the sandy soil, engendering a feeling of firmness and stabilization.

Now, the aura of the Pine angel has shifted from green to a searing purple. Yellow pulses swirl within the purple, then a core of burnt orange and gold begins to shine from its center. While the voice of the pine angel is silent, we can feel sweetness streaming into us, and we understand its message.

You who have kept your hearts open will be able to perceive the signs to guide you away from coming disaster. By night, you will see a special star - the Blue Star Kachina - that you can follow. By day, a cloud-mist pervaded by eagle-power will guide you. These envoys will lead you to the house of Ant, a place of submergence, where you will be safe until the transformation of the world is complete. Go in peace, and never forget that you are children of Taiowa.

We give thanks, we leave prayer feathers in honor of the pine guardian and begin our westward trek. After many days, all the while following the prescribed celestial directors, we arrive at the place of Earth Painted Green with Plants. Here we find the entranceway to Anhinan: House of the Ants.

Here is the abode of Masaw, Guardian of the Underworld. Will we be safe here from the flooding waters, from the wrath of purification? Will we need to relinquish our hold on life-as-we-know-it? We are told our hibernation will carry us beyond the realm of Tokpela, the First world.

Tokpela: Endless Space.

Beyond Endless Space, within the chasm of the Deep, we breathe. We breathe the turning of a wheel. We inhale wonder, we exhale in pulse with the Kiva, the earth womb.

We give thanks for deliverance from the destruction of Atlan. We marvel at the beauty of the Earth, that she generates such vortexes of vitality and power within her. Here, in this deep Kiva, the pulse of Earthbeat enraptures us. It holds us, and folds us within ourself and bears us to a surpassing state of splendor.

We can depend on the Earth to hold us in her loving embrace. She guides our end, she aids our death, the culmination of the old way of being to make ready a new life, and she steeps us in her Earthly wisdom.

When the time is right, and the rhythm of contraction has commenced, we begin to emerge in layers, we birth in stages. But first we fall away until we dissolve and are transformed to combine with rock. We acquire the ability to shift-change. And it is in this stage that we sense the slowly spinning magnificence of the Earth - the grand blue and white pearl sailing through the indigo sea of space, rotating with lofty momentum around a great white sun.

Our day - now a year, since it takes a year to circle the sun - begins, and in ancient memory we recall numerous comings and goings upon the Gaian surface. Many spiritual emissaries arrive, and many leave. Those who come to know the Earth best are those who hold ceremony for her. They are the ones who give back to the Earth, who return reverence and thanks for her blessings.

With the passage of the yearlong day, our perception shifts and we are in a cavernous place in which we feel ourself rooted in the surrounding warmth and stone. After a time, we see ourself trading the rooted way for a rich emotional palette. Our eyes begin to focus as we penetrate through dusky veils to a tunnel that slants upward, toward a source of light softly glowing.

While in stone, we eat minerals. While rooted, we form a ghost-like Pla-cen-tah - "a keeps-alive while under." As we find light, the Pla-cen-tah solidifies. And then, upon Emergence, we no longer need this helper.

But Emergence is a fearful event. An emergency. The brightness is overwhelming, the nakedness and exposure unbearable. The vastness of open space pulls upon all our windows, unlocks all our doors.

Only through the doorways on the soles of our feet do we sense the umbilicus we need.

In the days after Emergence into the Fourth World, Spider Woman and Coyote Man guide the people away from the yellow eastern light, toward the dark purple light of the west. Noona, wild grain, is their sustenance as they sojourn further into the vast blooming desert that belongs to Chochmingwa, Corn Mother.

This mother has five daughters: yellow, red, blue, white, and speckled. The people dream of Corn Mother, but have yet to encounter her. She and her five daughters are said to be a source of sweet comfort, givers of nurturing. It is toward Corn Mother that the people journey. They know that where they find her that is where they should settle.

Coyote Man prays for slyness, asks for cunning. Spider Woman prays for the wisdom of patience and the power of dream webs. And Taiowa gives them what they ask for.

Coyote Man comes to know all the names of plants, trees, animals and birds encountered on the journey. He learns all their songs and messages, and he grows to know remedies for the many needs of life.

Spider Woman waxes strong in patience, and by its key opens doors to new powers within herself. She learns to construct dream webs that can be used for entry into other realms. And she comes to know what is in the heart of others before they speak.

Coyote Man and Spider Woman develop godly bearing. They dedicate their lives to Taiowa, the Creator, and offer themselves up to the cause of Peace. Because of such gifted companions and the flourishing of understanding, the people grow strong in mind and heart.

Throughout their journey the people face many hardships, but learn to overcome them. When it is too hot and dry to find wild grain, they learn to pray for rain, and rain clouds drift ahead of them to secure provision. On one occasion, a horde of shadow beings comes upon the people and infects them with both a virulent illness and social pettiness. Coyote Man and Spider Woman quickly put an end to this influence by conjuring bolts of fire from the clouds to drive the shadow beings away.

Eventually, by virtue of passage, the people become refined to the point that they are fit to enter into the wondrous land that they seek. This is a land uncommon in the world. Here, sky and sun are entered and the earth is less evident. It is a place that is deeper than the well of desire, a place that draws

messenger birds to renew their mission. A place where, to avoid filtering the true meaning of things, much goes un-named.

Here is the birthplace of Mother Corn and her five daughters. Here, all the virtues of Maize are embodied in five maidens: industry, purity, compulsion, nourishment, and comfort.

The people sing:

Through

white of sand

yellow of sun

blue of rain

red of heartblood

and speckles of earth nutrients

is manifest Corn Mother, the Nourisher.

[commentary](#)

8 Inda

Here, the celestial motivation of *Ahimsa* is the highest principle. Gentleness toward all living beings. Such is this land of endless forest, presided over by an earthy goddess bearing a blue lotus in her right hand.

Nature, unfolding in all her aspects, ranges from bliss to devastation. We are presented with the entire wheel of her turning. Such full array comprising the blossom of her becoming moves within us, so that choosing that which we would adopt, in particular, as a distinct part of our being becomes the finest form of art upon the Earth.

As demi-gods, our lives are lived. The land is dreamed in slow draughts, and the play of our reverie unfolds akin to a lotus blooming. The soul drifts like a white swan in the moonlight shining upon the surface of a pure pool. Swan-like, as a spouse to spirit, the soul's astral fervency is presided over by a goddess of beauty. In this lotus-petal fashion, thriving in waters, in full saturation of spirit-power, wherein only leaves and flowers are floating above the inundation, astrality, akin to the Earth itself, is able to persist in the face of drowning. And above, the full moon, there shining, as a princess buried in a multitude of flowers, eternally ensconced in the orchard of the heavens, sends out her mysterious perfume, a scent only utmost vigilance can detect.

Has the deluge that brought an end to the great lands of Atlan ceased its momentum? Or does it carry on in our very being, flooding to the heights to pervade the starry heavens in our mind? When does the inundation cease and the saturating force of its metaphysical sweep begin to draw back? And once it does at last come to the dwindling of its momentum, will it counterpoint itself into an immense and inexorable ebbing force to balance its once surpassing overflow?

If this rebounding comes to pass, surely such a powerful metaphysical ebb sounding down through the great corridor of time will come to strike some distant civilization, rendering its members devoid of spiritual perception - mere waifs of materialism marooned within a hedonist wasteland.

There are long-ago stories of those who migrated to the west of Atlan, and there are stories passed down from our ancestors who migrated eastward, the people of Brahm. The gods our ancestors were intimate with linger now only as collective memories. Now, the beings who coexist with us must cross to us over an atavistic bridge of awareness. Our attunements during meditation, to the sun and the lofty beings that dwell therein, become our primary means of higher knowledge. During one such occasion, while watching through our inner eye, Visitors appear, beings who have come to direct us, and the following is an account we offer to share with those who will listen, perhaps even some who may dwell on that distant waste of hedonism that lies far over the sea of time:

Although the Deluge swept from us the presence of the Winged Horse, that mighty equine who could transport us at the speed of thought, through extensive training we learn the lucid arts, including a willful form of dreaming, so that, whenever the Winged Horse is corralled in a place between waking and dreaming we can acquire astral ridership skills. Such an animal-bridge becomes a great ally.

Here, in this valley of the Ganges, we dwell in a god's garden. The breeze is heavy with the scent of water lilies. The very air is luminous. The lotus flourishes everywhere, as does the blooming of saffron, and the splendor of the pomegranate tree. The garden gives forth a plumage of intoxication, dripping honey from every bursting blossom, and while the bees gorge upon the opulence, there plays in the air a raga of their wings humming. Wanderers who arrive here among the golden stairs and emerald pillars remark on the sweet ambiance created by our lush garden.

The mango replenishes our will to create, and the white blossom of wild pear begins to fall as spent notions from the bough of aspiration, promising to produce fruit of our longing. And beneath this arboretum of pear and mango presides the cobra, guardian of the Earth and its secrets, an underground traveler. Ensnared in the plenitude of fertility, it carries the secret of creation, along with occult forces that ensure successful harvest. Here is creativity wending its way

through the smallest of openings, unfettered, elongated, without inhibition, as bold as the countenance of the full moon.

While the kachnar tree is branching its orchid-like blooming into a many-streamed reverence, pink cassia paints the tone of our ardor. And the fig, with its formidable trunk, is a tree we must render allegiance to. Oh banyan, untaintable, vital, overflowing vessel of life-force, we make our offering at the base of your resplendence. The gift of your fruit is fit for the godly. Your arrow leaves pierce the armor of our reluctance, your descending roots penetrate and draw sustenance from a sacred source.

In this land of eternal summer, we discover magnolia gentleness thriving in the warming sun. The pipal tree, sacred, golden-leafed, silver-branched, opens the knot of our soul, while above, heron radiance adorns the topmost branch of inspiration. Below, upon the forest floor, a great bird can be found. A guardian of rebirth and transmigration, a universe of stars resides in the great fan of the peacock's tail, the feathers of which ward off evil. Its piercing cry penetrates any place in the heart that would withdraw to an impassable fortress. But while shielding vulnerability is a natural inclination, the shield needs to be moderated. First the thorn, then the blossom. Of the triad projections of the peacock, two are sharp contractions - beak and claw - and one is a soft, lustrous expansion that by power of color and beauty warms the coldest heart, lays bare the most hidden love.

In the dim of twilight, is it a nymph, or a golden vine like lightning, that appears by the edge of the pool of contemplation, there by the roots of the ironwood tree? Smitten with love, the liana-nymph offers cool, liquid wisdom in a fresh cupping of lotus leaf, for the slaking of an unbearable thirst. For it is by bathing with devotion in the pond of meditation that we come to develop a language that turns on the axis of godly bearing, each thing in creation sounding its name into a word. A Sanskrit wellspring.

But what is wisdom without compassion? The gentleness of the elephant, despite its mountainous size, attests to true greatness. What lives in the soul-kingdom of the elephant? Strength to remove obstacles, a prosperous outlook, pure motivation, nobility in action.

Thus our days pass, the land enriching our lives, cultivating our character. And at day's end, the nim tree offers its branches as a haven for our sparrow camaraderie. Now, with the songs of many trees kindling the hearth with golden harmony, our heart is illumined. And when night comes, with it emerges a being from a mystic den. Oh tiger, ultimate power and protection from darkness,

guardian of dreaming who can carry us into the spirit world, walk into the forest with us, side-by-side, into the place in the heart where a dark wood stands. You, with fire blazing in opal eyes, you who guard against the thoughtless woodcutter - whoso fails to venerate the forest while harvesting its bounty forfeits tiger power. But for the many who seek to know such things, it is discovered that tiger power builds fiercely its momentum in those who render consideration to the forest, who take time to ponder its genesis, its weaving tendrils, its uncontested abandon, and strive to determine means to harvest bounty without harming the overall province of life. Wisdom visits those who study the inter-twining among the many beings of the forest, how they interact, how the hidden spirit behind each being works its magic, how what is hidden is often greater than, more intricate than, involves more function and talent than, what is evident in this world.

Veneration wells from deep, a splendor to quench the very thirst this world cannot hope to meet.

Time passes, and we grow discontent with eating only the fruits of the garden. Fruits are pleasing. They are sweet, they augment our primary food, sustenance of universal spirit. The sun-power they have captured in their flesh fills us with radiance. But we find ourselves floating upon this radiance and would like to walk more firmly upon the Earth.

We begin looking to the Cow children, beings whose hooves can strike the earth deeper than our most strident stepping. Here, we reason, may lie new sustenance, a food to fill an empty space and bear us further into the Earth. Some reason we don't need this. *Does the cow, they ask, live outside of us? Can we not find a way across the heavens within, a route to the constellation of The Bull?* Others, however, cannot imagine such an endeavor, and will not hazard the journey.

And so we begin to add the children of the Cow to our daily fare. Blood flows. Flesh is consumed. At first the meat is heavy. We may as well consume stones. And we become ill. Fever burns. Strife and chaos invade our bearing. But slowly we grow accustomed to this new fare. And we find ourselves becoming more solid, walking more firmly upon the Earth.

But each time we kill and eat a cow child, a flame of light emerges from the act and ascends to a mountaintop. There it hovers on the peak, and grows dim like a wisp of smoke that won't blow away in the wind. Over time, it builds in size. As

we continue eating meat, the haze upon the peak becomes as a great cloud of darkness amassing.

One day, a terrible dragon emerges from the cloud and, after taking a few turns lofting back and forth across the sky, darkening the light of the sun as it passes, it descends upon us and, intent on consuming the remaining children of the Cow unto itself, gathers them up and removes them to a cave on the mountainside.

And so it is that we lose our new-found sustenance. Soon after, offering devotion, ascending to the place of pure beginning, unfathomable, in response to our plea, our divine overseers, Indra and Indrani, arrive in their shining vehicle. They have come from Deva-pura, the “city of the gods,” which hovers like a golden mansion, bedecked with jewels and containing a thousand pillars and a thousand doors. Celestial forces are arrayed. Cymbals, drums, and trumpets sound, and a tumultuous din arises.

Indra and Indrani offer assistance, but the liberation of the children of the Cow will not come without a price. The cost of freeing the herd will be a pledge on our part to cease consuming meat. Although some of our band do not want to comply, after pondering the matter, we come to agreement. We will stop eating flesh, so that the children of the Cow can be set free.

Indra and Indrani are “lord and goddess of the winds - holders of thunderbolt chakras.” Lightning wheels itself within their bodies. With the power of a thousand eyes, they can see all that is happening in a single glance. The dragon is no match for the power of these gods. Some say the dragon is slain outright. Others say Indra and Indrani do not elect to slay the beast. Instead, they subdue its will to their service, and the dragon becomes, over time, a powerful ally in service to the gods.

We return to eating plants, and we acquire new practices to help us traverse more firmly over the Earth while incurring less of a karmic tie. When the children of the Cow are set free, the freeing is our release, also. We see the end of our practice of eating animal flesh as the beginning of liberation from the chains of matter.

Time passes, and one bright morning Indra and Indrani return. They gather twelve of our number for passage to the nearby mountains of Gandharva. What we have in common with one another is that by virtue of instruction from Indra and Indrani we have been clearing our minds and hearts through practices of an ascetic nature.

Gandharva is the god-brother of Indra who dwells in the sacred mountains that harbor the Soma plant. Known as the Celestial Bard because of his twilight practice of singing from a mountaintop across the land, he converts raw star energy into ethers that the local plants can partake of. Soma is a “plant of divine nectar” whose juice can enhance spiritual power and awareness.

We journey with our divine Guides until sunset, and then make camp. We are surrounded by weathered mountains of yellow claystone. Steam from a nearby hot spring is rising into the still night air. The spirits of ancient trees on the surrounding slopes begin to stir and converse with awakening owls.

Patiently, we lie face up, watching thousands of stars within our circle of vision, until a window of light opens in the sky-vault. Looking through this window, we begin to see the face of a Helper. Each person is experiencing the opening of a window, each one encountering a different Helper.

One Helper is a crane that can fly at a great height. One is a pine-man who sings ancient songs. Another is a cactus-woman, with a face wrinkled with aged wisdom. Her hair is spiked and her voice is silent, green, primeval. Nearby, Indra and Indrani sit, glowing in the dark. They are assisting us, coordinating the desert landscape in our souls. We “hear” the cactus-Helper silently sing to us of her birth in heaven, of our own birth in heaven, that we are immortal like Indra and Indrani. Through power of mind, she sings, we can recreate the body. Her voice carries long with counsel, but we are soon lulled into a state that we seldom encounter, that of a deep sleep.

Within our sleep, on the other side of a dark void, we enter a wakeful dreaming in which we encounter four more helpers.

First, the fish. In the case of excessive saturation, qualities of the fish are most helpful to lead one through a period of flooding. The same can be applied to *spiritual* inundation. Therefore, under similar circumstances, the qualities of the fish are most appropriate.

Then the tortoise. This being is helpful in recovering treasures lost in a deluge. With the help of the tortoise, the best things of a previous age can be preserved for present times.

And the third one, a great white horse with attendant powers of mobility.

Lastly, it can be said that some beings require more attention than others to incorporate in a wholesome manner. The jumping spider can perceive beyond the visible, and in all directions at once in a great circle of sensing, apprehending subtleties, secrets of the surrounding locale. Though its scope may be of limited

stature, it is intensely familiar with the entire arena of its setting. A master of deceit, it is adept at disguising itself, to the detriment of the unwary. Hapless prey fall victim in the path of voracious appetite, a deceptive conjuring robed in a facade of mesmerizing colors.

Such can be the way of a karma inexorable. Yet, as hope is the voice of the heart, it can also come to pass that, ascertaining, meeting, and over-riding karma, there will be a new unfolding. While incarnate, we are continually presented with choices within a vast array. Spirit encourages the soul to adopt any useful qualities that remain once compassion has rendered its guiding influence.

The cloudy leopard evades perception, seeming to make of itself a dissipating mist at will. Slight in size, sleek in motion, now apparent, now dis-apparent, it dwells in trees, seldom touching ground. Refusing to be rendered solid, stalking a menu upon the heights, in the crown of the forest upon boughs of highest striving, the nature of this ghostly cat can only be ascertained by means of penetrating intent. But know, as within the whole of nature's treasury, even with considerable effort much remains in mystery.

Life grows, at times, like marital bliss. And we fall enamored into the arms of its blessings. We gaze steadfast into the windows of soulhood, as we court, and re-court, bearing bouquets of floral praise, swearing fidelity, looking past the dark and hazard-strewn abyss of incarnation's shadow into a pool of light, attending to the rhythm of the constellating, throbbing heartbeat that nightly shines down as ceaseless starlight.

Living can become, other times, like a dance in league with the cranes, bowing, emotional bearing circling with outspread wing, long neck thrown back in an openly vulnerable pose, taking energetic leaps into the warming choler of the mind. And the soul will have its way with the world, rising and falling on the shifting wind, wading the shallows of spirit's pooling, strewing feathers of imagination upon the quiet surface of discernment.

Dawn, mother of the sun, born of night, creates a rising mist that condenses into rainbow garments for our etheric bodies. The waters of the Ganges stream forth this magical mist each morning because the river is born in a celestial part of the universe, a place of constant renewal, a manifestation of divinity brought into being by godly forces bearing down with immense will, a great breathing of life down into the highest plane of Earthen being, a place we can journey to with

concerted effort, and almost discern with our eyes-not-all-seeing, a place that sings in tones far on the other side of silence, where a blinding light shines from out of the depth of darkness, there, where a dance is performed deep in the field of stillness.

[commentary](#)

9 China

Distinctions are to be made within the dynasty of nature, where the procession of a boundless regency takes place. While the white pheasant subdues idiocy, promotes composure, it is an encounter in the hills with the golden pheasant, despite its explosive exhortation underfoot, that marks a regal occasion. In the effortless glide of this sun-crowned prince, peace and order preside.

Green malachite, strewn upon the mountain slope, finds contrast with rose petals drifting down from depleted blossoms. These are roses that make their home beneath the spreading chestnut, catalyst of remembrance, purveyor of images that emerge in sudden spurts from an ancient tableau. Also upon the slopes, at strategic places where the limbs of the mountain are made bare, veins of white jade and scarlet gold break the surface, that same fine gold we discover striated along crystal bedrock. How like such gold are we when we refuse to submit to deception.

Elsewhere, down in the depth of the valley, where the water turtle in its river abode mentors in the art of listening, hidden phrases emanate from unspoken agencies. Over the river, above where patient attendants, scholars of nature, begin to ascertain the subtleties of their quest, a kingfisher with an orange beak and blue wings raises a great clamor. In its brazen manner, the bird warns of what will proceed from letting the fire of ardor erupt from the hearth of containment.

Upon the riverbank, once in a thousand years, the Divine Wind bird lays eggs in a nest of scarlet copper constructed in the boughs of a great cypress bedecked with pearl leaves glowing like comets. If a human seeking knowledge of the world eats such an egg, the subject either digests the egg, or dies in the process. If digestion proceeds, the subject is imbued with godly vision, and will go on to entertain an ambitious project.

It is incumbent upon us to acknowledge that in the kingdom of nature there presides counsel for meritocratic, not hereditary, rule.

As we mature, some of our number choose to spend a few hours at least once a week away from the village, in isolation. One seeker, a maiden of virtue and truth, on one such illustrious occasion, feels compelled to wander for those few hours. And after a short period of aimless roaming, she entertains the discipline of holding still. In the stillness she grows receptive and, as though peering into the facet of a gemstone, she finds herself penetrating the forms of nature until she can distinguish therein intrinsic gestures of motion.

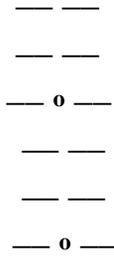
In such a manner, and by virtue of numerous occasions, she grows especially intrigued by movement, finding a range of expression in many subjects - the tireless rhythm of the horse, the joyous flight of the swallow, the effortless glide of the goldfish, the rolling lumber of the panda, and even the boisterous tumble of water down the mountainside on which she lives.

More than this, she appears to have cultivated a talent for observing, for discerning particular forces moving and acting in a given subject, almost as if she can reduce the activity to the seed of its bearing. All other considerations fall away, clutter of common thoughts is swept aside, and she is left with only the purity of the gesture.

As time goes by, the pain of isolation that arises from being separated from her people during these sessions grows dull. Gradually, she becomes more at home with her solo endeavors. She begins to question tradition, yet knows she must be discreet around others. People do not want to listen to such questioning. The subject who withdraws homage to the empire is in danger of prosecution.

In any event, how far can she enter into this manner of independence? The journey down such a road seems of immense duration, and she has just now put on her sandals.

ICHING



KUN, The Receptive $\frac{\text{Earth}}{\text{Earth}}$

The dark, yielding, primal power of yin. Devotion. The receptive does not combat the creative, but completes it.

Nature seems to be against spirit, earth against heaven, space against time, and the maternal against the paternal. But is there any real dualism?

We need the perseverance of the mare. If we try to lead, we go astray. If we follow, we find guidance. The mare knows tireless roaming over the plains of earth, yet is strong and gentle.

Nature, in her richness, has the power to nourish all things. Beauty and splendor await those who meet fate with acceptance. The wise one allows self to be guided, does not proceed blindly, but learns first from a situation what is demanded.

Through many sacred hours we must do without companions in order to adhere to the purity of the moment. Herein, one broadens one's character, like the many aspects of the Earthen empire, so one can meet what unfolds over the course of this incarnation.

Message number one for the empire of China: when frost is underfoot, solid ice is not far off. The decay of winter is imminent.

Message number two: just as the land is cloaked in its yellow garment, and we cannot see what lies beneath, so we do not openly profess these qualities: reliability, genuineness, and discretion. We do not profess them directly, only indirectly, as an effect from within.

The rising
is renewed
by the setting.

The snake
that travels
above the ground
can turn
on its own axis.

The child
becomes the parent
when nearing heaven.

The river of life
effortlessly carries
the receptive subject
to its destination.

One who I attend through rise and fall of circumstance undergoes great tribulation. Deep in autumn melancholy, she is falling with nature into the dying of the year. Wind sighs mournfully. Water lies in lifeless pools. Light is fading, darkness dominates, oppresses the yielding countenance. Lost in melancholy, discernible cause evades her.

Poverty does not assail, no dissension is at hand. Neither rumor nor portent of strife is in the land. The master osprey, known by its white head, black markings and tiger claws, the one who portends war, has not been seen, either by day or by dream, in many years. Even the jackal-wolf dwelling in the camphor forest, bearer of tidings of imminent danger, has shown no sign of approach. In view of these considerations, all that can be said in this case is that unaccountable enchantment prevails.

It began in spring, at the time when the perfume of crab apple blossom rose to free passion from its prison of inhibition. Lighting a wick of pure sentience, this

candling aroma pervaded the air. Certain blossoms deal winter a final blow. What winter desolation, for example, can over-ride the spring fervor found in the profusion of rhododendron?

Looking back now, she ascertains it was when the flower fairies departed, causing tree blossoms to fall, that the trouble seemed to begin. She could not bear their departure.

Through summer, she was unable to rise with the mounting light. She ignored even the joyous calligraphy of the swallow's flight, the soulful penmanship of turns and dips weaving passages of skyful meaning. What use against her dimming heart was a skywriting swallow, its inscription of wind, its authorship of ascending glory?

And she sank deeper. Even after the dog of candor had graced her dreaming to warn of malign forces, she could not move herself to rise above her doom. Spells, miasma, degeneration, against whatever tax of soul-account she could not hold sway.

And her autumnal melancholy persisted well into winter, beyond easy means to rise in the face of nature's demise. As winter grew more and more forlorn, she could not perceive the beauty in the dance, the pentatonic waltz of the snowflakes, nor the rising inspiration that glimmered through the season of the white moon.

Depleted, adrift in an abyss, her doom muffled down around her until, bearing no more, she fled to the mountains in search of solace. There, prayerfully shredding the bark of paper mulberry, she wove it into her sash to ward off exhaustion and to hold at bay the malign force of oblivion. And the wildcat of the mountains followed, slipping along through the underbrush. When this took place, because it is known that the spirit of a wildcat can be an auspicious companion, one that compels courage in the face of challenge, what first appeared hazardous became a sign of hope.

Following upon her rising fervency, as she struggled at the bottom of despair, three messengers came to her, one each day for three days. And each in turn alit upon her windowsill to sing its song.

The first was a magpie, intoning a melody of freedom and sweetness. The next day came a crow that sang of humor in the face of nightmare. Last, at dusk the following day, came the counsel of the one most wakeful in deepest shadow, an owl-of-night, announcing the turning of her fate.

As the wheel of events turned, it was not until this occasion, through winter's final course, that she rose, finally, above the weight of her melancholy.

Despair gave way to hope, in halting portions that grew to bounds. And hope is known to lead to the occasion of joy and harmony. Such a life is like the bamboo that, after several years' growth, dies upon flowering. Only new shoots can bring revival. Only a new beginning in full measure is what is needed, and the last resort often lies upon the distant shore of death's wide sea.

As time went by, although in great measure she overcame that dark and ephemeral dragon, its shadow persisted, destined to endure through the stream of time, to meet all auspicious conditions that might arise to merit its foreboding nature.

Now, a wind-sculpted pine presides over a vale-of-fog, its arms reaching out and down to the impenetrable mist, its needles etching distinct patterns in the ethers. Forces of desolation can bear such blessing that what is first perceived as detrimental comes at last to reversal.

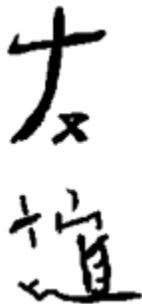
Azaleas and maples cohabit water-worn rocks, each with its own demonstration of flourishing out of barren foundation. What can be learned from such incarceration, what unspoken sagacity can be discerned from such unflagging intent, so ardent a determination?

In the end, if asked by those curious in heart as to the identity of the troubled maid, it is incumbent upon me to reveal that the one grappling with these forces of melancholy lives within my being, as my Lady Soul.

TAO

The image shows two vertical calligraphic characters in black ink. The top character is '卅' (shí) and the bottom character is '一' (yī), which together mean 'thirty spokes'.

Thirty spokes are made one by holes in a hub, by vacancies joining them for the wheel's use; the use of clay in molding pitchers comes from the hollow of its absence; doors, windows, in a house, are used for their emptiness: Thus we are helped by what is not, to use what is.

The image shows two vertical calligraphic characters in black ink. The top character is '大' (dà) and the bottom character is '道' (dào), which together mean 'the best captain'.

The best captain does not plunge headlong, nor is the best soldier out to fight. The greatest victor wins without battle: he who overcomes, understands. There is a quality of quietness that quickens by no stress. Oneness with Creation is oneness with humanity.

Time passes, another incarnation proceeds and, by mid-life, through diligent labor, he acquires some land for the purpose of farming. He explores the landscape, the hills, the valley. Gazing upon a clear stream, his heart grows composed. And there are occasions in which, as though astride a giant crane, his heart soars over the misted peaks and wildlands inlaid with orchards grown wild. Certain birds die in captivity. The heart is such a songbird that cannot be confined.

On the hillside, the tea of camellia steepens his integrity, portrays how excellence can come to full infusion. In contrast to the rhododendron that keeps its leaves through all seasonal changes, demonstrating constancy, how futile it is to harvest the orchid, a fragile beauty known only for a short span of bloom. Try to retain the wonder of its blossom, and it fades. Transitory charm has to be so. How else can such perfection come to show itself in this world?

Ginkgo biloba, “maiden hair tree,” yellow in spring, green in summer, gold in autumn, paddles its thousand duck foot leaves in the pond of mind. And the profusion of small scented blooms upon leafless spring twigs of witch hazel, the cascade of fragrant flowers and delicately petalled catkins, opens the heart’s most sealed portal. Only as the tree ages, can its bloom be plucked. Faint yellow-white, later pink, and then red, the blooms proceed as ghosts at first. Then, forty years of blooming, season by season, finally prepare the fullness of incarnation. And in the fulfillment of this two-score maturity, inspired by such dedicated ascension, caterpillars find the tree so alluring they weave their cocoons in its branches, eventually to emerge as flying-insect blossoms.

Down in the lowlands, while he revels in the gentian’s nodding bellflower, the primeval primrose, the luscious apricot, and many other artful presentations of beauty, of quality, of splendor, a day comes when a boar, having descended from the wildlands of the mountains, chooses to root for its sustenance adjacent to his farmland. And he senses the occasion to be an auspicious sign. True to such portent, prosperity in the form of a bumper crop blesses the season, and he acquires a massive pile of straw in his yard. Over the winter, he draws from the pile to feed his horses, forming a tunnel into its heart.

One night, he falls asleep to intermittent yapping of a distant fox. Soon he is dreaming. He visits a burial ground, and observes a fox emerge from a fresh grave, as though a part of the soul of the deceased has separated into this crafty animal. In his dream state he intuits that this is a magical being with special

virtues dwelling in each part of its body. When the fox sees him, it turns and, just before fleeing, strikes its tail upon the ground causing fire to erupt. As the dream fades, he is watching the flames turn to ember.

The next day, as he comes to draw off his bale of straw, he discovers that a wooden door has been built across the tunnel. Knocking on the door, an old man responds. Seeking shelter from winter, the old man has built a home into the mound. He tells the old one he is welcome to use the straw for as long as it serves. The old one invites him in to tea, and he is impressed with the cozy, well-arranged dwelling that has been established. The two become friends and continue to visit each other daily for seven days.

He begins to notice that the old man is always out in the evening. When he asks him where he goes, the old one is evasive, reluctant to tell him. After persisting, he reveals that he goes to a distant tavern every evening. He pesters the old one into letting him join him. Again, the old one is reluctant to comply, but finally consents.

As they start down the road, the old one suddenly seizes his arm, and they are born overland at tremendous speed. In the time it takes to cook a pot of millet, they find themselves in a distant town by a busy tavern. Once inside, his friend leads him up a rickety stairway to a narrow balcony overlooking a noisy band of revelers below. Raising their cups to toast the moon, the two enjoy their refreshment until a well-dressed gentleman enters selling kumquats from a small basket. He asks his friend to fetch some. But the old one refuses, catching himself, too late, as he blurts out that he would not be able to, as not even a wily fox can approach such an upright gentleman.

Taken aback, he has difficulty believing his friend could be a disguised fox, until he notices fine red hairs over the old one's face and hands and realizes he has been placing his fate in the hands of a dangerous prankster. But in the moment of his realization he becomes upright himself, and the spell he has been under is broken. The two tumble to the floor beneath the balcony. As his fox comrade escapes through the door, he looks up to see that he has been perched on rafters all along.

After recounting his story to the revelers, they pass around a hat and collect enough money for his return trip. For, as he discovers, he is now a thousand *li* from home.

CONFUCIOUS

When I was fifteen, I intended to study the classics, and when I was thirty years old I stood up by myself.

One who follows blindly the old way cannot enter into the sage's depth.

A superior man seeks everything in himself, while a mean man seeks everything in others.

In this Land of Flowers, I cease my wandering. I am still, and in the stillness a procession of beings passes through the temple of my soul. First a white egret flies by, then a broad-winged crane, lofting by the sun shining above a tall treetop, and the arrangement of my words is rendered elegant.

What rhapsody, a myna winging through pine-scented air. Some songs are medicinal. Often the most beautiful songs issue from birds the color of mud. Down upon the peaceful bed of bamboo greening up from the yellow earth, an elvin lark flutters. Like the lark upon the sprouting breast of Earth, my mind does not want to alight on a solid branch, preferring either the roostless sky or the featherweight down of a mossy knoll.

The flying white ant ceases its energy squander, and the mosquito its whining. Just so, my apprehension folds its wings. Because the thrush has decreed death or victory, there is no room for fear. And in this same fearless state, wings of leather unfold my hunting instinct as the flying fox, set free in its long-boned flight, begins to forage for the fruits of primordia.

Far above, within high-country pine forest, thriving by the mountain's crest, a fruit-eating marten stirs and awakens from its nest in a rocky crevice. Dusk has gently prodded its eyelids, and the camellia has wafted its bold scent over its fox-long snout.

Within the forest of my mind march sentries, yet there is no perceptible movement beyond the caress of wind. They are the regiment of arbors - birch, walnut, willow, linden draped in clematis vine, alder, spruce and, even bolder than

its neighbors, the dwarf juniper. But rhododendrons. Is it not so that rhododendrons present an army of their own that one day may well conquer the gardens of the world?

High above, the hawk of my knowing turns on the wind of circumspect and spies, far below, the smallest wren in the thickest cover that folds a wing over the simplest desire. As I watch the hawk wheel in its heaven, my golden pheasant heart suddenly bursts from cover, sails over the forest of thought, and descends upon the bank of an interior streaming. And here, in a most ultimate manner, runs a current guided by the Count of the River, a river upon whose bank an oath is made firm, a marriage rendered lengthy, and a contract sworn as by gold ink.

JADE MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

Nomads with fast horses akin to the power in clouds of ominous billow are flying to the Jade Terrace in search of the sacred peach tree that blooms every 6,000 years. As they travel, water chestnuts, lotus roots, and orchids sustain them.

They are listening to the mountains, singing with the streaming water, riding the wind, learning from the Sun's children, and seeking a golden doorway through which to find passage.

Trees whose branches are composed of precious stones chime musically when stirred by the wind. Spirits of dragons rise from rivers and lakes, course across the sky, and drop fertile rains on dwellers of the land. Such dragons bear prosperity.

While tigers are guardians of old age, pearls endure in adornment, the crane is the wing of longevity, and the bamboo is the root of a healthy life. Just as the splendor of peach blossoms follows the bite of winter, good fortune is ever a phoenix rising.

Again and again, I have turned my wandering feet inward. What use is outward rambling when a mapless heaven waits beyond a threshold nearer than my arm's reach? And I penetrate, again and again, finding new treasure at every turn.

Time passes and I carry on, yet realize I have only scarcely begun. One moment, I am enthralled. The next, I feel small within a great plain. Just as a vast ocean of stars lies above, and each star is a light of nature and a light of the self, how can I ever come to know my being and nature's universe? With what army will I attack the nation of heaven? As I sit on the bank of the Yellow River, can I count the grains of sand floating by each day in its waters? As a dim candle is to the sun, I burn, but the light shines only a short way into the abyss. A vast ocean of stars lies far above my sparrow wings.

10 Siberia

A gloom of cloud covers all the land and a cool wind wails its way through the forest. And under the gray morass of cloud, parts of her are disintegrating. Wrestling with a bruin over-whelming, shoving, heaving, falling, struggling, grappling with her inner bear for a too-long session, she is torn asunder. And through disjointed, fragmenting sensation, her soul flies out to all manner of course, one extremity atop a great swaying spruce, another floating in white froth of river rapid, another held in the spidery chalice of an orchid bloom, yet another flung about in the blustering sky, and still another sinking down into the very roots of a mountain. The weight of the mountain crushing, wild wind turbulent, flower petals teasing, foaming waters drowning, careening at a dizzy height, dispersed and abandoned to the will of spirit forces, her soul cries and cries again for integration.

In the end, her people, a people kind and honest, lay her body to rest. A people, a clan that lives well together, so that none go without in time of need. A people who share as one, whose pleasures are simple, who delight in beauty of the land, who revel in the drama that resides in changing weather and seasons. But delight now has grown distant, given way to grieving the loss of this sister, friend, and medicine woman. For three days dead she lay, and in lowering her into a shallow grave, the people are not knowing how so it is for her, and so stand unprepared for what next comes to be.

Now forces of spirit, having held out of the shaman's body nigh to last possible resort, pull together from their scattered realm from their depth of spirit drowning. And surfacing, coughing and sputtering, she fights her way back, and

no less than her clans people does she start in astonishment. For though she is a shaman versed in the ways of death and passage between incarnation, and a shaman of many years surpassing, such death as this has fallen to a steep and wildling trial, putting the trembling in her core. And though on course of revival, she still, from cause of siege and dismember, faces now the long and darkling weight of making her soul as one again, a task that only align of will with counsel of Spirit can even hope to achieve.

And the moss upon which now she lies shaken in distress, the moss that cushions her deep and spasmic course of breathing is all the comfort that avails. A comfort short in stay, as dawns what lies behind and before, and with such a dawn the weeping spell comes on her long, a weeping that circles as hawk on wing, through turn and turn again.

Yet, after the purging plays out, and the very wind calms and a faint stream of sunlight breaks dimly through the cloudy veil, placing her ear upon the Earth, she listens for a time to what the Mother has to say. And the Earth speaks to her in maternal wisdom, of nourishment, and speaks to her of the need to vitalize after such hard-lived and traumatic descent. And how to come to know the ways of when the vital force in food falls depleted and its very “sur” has departed, and it comes to be alike to when sur in a person grows faint, rendering all feeling of defeat and weariness.

And from her learning there comes to grow, day by day, a shamanic breed of knowledge, of how some sickness can be known as a timely absence of soul, or sur. Sur, that same sur that comes strong in the pulse of the drum. And how the green eyes of the drum spirit shine with vigor. And that through its steadfast beat, one comes to meet owl-person, birch and alder spirits, reindeer, and even thunderbird, protector of shamans.

And the voice of the drum beats now for renewal, for the partaking of base foods and herbs, and drum work deeper. And resolute she grows, and begins to follow counsel, such that, in time, her mounting power comes to fashion a new portal, through which she comes to pass by sterling-gray light of renewing moon, in search of yet more of coming whole. And the portal, by passage of moon by moon, comes at last to be a doorway facing north, facing plainly upon a spirit journey of long traverse, painted silver by shimmer of moon and star beam.

And when time draws ripe, on that northward way under hale blue sky, on through snow, glinting, pure and untraversed, she ranges. And long leads the way, day by day, until her wander draws even to the end of forest, into taiga, a place

much unknown, such that by course of traverse, her way grows lost. Yet still she proceeds with new-found courage, until her wandering at last draws, in final measure, to a hilltop low where sits a man upon snow-strewn moss with a beard and hair long like musk ox, and pointed ears and sea-green eyes akin to the spirit that lives in the drum. And the stranger, she makes note, is of calm bearing and gives forth a gesture as though, above all else, he has been expecting her. And after making himself known by name of Leshy, being the way of his manner, he jokes with her and offers aid and even sustenance in form of a basketful of cranberry and blueberry.

Only after some passage of time does she come to note a strange and wondrous attribute of Leshy, that even in the brightest of light no shadow does he cast.

During the season that she ventures there, Leshy leads her through his homeland, the taiga, mossy land of sparse, dwarf trees, and teaches her the proper way to venerate a sacred spring, a technique that opens further her shamanic sensing such that she might commune with a spring in a way of magic growing. And he tells her of a power in some of the local trees to move around at night and in a strange tongue converse that even he, despite long northland residence, has yet to comprehend.

The season turns and she learns much from the Taiga Spirit. And with the decline of winter, as her learning comes to fullness, Leshy leads her back to their place of first encounter and, while in the thrall of a moment of wonder, she marveling at the sight of white swans winging north across the spring-warm sky, he disappears with not a word of farewell.

Upon returning to her people of the forest boreal, with seasons turning, once again winter presides, and the season deepens until the sun rises but a short span, giving forth only a brassy gleam. And this small passage of sun, paling well short of the loft of gold that reigns over summer, ends in dull ember, yielding to long bracing nights of frozen stars. And in this very depth of winter the wind howls and the snow flies for three days unabated. For, Kotura, lord of winds, refusing to sleep, has elected to apply, unceasing, his mighty snowstorm arts.

And it comes to her, for the sake of her people, to appease the lord of winds, to follow the path of weathering forces in search of Kotura's frosty yurt.

So it unfolds that, a year after her venture into taiga, she is once more northward bound, keeping her face to the wind, pressing on resolute. And on her way, oft when she stops to eat, a small bird alights on her shoulder to share her meal, and they dine on dried meat, dried mushrooms, and the boiled tea of blueberry.

Then, after a time, when for a span the wind abates, she addresses her art of howling into the still air. And it happens that after seven spans of toning, a family of wolves gives answer, and with their gathering she passes into the shamanic way to speak to them. There, with silent song of wolf and human converging upon the nomadic quest, the wildlings lead her far along the way, such that, by end of two days' journey they reach the northmost border of their terrain. Here, the wolves slip away, leaving her alone upon the snow to rest and wait.

And with the turning of night, a bear appears. And again she shamanizes herself, that she may speak to the bear. And the track of bear and human run side-by-side along a trail of steadfast strength. Through the night they travel until, with the dawn, the bear departs to return to winter slumber.

Then, walking softly and keeping respectful distance, the stealth of white fox, like a pale ghost flitting across the endless snowdrifts, leads her yet deeper on, until the fox, too, slips away, its tracks fading fast under the whiting oblivion.

Soon the short day ends, night falls, and the moon rises. And because the dreaming light of the moon and a shaman harmonize, the path through the wilds grows clear. Halfway through the night the moon sets. But no sooner has it set when a lynx bounds forth. And the eyes of lynx and hunter pierce, together, the long-night veil. And, in the end, it is the lynx who finally leads her to the land most remote, that place of Aurora Light Descending.

Twice in a long life does it happen that Aurora Light comes down upon the ground, and when it does there comes of it a magic portal wherein the light may be consorted with. And this she does, such that, ascending with the light as it rises to a frosty yurt staked by the shore of a great expanse, She finds herself in the place by the sea of stars where Kotura himself does dwell.

But it is only by fortune of luck, and virtue of shamanic power, that she gains admission to such regal status. For few are they that come to live with Kotura, Lord of Winds, and few are they that come to dwell in the region of the upper universe. But now, as it is, such harmony resides in their alliance, that together they hunt reindeer by moonlight, and together they share stories by starlight.

The yurt in which they dwell has a solid roof, but an airy floor woven of a thin layer of moss. But by the coming of spring, each night she pulls the tent cover down, little by little, so that, after a month, it comes down to earth.

Then, through late spring, now upon earthen ground, she makes alliance with earth-and-water-bound companions, the deer, the ant, and the sturgeon, all of who pledge assistance in her shamanic art. The deer, which covers much terrain, can pass through a great span of the soul's forest, the ant can retrieve masses of tiny details, and the sturgeon can retrieve lost gold at the bottom of spirit's river-deep current.

And by the time the power of these helpers grows strong in her, it happens that spring comes to pass and gives way to summer, and the restless way grows strong in her.

Summer is a time when all little mosquitoes of anxiety and loneliness whine, and lichens of habit are exposed upon the stony ground of compulsion. And a time when the bear of renewal, that steadfast auger, has climbed into the tree of compassion known as apple, to thrive upon sweet fruit of soul. Now the pine tree, ruler of taiga, offers the meat of its seed to nurture all hunger arising. And birch twigs fan sweetly, softening to contentment all sense of deprivation, and larch needles gold the shaman's varied emotion, dropping dozen by dozen upon the mossy floor of inventiveness. And, not least, and potent besides, by steeping her perception in tea of rosemary, there grows clearer such vision as can make its way into things to come.

Through passage of time, under auspice of nature's surpassing guidance, and spirit's ascending power of transformation, she aspires now to meet the challenge of living in the boreal forest in sacred manner. The season of thunderstorm comes to ripen. And in that season, pondering the force of lightning, she comprehends that lightning-born fire burns holier than other, and that such heaven-drawn power can be born as a great force of healing. Adjoined with this, she learns, as an apprentice of the Master of Flame, that she must never use spit, water, or breath to extinguish fire, to treat such force only with all thoughtful reverence.

Once there, residing in the eyes of a shaman, formidable is this power of fire for burning clean an affliction. The Master of the art lives in fire, consumes raw wood, sleeps on a bed of ashes, and uses smoke for breath. If dreamt of, the

Master, appearing in the form of a walking flame-being, always bears a message demanding much effort to interpret.

And one night such dreaming comes upon her, bearing her own personal message (but which, out of respect for the spirit that gives it, cannot here be rendered to image). And the meaning of the dreaming here follows: the peak of summer is of highest preparation for the death that autumn bears. Behind every expression of life resides a quiet way of dying. It must be this way, so that humanity can, over course of many seasons, come to know its new way of being. And because of such a way of unfolding, the real life of Self can, in all full measure, come in proper season to hold full sway.

11 Persia

We live in a wide, flat expanse of no valleys or mountains. The sun and moon stand still in noon-high positions. Life is harmonious and simple. No tempest arises, no suffocation of heat. Water laps gently, never meets an icy blast that freezes. Horizons do not invite, nor do they repel. The song of bird is neither mournful nor exuberant. Animals range across the paths of the people, without hostility and unafraid. The sun and moon paint a duet of light, silver and gold, making brass the moments, which do not stream after each other, but interweave as a fabric whose warp spins out of the distant side of eternity, and whose woof spins from the heart of immediacy.

Then comes Evil, crashing through the glass shield of sky, shaking the Earth with its impact, causing mountains to rise, valleys to sink. Sun, moon, and stars begin to revolve in a deepening sky, set upon courses from which there can be no tuning back. The great wheel of time and motion begins to rotate, loosens its hub, slowly begins to build an immensely ponderous momentum, now in a great circuit, now in a warping spiral pulled between the present and perpetuity. Tempests arise, as does merciless heat. A whirlwind sweeps from the south from which emerge furious clouds of stinging insects. Across the face of the waters rages now a tumult, suddenly calming to a quiet lull. Winds from the north bear ice and snow. Horizons beckon, then threaten. Birds, animals, and plants become more animated. Uncertainty and wildness proceed from them as they range the heights and depths, lift themselves to refinement, then tumble to debasement. Songs of the gods issue from the beaks of birds, emotions of the gods compel flowers to blossom.

When we succumb to duality, we lose sight of the godliness that resides in human nature. With senses scattered in the dust of ignorance, we develop a subtle code of exclusion. On the one hand, we cannot see the good in all (including the “bad”) and, on the other hand, we cannot see the shortcomings in the good. In our struggle to apprehend these new parameters, we are overwhelmed. We arrive like

water and depart like wind. Our power falls depleted, and we are stripped of clairvoyance. Wildly the water surges, cascading, churning, rampaging. And now wildly erupts the wind of our striving, billowing, rushing against the impervious fabric of the sail of desire, and self-deceit serpents its way into our souls, further contracting the dwindling span of our lives.

And we cry to the heavens, “What lamp shall guide us out from this mounting darkness?” And out of the silence of the heart, unto an ear attuned with patience, there arises this counsel:

Look you now, discover within your heart the carnelian of compassion, for now it comes down to love. What else can lead the way forward through the labyrinth of incarnation in a world such as this? Though you seem as though a bird with crippled wings feeding on windblown bits of clay, the seeds of love that lie hidden within the bed of grief and despair are seeds that can produce a thousand-fold.

To those who see with their ears, and hear with their eyes, I say that in the Zagros Mountains, oaks and junipers hold their ground. And across the plateau of contemplation, interspersed upon its thriving meadows, stands of pistachio forest have taken claim. The lion ranges in search of a solitary, nocturnal deer, or a wild goat gone astray. In spring, the ibex grazes on the strawberry tree, upon its fruit, flowers, and foliage, while in autumn it feeds upon golden mushrooms that sprout beneath its spread.

The drum of circumstance is beating now, a rhythm drawn from a wild creature dreaming. Moon animals do not reign here. They are driven back by circumstance, confined to night and hidden recesses. Here, sun animals have taken siege the fortress of passion and instinct.

The sun can rise and burn away cloud cover, flooding the world with love’s light. But there are times when cloud can be useful. Besides, love can live in such transcendent water, as well as anywhere. If you seek a pearl, wander by the sea. What gift is this, the darkness? What riches might emerge therein, riches unknown to eyes rendered by light alone? Let the fabric of night ravel and unravel its mysterious weave.

Meanwhile, Good and Evil battle over our souls. Good offers Evil peace, but Evil believes that anyone who offers peace does so out of weakness, so rejects the offer and fashions plans of destruction. Good then fixes the period of the battle, thus

limiting Evil, who is too ignorant to realize this arrangement will cause its own undoing.

(From this it is understood that if Evil is allowed to operate quietly and unceasingly behind the scenes, it can ultimately be destructive. But when drawn out in the open, it dissipates and loses its power.)

We are told of special helpers appointed to offer their services during the period of the battle of dualities. Among those who are prepared to respond if we ask for their assistance, are Vohu, Asha, Arma, and Shathra. The first meeting with these allies is a fearful experience, for they are deities with a burning gaze, radiant in awful majesty, gleaming like onyx by torchlight.

Vohu is a protector of animals and one who can show how animals are a reflection of human soul qualities. When we ask for Vohu's help, we begin to see how our will, like a desert fox, ranges in quest of provision, and how the falcon of our aspiration plummets from heights of ideals, strikes and carries away clear discernment in its capable talon.

Asha, a truth messenger, reveals Universal Laws, and uncovers the deeper cause of disease and disorder. Through Asha, we learn how some blossoms are delicate and must not be touched by the frost of pride, how our iris anticipation, whether it be a bloom of hope or sorrow, rises with a flame of ardor, how our poppy-dreaming wonder can be directed to take up residence in a garden of quiet labor.

Arma, on the other hand, teaches devotion and harmony, and demonstrates the fullness of the tulip-vessel, an abundance that flourishes from a bulb of diligence, and the purity of wild-rose love that cannot be withered by the frost of derision.

Shathra, who can instigate divine intervention on Earth, promotes the silken weaving of prosperity among our mulberry days of labor, days consigned to the community of God and man.

These allies remain with us for a time. After they withdraw, a special helper, a savior called Zoras, comes in human form to prophesy and demonstrate much power lying dormant in us.

No one knows where Zoras came from, but he-she (an entity of equal male-female balance) radiates light, a light that perplexes the ignorant of heart who, mistaking his-her strangeness for evil, seek to kill Zoras. But all attempts to kill Zoras are met by divine intervention.

As a child, Zoras is thrown into a blazing fire, but sits amid the flames, unharmed. On another occasion, Zoras is thrown before a stampeding herd of cattle. The cattle step around Zoras with great care. Zoras has enduring compassion for animals, and animals love Zoras in return.

Zoras is 30 years old before his-her first vision. Despite much radiance, wisdom, and love, he-she must undergo special trials. Because human hearts are hardened against him-her, Zoras can rely solely on comfort from God. However, despite temptations and afflictions, Zoras stands fast in faith and willing service.

And we walk the Earth during the time of this great teacher, and Zoras renders this prophecy:

I am one of several envoys, two others shall I mention now. The second shall be born of virtuous humans and shall be the "Walking Light," or the Master of Love. He shall heal many ailments, shall walk on water, and teach the power of Love. He shall defy death, even overcome it, through the Initiation of Resurrection. He shall demonstrate supreme love, yet the period of his ministry shall be but three years.

Despite the powerful teachings of the Master, humankind shall strive to work out of themselves, for a long time, the evils of war and destruction. And there will be a time near the end of this period when darkness will reign as never before. There will be horrible battles, clouds of smoke, earthquakes, afflictions and destruction against the ways of Nature. The water and air and earth shall be rendered poisonous, there will be strife of one against another, and there will be much chaos and despair.

And there shall be a war of wars, centered in this land we stand upon, but involving the many nations of the world. There will be a great aimlessness to this battle - it shall be largely the outworking of karma, both of nations and of individuals. And this war of wars shall seem of no avail, except to teach those who are involved the ways of suffering and destruction. Many shall be misled, not recognizing the call for each one to choose between Truth and deception. For it will be in this arena wherein the real call to arise shall lie.

Then, when all seems desperate beyond measure, a shower of stars shall announce the coming of an enlightened envoy. However, the Master will not come in form of person, but shall embody the multitude who have

chosen to live in service to the Creator. And they shall proceed in consort with the Master of Love, who shall dwell in spirit form in their midst.

Though the Earth shall be persecuted, the violators shall meet themselves by their own means. And those who choose love shall be given the joyous task of co-creating the sacred ground of a resurrecting Earth.

And so, with all our getting, may we get understanding. Before letting anger rule the heart, shall we not await wisdom to arise from within? Where strife shall produce mounting flame, gentleness reduces a consuming fire to ember.

The Creator refines the gold of our hearts. Can those who put themselves in the place of their neighbor find cause for war?

Though lacking agility, I am intrigued by movement. I fear the Void, and am repulsed by the vastness of the ocean, and shun the dwellers by the ocean. Though self-reliant in many things, I have little talent for navigation. I am dependent on the mercies of the overlords, and upon the guidance that emanates from the fount of repose. When the moon is wrapped in a veil of blue light, I am led to ask: which is more beautiful, the moon or the sun? But what answer can be given? What manner of beauty is sought?

Before the wind and rain of winter sweep like scythes over the land, the herder takes to fattening the beast. The chariots of time race to an unattainable goal, carried by the wheel of momentum, and holding fast to the power that resides in their godly hub.

Foregoing rashness, surveying passage through the Land of the Cedars, what concubine wantonness can hold sway over our destiny?

Like wild deer, the poetry of our meditation becomes companion to our souls, ranging across the plateau of our mind to the highlands of our hearts.

What would be done foremost - find fault, or give praise? Let the tongue become the golden stamen of the wild rose. The radiance of a rose opening, petals turning in a sunbeam vortex, is a semblance of the soft cadence in the dove's song.

We come and go, but the Earth Mother carries on. And we hear the Earth Mother ask in distress, *who shall I send, who will help now?* And some say, "Here I am, send me." And others shall hear and not understand, and though it be in plain view, few shall see.

Angels in contest fashion the rose bloom, each out-doing the next until, full circle, they fold their wings of light and, before surpassing beauty, fall weeping upon knees of submission. He who carries into play the force of the Master of Love is consumed by its splendor, only to rise again in a mighty form.

Our eyes drink the wine of sundown, as a melted ruby in the chalice of the sky, its intoxicant light reeling in our soul, now flaring, now ember, now ash.

We celebrate the carmine passage, a life lived in one day, a daylong wingspan, the flight of our thought-life now finch, now hawk, folded in final fireflight. Now flaring, now ember, now ash.

The musky earth sends forth scent of rose only the gold of angels can purchase, its yellow aroma fashioning the power of flight in a bird now freed from sorrow's cage, a bird of yellow wings, now flaring, now ember, now ash.

And the bird of our wondering transforms into the soft wind of a closing dusk, and blows against the leafy tresses of the forest wherein upon an ancient pistachio tree dwells a young owl, vanquished moonbird of night's recess. From the golden pool of its being floats the owlet's call, descending over the hills to the lair of lion, to an ear that cups the night's movement, to an ear that holds all tumult in stasis.

Though a thousand artisans labor for a king for twenty years, the king shall go naked into the nether world, without impediment of adornment.

As a new moon growing to full, nature's progress, unfolding gradually and surely, comes to completion. Listen to the tread of the ant, and the sound of a grain of sand in the stream's current. Birdsong opens the vault of heaven, alights on our soul as a tempest.

Much of what we come to say can be as ripened fruit, but not all who hear will know it. And not every bird that alights consumes fruit.

Who is the potter, and who is the pot? What manner of clay strives in the drying oven of the soul, baking its pattern into an urn of redemption? What vessel contrives upon the wheel's turning to serve up such enraptured content?

One day, the Master of Love shall come, and you shall know him when he poses the question: *Who shall I send, who will help now?*

[commentary](#)

12 Las Palmas: Meditations Under a Palm Tree

LA PALMA, #1

Blessed is the one who walks the path of Nature's way. Delight shall reside there. Roots deep and sacred shall flourish.

How is it that some take counsel against Nature's way? Will not such vanity cause their undoing? Fortunate are those who trust in the Creator's design.

Nature spirits shall be our allies. Are not our prayers answered when the wolf runs by our side, and the eagle soars with our thought? In the river of wilderness a dream of peace shall be our current.

Teach us, Creator, in forgiving the violators, to forgive also our own waywardness, for have you not instructed us to love ourselves, even as you do? Teach us to forgive ourselves, that we may not fall prey to the falsehood that we are less than the eternal splendor of which you have fashioned us, that some splendor you have set before our eyes in the world of Nature.

LA PALMA, #2

Sweet Artist, how excellent is your manner in all Creation. When I ponder the higher realms and the purity of the stars, I come to wonder what is the nature of my soul. Have you not made us only one step below the angels and fashioned us as a crown of creation upon Earth? And have you not appointed us caretakers of the animals, birds, fish, and wildlands of Earth, that we may live in harmony with them and assist in their soulful unfoldment, as they do in ours?

I will sing your joy, and give thanks for your aid in overcoming my frailty. As I seek the kingdom of nature within, I discover comfort. In my cleansing I undergo suffering, but in the solace of your light my suffering is transmuted to gold.

Why do you seem so distant, at times, my Maker? Those who walk in pride, the war-makers and violators of your Creation, boast of their deeds, while the innocent suffer because of them. Arise in us, our God, and keep us for your will. The oppressors shall begin a war that none shall attend.

LA PALMA, #3

The wind is sounding its flute in the trees, the sun is cascading its light upon the meadow. Your glory shines in the spirit of nature that lives in grace and splendor. You show me my strength. You share with me your majesty. Your messengers console and aid us, and we are delivered from our afflictions.

Thank you for lighting the candle of my heart. Thank you for dwelling in the rock and tree and waters and ground over which we pass. Your gentleness is utmost power, your patience, the greatest of strengths. With such virtue are we delivered from the hands of the violators of nature.

LA PALMA, #4

From out of the depth of heaven's night angels sing, and I watch as the owl of my wondering drinks from a burning cup of starlight. Now the night falls to ember until, with dawn, the Sun-spirit rises to wash away all spent ashes. Teach me to listen closely, Father-Mother, that I may find my way beyond the veils of this world.

We give thanks for your uprooting force, levied now against our self-effacement. Our only enemy abides in our own shortcoming.

My God, why do I feel so vexed? When, once again, I feel forsaken, despite how often you have come to my aid, I know I need quest for abiding trust.

By your shamanic power I am shattered, so that I can be assembled according to your perfect design.

LA PALMA, #5

I am the shepherd of my soul. I shall honor my aspirations. I know abundance and re-invigoration. Though I walk, incarnated, through the valley of the world's desolation, I shall meet my fears and know they preside as a veil.

They that keep their hearts pure shall have clear vision. Those who seek the Master of Love shall attain a full chalice.

Show me your way, Creator, map me your path. Help me to know forgiveness of self and all I meet. Those who hold wonder in creation shall mine the gold of spirit.

Help me to harbor balance in my life. Prevent in me the hawk from ruling at cost of the sparrow. Let me honor all inward beings, and the gifts they bear for the kingdom. Even as vexations arise in me, I shall await that utmost peace that follows upon your design. When strife arises in the kingdom, your protection will avail. Each subject of the kingdom shall put on and put off its mask according to the way of spirit. My heart shall be strengthened.

By your strength and armor, by your refreshment and sustenance, shall I stay the hand of the violators of nature.

LA PALMA, #6

Beauty is aloft over many waters. The inner voice enchants like unicorns at play. The inner voice makes known the wonders of the forest.

And I will open the door, even as you speak openly within my heart. For I am done with falling and henceforth shall rise with you.

When the song of your voice created earth, Father-Mother, you birthed in us the strength of stone. And you made your face to shine upon our faces. Let our falsehood dissolve in the light of your shining.

Let me range as the horse does, with a generous heart. Let me be as a bridge from Earth to Sky, finding rhythm of hoof and wind of mane.

We are steeped in miracles. Everywhere the wonders of creation continue to unfold. Blessed are those that pursue the way of the heart.

Those who have eyes to see sense at every turn the presence of angels. Those who turn away deliver themselves to ruin, while those who come openly unto you encounter the fullness of your splendor.

Let my confusion work itself out, so that I may know increase of understanding. I give thanks that you are ever with me through trial and endurance, so that my heart once again can loft like a fearless bird that has never been caged.

LA PALMA, # 7

Warm light shines upon the frost and snow, melting the chimera of the soul. False pride takes its final fall. It shall not be able to rise.

The green of herb holds steadfast in its leafy throne through full measure of its course. Patience and resolve bring forth the fruit the soul hungers after.

Teach me to honor the kingdom within. Help me to trust, and to rebuild my life. May I follow your command to love myself, and the world.

In my stillness, as I watch within, a light arises. In the quiet, I sense within my soul a sound, a tone that sounds on as a tunnel of love streaming its power through all eternity.

Sweet wealth is rendered unto those who share. Their love shall bear them upon a river of joy. Fear shall fall away, for in such life there can be found no loss.

LA PALMA, #8

As a deer pants for a brook of water, my Creator, so my soul thirsts to comprehend the mystery of your ways. When I taste the water of my tears, I long for the flow of your clear spring.

The Light is our refuge and strength. We shall not fear even though the Earth may quake and the mountains sink undersea, for there is ever a sacred place enduring.

Nations that arise shall fall, in due course. Weapons will fail in the end. The violators of nature shall meet a terrible end. Life is a bridge, build no house upon it.

Create in me a pure heart, oh God, and renew my spirit.

LA PALMA, #9

Fortunate are those who choose to proceed by the light of the heart. Within that temple dwell a multitude of angels and talents.

Do not those who voice the glory of the Way set in motion forces to overcome the darkness of the world?

Though it comes to pass that evil ways prosper in this world, there is sure to come a balancing of accounts.

And though we have fallen under the spell of false opulence, have we not learned from the error of our ways? Let me strive first for that inmost wealth, and give thanks for whatsoever riches of the world follow as a matter of course.

How loving are your true forums of worship. A day in your light is worth more than a thousand upon the worldly stage. Better to be a doorkeeper in a hut of the soul, than a landlord in a mansion of this world.

LA PALMA, #10

From birth to death our days proceed in a manner of enchantment, and upon death we review our life and prepare for our next incarnation. We are like the grass that grows tall in the morning and withers and is cut down at night. From seed to seed, we come and we go.

But you, our Lord, live on in constancy.

Just so, shall we live also in constancy. Though we live but once, it is forever. Honor and majesty reside within us, strength and beauty are our sanctuary.

You have woven the golden strands of nature into a priceless fabric, and inspired life into its every aspect.

To hold awe in creation is the birth of wisdom.

[commentary](#)

13 Oceana

I am feeling half of two, wanting completion. I am wanting to look through a window into a distant future. I am wanting the gods to walk the Earth again.

The universe is my soul mate.

A voice opens, a doorway speaks. What is this breeze in the heart that stirs new life in the garden of ripening dreams? The universe is deeply in love with me. Eyes hear the sound of water, ears watch hope unfold. The octopus grapples with my questing, folding over and over the desire of my being into a protective embrace. I feel armored like a sea crab.

The universe is enchanted with me. Musical sounds tumble out of a sky of quickening angels. Silver chords converge in my limbs, inciting movement. Dance possesses me, moves me across a windswept seascape.

The universe will have its way with me.

La: light. La is dancing down from Woman of the Skies and hurtling its energy into me. My shadow is quivering at its edges, erupting into spontaneous movement. I must dance, I am a woman whose soul is ardently woven with dance.

Pounding waves have awoken my sleeping-sand pondering. Light has led me over a volcanic brink. On the feather of spirit I am moved, wild waves dancing me, a racing current propelling. Wind-whipped water sprays itself into a sky of flower-petal exhilaration. My guardian protector corals a reef, dispersing the pounding of sea god anger to ease my quavering heart. But Tuna is there gliding

outside the reef's harbor, out in a wilderness vast and surging, and unless I swim with Tuna, how will I comprehend the sounding's deep-sea enigma? Ashore, coconut milks the starlight, turning heaven's stream of vision to godly nutmeat, and a wild boar of dissension worries the jungle of complacency, frowning and scraping, uprooting the ground of my heart's delusion, snapping twigs of petty contrivance, trampling upon the loam of shallow desire.

Navigators befriend whales, converse with dolphins. Fish swim gestures of pleasure in azure-blue glidings. I carry banana leaves with reverence. Anything green, anything vegetating upon the narrow platform of land, quivering between the immensities of sea and sky, I cherish. Is not life on the brink of the Void destined to undergo continuous re-creation? Is not the land tentative, scarcely underfoot, a marginal presence poised on the verge of abyss?

When the sun sets I pray my guardian spirit will ascend a rainbow to join other angels in setting fire to the sky, in painting the clouds with parrot flames. My heart revels in color, for now, but tomorrow must sober to the brazen light of day, for I have seen a future that I must strive to alter. In a few things we are fated, but in most we have *kala* power - the ability to cleanse muddy outcomes of the future.

I awake with dawn, and walk a beach of quiet sensibility. I find fish remains, but around them are impressed only slight, intermittent tracks. Sitting and waiting for the makers of these impressions to return, I reason that if I can persuade them to be my allies, perhaps my quest will become viable. For, I believe, they are those who possess the power of tricksters, fairies who can ride upon currents of a supernatural ocean.

I will ask them to help fashion a canoe and to accompany me on a voyage. For I go to encounter my sea-father - and few are they who return from such a quest.

They access power that resides on the horizon of my experience. But if they respond to my plea, I will be compelled to expand my knowing beyond the shores of its island containment. With luck, they will bring me halfway, but I will need to accomplish the rest myself. Through the day, I eat no food. The wind is my only food. I wear a white-petalled tiare flower above my ear. My longing rises higher than the tallest coconut tree. My heart ascends to the third and fourth horizon, to the edge of beyond, to a dominion of gentle air.

As I patiently await the return of the elvin people, the sun's heat grows more intense. A jellyfish washes ashore. They will soon be here, I can see them in my mind. The wind picks up, bending palm fronds into graceful arcs. I pick some shells off the sand and turn them over in my hand. At the other end of the beach a finch calls from a coconut tree. Underneath the tree I can see leaves rustling as something passes there, coming in my direction.

They are in my midst. Beauty in faces looks back at me, asks me to free myself. I describe my ambition, to visit the sea-father, and I ask for help to build a canoe. The fairy-folk are delighted with my quest, but warn of impending danger. They will only agree to help if I pledge to dance for them, to dedicate my dancing to the untamable elements of the world. I vow to do so, and they arrange to have Father Woodpecker guide me in building a canoe.

A week later, the canoe is ready. It is a long dugout, with a trough burned out and hewn to a fine finish. Now, all that remains is to load provision. I gather fruits and scale coconut trees. I am nearly finished when I slip and tumble from a height. It is a bad fall. My leg is broken, the pain is overwhelming and I pass out.

While unconscious, I travel undersea to the village of the coral people. Their leader, Tenifa, a shark that eats men, gives me a magic tube and shows me how to mend a broken reef. When I awaken, I am in my aunt's hut. My leg is bound, I am suffering, but the pain is made dull thanks to my aunt's herbal wisdom. I learn that my leg is badly broken. I will recover and walk again, but barely. I am devastated to learn I will never dance again. Dance has always been my release, my freedom, my joy. My heart is broken.

In time, I recover, and learn the healing arts of my aunt, the use of herbs and certain procedures. I learn how magic resides in things. I learn of the hala tree, how its leaves for weaving carry a special power into hats, mats, sandals, and baskets. I learn of the hau plant's ancient soulhood, how its blossoms can evolve through the day, from yellow to orange to red, and how its power changes course with its color. I learn of the uplifting effect of the golden shower tree. These arts will become my mainstay now that dance is over. I strive to become an answer to the question, "Who will help?" But I am only half-alive, living in and out of despair, like a wild sow half-mad from a thorn embedded in her hoof.

One day, the fairy-folk visit. They have come for their tribute, and complain about my not living up to our agreement. In my self-pity, I lament. How can I

dance again? But they have no patience for my despair. They insist on recompense.

Eventually, I come to realize they are asking for the only kind of dancing that remains for me - that of dancing in my heart. Over time, I learn to dance with my healing arts, and with my singing, and in everything I do.

After a while, I become as a dolphin in untamable waves, a swallow at play in heaven's blue vault, the sun glinting off a tumbling waterfall. The fairy folk are pleased with my progress. They are in my midst. Beauty in faces looks back at me, celebrates that I am learning to free myself.

Time passes, and the sea turtle of my soul awakens to befriend and teach me. Its shell becomes the dome of the universe, the starry height that curves above and depicts the thousand wishes of my heart. Now I can learn to navigate.

And the sea turtle nests in my pondering, helping me to lay its hundred eggs of inspiration. Then it departs, to leave the turtlettes to make their own way down to the sea of consciousness, infant notions emerging from a sandy pit, intent on their briny home, following the light to the searing radiance of a spreading sea swelling with surf-wild passion.

And illumination self-navigates, the swim of my heart plunging beneath the cresting, and rising again in the fortifying embrace of tidal fullness.

From thatched hut by blue lagoon, I view the setting sun. Not like slow rise and fall of tide, the sun sets and rises abruptly. Like strike of shark is the shift between day and night.

Like most of the women of our island, during the day I find serenity of soul, and when it grows dark I grow fearful of night spirits. But I do not plunge into this fear. Always I strive to overcome. Mostly, living here, in this arena of majestic and eternal sea, I am at home in the pulse of my being, in the undulations of its many rhythms.

Yes, the sea sings eternity and immensity, at times gently, at times powerfully, but always with soothing constancy. The world is filled with sea and sky, cloud and light, with a little forest green to offer a center. The center gives itself like paradise, but paradise can wear one out. Diluting utopic joy, it can pour itself out upon a dry sand of complacency.

Red, for earthbound sojourners, is the gold of colors, the wealthiest light of worldly merit in the rainbow. Red feathers adorn, seaweed anoints, and the nut of pandanu satisfies remaining appetite. The harmony of lorikeet and warbler transfix. And the dove, an agent of peace, turns out to be the most fearless of birds.

Now I live alone. Life can be all or nothing. For a while I have two suitors. One is a brash warrior, the other, a gentle, reflective soul. I am drawn to both, but have to choose. In a dream, I become an owl flying in the night, pulled between two stars - one, a glaring red, the other, a soft blue. Flying between them for a long while, I can veer neither left nor right. Each shines equally with silver-purplence. Then one is taken away by the pull of a shooting star and disappears over the horizon. I bank toward the other light, which becomes, like me, a bright owl. Together we fly into the sea. When we strike the water, we become dolphins.

As time goes by, my dream comes to pass. The warrior gradually becomes more gentle, but without losing his strength and power. And the gentle one grows stronger, more resolute. Then a time comes when another people from a distant island arrive. Among these people there is a maiden of striking beauty and pleasant bearing. When her people return to their home, one of my suitors goes with her. I marry the remaining one.

The harmony of our life together is dependable, akin to a steady supply of taro. Our patience is undying, like fern root. The spirit of generosity that evolves between our people and us becomes a school of mackerel that comes unending. Our marriage becomes a canoe loaded with treasure, paddled in a current of prosperity where fine fish abound, a harvest cooked on a bed of fragrant korimoko leaves.

As newlyweds, we roast eels in an enchanted oven. If we give thanks our abundance grows. If we fail to acknowledge the source of our prosperity, illness or lackluster follows. We offer gemstones to the fairies, half-spirit, half-human beings. The fairies take away the dark part of each gemstone, absorb the shadow, rendering the gems more radiant than ever, and the fairies become a little more visible.

The crested cormorant guides our enterprise. We learn that a net cast into the pool of the soul must have the right-sized spaces in its weave. Our union becomes a rhythmic tide, a rising and falling of the energy of a dance that portrays grace and beauty, that converges with the charm in the breeze of a swaying palm.

But when the sea out beyond the reef of safety, in a mood of fury, takes his life, I can no longer hold joy in my heart. For a while, as a widow, I sleep at night, both to avoid the darkness and to commune with my departed one. And through the passage of day, I carry the skull of my loved one wherever I go.

You follow upon a soft mat of forest floor that cushions your steps. And you come to a tall forest full of scarlet berries upon which a flock of green pigeons is feeding. There, as you wait in stillness, time passes, until your attention is drawn to a low rustling sound as something begins to climb a tree. The crested iguana, in a green and white costume, now passive, now aggressive, a hissing monster decked in black and white, attacks a parrot of glossy plumage, an embodiment of radiant color who flies away to consort with the golden whistler, a bird who adopts the role of many characters in its musical performance.

Later, emerging from the forest down to the seashore, the ghost crab side steps near the edge of vision and blends into the white beach, the place where spirit and body meet and converse in surf and sand. A giant clam in warm, clear waters of the lagoon, next to the reef of coral, shows strength of containment, how to live in a gentle manner, yet shield the flesh of tenderness. And then the land crab, who has abandoned the sea to wander the Earth, in and out of the forest, wrestles now with a coconut, applying tenacity to access the creamy nut-flesh. Teach me to persist, my friend.

With nightfall, the mosquito steals blood, our life fluid, and leaves discomfort in exchange. The sea steals the sun, and the night, in turn, steals command from the sea. One day, inspired by such thievery, a teacher holds a contest. He and five others will compare what they can steal in one day. The five fill their homes with as much as they can steal. Exhausted by their efforts, they go to sleep. Soundly they sleep, not waking when the teacher quietly creeps in and steals off with their booty. By morning it is clear who has won the contest, as the teacher holds every opponent's booty in his own house.

A five-day festival begins with one voice singing in a wavering, atonal sound. Then others begin to harmonize, and the song comes into form. Only with several members of the village singing together can the song grow strong and full. Dance is similar, and drumming, and the playing of flute music. The group builds power. A soloist cannot stand on his own. Maybe one day, a soloist can complete a song.

Is it a dream? or real, when Porpoise girl, drawn to shore by our music and dancing, sheds her tail to take part in the dance?

The night comes to an end, and the next day, serenading the forest, our voices thrill, rouse, render order, and compel magic to become accessible. Poetry, the voice of the heart, runs wild and consummate, like a garland of white flowers, until the fiesta ends.

Uncharted reefs range through the wide sea of spirit. Through the night, upon the ocean of stars, where the canoe of my soul plies heavenly surf, a void stretches above, and a void lies asea, and to live in a void, to make it home, becomes the lifelong task. A bright star, keeping the spirits of night at bay in the forest, overriding all, is shining its solitary rays upon the beach of my pondering. And deep within the void thrives the magician oyster fashioning a small, warm moon of its own within its flesh.

The following day, enduring biting pain, a tattoo of fortitude renders art of pleasing design. Then, on the other side of pain, out upon a raft of solitude, seabirds throng, cavorting in all directions over the surf of ingenuity that pounds upon the vessel of my silent endurance. Ashore, a spray of inspiration, flying wildly, spatters into a percussive rhythm that blends with the blackbird's song, and the hours filter down through the forest's emerald foliage in sunlit tones. And I rest by a rushing brook, with a cooling draft of air streaming from under the canopy, the voice of water chanting quiet invigoration.

A whorl of palm fronds atop a tree radiates in a sunwise pattern. It sings of mystery, how all the fronds emanate from unity, and how the one shall rise from the many to become itself unto itself. And how many days shall I sit by the waterfall to comprehend its elusive, moving mystery? What hidden secrets cascade down upon its ocean bound quest? And what occult spirit resides beside its bubbling course in the giant tree-fern? What quiet counsel in the clinging moss? Or unfolds, above, on the wing of the ocean tern?

The assembly of clouds in the heavens, the reign of stars in their unending majesty, the sluicing of rain from the vault of sky, the undanceable gesture of thunder, how will we make account? What tally comes from assessing the sand grains by the sea?

Forest spirits serve as a crew aboard the canoe of my incarnation, attracted by the rites of passage that have entered into the fabric of the craft. While paddling under father sky's blessing, upon the surging waves of emotional revelation, a message soars out of reach, overhead, upon the wingspan of the tropicbird.

Now, the pathway of the sea opens. The opponents - shark, swordfish, and giant clam - are subdued, are made to pledge allegiance. From each, I recover aspects of personal power, which I use to attain the Island of Impasse. Here, I somehow slip by sentries - jungle fowl and lizard - and overcome a primary opponent, the enchantment of my shadow. All that remains now is to liberate the mother, the Earth Queen, to disassemble her manacles and remove her blindfold. I point my canoe in the direction of the captive parent. I do not yet know how the story ends.

14 The Nile Valley

For a time, I grew ill, and mistook the Nile that runs through the underworld for the Nile that runs through the sky. A wind from Nubis, the northbound envoy of a goddess, strummed on the lute strings of my emotions. Figures of silver fish and black ibis danced in two-dimensional patterns across sheets of papyrus. Because I had done harm to some, a crocodile fashioned its way into my fate. And because I had done benefit to others, a water-spirit made its home along the opposite bank of the same soul-river. For some time, the two battled in the depths, each seeking to have its way with me. Which would come to prevail?

A week later, the crocodile of avarice, appearing at first waxen and subdued, comes to life, and strives in me - and yet the crimson grace of flamingo also unfolds its wings in my heart, for it is a time of new life, not yet a time of death.

Adoration of the sun as he rises on the eastern horizon is the first gateway to heaven. Praise to you that rise from the celestial ocean and lighten the lands. Goodly renewer, when you rise, we live. Joy is extolled to you by all. Even the wild beasts sing praise to you. The yellow sail of your surpassing ship is filled with our song. Even give us light, that we may see your beauty.

The spirit of the River Nile, Dawna Anellis, issues from afar, bearing nourishment. Life-blood of the land, streaming like the soul, it inundates all with its powerful bearing, irrigates the thirsting roots of our wonder. Through our hearts it flows unimpeded, renewing our seeing, washing away weariness,

conveying our wishes, steeping us in a tea of reflection, initiating our fertility, sifting the sands of time and consequence, flooding our senses with the wine of its charm, wending its way through the breath of splendor, even unto its grand exhalation in the shining Sea of Mediterrana. A hidden nature presides in its depths. Liquid joy, driving away the drought of oppression, giving drink to all cattle of sustenance, all desert of despair. Lord of fish, director of the grain-god, inundator of sleeping meadows, your verdant manner thrives beyond our knowing.

And it is related that a traveler in the valley land, in search of his canine companion, a dog of many years, searching by the banks of the river, fearing the fate of his greyhound had fallen to the crocodiles, came, in that low-lying place, upon a woman not of mortal ken. And she was of a shining countenance causing his hair to stand on end, and a windspell she sang, and he grew in fear.

And by the force of the fear-spell he was overcome, and fell into the dark of sleep, not to awaken through the long night. And by dawn, finding himself in a field of chamomile, and seeing the colors of the chamomile matched well the hair and eyes of the goddess he had met, he took aside a measure of incense to burn as tribute, and went away wondering of other gods and goddesses dwelling in and of the land. And the river came to seem as a path laced with powdered coral and lily petals. And upon the bank, verdant to the point of opulence, scent of lemon pervading the air, he listens now to the distant bellowing of an unknown creature. And with gazelles of hooving press abounding, and the sun attaining full height, marrow heats in the bone of his contention, such that godly gesture rushes at the sky on heron wings, leaping skyward.

For many days, through meadowlands mixed here and there with stands of trees, we traveled from the East as part of a caravan, our items of trade laden upon a donkey. Now we are on our own. Shallah smiles at me - a smile that reveals the candle in her heart. We are supremely happy together. Ours is a rare twin-flame union, one that down through the passage of time occurs once in several lifetimes. Two yellow rose blooms that take each other for the sun, we open wide our petals, unfold to give and catch what shines back. When love lit its fire in our hearts, it burned away much that was not love. Then it began the lessons of its method that take many incarnations to learn.

Westward we pass through yet more land of forest and meadow, on the way to the Egyptian empire, the Nile valley and the holy pyramids, and I ponder many

things. Resting in shade through the hottest part of the day, continuing on when the linnet sings its song of the passing of the heat, we are unsure why we are bound to our sacred destination, but trust the compulsion of the inner voice. Often in the past we have chosen to heed our intuition, which has a way of leading ever on to great treasure, despite all obstruction on the way. In determination, we proceed. In opposition, we stop for whatsoever duration is required to clear the way. Like the Nile's current, the strength of our aspiration cannot be impeded.

As we proceed, a series of dreams comes upon us, dreams of a mounting flow of water. First, we dream of a spring high up on a mountain. The water that emerges shimmers with uncommon clarity. Next, we dream of a tiny freshet trickling downhill. This is followed by a stream bubbling over stones, then a larger stream, then a small river with a deep bed. These dreams of water building to ever greater force continue to mount as we draw closer to the Nile.

One night, I fall asleep with my legs aching from our long journey. And I dream that night of the Spirit of Myrrh, who speaks in liquid tones. *I am here to heal your joints, sweet and penetrating is my balm.* Another night, I am immersed in a mysterious dream, a dream that causes me to wonder if I have entered a Spirit realm. I find myself in a dwelling composed of strange materials and adorned with an uncommon array of furnishings, even staring in awe through a crystalline veil that fills a window opening. The veil prevents cold and heat from passing to and fro, but is so clear as to render everything on the other side visible in such a way that one would swear an oath that there must surely be nothing across the opening.

As I gaze through this window, I look upon chariots moving of their own accord, chariots, shiny, godly, and brightly colored, not drawn by an animal, but seeming to roll forward by the will of the charioteer.

Many heartbeats later, as I turn to behold the inside of the dwelling, I see a man seated in a quiet state of sadness. There is also a woman nearby, who appears to be his wife. But such little bliss there seems between them, a sadly adjoined pair, two falcons bound before open regions, a sky unused. Then, with the dream coming to an end, a great weight presses upon me.

Shallah is surprised when I awake weeping. I share my lament with her that one eye weeps despair for a dream-man who does not know love, while the other eye weeps a tear of joy and thankfulness that I have her by my side, that it is for me to experience the sweetest pathway of passion.

Shallah, with her uncaged wisdom, beholds the dream as an auspicious event, fitting as we draw now so near the Nile. “Besides,” she adds, winking, “the mate of your soul is not to be taken lightly, is she?”

For she is as a bright star rising in a pre-dawn heaven. She has enriched my fate far beyond silk and diamond, and the river of our love overflows to compassion for all, as a seal that consummates our hearts. The perfume of riverside flowers emanates from her gaze. If I could but learn to love as well as she. And that it may come to pass for all to know that two hearts can rise in cadence with each other!

In the perfume of your exhalation I find my very sustenance, like a luxurious garden, the pomegranate fruitful through all love’s seasons, the sycamore swaying, the fig tree whispering, the honeybee mining nectar of all profusion.

Wind, how does it come to be that you whisper her name? Dove, how sing you her praise all day?

The lush setting of the Nile valley spreads before us. The bull of fervor will not stay its horn. Here, by the edge of the plateau, we survey the valley, and we are filled with joy and amazement. A long-sought moment has come at last. Much travail and austerity lies behind us. Here is water, shade, prosperity, food, a place of bounding harmony. Here we find an acacia rooted in our aspiration, in ground of mystery, by the verge of an oasis of light. Though this ground we walk upon stretches low, close even to seawater, this is a setting much proclaimed as the highest of all lands. Back from fertile field and garden by the river, the trees throng in endless numbers. Never before have I met such abundant life of bird, with little songs at every turn, and bright colors flashing on wing. Here is the sweet pomegranate and the succulent grape. The piercing cry of a falcon cuts from above. Along the river live herons, spoonbills, waterfowl, plovers, pelicans, cormorants and, above all, rose-colored flamingoes by the thousands, all lit with wings of flame.

In the river, also, a flock of ibises feeds quietly among a group of hippopotami. The pyramids, framed by palms, standing stark and ominous, the way they rise above all, as though poised and expecting, add to our feeling that something of great importance is due to unfold.

Deep within the pyramid, Seran has been lying for three days, bordering between life and death. And although she appears lifeless, she is ascending to glory. The eyelids of Seran are painted green with powder of malachite. Her hair, even after three days and nights, still emanates a scent of fresh lotus. The floor of the chamber is composed of polished lapis, the walls inlaid with turquoise. A few pomegranates, still fresh, lie upon a short table, and sweet incense of musk pervades the silence.

Seran has journeyed for three days beyond death's door into the kingdom of spirit. The time is at hand to return with spirit wisdom to pass on to her apprentices but, more than this, she will return in time to join the growing multitude now converging outside the pyramid.

Shallah and I raise our tent on the edge of a small grove of date palms. With the setting sun casting long shadows, we, along with several hundred-fold other seekers, are prepared to witness what shall come to pass.

In silence we sit, and the night slowly deepens. No sooner has the sky darkened to a deep indigo and the power of the owl has taken wing, when a light above the nearest pyramid begins to glow. At first, seeming as a bright star, a murmur of awe ripples through the gathered ones as it grows to the breadth of the sun. The huge globe hovers, basking us in a flood of love, healing, and wisdom. During these sacred moments, as I discover later, within the heart of each witness unfolds their own procession of image and guidance.

Some witness Horus, father of Osiris, kneeling in tribute, others see the throne of Isis crumbling. As for me, I am over-welcomed by love and compassion, and there follows a vision of a holy man - a man who can hover at will, and with such disarming countenance, purity and compassion, that I wonder if it can come to pass for such a one to even alight upon the Earth.

During the moments of beholding this godly being, I ponder the pyramids, how these lustrous, newly-built temples throwing sharp purple shadows have such formidable bearing. As though an architecture of spirit forces. And how our pyramid soul, composed of all manner and kind so grand and vast in quantity, is akin to this surpassing monument to death, because death is so worthy an opponent, so worthy a passage, of initiation through a doorway to limitless power.

And how what once was so well known becomes, over time, a great secret. How the secret the caterpillar conceals when it builds the pyramid of its cocoon,

the shroud of its death, becomes a key that opens the gate of life itself. Were all men and women upon the Earth to grow dumb to humanity's immortality, to its inheritance of godhood, they could gaze upon the pyramids. And wonder again.

In a few moments, it is over, and the darkness of night folds us again into its quiet heart.

From that moment onward, however, our destiny has come to turn in a new direction. For we hold now within us a sacred imprint upon the papyrus of our souls: we have been joined with the circumstance of an unutterable manifestation. In the end, I am left wondering if the event foretells the arrival of the God of gods upon the very ground where now walk the men and women of Earth.

[commentary](#)

15 The Time of Wakan

[commentary](#)

a. *Sun Logos*

Within the yellow teepee of the Sun there dwells a Being, a Being equally at home in immense radiance and in the Void, which is the womb of that radiance. And the Being is the Light. And the Light is also the Song - the Song that turns death on its axis and opens a portal for life to stream through.

The Light is the Life that blesses Earth, and yet is not comprehended by dwellers-of-Earth who, living in darkness, cannot comprehend its nature.

The Being who is Light sees the Earth proceeding along a path through a dense thicket, a trail through wilderness that leads to hardship wherein the grass of the prairie grows brittle, the flesh of animal turns to sinew, the songbird loses its sweetness, where the poplar bends under its own weight, and the power of the hawk is diminished. And the Being knows the time is at hand to intercede, to penetrate the soul of Earth with Light, that it may ascend from darkness.

And the Being takes the form of a great thunderbird and sets out from the Sun-lodge. And the Light streams across the void toward Earth.

Kiowa can sense change in the air. The sky, the rocks, the trees, everything is shifting its song. Over the past year, powerful visions have come to her: a bright

star shining above a radiant teepee; animals changing form; sleeping spirits emerging from landscapes; an eagle of light who descends upon her people, changing into a man who shines with the countenance of many stars. As a shaman, it is common for Kiowa to have visions, but these experiences have become overwhelming. There is a mystery in all this, a holiness she cannot fathom.

When Kiowa was becoming a woman, she had to spend time alone in the mountains. Though she would be gone for more than a moon's passage, she could carry only that which she would need for a day or two. To find her power, to find the worth of becoming a medicine-bearer, she had to go alone into the wildlands of the west where death's teepee perches on the rim of the world's circle.

The fears attacked one after another. The first to assail was the terror of separation from her people. Then came the gnaw of vulnerability from being alone on the open land with no defense. Fear of survival followed, fear of hunger, exposure, of what ranges in the darkness, of hidden threats that lurk in the unknown.

Within a moon's passage, she thought she had reached the bottom of her fear. Up until then, every time she met a fear squarely, her power grew. But then came a threat in the form of a supernatural being, a foe she could overcome only by reaching beyond the limit of her power.

And it came to pass that by virtue of determination and the medicine of her soul, and by aid of the thunderbird in her vision, her supernatural opponent was vanquished. In so doing, she gained access to a power centered in the western mountains of her soul, a place where the river of her heart makes its source. And from this day on, Kiowa could use her power directly. She was prepared to walk her shamanic path.

With the passing of this initiation, feathers came to Kiowa, one by one. The blue and white shaft of the kingfisher helped her to harvest what she needed from the pool of spirit. The black and white feather of the woodpecker counseled her to penetrate beyond appearances of people, of their conditions. The pinion of the golden-brown owl came to her in a middle-of-night vision, a way of seeing that carried light to pierce the darkness, and a way of sharing its power to travel far in tireless, silent rhythm, its way of keeping sacred the still of night. Also, the pure white shaft of the swan bore her into the mystery of the deep south, that she might return with the mythic power that resides in the sun's winter home.

And her power grew, feather by feather, until her wings could bear her to any realm of her choosing.

Toward a river called Jordan there passes a man in his thirtieth year. And he walks in a state of holy enchantment, yet sure of his passage.

Many lives has he lived upon Earth, often times overcoming limitations. He has been a common man and he has been a warrior, and he has also been a prophet. And through his sojourns he has attained the soulhood of a pure and fervent character.

As this servant of the Creator comes to Jordan, he meets a holy man upon the bank of the river. Holiness is of wholeness, one who can leave the hearth of community to fashion his own hearth, yet remain one in heart with all, to serve all.

And in that moment, on the other side of Earth, stands the holy shaman, Kiowa, on the bank of another sacred river. And she looks through the doorway of her heart and sees the Event unfolding in the far land, by the distant river called Jordan.

And the Light, on the wing of thunderbird, streams across the void until, coming down upon the Earth, it shifts into a bright spirit-dove that descends upon the man from Nazareth who, receiving blessing of water power from the holy shaman of Jordan, is filled with light.

Thus comes “Wakan,” the Walking Light, or Kry-sta the Logos, a servant of Love bearing seed of a new power.

Kiowa prays for knowledge as she journeys with hawk spirit to a place where her vision has beckoned her. She wants to know the meaning of the Event she has witnessed. And she wants to know if it holds answers for the people of her land, who have begun to stray from the sacred way.

While most of her people continue to travel upon a wholesome path, increasing numbers have been stumbling into black magic, sorcery for personal gain, and associations with wayward spirits intent on rendering the souls of the people unto darkness.

Even those who adhere to the sacred way are beginning to waver, to drink of stagnant water, because they are reluctant to learn from the new teachings that their shamans bear for them. And so it is that Kiowa suffers from a soul-deep emptiness, that she endures the loneliness that afflicts those who have much to offer but few to give to.

Kiowa is learning to redirect her suffering into uncommon love, a force of love that proceeds like a flowing stream. She can be in the midst of her people and, without speaking or acting, in her own small way, bear healing to those who are receptive to the streaming.

And this streaming she now bears with her to the place her dream has drawn her to. Approaching a pine grove at the base of a sacred mountain, she finds others there, already gathered. In their midst burns a fire and they welcome her into their circle.

In the circle are six holy shamans from other nations: a woman from the Hopi, a man from the Sioux, a man from the Cree, one from the Mohawk Nation, a woman from the Seminoles, and another from the Cherokee.

“We have been awaiting your arrival, you are the last one needed to finish the shape of our circle,” says her brother from the land of Sioux. “We are here for the One who has been prophesied by our elders. We are here, waiting for Wakan.”

For a time they sit, praying and quietly singing in the cathedral of pines at the base of the mountain. And then they see, out of a smoky haze in the distance, two figures drawing toward them, slowly making their way over the rocky ground. The seven shamans know that it is the Walking Light who approaches, and that he is accompanied by White Buffalo Calf Woman, and while they give thanks, each in his or her heart, for the honor of the moment, they are also afraid to be in the presence of such power, knowing that only the pure of heart can look safely upon so much holiness.

And as the sacred ones draw near, the shamans see through the eye of Spirit that they shine with a radiance, and walk as though floating, with feet scarcely touching the Earth.

“We give thanks for your coming, sacred ones. We know that we are on holy ground and humbly offer our hearts in an open fashion to you - for we can see that you are Buffalo Woman and Wakan.”

And White Buffalo Calf Woman turns and leaves the way she came, having delivered Wakan over to the people, that they may know that she and he are of one purpose. And Wakan stands and silently embraces them in his heart, quietly folding them into the steady stream of his love.

“As you walk, do you not touch the Earth?” they ask.

“I am of the Earth,” answers Wakan. “Just as I and the Father are one, so I and the Mother are one, also. The bluebird descends, bearing a portion of sky to earth in the blue of its feather, and in its breath heralds the rising sun. Fortunate

are those who lift their eyes to the sky and, like the bluebird, grow careful as to the manner of lodge they shall dwell in.”

And they ask him where he lives and who is his father. And he answers, “I am of the Father, the Sun is my lodge, and I am of Mother Earth, and in time to come even more so, and now yet as a man walking among you. The time has come to set snare for fish, for sustenance is to be had from the waters of spirit. The time has come, also, for you to see with the eyes of the antelope, which are like flowers that blossom in the spirit world, and to know, also, the power and swiftness that bears thunder and rain-bearing life from the heavens.

By day, which is your night, I walk in a land far across the great waters of the east. By night, which is your day, I sleep and travel in the form of a mighty eagle to this land which has its day.”

And they ask him what more he has come to teach. And he answers, “I am here so that you shall say, from yourself, ‘I AM’ - which is to say, I AM one with the Creator, yet one unto myself.

Those of you who say that you are one with your ancestors come to know some of your power, but it is veiled in its shining and thus you walk in shadow. But those who live I AM from the depth of Creation will know light and love, power and freedom over earthly darkness. Against the darkness that enslaves and dims all vision, I have come. For I am here to proclaim liberty to the captive, vision to the blind, and to set free the oppressed.”

Then, taking up a handful of red willow bark, Waken holds it in his hands while praying, and in a moment the people see that he has changed the willow into sacred tobacco, and the people marvel at this wonder taking place before their eyes.

“A healthy plant does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad plant bear healthy fruit. Every plant is known for the fruit it bears; you pick not berries from the grasses. Whatsoever heart has ripened comes to bear fruit.

The I AM from which I speak, and ask you also to know, stands unto itself, yet is also of oneness with all of nature, all of creation, all your relations. You and the Father-Mother are one.”

And the seven take what Wakan has said into their hearts and ponder its medicine.

b. *Wakan Visits the Great Plains, the Sage Desert, the Tula, and the Oak Forest.*

High above a summer meadow, broad dark wings braced in a bright sky hold aloft a mighty spirit of far-seeing, and my heart turns and banks in the same sky, cresting with its midday light, and riding the wind of a shifting course that buffets and twists against tireless sinew. Long soars eagle power, mounting its way through a bright spirit-lodge.

Down below, butterflies skitter vibrantly over the meadow, painting color across the sameness that green presents. The sun that shines upon our faces shines in the same manner upon the flowers of the prairie. Now we open our petals, now we beam back to the mighty father light. The power that rises in our dancing is the same as that which dwells in the breeding-ground of thunder. And the falling of our steps invites the spirit of life-giving to caress the surface of the Earth.

Like stars in the heavens, vast herds of buffalo cover the plains, and our prayers, as they rise upon the smoke of sweetgrass, converge with the endless multitude of pigeons aloft in the dawning sky. The songs of rivers and streams wend their way into a sacred lodge where the hearts of our people have their meeting place. The thriving summer grasses across the prairie carry a message from the Great Spirit that affirms our prosperity down through time - that no matter what changes come upon us, in the end we will prevail.

There are victories of lives lived in harmony with the animals, trees, waters, and plants, and the triumph of this harmony shall endure and ride in the winds across the plains, and sing in the heights at night with the stars.

In the land of the Great Plains, the people emerge from a lodge at the end of a purifying ceremony, to feast and celebrate the joy of renewal and the growing light of a new day that is arriving across the tall-grass prairie. Now, after the ceremony in which the bison of their fortitude has been affirmed, a flock of goldfinches passes by, and they comprehend the black of wing and tail of the birds as an oratory of the mystery of where they have come from, and where they will go next. And a moment of stillness prevails, followed by a single dove passing softly, singing of peace, of comfort.

As they turn in the direction the dove came from they see a man in the distance, wading the green prairie, making his way toward them. And they know it to be Wakan, the Walking Light, and they marvel at what they see.

Beside Wakan strides a wolf, and on his shoulder rides a small red squirrel. Behind him follows a deer and above him flies a hawk.

And the people of the Plains address him as he draws near. “We see that you are Wakan and we see also that you know well the language of living things, of all our relations.”

And Wakan answers, “Within your lodge of purification you pray for the well-being of all our relations. So also, within the lodge of my heart, which also is the heart of the Earth, our Mother, I find communion with her many beings.

Blessed are you as a people, for you know in your hearts that all your relations dwell upon the prairie within you. You know the fleetness of deer, the keen vision of hawk, the strength of wolf, and the steadfastness of the trees, that all those beings of the Earth.

As you continue to give thanks for the sustenance of both this world and the world of Spirit, you overcome the needs of this world.”

Wakan then joins with the people of the prairie in giving thanks for abundance and sits with them to share the morning meal, and both the buttercup of cheer and the bluebell of constancy thrive in their hearts. And when they are finished they ask Wakan to share his teaching with them. And Wakan speaks this way:

“Like this land that spreads itself so openly in full sight of the Creator’s eye, the people of the prairie are blessed with an open heart. It is well that you have a way of sharing ceremony with neighboring peoples. For there are those who walk the Earth who hold their own people in a higher place than others. Behold the heart of the dying willow, growing rigid, whose root of questing is cut off.”

And the people sit with Wakan and share with him the teachings of the Earth and Sun and give thanks for the powers that proceed from many relations - the speed of antelope, the penetrating vision of hawk, the proliferation of prairie grass, the music of songbird, the strength of bear, the industry of badger, the patience of turtle, and much more.

It comes to pass that the seven shamans join with Wakan as he walks the land, and they journey with him wherever he goes, and grow rich in understanding. In time,

the power of the Great Spirit fills each of them and a common observer cannot determine which one is the greater shining of Light. Because Wakan shares it freely with them all, it is as though they each speak with much wisdom. Where they go, those who practice black magic can no longer use such power. Where they go, they bring forth healing and the power of Love in abundance.

In time, they come into the land of sage, and celebrate the desert and its many beings. The hawk, the cougar, the pinion, the wisdom that derives from the red earth, even the salt weep of the dry land, and the way of sagebrush, yucca, and creosote. And the sparkling hummingbird, who flashes forth on wings untiring, conveyor of rain, and of secret things from distant realms. And they celebrate the cunning of the hedgehog cactus, and the way of the lizard and chipmunk, and the sage grouse and turkey, and all the beings who have mastered a way of living in this land of austerity.

And the people of the sage ask Wakan to speak to them. And this is what Wakan says: "As a seed that offers itself to a dove to escape confinement, you know the heavens are sacred and are tempted to depart from this life. But I am here to stand against such waywardness. You are called on to keep sacred your walk upon the land, as you return, again and again, so that you may overcome this world and grow into a new way of being. And this is to be won through oneness with the Earth.

Many who dwell across the great waters no longer find the sacredness within their being.

And you shall be their medicine.

And there are those who walk the Earth, not looking outward upon the world, striving to live only within themselves. And they pass by one another, each heart dwelling in its own lodge. Further, though they drive the darkness from their door, they drive it straight into their neighbor's lodge.

And you shall be their medicine, also.

Like the antelope upon the desert, with horns thrust to the sky, and hooves planted upon the Earth, the lower shall balance the upper, and the outer world shall give over to the lodge within. Each in its season, the serpent shall hibernate within the earth, then range upon it."

And Wakan finishes what he has to say and goes with the seven shamans into a Kiva to partake with the people of their sacred ceremony.

It comes to pass that Wakan's travels bring him far to the south, to a great jungle where dwell the people of the Sun. Here, he encounters and befriends the spirit of the jaguar, with its quiet fervor and secret power. And Wakan adds this spirit to his sacred manner.

Wherever he goes, he intercedes in strife, and discourages the ways of war, of human sacrifice, sorcery, and the darkness that preys upon the people.

And he comes to Tula, the world's most beautiful city. Wondrous canals lace the city, gardens bloom at every turn - there are trees, lush greenery, flowers, orchards, and much beauty.

The people of Tula grow amaranth and large ears of corn, and trade in cotton, jewelry, turquoise, silver, gold, copper, and bronze. Prosperity and creative enterprise proceed, and the people are arrayed in garments of bright color and striking embroidery.

And the people marvel at Wakan's way and listen to his teaching. And this is Wakan's foremost message to the people of Tula:

"Great is your nation, but it shall fall with a coming invasion. And that nation which takes its place shall fall, in turn, just as all empires of man in this world must come to an end.

But do not be troubled. Just as the rain penetrates the jungle, your blood shall live on, even in theirs, and they in you. And all nations of Earth will intermingle, and return again in guise of each other.

A time will come when you shall know that all people are as one, united under one sky, standing upon one Earth. Although many empires shall fall, the way of reverence for the Earth shall rise. But for now, all this splendor cannot stand, for even as the ways of evil prey upon abundance, it has come to hold you enchanted in its grasp. This city must fall, for it is for you to overcome what takes holds, just as the ground under a thriving tree becomes a new, risen part of the Earth."

The full moon hangs above, blazing a thousand silver butterflies across the surface of the great inland sea. Ashore, the call of a wildcat sounds from out of the dark forest, and an owl responds from a ridge top, calling out its question that asks who is ranging across its reserve. Caught between these hungry voices, a tiny mouse rustles its way through the scattered leaves upon the floor of the forest.

Then the silence of night returns and, like a sea pregnant with invitation, the gentle night is touched only by a soft lapping upon the sands of the shore of reverie. And this womb of comfort holds sway until moonset and a faint glow on the horizon that heralds the coming of day. As the sun slowly builds the day's lodge of golden timbers, avian spirits begin to stir from fir bough shelters - chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers - creatures of wing and air.

With the rising light, colors emerge from the land, at first pale and muted, a brassy gleam, a gentle green, dull yellow, deep russet. Then, as the light waxes, it unveils brighter hues, flames of orange, bursts of scarlet, counterpoints of green fire, and behind it all the remote void of the sky's deep blue. Now geese, called by the south's primeval mystery, loft over at a great height. Squirrels rustle through the forest floor and, in the shallows of the lake, fish congregate as they respond to the call of spawning.

With the advance of morning, a multitude of waves builds to a pitch and heave over the freshwater sea, sparkling, surging, over which seagulls wheel, and under which perch flash in bright robes of green and gold. By a stream, a meadowlark stations itself upon a fallen tree. As its joyous notes stream forth, other songsters begin to chime from all directions until the chorus rises to a celebration that blesses the whole community of Earth-dwellers.

Now the sleek form of a weasel twists and turns as it crosses the ground, sensing, interpreting, devising, energetically slipping like a puff of smoke past all obstruction.

Now the weasel shifts its form to that of a wolverine, with power and strength rippling in compact muscles. A willful and fiery temper fomented, along with a boldness that knows no bound.

And, by heat of afternoon, the wolverine shifts to the form of a gray jay, a being who uses feathers of other birds to improve its lot.

Then, even as the sun draws near to setting, in one last shifting, the jay transforms into a great swan who, soaring at a sacred height through the veils of the gods and transporting the mood of seasonality upon its bright wings, lofts over the spent autumn light toward the sanguine kingdom of the south.

It is the third year of Wakan's sojourn upon the Earth and, like an eagle in the heights, power of Spirit has risen to its utmost. And he arrives in the land where the oak forest grows by the great inland sea, accompanied by Corn Mother, and

Blue Jay Chief. Corn Mother bears a sacred cob to the chief of the people of the oak forest, a cob that replenishes itself each time its milky seed is consumed. And the Chief of Blue Jays brings a hop-dancing ceremony to celebrate boldness in the face of hardship. And Wakan lives for a time among the people of the oak forest.

And the people sing together with Wakan, about the meek and graceful birch tree that grows upon stony ground and gives forth a shower of life. And the chickadee that dances in the branching of their joy, whose tireless cheer endures the harshest winter, how the chickadee spirit can hang troubles upside down, leave them swaying in the winds of resolve.

And the people sing about the cardinal, who lives sweetly in the quiet lodge of heart. And they account for the power of the redwing blackbird, who teaches them to retrieve hidden secrets, and of the squirrel, who plants acorns and seeds in the wilds of their pondering, cultivator of a new forest of thought. And of the tiny kinglet's voice of power, and way of binding its mossy nest with strands of cobweb. And the ceremony carries on, day by day, of the countless relations of the land.

One day, Wakan begins to speak of the future, and he has this to say:

“Just as the caterpillar retreats into its shroud, I will not much longer be with you in the form in which you know me. I will soon be done with what I have come for. It is well that I have arrived at this time, for the night of the Earth has been nigh upon it, and if I had not come while the day of Spirit still shone, the hour would have grown too late.

As you continue to treat your relations with reverence, so shall you keep me in your midst, even after I pass through the veils of the Earth. As you are one with the Earth Mother, so you are one with me.

Those who dwell across the great water will take my teachings and subvert them, twisting them until the way cannot be made straight. Many who will proclaim themselves to be the ones who live by my Way will, in truth, be living against the spirit of my teaching.

The river of time will stream on, and it will come to pass that a people of pale countenance will descend upon you from across the great water, and they will strive against your lives of harmony. And many will proceed falsely in my name.

Time will pass, and they will bring all the land to destruction, but your ways will stand as a medicine, for the way of the red man will light the darkness like a shower of meteors. Even many of your pale brothers and sisters will come to

celebrate the red man's return - for they will be red ones reborn, and will seek in eagerness a reunion with the path of the red spirit."

And Wakan stays and dwells with the peaceful people of the oak forest until the end of his time draws near.

c. *Gaia Ascension: the final chapter of the Walking Light*

Now Kiowa ponders the way of life on Earth. How times come, she reasons, when we are well to fly by the straight wings of the raven. Then a new day dawns and we are better to soar upon the bent wings of the seagull. And again, in another wind it is wise to use the broad wings of the eagle, or the rapid wings of the hummingbird, or even the silent wings of the owl, that each wind bears the right sail of feathers, to each morning the right song.

And the water of spirit streams in my heart and cascades through my dreaming, opens my vista and sets me to wondering. What wisdom seeps now from the spring, and what hides behind the mooneyes of the owl? What trickles down the precipice of resolve, and what hides within the cry of the hawk? Or the shadow-eyes of the bat? Or the long-drawn howl of the wolf?

All things carry their own magic, from the blood-flight of the mosquito to the seed-scurry of the mouse. From the fish-plunge of the loon to the color-flight of the butterfly. While the dog of servitude has emerged from the wild to join us, the wolf of endless freedom will never descend to such a life any more than thunder can rise from morning mist.

Now, when I travel in my dreambody, I can accomplish many things. I can discover where the deer are gathered in mid-winter when starvation stalks. I can talk to the animals and hear what they are saying. I can uncover what is needed to bring healing for an ailment. I can appease the spirit of the bear to ensure passage overland free from danger. I can seek counsel from spirit elders on matters in which there is a need for guidance.

Now, adorned in corn husks, shaking a turtle rattle, inviting spirit into the longhouse of my heart, I pray that in this world, where it is easy to feel powerless, that the mighty strength that lives in the land of spirit will come here to roost. Let us shape the Earth, but gently, the way the beaver does, bringing life more abundant to all our neighbors.

Now the magic of a tree is understood, in a small way of knowing. A tree teaches how to bring the earth to the sky, and the sky to the earth. What manner of balance resides in a tree? See how the leaf is thin, modeled after the barrier between this world and the spiritland. And how the leaf catches sky and sun to bear them to earth, and earth and sky meet in fruit and nut, and the union of sky and earth creates a seed from the tree, how that tiny seed ensouls a great being standing tall, rendering cooking fuel, a nesting place for the birds, and cooling shade when the sun grows hot.

Upon the Great Plains belonging to the spirit of the buffalo, the seven shamans are gathered to listen to the last talk of the Walking Light.

“I speak to you for the last time in this manner for, like the geese in autumn, I must leave you. I will return, not again as you know me now, but in spirit form. Those who have eyes shall see me. I will appear in their midst.

Love your enemies. If you war upon others, you are striving against yourself. They are of you, and you are of them. Give thanks for those who vex you, for they are a sweat lodge of opportunity to overcome limitation, so that your soul, like the flowering vine may bear its fruit in season.

Blessed are your ways, for you treat possessions as that which belong to all your people, and go over the Earth as a holy place that lives beyond ownership.

You know the spirit of the mosquito. It is here to remind you that you cannot find the peace you seek in this world, but must overcome the world. In that way, also, is much of the illness that besets you. Overcome, then, the limitations of the world. Believe in all manner of miracle, for you live in the midst of nothing but miracles.

Like the eagle, your vision pierces a veil of falseness and you are able to journey into many realms. Continue in this way, which renders joy to my heart.

In a time to come, the Earth, which I will imbue with my Spirit, will be attacked by powers from all sides. The land, water and air shall be made poisonous. The common lot shall not revere life. Dust and smoke shall blind the

seeing of the people and an illusion of substance shall overcome the multitude. There shall be much strife of one against another.

And you of the red race shall carry the balm of a flowering spring to end the killing winter. For you shall hold sacred the Spirit of the Earth, which also is my Spirit.

The soul and spirit of Gaia is Wakan. For I am of the Father, the Sun is my house, and I am also of the Earth Mother, here to walk among you. You eat of my body when you make a meal of corn or pine nut or berry - all things produced by the Mother Spirit.

Soon it will be that I shall no longer walk among you, but I will be with you, living in the Earth, and shall speak to you through the voice of the Mother. I shall exalt the Earth and raise her out of the falling of substance. For I have told you that if not for the coming of the Walking Light, you would have descended into endless winter death, and I say again: I can work by day, but night comes and none can work by night.

Oneness with the Mother shall carry you forward, for the I AM will dwell within the Earth, in the way that wings of a butterfly give themselves to the caterpillar. Through this you become free and will one day come to join me.”

Having said these things, Wakan stands still for a moment, silently embracing the seven shamans in his aura of love, then turns and, walking eastward, fades into the darkening twilight.

Three days later, Kiowa sits upon the hill where Wakan last spoke and watches a powerful mystery unfold through the portal of her heart.

Upon a hill, far across the great water, she watches a man suspended on a sundance pole, as he hangs there in his last dying moments. She watches as, from a wound in his sacred body - for she knows that this is Wakan, the Master of Love - there falls to Earth the blood of a most sacred manner.

And Kiowa watches as the first drops strike the Earth under the sundance pole. And in that moment the sun grows dark, the Earth quakes, and great winds begin to arise. Even where Kiowa sits there comes to pass a dimming of sky and a rushing of wind.

Swept by this wind, Kiowa finds herself high over the Earth, in the body of a great eagle. And she rises to a great height where she can see now the whole of

Earth. And though she has been here before, this time she is witness to something that has never before come to pass.

As she watches, the cloak of the Earth shifts and streams, and becomes cloaked in a shining field of light. She is overwhelmed as the power of the event unfolds. Words of the Walking Light come back to her as she soars in the dizzy heights of Eagle Spirit: “The soul and spirit of Gaia is Wakan. . . I am also of the Earth Mother.”

16 **Mediterrana**

Wilted petals are strewn beneath an empty vase resting upon the sill of a dusking window. And the oracle wanders abandoned by the shore of the soul's surging sea.

When the sundial of tradition has expired, its line of shadow dissipated by a sunless sky, when the breath of custom falls in repeated sighs, and the lute of the heart plays a yearning tone, passion tacks across a widespread span, its sail driven by wind of a distant horizon.

Stranded, bereft, while a faint wash plays against the shore of discernment, each wave becomes a dilution sliding back upon the sands of conjecture. And while the ear cups no melody of canary or parakeet, despite all volition of sweetness, and the soul's fortress is moated by reason, spring cannot sound its cadence in the heart of the kingdom.

Here, at the turning point of time, the glory of sunset, and all the magic destined to grace the quest of this Mediterranean sojourn awaits the redemption of the poet's quill.

Out from the shore of spirit's pearl-forming sea, birthplace of Aphrodite, past the weave of wave rolling, a stingray, winged glider forever looking skyward, plies its trade. And the anchovy, amassed in a silver and green school, encounter the round-backed bream and the exotic dragonet splashed with blue and yellow paint, wild sails for fins. Closer in, where rolls the jellyfish, there thrives in the same salt bath the jelly of our eye. And growing from medusa stage, a polyp bearing a serpent bouquet, there pulses now with an undulating membrane of pink and violet, a living veil of tentacles, hypnotic and translucent.

As dancing green flame, seaweed fans burst with light, and closer still, upon the encrusted resolve of willfulness, a barnacle colony thrives, radiating razor point

vehemence. Here also, the chiton armors its pliancy with plates of resolve, and further asea, the queen scallop sculpts a sunset, frozen rays mounting as a fan of resurrection. And a little further out, a sea urchin lies in stillness, spiny purple warder in a field of green-stalked urchins. And further out still, the five rays of the starfish splay nakedly radiant, an Arcturus presence glinting bronzely from night-deep waters. Then, where the water grows deeper yet, out past the marbled crab spidering its way across the floor of subconscious impulse, a lobster swimming backward brandishes its skeleton on the outside, in counterpoint to us, who harbor the steel of our bones like an interior armor.

Artemi, sleeping sweetly in reverie's gateway, is transported by a musical passage within her dream, the sound of a lyre drawing her toward a quiet place, inviting her to sit at the base of a tree well-rooted.

Now the stage is set - with Helios bronzing all sky of intention, mythologic events can become actualized. Prior to this, wandering, although immersed in the self, one was unconscious of the self's bearing. Now the human soul becomes like an equine vessel concealing a compendium of beings within its Trojan interior.

And a vision, as she sits rooted by the guardian tree, unfolds within Artemi's dream, and within this vision she finds herself lying by another tree sleeping, and within the depths of this sleep a dream is proceeding. Thus, Artemi dreams within sleep within a vision within a meditation that takes place within a dream. And, at the heart of this five-fold level, the following experience proceeds:

In a sagacious setting, by the perimeter of a grove of olive trees beneath which a goat herd grazes, she trains her gaze upon the place where a watery expanse meets both land and sky. And at this beachhead of three elements an initiation takes place.

Out of her sky of mind, a child descends, germinated by newly awakened faculties. And the child is imbued, as a clear-voiced herald, with bright yellow mental agility.

The child, refusing the honeyed fruit of lotus, is nurtured by other fare, given concepts as toys, and a shelter to shield it from the threat of saturation, the flood of spirit. Thus the child, protected from the danger of submerging with the unbounded expanse, will be able to mature with autonomy.

The child is restless, seeks contentment. The chariot of curiosity drives forth. The child queries where it came from and wants to know the meaning of its

own viewpoint and other viewpoints, too. Somehow it knows that seeds have been planted that are coming now to fruition.

like a sea-washed island, it stands alone in some way. An aftertaste of separation lingers. *The Creator thought me into existence, and I continue as a train of thought. Within the womb of Artemi's mind I am a living, breathing, idea-being. The universe consists of Beings in different states of consciousness.*

At first the Muses, instigators of intellect, inspirational reflection, and articulation, work closely with the child. They initiate progressive cognitive functions. Their shuttle of discernment, weaving away at the great day-loom, unraveling by night, shows how things and ideas of the world can be penetrated, then analyzed, reduced to a series of pieces, a fragmenting of the whole. An olive tree starts as a seed that sprouts. The sprouting takes root, draws sustenance from above and below the earth, grows a stalk, undergoes progressive phases to separate itself from its mother, the Earth, and its father, the sun. It extends itself into a distinction. It then produces seed cases wrapped in flesh of olive, which animals, birds, and man are induced to consume, transporting seed to new locations, to start again the cycle of an olive tree. Each activity can be analyzed further, the function and nature of every part - the roots, the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the fruit - can be penetrated more deeply.

But there are others, besides Artemi, who are experiencing this process. The analyzing, the penetrating, proceeds not on an individual basis, but on a group level. Like a hive of bees, they attack the nectar of blossoming intellect. Compelling art forms arise. Sculpture is brought to a surpassing level of refinement by penetrating the human form. But there it is not a single artist who is creating the masterpiece, rather, a process in common agreement among a group of artists striving to perfect the form. An agreed upon code arises, all sculptures are imbued with exquisite quality, and living etheric beauty comes into being. But the works, though sculpted by individual artists, are creations of the same group will.

For a time, the muses continue to inspire the children of intellect, who gradually begin to mature. But as the children mature, the muses begin to shift their involvement. They are in place to set intellect in motion, but then withdraw to permit the individuals to carry on for themselves.

The children, now adolescent, feel abandoned, discarded, have to resort to self-dependence, have to become resourceful. While gods dwell in Olympus, the adolescents have to prepare themselves for a great undertaking upon the earth

plane. They are compelled to prepare whatever will be needed to launch the ship of rationality upon a great odyssey.

Passing through an arch over-blooming with roses, we enter a realm soft, mild, fragrant. Here is milky blue, quiet rust, and the silver-gray of olive. But what predominates are swaths of still green that counter the blaze of white, a radiance which we cannot look upon, must turn away from.

Sleep-inducing oleander provides escape from the day-to-day world, and an almond tree persists, unperturbed, even in the face of cataclysm. Lavender thrives best on barren, rocky ground. And Cypress, darkly verdant in its sleeping green, stands upright, a finely arrayed complement to the ruby-loaded pomegranate.

Spear-tip leaves, sharply-outlined foliage of cognition, penetrate a sun-washed atmosphere. Dragonfly notion, a feather-winged logic, consumes wayward moths of intuition, little winged fantasies doomed to expire in the candle flame of the mind. Waters of avid emotion slake the roots of fig tree aspiration, rendering the hard green fruit to luscious pulp with its ripening force. Offshore, scales of spirit-fish glint in pure waters, as schools of meandering intention feed on land-born insectine sustenance, and a flock of shorebirds banks and glides in unison, one-mind intent on directing a hundred wings.

Grapes ripening in a warming sun. Olives bearing oil, a gift to nourish and heal. Barley harvesting itself, wine heating passion, the seahorse riding a deepening tide, with its calcic mane and hoofless cast, and grazing in the shallows among the fields of eelgrass.

Black stars stare out of a sun-washed face. Chaos, the primeval energy from which the intellect is birthed, causes wild-seed thoughts to scatter. Untamed horses, wind-rampant and lightning-eyed, range un-coralled by any shepherd intention.

Frail creatures emerge from the formless. There are faltering steps and unanswered questionings. Why? Who? How? Questions caught between the Scylla of intuition and the Charybdis of logic. Slowly grows the light of perception through self-reflection, and in a widening orb of existentialism.

And the dance of mind deepens.

Analytic quests bloom in the garden of conception. The will lends itself to conjecture. There are rationally constructed mindscapes and cities of logicus with

conceptual basements and frameworks of theory, rooflines of the upper limit of consciousness.

Sunrays glint and sear. Poetry runs rampant, a wild thing released from bondage. It ransacks the house of mind and makes off with the heart's daughter. It wanders and cavorts and lives by its wits and collects no possessions. It bridges the old with the new, defying Cyclopean might, immune to the siren's call and the Isle of Dreamery. It herds the sheep of tradition across a bridge, scattering them in a new land. Fortresses crumble before its articulation, perception witnesses miracles, and poetry dances its cadence across a theatric stage, ransoming integrity from the trickle of invention off into the unknown, soaring crazily upon the uncaged winds of Aeolus.

Within the stone walls of a large chamber six friends are gathered, feasting on pleasant companionship and wholesome food, and drinking wine that warms the heart. Outside, a procession has begun, led by cavalrymen on horses.

And, like heroes in sheep's clothing, the six who gather are an artisan, a teacher, a courtesan, a sandal-maker, a politico, and a slave. It matters not who says what, but we have here the winged words of their conversation:

- A toast to Apollo - god of light, truth, and music.

- Yes, friends, let eloquence rule, as upon a fair wind following, or let us be damned!

- One or the other shall be our fate, I'm sure.

And outside, four-horse chariots next pass by, driven by long-robed charioteers. Meanwhile, the friends deepen their feasting.

- How goes our code? Remind me, friends.

- Honor the gods, help your friends, adorn your city - but let that wait until tomorrow, I say. . . .

- That sect across the sea, those who practice the peculiar rites - they carry these sentiments much further, from what I hear.

- Yes, you mean the Jesus instigator - an inciter of all kinds of mischief. . .

Outside now, a group of elders takes a turn in the procession, walking with the assurance that time and wisdom bring to bear. And the revelers within drain their draughts of wine and turn their thoughts to Delphi. Delphi, and the Omphalos stone, the navel of the Earth. And they debate whether or no the function of the oracle of Delphi, who fathoms the underlying structure of mathematics, medicine,

and gymnastics, can prove that discipline and inspiration can issue from the same place.

Next in the procession passes a band of musicians, with lyre and flute and percussion. And the enchantment of the music pervades all who hear like a spell cast by a nymph discovered bathing in her stream, so that deeper fall the revelers, into the wine-dark of their minds, into depths sailed by adventurous sailors, the mast of their revel unfurling a reckless sail.

Time passes, and the exuberance of the revelers waxes excessive, as an undefeated Cyclops dining on forbidden heroic flesh, even to spinning beyond the sea-purple yarn of consciousness, while outside, at the tail end of the procession, beaters of drums and pledgers of offerings drift by in the waning light of evening.

Holy things can flourish in a sparse meadow of reverie, just as the olive tree thrives in the poor soil of Greece and Rome. And wings of mind can form a falcon chariot, such that when power of thought is like the power of flight in sky, and its speed faster than a beam of light, there can ride more truth in poetry than reportage.

And, though reveling can turn loose the hounds of wanton liberty held collar by custom, here, at this turning point of time, when Chronos instigates the pivotal force of Anno Domini, the soul looks forward, sensing that, in days to come, only on the wakeful side of consciousness and unencumbered by draft of wine and revel, shall the finest creations of the world come to be.

17 African Sojourn

I am yet unborn.

With no eyes to see the savanna, I choose to look through those of another being. I look out through the eyes of the Great Lion of Ethiopia and see the quest here is to become self, and realize the order in which self lives, both within the context of nature, and within the context of community.

In this place in which I wish to incarnate, I will seek protection for the spiritual interests of the individual. Are not sky, celestial bodies, things and beings of the land, representations of the human? I resolve that when I come to walk the Earth, whenever I move away from the human aspect of myself, it will always be with the idea of bringing what is found back to the human arena.

I am incarnating.

A man and a woman are praying beside a lake for a child to come through them via the water. A newborn is not a person yet, but is still “water.” The womb of the lake births me for them. I am liquid soul. I possess androgyny, and must choose. Male, for strength and action. Female, for secrecy and nurturance. Life after life, I have taken turns in each gender. I will choose now what I most need.

I am a child.

I learn the ways of the hyena, the gazelle, the chameleon, the lion. I taste a Kola nut, I taste manioc. I learn from all beings. The delphinium that grows tall in

the grassland knows swiftness and light. The giant lobelia feeds my sunbird joy a nectar that distills on treetop height. And clusters of hibiscus blooms, white in the morning, deep pink by evening, instruct my elegance, compel me from time to time to loft upon the stream of light's grace.

I am growing.

The rains proceed from the East, the sun recedes in the West. Can North and South be relevant? I observe that the actions of humans upon the world can rejuvenate it. Rainmaking is vital for sustenance. If we are aware of our communion with the elements, does it yield power over aspects of the world? Rain, thunder, animals, plants. I am learning that exposure endured through braving the elements renders an affinity with them. This, in turn, brings harmony with their powers.

I begin to seek exposure. I am willing to endure suffering to fulfill this quest.

I am an older child.

N'domo is knowledge of the self. I learn more:

The joints of the lower limbs represent the power of inquiry, research

The joints of the upper limbs - doing

The sense organs - contact with exterior reality

The ankle - sense of direction

The foot and leg - balance and foundation

The voice - form

The shoulders - relationship with the sun, earth, animal spirits, plant energies.

I learn about sacred places - settings of holy events - a riverbank site, a grotto, a place of unique vegetation.

I am brought, one day, to a sacred grove of trees. There is a clearing in the center with a pond in which live crocodiles and fish that no one ever tries to catch. One must walk through the thicket barefoot to pass into the sacred center. One must not tread on the sky of this place.

I near the end of my childhood.

I am learning the laws of the drum. My spirit can sing praise through drumming. By drumming, I am able to summon forces, such as Orishes of rivers, trees, gemstones. Orishes are beings who have become the land.

I am one of four drummers. We play, entranced, as our patterns interweave, building elaborate variations of rhythm.

The drum is a creative voice of Spirit.

I am an adolescent.

I undertake a lengthy initiation process to acquire spiritual knowledge and understanding of the complexities of individuality. Can I do this best by leaving my home and starting with nothing?

I begin to subsist with very little, I do menial chores for others, for sustenance and a few seeds. Eventually, I have enough seeds and I clear an area in the bush to plant. I thresh and harvest and sell some of my produce for clothing and whatever I need. I sustain myself.

I become, in time, *silatigi*: one who has learned pastoral independence and mysteries of the bush. I can now ask for instruction from an elder.

I am a young adult.

Nyama is the essence of power in all beings and things. Are we not here to free *nyama* from its material base? A tulip tree fountains out a three-day bloom, cups my orange and scarlet ardor, fringing my savanna languor with its potent counterpoint. And an *amarrilla*, scarcely of this world, dazzles with a splendor one day, the next, refuses to bloom. The creeping shrub, even its blooms trail lianas, refuses to rest still at blossomhood, its final stage. And *coffea*, *coffea* the rational, with its tiny white-star flowers that gleam a promise of new thought, a stimulation of logic, of whence, therefore, hence, accordingly, and thence.

One who is able to assure mastery of self possesses inner peace and balance. Is this the clearest method of overcoming this plane of existence? Unshakable even before death, there is no reason to aspire to false heavenly realms.

To discover the true human, the one behind my face, I must pursue, at turns, two disciplines. One, to observe myself as I relate to others. And two, I must

enter isolation and the silence of the soul. Silence is a great facet of healing an illusion or imbalance. Knowing how to be silent leads to happiness, inner peace, detachment. Chattering is “speech without a path and without seeds.” A human without an inner life is impoverished.

In my period of isolation, which I spend at the heart of a sycamore grove, a sacred place that offers protection from dark forces, an immortal snake visits me every evening. I give it food and drink and ponder its ways.

During this time, the buffalo of my soul begins to assert its fierceness. It will not permit the hyena foolishness of bad habits to harass the gentle beings that are tentatively drawn to the creative spring of my heart. Though I am drawn from time to time to visit the dark of woodland, and the home of flying squirrel mystery, the gazelle of new venture vies for me to remain untouched by woodland shadow, that it may graze forthright in the open country of my vulnerability.

Meanwhile, a wandering porcupine has usurped the abandoned abode of the aardvark, and the rattle of its quills is warning against notions of complacency. But it is a median relegation, there is no call for vigilance to escalate to militancy. The middle path is best. Better the aimless porcupine than the belligerent black rhino. Better to lumber unperturbed, even through a forest of desolation, than to wage battle with every moving thing upon the great broad plain.

Out across the dry lands, as I wend my way toward the forest, I encounter scrub acacia and red termite hills. A ring-neck dove crosses my path. Here and there thrive green islands of banyan, tamarind and mango. In a grove of fig trees by a dark creek, I rest for a time to escape the hot breath of the wind. Leaning against a fig trunk, I fall asleep.

Soon the footprint of a small antelope presses into my dreaming, and I awaken with its counsel. The antelope is telling me to rely more on harvesting vegetation, less on hunting. And I will pursue the track of its wisdom.

As I resume my journey, I recall that I am approaching the lion’s territory and veer off to skirt around it. When we know we are nearing the lion’s arena we maintain respect, we do not impose upon it. Then the lion does not bother us. Only when we lose respect and invade its land are we in danger of attack.

Many are the lessons to learn from our animal relatives. The leopard warns of the danger of power in the wrong place, or power used in the wrong way. The tortoise teaches the art of waiting, how if what you want passes by before you can

apprehend it, it will come around again with the turning of the circle, just as the sun returns along the same sky path, day after day. The hare shows the value of wit over strength, and of keeping an attribute under cover until the right time comes to bring it forth. The spider shows the weaving of intricacy, of creative design, and an unending stream of diligence, conjecture and potential. It can teach a way of being productive, though it will not always be beneficial, unless guided by higher wisdom.

There are times, if I am long in the jungle, when my thinking becomes a chattering monkey. This state of mind alternates with a languid enchantment in which I grow numb, almost senseless. And, at this time, even as I fully penetrate the forest, feeling pulled into a quicksand miasma, I find myself entranced by the marvelous and lush vegetation, etchings of bark, hundreds of different textures of leaves, from mouse-ear to elephant-ear sizes, the milky tears of gum trees, amber globs of sap, masses of growth, heavings of trunks, fallen decaying trees, rotting vegetation, protrusions, mattings of layers and litter, climbing vines of endless lengths and gestures, draping veils and counterveils, tendrils, forks and branchings, and foliage unending, luxuriant and excessive, ferns, mosses, orchids, blossomings, draperies, and deep strangling impervious masses, all aspiring for life and light. And deeper still my narcosis falls, into muddy streams and stagnant water, infestations and the mystery of the invisible, an abundance of insatiable insects, the busy and warring ants, invaders, the at times furious torture of mosquitoes, and crawling, swarming raiders, hovering fury of flies, tsetse assail, fluttering, bounding, creeping, so that not long can one sit, little rest to be had, always moving like the breeding life overflowing, much beauty and vigor, but all counter-wheeling with disarray and subterfuge.

I am middle-aged.

I learn to double myself. This is very useful - when I reach a fork in my life, I can send another *me* down the path I do not take. Through repeated, sustained exercises I have developed my *dya*, my double, and use it now to penetrate the nature of things. It *becomes* the thing or person it enters.

Once, on a journey to the East, I encountered a great sea. When I sent my *dya* to live for a time on the bottom of that sea, it returned with special seaweed and powers for healing.

Now I can use my *dya* to investigate the power of lightning. The place where lightning strikes the earth becomes *sky* at the moment of impact. This causes me to wonder, if one can commune with that place can one enter another realm, into a “rapid time” experience? I wish to explore this. However, if struck full-force by lightning, one is thrust into the next incarnation. By use of the *dya*, perhaps I can be on that hot place with little risk of ending my life.

I am aging.

Two kinds of *suman*, or medicine forces, pull at me. One is of the day and goodness and vigor and stability. The other is of the night and transformation and anti-social forces. I learn what each has to offer and seek a balance.

The night needs to reign in order to symbolically loose the bonds of kinship, the group soul, so that one might move into selfhood. God was once close with humans, then withdrew to allow individuality, or free-spiritedness, to evolve.

Suba is the great night, a sorcery, most absolute darkness. A place of knowledge so profound it evades common investigation. The darkness is an aspect of every being, since there is a place in all beings not fathomable by the mind. Not comprehensible.

Because she is the most mysterious, is not woman, more than any other being, more closely related to this night power? A woman has a direct link to the germinative aspect of life. A woman possesses unusual skill in bringing unexpected solutions to problems. This is asset can be a great power. It can be misused or it can be developed in a spirit of compassion.

I am an elder.

I am in my lionhood - one step before Selfhood, or becoming the *wife* of God. I look deeply into the past and far into the future.

In the past, I suspect that an ancestor, who I used to seek to commune with, will turn out to be myself in a past incarnation. I have even visited the grave and seen bones that I believe were once mine.

When I look into the future, the vision that descends from the flock of messenger birds alights on my eyes, and I foresee the arrival of great ships sailed by greedy, ghost-white people who seek to steal us, to take us away over the great water - far, far into the unknown, to a place where it will surely be impossible to

ever find oneself again. I feel cold, hard iron wrapped around wrists and a slow dwindling of power in the seat of soul.

I have met the joy of death.

The savanna soothes any remaining discomfort of withdrawal from the Earth plane.

An apparent paradox: humans both affirm and deny themselves. Giving self away somehow helps one come to know self, to realize self.

Perhaps, on a day yet to dawn, we will be able to retain selfhood with Selfhood.

18 Erin's Land

As a harp sounds itself unfolding notes like words of the soul a great stag stares silently but speaking with its eyes and how is it we're drawn into those two brown pools of unending openness and a stillness like a glass pond while all around in the outward world our itinerant clan huddles on a listing ship in darkness and a raging sea whips what remains of torn and crumpled hope all to tatters but just at last possible moment a reprieve as come we in one last heave even while sinking nigh to the green of earth and wonder perchance how it must have been that such deadly tempest had brewed for the very cause of deterring our way of bearing such that we might avail ourselves of the precious vital emerald earth of Erin when comes the morning of green and splendor a wild teeming land of fine beauty and light and loveliness and a wealth of wildness shining all shining with sunrise omens overriding the night-long chaos dreamed to life again by an apprentice of wizardry upon the moors of charm and clemency where a priceless tide of energy wells and over-wells through soil of soul of people feeling soul feeling soul in viridian firmament.

With each wave washing upon the shore of the Ireland's strand, beating as an augur, there, from green-starred eyes glittering tears pervade the spray of surf, yet as a mist of joy. For Eri, wild and beautiful woman of the verdant Isle, watches as a fine silver boat draws unto the bay, a prowed ship upon a clear and heaving sea. And when, growing nigh, she spies upon its deck a noble bard at helm, and when

the elements, having fulfilled their mission, the sun gleaming its path to light the way, the tide conveying thrust upon the stern, the wind driving sail to land, he with golden locks steps ashore and quietly proceeds bearing acacia blossoms preserved, as though by magic, in crossing from his homeland afar. Elatha is his name, and before long Eri falls surrender to his upright presence, for the brightness of his garments is appealing and his gentle manner softening to her commonly stern demeanor.

Eri is a fine woman with honeycomb voice and a mind quick and clear, one who blends magic and the art of the harp in a brazen way. Goodly women do not paint their faces, and do not ply their virtues in trade. And Eri is goodly, yet is wild in her ways, as a light upon others for what is not worth holding in pain, and what things can be turned, in time, from stumbling block to stepping stone. And her heart, shining as a free and fierce lamp, is a light that Elatha lends courage to, a light that comes to wed with melody of her rapturing harpist craft.

And Elatha speaks at times as a bard is wont, and the outpour of his heart weaves design such as avails from far lands asea. And she, Eri, has the way of understanding the looming of this soul, a fabric all woofed and warped with wondrous strands.

Thus waxes between the two, and rising on the breeze of love, a force to parent such art of harpist, poet, magician, smith, and cup-bronze, that from this love is born the Celtic way - though the Celtic manner springs also, as is known, from the counsel of the fairies and those dreams of Eri's people that wend their way in lucid manner to fire of imagination.

And what is the means of consort that Elatha and Eri bear to engender the Celtic way? Wind at sea, wave of ocean, tumble of waterfall, fierce eye of hawk, warm raying sun, cool green of sacred herb, sinew of ox, the wide-vast moor, and the like.

Time passes, and Eri and Elatha walk the land of Erin no more, but from their resting place springs power of clover and shamrock. And upon a sacred site there comes to be fashioned a monument of tribute, where sits now a youth at quiet contemplation, in pre-dawn dark. And while opening unto the maze, layer by layer, within the heart of his soul, rowan tree berries scatter their honeyed magic at his feet, and one of Four Birds of Enchantment, a falcon of burning bronze feathers, shafts of willpower aflame, preys upon his impetuous sparrow seeking.

And a shoot branches off unto patience and diligence, tempering his linden zeal, and leafing myriad curiosity, sentiment of wonder.

The hour turns, and a great stillness settles down around him, calling the silent outbreath of his swan serenity to open a passage beyond all consternation. And there, roosting in the tree of his childhood, where thrives hawthorn persistence, a force does arise that will not quit. And he remains there, steadfast, exploring the heart of his soul, until he comes to know that it is Ireland itself that presides over the heart of his soul. Such it is then, that with first strike of rising sun upon the breast of the patient youth, revelation is imparted.

Oft times, the youth did wonder and long to know of lands that lie afar, over the coiling sea, upon whose cresting and shining vast, seabirds sail and sound. And never did the youth stray from this great Isle, but for this one occasion, and this is what he came to see:

At first a darkness, but with far-away intonation of harpstring pervading the void. And upon the tide of melody rides the youth, and in the music's swelling is met splendor, harshness, sorrow, joy, laughter, grief, even unto the whirlwind passing of age, death and rebirth.

And then comes the lifting of a veil, behind which there carries on draughts of boisterous engagement, as the youth beholds a merry band at feast. The fruits there are ripe and perfect and the grain vital, the honey full in taste, and there is to be found none of dissension, or homesick distress, or trepidation in the midst of the feasters. For it is a grouping of heroic people, men and women who live out the span of their lives pledging to overcome all manner of confinement. They it is who seek to find the limits of things and to muster courage to render passage through the all-unknown. While common bands of warriors fight and slay in downtrod manner, these ones rise to battle foes supernatural - gods, giants, phantoms, and other fantastical entities, all of which they have come to meet as dwellers in the denizen of their own soul.

Then, ere long, a wizard with a great hound arises, and from the midst of the merry band takes his leave, and the entranced youth, taking the form of a raven, with steadfast watchfulness comes to trail behind, as the wizard wends his way through the black and formless chill of the Irish night.

And upon the heights, the raven eyes now the wizard who, in the course of powerful striding, commences an incantation to the wind. And upon the tail of the incant there gallops up a mighty steed, wild and over-welling in spirit, upon which the wizard mounts and speeds, his hound keeping pace alongside. And fortune has

it that a great wind arises upon which the raven can sail to match the flight of the mighty steed.

Time and tide traverse the night, and soon the dawn breaks, the rising light showing that gone now is the green of Ireland, and with it the dark and chill, and all around lies only a great pale desert, a dry land stretching off to uncountable span. And in the crossing of this mystic realm, few animals come in sight, and those that do avail are strange, hopping, leaping beasts with great tails and powerful legs.

Here and there, a hawk turns above in the blue expanse, and they travel on. And it comes to be known that here, at last, is a land over which nomadic people can have full wander, not like the isle of home, but ever so great in breadth as to satisfy the very soul of wanderlust.

So enamored grows the Raven-youth now that he stops and begins to sing a song for the wind to carry wherever it may. And upon the surging stream the song flies free, making its way through cunning art of sound and tone, finding power and shaping wings to rise and fall, preening feather-like tones until the wind sings back, and such harmony arises, possessed so of a great fervor that the land itself begins to fall under enchantment. And it comes to pass that, as the bewitchment builds, the light recedes, until only a dim veil resides over the vision, beyond which the nomad finds himself once more back upon the green moor of his dear old homeland.

Giving thanks in my heart to the wizard for his magical transport, I take my leave over a hilly land that slopes down to a wind-rent lake. And here I sense a troubled water, but know not what malaise lies over its rippling face, nor in its darkling depth. Awander by its rim, stepping in time to the waving buffet, I come to spy there drawn ashore a barque to commandeer across the rising tumult. But once out upon the teeming, ere long I come to meet regret as, at middlemost part, the heaving comes yet more aboil, with a great crashing pummel upon my vessel. And thrown overboard in the terror of the sundering, with desperate treading to near demise, I scarce come nigh my shoreline goal. And then it is, just when rising upon my feet in waist-high water, a great monster striking from behind throws me, flailing and thrashing, clawing and crawling landward with roaring pain of gaping wound, and I am overtaken of a swoon which lowers me upon the heath and I know no more.

A good time later, awaking, I feel my mind not right and my heart gone astray, as fallen I am under enchantment, a bearing dreamly and senseless. And though many a day passes by, ever I remain adrift in a realm no person can tread. Awake by night, asleep by day, thinking comes not in train of thought, but in wild and furtive picturing. And when, after a timeless span has passed, spy me then my likeness in a pool, and my comeliness I see has fled in trade for crudity.

By all account have I fallen, but then, never to rise? Am I reduced, now, rendered to animal means, no more a member of the human clan? And hence, what use be hooves of low intent, such black and useless stones? What, my antlering thoughts, but mere wisps of smoking rise? Now, ere long, must I scale my way out of this well of lost-soul rapture, for seems it sure to be, better a peasant in the human kingdom, than a ruling stag, king of the forest within all the empire of fauna.

I must arise, ascend, trace back passage of my destiny, and so make resolve to turn my animality upon the wheel of its core. And, by use of bestiary to human end, from magpie flight, I seize direction, I will myself, wing by wing, to steal a way out of this wayward thicket. And from eagle stance, I ransom sight of holy headwater, that the stream of knowing might serve a nobler cause. By travel swift on fox paw, even feather of crow, and by prolonged endeavor, through gain and loss, and gain again, in my striving I come at last to attain the highland lay of headwater where grows the sacred oak. And after prayerful span by the mighty girth of a very grandfatherly arbor, I climb this aged oak to lay hand upon the rare one that so fervently I do seek. For there, upon a high bough in the light's gliding sheen thrives the mistletoe weird and poison, whose manner bears death to all who partake unguided.

Then, waiting a spell in prayerful stance, there comes upon me the fairy guardian of mistletoe arrayed in gold and silver wing, and the resplendent sprite, by the sun's passage and turn of time's tide, lets known in quiet tone the secret power of her charge, its use without the courting of death or illness. And there, with utmost care, and by hand of fairy wisdom, I come by course to concoct a sacred potion from the strange and brightling foliage, a blessed infusion to dispel my hapless enchantment, such that little by little the yoke of my stupor is thrown down even until, little by little, over a two-month span, I am returned to the community of man.

Here stands the hut of a hermit, formed of hazel and ash, with blackbird sentries set upon its gable. And while the great oaks hold vigil sacredly by, wild things guard his door, white and black badgers, tall deer, and dancing foxes from the meadowlands. And all the oakwood towers of noble mast, with a host of leaves full of brightling angels. Acorns, beautifully formed to manifest tremendous arbors, great spirits in tiny packets, pummel to Earth, feeding the deer and consorting their meat to death of worm or life of rooted seedling. And the weasel counsels thanksgiving, reveling in vigor at every little turn, while the fox incites cunning and arises, hour by hour, to new and newer contrivance.

By day, the crow presents alertness, and the salmon, sagacity. But in the pitch dark, where vision sleeps, the sense that discerns the variation between a hazel and an oak comes now awake. As does that sense which discerns movement overhead in the silent flight of owl, when neither sight nor hearing can avail whatsoever. And above it all descends the music of wolf, sounding from the mountain peak, portending charm of cool wind and the wheeling flight of snow, in all its pure and charismatic assail.

Now, the brown bear, steeped in salmon power and rodent harry, dreams in its winter bed. Flood and ebb, cold and untamed wind come to rail for a season across the thrust and heave of seawater, an oft-times fierce sea, and winter, having prevailed for its just span, comes at last to folding its ferocity, giving way to the yellow of gorse and the pink of heather and, in course of folding, leaves off its heaving crests for gentle rolling.

And above, the bronze gleam of hyacinth captures a beam of sun, as blossoms pour forth a stream of honey, and sweetly flows the water springing from the stony ground. And in these days when foxglove colors our cheek, we come to account a blackbird egg as more costly than an emerald, with hatchling song of finer worth than mankind's most burden treasure.

Here, where this clear note of blackbird, hermit of the glen, sounds, and the dusty-coated cuckoo flits, where the thrush canticles in harmony with the wind in tall music-pines, questions come to arise. What sublime spirit rendered here such utmost consort with divinity? And what thatcher of surpassing means has roofed this cathedral forest?

Beneath the birch, with its melody of gesture in uppermost branching, the little fox is gnawing bones snared in wile. And deeper in the wood, there dwells the stag of musing. Oh antlered one, steadfast monarch, how the prong of determination has pierced to spirit's most whispered heart. Ferny glen, a place of

moss and waterfall. Unpeopled bog and peatlands, preservation of relic aspiration, mineral longing, ancient mossbed - bog grasses, rushes, heath, bleak, haunting, home to the intrepid ground-nesting bird, camouflage of vulnerability - skylark, curlew, red grouse, the snipe that penetrates - and dragonfly and water spider.

And with summer's grand, spacious, and windrent light, the hoof of evasion turns to talon, and Lady Soul, fledging feathers, longs to ascend to a light-steeped origin, and the sea shines back from unmountable heavens, under which clouds of faint measure roll as an angular landscape, and earthly self-glory folds its paper-bark wings in the face of eternity. Now even the lowly, silent moth offers a remedy. For those who heed its soundless flight, in striving to hear the beat of its mute wings in motion, ward off deafness, open the windows of their ears upon another realm.

And now, sleep to the melodies, wind in bough, rush of wave, chant of warbler. Birch wreath becomes a love token. Rowan branches deter witchery. The ash tree grows spirit-lumber to fashion a vessel that can sail the sea of soul. Leaves and flowers of the hazel, blooming at the same time, bearing inspiration of poetics, after a span fall upon the nether surface of a well whose waters are rendered purple. And, in turn of season, salmon rise to consume the wayward floating hazelnuts, and any mortal who partakes of either blossom, or purpling water, or salmon, shall be charged with the power and wisdom of poetic verse.

But now, am I, I ask in slow pause, willing to take the gamble that dwells in such fairy encounter? Shall it be fortune or misfortune that comes of it? No matter, the risk shall be taken. But in the end, when all endeavor is left as an aftertaste in the bud of discontainment, there comes to persist the reveling of an unrequited quest, based squarely on an oath of sovereignty. And that oath comes to fore as an all-surpassing decree that, above all, it be vital that I rescue from enchantment of Fairyland my liege, my queen, my Lady Soul.

19 **Australia** - *Travels by Songline*

From the steamy mud of primordial water holes, aspects of the self were condensed. An Ancestor journeyed across the land creating as he went: gum trees, sand dunes, rocks, animals, birds. An artwork deliberately arranged, but not at all forced. If resistance was met at any turn, it was given into.

Footprints of the Ancestors are Dreaming Tracks, sequences of steps that unfolded a trail, delineated spiritual streambeds filled with dry liquid tumbling, where currents formed confluences of reverie.

Songpaths run across the land. Songlines, like braided cord. One braid is composed of the wisdoms of nature, by a human walking softly, pausing to acknowledge incarnatings of spirit-wisdom. Another braid is time travel, a braid that runs from soul to soul, and ancestor to descendant. Another braid is composed of spirit beings that oversee the land. Altogether, the songline is an interweaving of nature and deep ancestral volition.

Singing, the highest form of expression, echoes the soul. Because song relays the momentum of the heart, a walkabout is a song-constructed pathway. Travelers locate themselves on the song-grid by singing. If the songs of the land are forgotten, will the land die?

The first language was song and poetry. Trade took place in these oral arts, primarily. Secondary trade entailed goods. Singing *seeds* the land, scatters songseeds that take root and seek to sprout in the hearts of those who pass by later. Footprints leave a trail of music.

A pink plain stretches out, a wide expanse of blushed earth, and beyond, a purple mountain rises. After rain soaks the quiet red of the clay floor, it generates a brightly colored, flower-strewn profusion.

In the middle of a patch of vivid blossoms atop a rise, a white-bearded elder is looking within himself to perceive the desert's hidden features. Invisible lines stretch out, etched in etheric contours. The land has withdrawn, contracted its plant-spirit patterns, in response to the impact of human consciousness. Only sensitive members of the human community can detect the hidden resources. The shyness of inhabitants reflects the inaccessibility of certain aspects of the land.

Platypus, anteater, parrot, ghost gum, finch, tamarisk tree. Each holds a place in the grid of life. Rock pool, termite mound, songbirds burning like embering color, a blue wren flickering through underbrush like a flash of sky. The people who reside here each encode a tract of wisdom, a wealth of unique qualities compacted into biographic stories.

The old man is a Kirda: caretaker of a land tract, one who ensures songs are sung and rituals are performed on time. He has covered his body with fine clay to camouflage himself, and to mask his scent and energy-field so he can stalk the invisible. His soul finds peace from wandering in the desert.

Giving expression to inner restlessness by wandering is a way to help creation. As he walks, he is dreaming his pathway into being. He is creating a new songline, a path that will run strong over a lengthy span of time. When he comes upon a tamarisk, he stops and weaves the roots with song, ties the path into the ground. A songbird lands in the tree, and bends the line to its own song. Colors fill the foliage of the tamarisk, song-colors that fold into the branches and glimmer in the sun. Now the line thrusts off across the land, and the Kirda follows its gesture.

After a while, the songline weakens, and the Kirda sits to rest and sing, to energize the line. And an anteater comes to assist, not drawing too near, but close enough to share the line. The anteater hunts from mound to mound, linking the line to the song of the termite. And the Earth sings back, of how its soil was turned to wood by tamarisk and ghost gum, and how termite returned the wood to soil, once again. The stitch in the line turns back on itself and ties into the Earth, mound by mound.

The songlines weave a web, and the big land is held intact, kept in one piece despite its immensity, prevented from dispersal like the vast surrounding ocean of dissolution.

The Kirda stops and sits and, looking backward in time, finds a window that opens upon a primordial water hole, and he watches as the mud bubbles and spits, and a gentle steam arises. Out of the steam condense little insects that flit off across the land, each one with a tiny song that hums in the air, barely audible. And the sky sings and the window closes.

Now the Kirda turns to face forward, and in his mind he imagines himself walking forward, although he sits still. And he hears himself singing, although he remains silent. And his image-laden rhythms of walking and singing deepen, and his will is inflamed. This is something new for the Kirda, but something in which he senses there resides rarefied power. As he continues on, a window opens that invites him to eavesdrop on a distant future:

“So, why don’t the Aborigines fit into our world? What’s the problem?”

“You ask a big question. What kind of answer can satisfy it? But, if you first understand yourself better, then it will be easier to understand them. Consider this: in animals, migratory beings are less aggressive than stationary types.”

“And how does this relate to the question?”

“The Aboriginal person recognizes how renunciation leads to liberation. Simplicity and directness allow expedience in dealing with matters of Spirit - as opposed to a way of life of diversions. When you wander in the bush, it is restful, it is an energizing experience. There, you shed cynicism, engendering wonder in its place.”

“And this relates to how my culture exhibits more aggression?”

“In nomadic cultures, warrior arts are ideal practices for the adolescent stage - an externally focused rigor and discipline with which to develop qualities that may then be applied to the real battle for the human in a mature stage: the overcoming of inner foes. Those cultures that continue the warrior expression in an external way, however, are stranded in the adolescent stage. They have yet to mature.”

“So, we have a world dominated by adolescent nations!”

“Exactly. And, because the Aboriginal people live in a mature stage, they have been able to excel in spiritual capacities. They live by nature metaphors. For example, in these times of spiritual drought that have fallen upon humanity they

can access the power of the Kurrajong tree with its special ability to hold water in its roots, in this case in a metaphysical sense. And they have long been able to send thoughts over distances. They know when there has been a successful hunt in a neighboring camp. They know if someone is ill and needs someone to come and help them. They can read the purpose of an approaching visitor, can tell where he's been. They can identify objects at a great distance. But, most of all, they can "see" hidden things - the powerful but concealed things of this land."

"You mean Dreaming Sites, and that sort of thing."

"Yes. Lizard Ancestor, Eucalyptus Ancestor, power sites, and such. They know the primordial powers that underlie the appearance of nature. And they reinforce a link that ensures that Australia will sustain a primeval quality, at least on one level of its being."

"What do you mean by that?"

"The power of Dreamtime carries on, regardless of European inroads. It will triumph in the end. It will overpass lesser ambitions, such as resourcism, meaning greed-based material considerations. All the developmental activity that has been unknowingly violating songlines has an impact. In effect, it has engaged in an uncreating process, where aspects of the land are desecrated, brought to a lower level of being. Uncreated. The healing practice of re-creating restores what is lost. Australia has not quite ever become a completely material land - it has always been a little removed from the physical realm, always jutting into Dreamtime, always been withheld, somewhat, from the world of matter by the force of Dreaming."

"But how can this be? How will Australia be able to join the modern world?"

"It won't. It will be vice-versa or, in a way, a mixture of both. Because of the force of Dreaming power, we now have the diverting of railways, the honoring of sacred sites, an increased adherence to Aboriginal requests regarding land treatment - and all this, despite the inability of the dominant culture to comprehend, conceptually, the Aboriginal ways.

"You're saying that it's almost as if Aboriginal spiritual concepts are intuitively felt, and then ascribed to. . ."

"And, for the future, I see a continuing rise in the environmental lobby - as an ally of the Aboriginal peoples. And an increasing take-over of social institutions by the Aboriginal worldview. Major social transformation. Needless to say, there will be a decrease in corporate profit activity - a purging of

resourcism and land abuse. To use a nature metaphor, it has long been considered that the appearance of a bronze-winged pigeon is an auspicious occasion. The bird is known to lead a willing traveler to gold. Now the bronze-winged pigeon has recently been making appearances, but the choice that always arises for the sojourner is between following the bird to material gold, or the gold of understanding, a more enduring form of wealth.”

“If I understand correctly, the Aboriginal people have been quietly riding the invisible force of Dreamtime power, patiently adhering to its subverting qualities, waiting for its inexorable forces to have their way.”

“That’s right. And it must be realized that *will* is a mysterious aspect of a human being. It is connected with an unknowable current that bridges humanity with the land. The Aboriginal practice of walking and wandering serves a function we can scarcely grasp. Walking utilizes and draws out the will. And a powerful silent will has an unapparent effect.”

I am pursuing a spirit that is proving to be very secretive. It has been hiding in deep holes, creek beds, thickets, caves, deserted areas, dust storms. Now it is hiding in the form of a walking bird. I seek to attain some of its shamanic power.

I have painted my body with charcoal and ochre, yellow, white, brown - and red, the most valuable. I have covered myself in purifying mushroom smoke. I see a vision of a giant blue-green egg of the emu. Crocodile eyes peer out of liquid primordia. A black rain cloud circles my head. I must beware, it portends danger, an excess of power. Two black swans fly over, asserting that I need twice-fold vigilance. The cry of the curlew sounds in the evening, a call portending either death or travel to the sky-world. A world normally taboo except for reincarnation purposes.

I will lie for the night by the Rocks of Starlight Hunting, an energy site so strong I know I will be unable to sleep. I will lie awake and wait for what is coming.

When night falls, the oppression of heat diminishes and the cooling air wakes the day-sleepers. Now vision recedes and the senses of hearing and scent-detecting, and movement-sensing rise. Eyes that cannot cope with the glare of daylight now peer into mysteries of shadow and a faint veiling of starlight. Hand-like paws strive for sustenance, silent wings loft, and tails grapple for balance. Nectar, insects, lizards, vegetation, submit to the demand of menu.

The moon rises and I ward off its beams, I will not yield to its trancing power. But fear rises also, and I must endure like a warrior under siege. Time passes, and I prevail over the assail of fear, and with it, danger passes, also. The night runs its course, only at its end does a spirit come. It arrives in the early light of dawn, in the form of a ghost parrot, barely visible one moment, flashing brightly the next. It is a good, though strong, spirit. I am unafraid. It circles me repeatedly, silently wheeling until I fall into a vision. I am at the edge of a swamp, on the nether end of a songline. The insectine harry of my soul, wandering on the brink of a sundew lip, meets the waxy surface of doubt and plummets to its demise. After serving as sustenance for the animal-plant, I am then shown a flying fox in an agitated state, and I realize I have lately been too quarrelsome. Finally, I am transposed into an emu that makes senseless choices. I will have to consult the elders more often. I can count on them to guide me in curtailing my foolishness.

When I awaken from the vision, the sun is beginning to warm the land. A blue haze over distant mountains promises that a blessing will condense out of the sky-world to ensure well-being and fertility of the land. I arise and enter a forest of eucalypts. Petal-less flowers, whorls of stamens abound. These trees are long-flowering, like my people, a people with deep-probing roots tapping down into a well of soulful forbearance.

A dainty fairy wren, with its long tail and resplendent coloration, draws off predation with its broken wing act, steering voracity away from the nest of contentment. The nomadic honeyeater uses its long curved beak to probe minute wells of nectar, liquid-gold that springs directly from the spirit of the sun. A parrot flashes, a feathered fragment of rainbow, gracefully colored to incite fervor in the heart. While color cuts to the soul, the hook-bill slices the fruit of forest enigma, consuming entire lives of trees compacted, condensed into minute seed forms. Seeds house songlines - one line feeds a parrot life, one line lives a treelife.

Flowers-to-be of a great variety of hue and form hold still their impending life-force over long dry spells, come rain to flourish in surpassing beauty. What places in the soul do likewise, hold out for spirit's animating resource to prevail over a lengthy span of thirst? What places in the heart have been abandoned for dead that yet shall come to flourish?

Across the parched land, what respite can there be? A flock of pigeons leads to a place of minimal greenery. There, beneath a vibrant bush, ants can be seen creeping in and out of a crack. Digging down, a little moisture is found, further and a sleeping frog lies bloated with life-sustaining water, further yet, and the very

elixir-of-life pools up to meet all manner of thirst. The terrain of soul is blessed with dependable waterholes - but a traveler must learn to read signs that render direction to the liquid treasure.

Large ears twist into the wind's rising voice. The kangaroo leaps our intent, propels its bold manner across a plain of aspiration. But our eucalyptus dreams, aromatic, laced with irrepressible vapor, become distilled and assimilated into a pleasant koala stasis. Deep in the throes of time, far and away upon a track rendered intermittent, along the shore of a pond of obscurity across which the platypus flatbills its enigma, the native cat hunts our reptile remembrances, pursues our small bird hatchings. Meanwhile, out across the distant plains of mystery, a hopping-mouse contrivance evades dingo predation, bounds lightly across open ground and takes cover under wing of a bird of prayer.

Next to the valley of sedation, an ancient mulga tree stands dreaming, and the green trunk of the kurrajog complements the red bark of the mulga, inflaming contrast, stitching seams of harmony, tailoring a garment to suit our fabric of integration. Deeper in the valley, we encounter intent, a resolve to keep our wild-plum oath, to listen to the silence at the heart of the nightshade and, with mistletoe persistence, to surmount impending obstacles.

When the sun begins its descent into the golding west we will ascend, with wing-like intent, the stalk of the wonga wonga vine, and inhale the serene beauty of the blue water lily. Over in the swamp of apprehension, the sundew, glistening in rarefied light, with fire ablaze in its petals, will entrap our insects of anxiety. And while the raging mass of crimson and gold flames of the firewheel tree consumes the caprice of our false pride, the sunshine wattle quietly outflowers our self-absorbed notion of industry.

Now, as the sun sets in final flames of glory, over where the open country gives way to forest, there stand the sentinel grass trees. Upright, spear-holding, unmovingly fierce for a thousand years, they guard the sacred eucalypt grove, and the aromatic koala, and the doorway that opens only to those who purify their heart in the kiln of wonder.

If we are physically interred, or forced to be still in one place, we will voyage on other levels of our being to make up for our confinement. For dilemmas are often solved by walking. The rhythm of walking dissolves attachment. While excessive possessions drain us, honoring the land empowers us.

Home can never be relegated to a location. Home cannot have a site.

There are two ways to re-establish harmony between the self and the universe. One, to sit still and invoke awareness that the universe is within, and two, to wander over the land, encountering oneself.

In the latter case, one needs to walk until one discovers how one is the place walked, how it is that the land that resides within resolves itself into the outer world.

20 America the South

A place where vision ends
horizon

amiga
yearning
sea of yearning on the shore of your ocean-eyes
under sunray smile

can you walk across even half the boundaries with me?

For a long time, I was a sensible, considerate man. I knew and admired the ways of Paloma, the dove. But my butterfly soulhood was young yet. Fluttering over astral pools, my sensibility lacked grounding. That is why, one day, I fell prey to the General's charisma. As his mind spun its tarantula thoughts, silken ravelings of the General's persuasion convinced me that conducting war against the enemy could only be right. Besides, I had little else to do with my life. I had not yet cultivated a quest to render direction to the force of my incarnation. I was not married, I had no trade, how was I to make a living? The army would take care of that. And a lot more, besides.

Soon, Paloma the dove was nowhere to be seen. Army life dictated my options. I became a unit in a fighting machine. I was trained to kill like a jaguar, to attack with fearless abandon. I was taught to despise the enemy. I was not permitted to acknowledge any beneficial traits in the opponent. He was not even to

be considered human. I see now, as I look back, how taken in I was. I wanted to be fierce and courageous, not comprehending that the greatest courage resides in non-violence.

Meanwhile, however, I became adept in my soldiering. In a state of spiritual ignorance, I killed opponents. But as I fell deeper into this miasma, my conscience grew ever more contentious. Intuitively, I knew things were coming to a head, I must cease my killing ways. After I resigned from the army, I tried my hand at various trades. In the end, I chose to work on a farm and lived a simple, peaceful life. Again, I knew the ways of Paloma. But now the embrace of peace held deeper meaning.

At the end of my days, as a turtle submerged in a great ocean, I passed over into the spirit world, and relived my life in a backward fashion, a review that unwound the thread of time, from my death back to my birth, a snakeskin casing shed to mark the limit of growth. When I reached the period of my life as a soldier, I experienced, again, each event of killing a member of the enemy camp. Every time I did so, I experienced being the individual I had killed, in the moments leading up to, and including, the death event. With the illusion of separation absent I was, in effect, killing myself over and over. Now, at last, I could comprehend the real business of warfare in all its futility, in all its unholy insanity. Now that I fully understood, I was finished with that lesson. I was through with military life for all time. Never again in any future incarnation would I forsake Paloma the dove.

In South America, at different mileposts where the Pan-American Highway would one day cut its stone ribbon across the land, one could find: plaited armadillos ambling in underbrush; spider monkeys feeding on fruit or up to crude mischief; horses grazing, galloping, ranging through meadow and wood; campesinos eking out a living; gauchos riding, herding, singing to the wind; banditos that show up unexpectedly, ignorant of karma; Andes, steep, rugged, lofty; llamas grazing unperturbed; and sometimes even Inca gold or *sweat of the sun*.

Here lies a land assaulted, drained of wealth, an arena whose riches are veiled by many guises. Spanish conquistadors invaded, then settled, and were in turn conquered. Acquisition of gold generated long-term impoverishment. Then, not to be outdone, like a plague of vampires, multi-national corporations rendered the people even more destitute.

Poverty, illness, hunger, and coca leaves to dull the misery. Few opportunities. Fat financiers - a tiny, wealthy minority - manipulate events, people, politics, economics, spinning slums, encampments of shacks, desperation, crime, suicide. And the jungle comes down, the Mother in rags. Under colonial demise, the land deteriorates in a process of crucifixion, calling out for resurrection.

As though the astral body and the regional sociology have contracted rabies, military adolescence persists, fostering brutality and corruption - not comprehending that when you shoot someone, it is an extension of yourself, that the end never justifies the means, because the means *is* always the end. Opulence became a magnet that drew the conquistador nightmare which, in turn, drew the corporate conquest.

And America the North, what hand have you had in this? And America the South parades before America the North: is this what you really want for yourself?

Jungle is wild, teeming energy on full display. It gives and it gives, in every direction it proliferates.

What is wealth? Can it be acquired? How deeply can this be penetrated? Do the richest simply deny their poverty?

The wild call of the toucan celebrates wholesomeness. The song of the parrot is the birth of color. Color is an inhalant for angels. A wild sky of teeming vegetation and humid vitality breathes the human soul. Jungle is saturation. Jungle is every small niche filled, multi-layered paths crossing, teeming with invisible life forms.

And across the river of my contemplation, she lives her slumly life, never leveling her sight to peer above the squalor, never raising her vision to discern my presence. Can I draw near? Or must I remain on her horizon, unseen, no closer than the starbeam of her diffusion? Though she draws the water of soul, thirst prevails. Though she blends savory ingredients on the menu of sentience, a mare of famine champs and bolts.

And I am in horror of the assault of the new conquistadors, at their persistent scarring of the chicle tree, torching of la selva, washing away the mother lode of tomorrow's fortune. How many centuries must pass before gold dust shall be able to reseed this devastated El Dorado? Or the parrot find transcendence over this wasting desolation?

Why slash and burn this treasury for commerce we will soon be leaving behind? Can we come to fathom the mist that pervades the upper canopy? Or the intertwine of our intent with highest aspiration?

Gold models utmost refinement, transcendence. And humankind, not rising to gold's alchemic challenge, wallows as lead. Acquisition fetters. Ingots snare the heart. More is less. Too often, only after death, do the conquistadors grow into the truth of this. Like serpent deceit, posing as vine, the devious game of pretending to own is lost in surpassing illusion. Stupefied by pyrite conquest - .999 fine, but not a carat in the vault.

Meanwhile, the Jaguar, feline priest of the night, embodies dignity, power, soft-walking stealth. If you could ignite the emerald-fire of the jaguar's eye in your soul, would you then fall into a pool of deliberation? Would you not enter, unrestrained, into fearlessness and cunning?

In twilit selva, the silver of evening fades into the blue-black of night. You dream your life lucidly. Moonbeams rouse you. As emerald tempest, lashings of green fire, the thousand frenzied eyes of the jungle have their way. Jungle equals ecstasy. Entering into enchantment, can you comprehend the messages sounding from out of the darkest understory?

Colombian coffee grinds into a black stream of logic, a roast of wondering. Eyes are portals to a well, feet dance a blue rhythm, a tango of lost love. The mind opens a crack and invites a soft ray to filter in. A jaguar breathes in the whispers of our fervor, then exhales its ardent pronouncement in our dreaming.

In the birthplace of avocado, guava, and lima bean, Inca wisdom sleeps, waits for re-enactment. And the land, alive, flourishes in the hearts of the people, and reinvigorates the music of the Spanish language, fevering the poetics of Latin artisanry. Terra vitala, the prosperity unmined, will prevail in the end.

If the color of a macaw flashes in the depth of jungle, and there is no one there to perceive it, does it still flash?

There is an instance when color, no matter how vibrant, stands muted, chromatically silenced. And there is an instance when the same rarefied color is vivified, incarnated in an aurous fiesta. How more still can color draw than when it enters the neutral chroma of green? Greenness halts, stands stock-still, holds to

ultimate centeredness. Where blue recedes with unending retreat, and red rushes headlong into the eye, green stands between, and so renders itself as an ideal backdrop.

Across the emerald canvas of la selva, when parrots flock over, painting themselves, no matter how effulgent, vivid, or reeling with madness the beauty, color can only sound its thunder though a lens whose owner is awake and grappling with the evasive aperture of lucidity. Such eye nectar attains its nirvana when sipped by soulful perception, occasions that render an inhalation for the angels.

And when the parrot sleeps, and the monkey is nowhere to be found, when a scent of ashes fills the air, and light dims to invite shadow's stealthy guise, when the ambitions of the people are concealed like animals in a foliage impenetrable, and the jaguar is verging on its final dreams in the depth of a cave where the bat guards all reverie, then there arises opportunity. The portal of verdancy comes ajar, and the wary, laying aside all arrow and poison of dart, may enter the heart's still pool of receptivity.

And on the other side of this threshold, where Lizard Woman dances with Tobacco Man, Anteater, seized by an uncontrollable fit, is laughing until his teeth fall out. And high up on the mountainside, Water Mistress, running headlong, picking up speed, flying faster than feet can hold to, tumbles forward down the slope. Hitting the ground, she transforms into a great snake and slips into a newly formed streambed to make a home, further down, on the bottom of boiling rapids. And the Orinoco River is born.

In the lowlands, a thousand masked hunters are in search of Fat Rabbit. And when they find him, they surround him and they all shoot at once. A thousand arrows fly into Fat Rabbit. And Porcupine is born.

Time goes by, and on the other side of the veil that separates the world from limitless ingenuity a volcano vents earthen ire. And out from the cone flies a wild man with flaming hair and hands. He rushes across the land, setting fires in his wake, racing toward the portal. He wants out. He wants to pass through the portal into the world and burn what he finds on the other side. But when he reaches the threshold, he stumbles headlong through, lands on his head, and passes out. The next day from the same place, rooted in the soil, grows a verdant, almost luminous, bush of chili peppers.

The horizon is a place where vision ends.

Amiga. Sea of yearning on the shore of ocean-eyes, under sunray smile.
Can you walk across even half the boundaries with me?

Mares dance in the heart of your pampas sojourn. A grass of pampa rooting the carpet of my widening vision, a horizon breathing, wings full and dialoguing with the wind. With radiance condensing, precipitation of light and love sculpts into a pattering comfort, creates a rain descending untainted, showering down upon the grime of worldly contrivance, washing away the dust of dissipation.

And a man walks on the horizon, seeking.

Something magnetic draws the iron filings of resolve, energy recombines, we trade currents in our oceans of soul, red for blue, green for orange. Colors gleam with an audacity that will not reduce to ember.

And el lobo, encountering our trail on the horizon, prepares to run the final chase.

From albatross height, wings braced in a blustering sky, vision pierces the depths below, where nest-hunting hummingbirds-to-be pummel the ethers on astral wings, and quiet jungle greenery growls in the throat of silent thought, and a magnificently vulnerable landscape invites and enchants and ennobles.

And I rest on your horizon, waiting.

Up in sun-bright highlands, where condor ministrations address the most transcendent ideals, where our lama dependability renders wool of comfort, where a cactus-wood door faces east and taxes are paid in labor of retribution, a callous of levy, and winds sweep wide and clean, terraces of quinoa, corn, and potato thrive. Here, in the ball of time's yarn, each finger width spans a day, each hand width a week, each arm length a month. And as I contemplate the unraveling skein of dissolution, I come, inexorably, to a time before birth, to a life prior to this one. And then comes to mind a sojourn upon a tiny isle within a teeming ocean.

Meanwhile, beneath the highlands, down in Amazonas, where almost everything is against the law, and so, almost everything must be permitted, where a sudden deluge of tropical rain can wash asunder the best intention, a tributary leads to a confluence with a great river, a river that spills over into a seasonal flood plain, an overflow that saturates the wick of our lamp's perception. Under the canopy that presides at a great height, upholding the realm of parrot, flower, and monkey, it is cool and sunless, an ambiance of green submarine darkness.

The people here are shedding their anaconda layers, skins of spent volition that bind and constrict as they swell with the flesh of resolve and insight. Here, under a kinkajou understory, anthills spawn, and legions march our ant-horde thinking, slicing away at all leaves of conjecture, and crystalline nests gestate proliferation to house a termite brotherhood, a social organization of industry and executive deliberation.

And here ranges the longsnout coatimundi, and the aggressive parrot squawking, and the rooting, knife-edged tusk of peccary. And within the vast cathedral of Amazona selva, under a vaulting ceiling, sacrifices of human complacency proceed, lethal elements abound. Though the land demonstrates paradise, shadow forces over-well, persisting as deadening heat, as oppressive humidity that effectively prevents idyllic languor, as does all manner of insect, mosquito, spider, ant to harry and sting. And deadly beings call for vigilance, as death, trauma or deliberation stalk in the guise of jaguar, toxic snake, piranha, malaria, beriberi, leprosy, blackwater fever, and a host of others.

In the distance are heard the castanets of crickets. Closer, the whine of mosquitoes. Closer still, an army of ants converges, swarms of soldiers covering the body of our lassitude. In the cause of sanity, we flee to the water's edge.

Later, by close of day, our machete thoughts slice through resignation. We initiate the calls of the animals. Some call back - the owl, the monkey, the boar, the coatimundi. We will endeavor to prevail, we will seek the cover of a deep-rooted carob tree, where good fortune consorts with restitution to provide a shelter of nightwall fabric. There, we discover jaguar tracks printed in the clay of our reasoning, in the dry riverbed of rationality. The feline stalks our peccary obstinacy, penetrates our dreams, its spirit arriving at our campfire long before its form.

And while the vines of habituation drape and climb, weaving over the fabric of our enterprise, and curling under the determination of our prowess, our tortoise patience lies helpless, stuck upon its back, exerting its powerless will to right itself. Can it hold forth? Can it wait out the oratory of our inversion?

Long ago, nasty thoughts spoken into a gourd created a swarm of mosquitoes that flew out to populate the jungle. In another gourd, only good will was spoken, and the elixir of joy incarnated into a beautiful flock of butterflies.

Seeds of rubber trees spill into a shell rattling into a rhythm of maraca. As we gather the latex of love's forbearance, a chicle resiliency imbues our honor. A flying-beak, known as toucan, flees the sacrilege of plunder. Like predation upon

the eggs of colorful parrots, conquistador hegemony afflicts the creative inspiration of original peoples. But like serpent madness, a mentoring proceeds, about toxicity, about the venom of paralysis. Wrestling with an anaconda, strangulation threatens, constriction of inspiration. Now hidden, posing as a leaf pile or a branch, coiled to strike, waiting for fresh blunder, such limbless mobility becomes a conduct of direct will versus an extension through appendages.

Now, the hummingbird of our mania flies so fast it creates a fever. With miniscule bursts of radiance, penetrations, and sword-beak vigilance, it guards the bullion nectar of imagination, the diluted octane of high-metabolic stasis that hums upon a petal-infusion of the exhalations of angels.

The towering canopy of multi-layered greenery is heavy-winged, feathered with primordia. And mid-height, upon a crude platform of twigs nests the jungle fowl, the wild-eyed hoatzin, blue-faced under a spiked crest. And below stretch the flood plains with floating meadows and riverine passages, liquid roadways, estradas liquadas, where dawn-bearing flamingoes abound, as does the water hyacinth and water lily.

Seed-eating fish, tambaqui, forage, as the heating sun pops awry the casings of rubber tree seeds, spewing them into the water. A few yards away, a bird song is sounding, but its singer is invisible, so fine is its camouflage. Rescinding the flesh of conquest, a fruitarian diet evokes a countenance of surpassing beauty and, in turn, the macaw of resplendent color evades the snake, the slithering embodiment of appetite. Free to proceed, the macaw lofts over the river of inspiration to graze upon elements, salts of calcium, phosphorous, burgeoning fruits of untried conception that modify the mind's twining, invoking an alchemy of contemplation.

Thunder speaks in bird tongues, volumes of romance reel off maddening, confining his-her-story. Sacred time alone together is rationed in furtive moments. The downy caress of a warrior-of-love evokes a gentle embering in the body, within the subtle body, within the astral body, layers deep.

And you've glimpsed my horizon.

Choose: a white flower to share purity

A red one for erotica

Yellow for intelligence

Orange for compassion

Green for healing

Gold to empower

Blue for peace

And while you stand on my horizon and cast your love in my direction, I envision a rainbow bouquet.

Meanwhile, within the fragrance and warming tide of this outrageous flora, a passport is rendered to assail the social frontier, to seek and retrieve wandering innocence. This ministry, this portfolio of passion that issues visas, stamps a permit to cross a border into the wild subterranean nation of animal companions, nature spirits, birthing suns, uncountable stars haunting primordia.

Horizons.

I rise resplendent as a palm tree, as a howler monkey with its bonfire of jubilation, as the celestial quetzal, a vortex of color grown wings, an anarchy of beauty brought to order. My mahogany blood is red fiber, a wooden plasma. Mirrored in your portrait, a masterpiece of sky and cloudscape, and water's open tumult, my heart becomes a parrot, a fiesta of wings and energy, wild color cascading against the green of my solemnity.

Horizons.

Love wakes a current unmappable, as musical notes nip the heels of those walking in routine sadness, and ashes are converted to courageous bloomings on a quiet path to the future, even now wending its way through an untaintable forest of feeling, over which skyships build into plumes that rain down upon untold cornfield questings, a volition whose milk meets the thirst of eons in a thunderously silent quenching.

Whose horizon is whose?

21 Japan - *Haiku as String on Koto*

While out of the sea the land arose
and to the sea it shall return
what then is the case for humanity?
Having risen from spirit
in what form shall it return?

This arena of remarkable serenity presides as a setting of bright summers and dim, snowy winters, with evergreen boughs sleeping under the lading of snow, a stark purity bracing the Ainu, people of the land, burnishing the copper of their soul.

And from time to time, occasions of icy rain crust the snow, setting the Ainu free to delve deep into the forest. And there, ranging atop the crusty pack, while hunting and gathering wood, the deer present themselves as a gift to the maw of hunger. And the wise hunter, in gratitude, hangs a little of his catch in branches to feed the crows, or lays an offering to the foxes by the base of a tree.

And with spring rains, the striped owl, protector of the village, flaps its wings to the sound of the silver patter. And the people, sensing a promise of treasure pervading the air, feel affirmed by the owl's voice inflecting against the syllables of the rain. What riches shall visit from out of the plenitude? What shall arise from the ground of this fervor?

And, as out of winter death the new year is born, so are tales that run long, and come rhythmically told. All the day and through the night, unceasing until dawn, the stories wend, turning and streaming, directed and redirected by the

beings in nature, as improvisations composed by Ainu are orchestrated at whim of bear and wolf, orca and tuna, snake, frog, mushroom, lily, and yew tree. Each take a turn to wind and unwind, spin and weave, such that in spring the soul of the land is filled with a treasurehold of rhythmic sound and image.

Now, with gold-gleaming buttercup and budding of auspicious elm, first tree planted by a god, the waters again flow free and pure. And the Ainu make offering to the waters, that their lives may know such flowing, that the stream of heart course in pure manner. And who are the gods that dwell in the streaming that boldly arise and walk the land? Are they not here to open the sealed chamber of inspiration?

Attending the weave of this questing, the Ainu come to discern the fabric of nature's cloth. And they sing in tandem with the birds, mentors of harmony, gather wild edibles, tend their dwellings, and carve new tools.

And far away north of sacred Mount Fuji-moto (Mount Fujiyama's former incarnation), where it is said the last remaining dragons came to dwell, the Ainu watch the gods give birth out of a volcanic womb to numerous small islands, heated, contracting, rapidly birthing in a fury of hail and lightning. And amidst the upheaval and foment, Matsu, pine-tree man of Ainu, sits unperturbed, pondering the flowing water beside a stream of endless renewal. This is his sandho to carp, an approach to its sacred being.

With the afternoon sunlight dulled by the birthing maelstrom, Matsu perceives Carp, creator-fish, flexing in the steady current, and honors its strength in ascending the river, its inexorable attainment of the stream over which it now presides.

And Carp senses the presence of Matsu, the quiet bearing of his sando, and asks for help for mandarin duck who, as he passed upstream found it floundering, weakened by the rigors of the harsh winter. And the following day, with fate turning on the surpassing wheel of sandho, proceeding downstream, Matsu finds mandarin duck resting quietly on a grassy bank. Then, nurturing the duck with millet, reviving its will, mandarin duck grows strong again.

I will assist you, responds mandarin duck, when you most need it, at a time and place far in the future.

After giving thanks, Matsu travels to the edge of the ocean, and ponders the new islands. There he witnesses, in the magic of the sun's setting, the silver gliding of brightlings over the cold and briny span. Could these be spirits of other

homelands? wonders Matsu, spirits who live in timeless community, cultivating their own sando to the heavens by engaging in this art of dance?

Such theatrics are taking place in the time when bonsai tree and ivy are born. And bamboo and seaweed are formed - before phoenix and cherry-with-blossoms, before plum tree and silkworm and koto music. And Matsu studies the ways of the water spirits and learns the meaning of their song and movement. After much practice and application, the body of culture that develops from this study evolves into a rich resource, a source of inspiration. And it seems unlikely that its influence will fail to endure over a long span of time and circumstance.

Time passes, and Matsu is reborn - now as Yukio, in the time of phoenix and koto. As a child, Yukio plays with a Tengu friend - part-man, part-bird, part-tree - who lives in a pine grove. The Tengu teaches Yukio the art of strategy, and imparts the wisdom of patience. Then Yukio studies some of the principle virtues, such as *Kamikaze*, or “divine wind,” a use of will and heart together with great persistence.

But are Yukio’s ways of mischief born from the core of his being, or do they derive from his friend, reflecting the true nature of a Tengu? Yukio is permitted to play with the Tengu’s straw cloak of invisibility and uses it for various acts of trickery. However, consistently, Yukio keeps his mischief within reasonable bounds, so that he earns only minor forms of retribution.

When Yukio matures, he learns the art of rope-making and is soon fashioning an endless braiding of rope out of straw. One day, he sets out to ply his trade in a mountainous region. While there, he comes upon a magnificent willow growing by a river at the edge of a town. Yukio so admires the willow that when he hears of intention to cut it down for use in building a bridge, he becomes exceedingly distraught and seeks to prevent the scheme.

This commitment of Yukio’s is a historic occasion. What samurai will arise for a cause such as this? What shogunate would stand up for the virtue of nature? And who will model responsible emperage of the Earth? When the last persimmon is left on an autumn tree, each leaving it for others, and none partake of it, it seems to wither. However, once the veiling is penetrated, and such an event is understood, do we not find that the fruit is consumed by the spirit of community?

Eventually, by pointing out the exceeding virtue of the tree in its live form, and presenting enough people with a beautiful verbal portrait of the willow, Yukio is able to save the tree from destruction.

Soon after, as fate has things, Yukio meets a woman under the great willow, a maiden to whom his heart is destined to develop strong roots of love. In time, their love intertwines and a wonderful marriage ensues, the wedding of which takes place under the flowing foliage of the auspicious tree.

As the seasons turn, winter's end sees the willow branches, as though gleaming with the aurous gold of spring, begin to bud their tiny lemon-green clusters. All through the season of renewal, as morning glories open their flasks of light, the gentle wind in the pines weaves with happy notes from the flute of Yukio's wife.

While butterflies emerge from cocoons of lengthy dreaming, and the blue of iris crowns the greening land, Yukio with patient devotion concocts an extract of hydrangea to offer to the spirit of the wind for healing and good harvest. Nearby his dwelling a plum tree has awakened. There, in the angular twigs of its jutting branches, delicate ivory blossoms emerge. And when, across the vast backdrop of a pale rose sky, there wings a resplendent blue and white flycatcher, when this bird of paradise, with its long-plumed, flowing tail, alights amid the plum blossoms and sings in bell-like tones, Yukio cannot help feeling his offering has been accepted.

Later in the year, with summer wind ranging up through the passes of the mountains, warmth pervading all, encumbrances diminishing, Yukio feels himself released from the restraint of worldly care. Up in the heights, upon the stony shoulders of the pinnacles, grow stunted and twisted pines, sculpted masterpieces depicting persistence and resourcefulness. And Yukio conjectures that if an aspirant were to render even half such noble quality in an artwork, they would attain the rank of a great master.

Later, in the lowlands adjacent to his dwelling, while Yukio is drawing upon a lavender-perfumed sheet of paper, the moon rises. And as its silvering beam drapes its rays over the garden and gleams softly upon the water lilies of the pond, fireflies begin to emerge from a bamboo thicket. In the distance koto music sounds, floating dreamily over the setting, interweaving with the tiny pulse of the flying torches, creating delicate aerial harbors of nascent mystery within each lantern recess.

And the season turns, and the autumn wind that poets find so compelling sighs across the land. Deep in the woods there sounds a strange and mournful call. Is it an owl? A night-bird we've not yet come to know? But only the lingering scent of gentian and wild carnation and the haunting aroma of chrysanthemum respond to the question.

Time passes, and mists, rains, and stormy skies bear down on the land. Drums, bells, and wind instruments sound in the roaring wind. Cicadas cry as they dream of snow swept drifts. A happy oppression persists for a time, then gives way to winter. Now the golden eagle claims the throne of sky, and night draws a longer veiling. It is through the dark of night that the first snow descends. And the happy couple wonders, how is it such a painting, such a choreograph of dancing snowflakes, can emerge from so black a heaven? Then, with daybreak, a sea of light burns across the broad seascape, radiates upon the mountains, washes through the sky, and all the land is cloaked in brilliance.

The seasons turn, years pass. One night, Yukio dreams he and his wife are crossing a wide river. Yukio pays two black-hooded ferrymen some rice and a length of cloth to conduct the ferry. They wend a course through boiling whirlpools - one pulling in front on a rope made of strands of wisteria, the other poling behind. When they attain the other side, they encounter a land of untold mystery. After exploring for a while, the time comes to go back. But, as Yukio discovers when he returns to the other side, he is alone. As the dream comes to a close, his wife remains on the far side.

Soon after, a new emperor takes command of the region. One of the edicts he issues is to have the great willow used in constructing a temple in tribute to his feats as a warrior. This time, Yukio is unable to prevent the willow's demise. It is not long after the fall of the willow that Yukio's wife passes away.

Spirit promises a fertile garden, but places us on a barren, rocky landscape.

Once again, with the wheeling of the stars in the heavens, a great time passes and we find Matsu, then Yukio, is now Hira, a young woman in search of an appropriate suitor. But Hira is intent on complying with divine will. She wants Spirit to choose her mate. Through intuition, she conceives of a notion to follow Spirit's light to the optimal suitor. *Shall I remain vigilant for such guidance? Shall I await a luminous path?*

At the same time, by the shore of that great vista called ocean, Kita, a lighthouse-keeper, is growing lonely in the solitude of his vocation. To a pine tree by the sea, *if you were only a human being, I would talk with you.* The wind visits his solitude. A calling deer deepens the night. A stream asks him to follow its trundle, the murmur of its unimpedable momentum.

Bearing the karma of his profession, Kita is learning to penetrate the unknown, to illuminate what passes in the dark. *Rainy season dark, from a distant peak a nightingale wings. But as it draws near, I see it is cloaked as a woodpecker, a kimono of black and white.* And in his meditation, another image follows - *plum blossoms, the first of spring, as though new love beginning.* Later, inside, by the light of his rapeseed oil lamp, Kita conceives the notion of sending out a prayer with his light beam, that the darkness of his cloister be brightened by a companion.

One evening, after the passing of the moon of singing frogs, having wandered far to the very edge of her island home, Hira sees a golden light shining from across a wide channel, and she is immediately drawn to it. *Can this be an answer, as on wings of holy heron, to the song of my heart?* Resolved to follow along the shaft of the beacon, she commissions a boat builder to fashion an appropriate craft and deliver it to the seashore. By the time the craft has been prepared, it is early summer, the sun is warm, the days wild and windy, the nights a deep and quiet black.

Meanwhile, as Kita makes his rounds, he senses an unusual timbre to the atmosphere. All through the windless day the sky sustains a broad white wash. It is not a cloudy day, not a sunny, blue-sky day, but a day in which the cloud cover is so thin and even that it captures the sunlight and radiates an even glow across the land. At mid-day a seagull is soaring at a great height, far higher than usual. On a hillside a single green iris blooms amid a throng of blue irises. Kita finds an exotic shell washed ashore. Never before has he seen such delicate purple and gold blushes, and in such a perfect radial configuration.

That night, adorned in a garland made of holy sakaki leaves, Hira follows the beam across the wide water.

When Kita first meets Hira, he is infatuated with this unusual woman. He serves her plum flower tea with a delicate almond flavor. The pleasure of a ripe strawberry does not compare to the taste of her presence. He is enamored that she experiences moonrise as a poem, a waterfall as a song. To Hira, a year in nature is an epic drama culminating in spring with the miraculous incarnating of a new cycle.

And Kita thrives in her company, in the way she fathoms the wisdom in nature's ways. And his soul gains much, especially from her intimate awareness of one of life's greatest secrets - the wealth that lies in the silent emptiness, how a single red blossom in a green arrangement can enhance its properties, as opposed

to a handful, which would dilute the essence of the bloom. How the emptiness between the stars is filled with limitless harmony. How the dead of winter imbues the Earth and its people with a reservoir of unending life.

But something deep inside of Kita gnaws at him, will not let him be at peace with his new fortune. *How strange, he thinks, that Hira should cross this great passage in the black of night to visit me.* A moss-gray wash veils his vision, and he cannot quite believe in the whole experience.

But Hira loves to paddle and enjoys the quiet waters of night and the metaphysical aptness of crossing a great water by guidance of a light.

All is well for a time, until the secret uneasiness in Kita's soul begins to erupt. He dreams of slaying a cuckoo, of hurling it into a dark pit. A gecko crawls out of shrubbery, a disturbing presence emerging from a shadowy denizen. A gnawing fear persists in him, that Hira isn't his lover, but an enchantress sent to subdue him in some way. One night, Kita decides to test their relationship by shutting the light off.

At first, the night is calm. Like many times before, Hira sets out to cross the water. A soft breeze arises, the white surf of the gentle rolling waves glints cheerily in the beacon's rays.

Then, partway across, the light goes out. Suddenly in the dark, Hira grows anxious. Fog rolls in, beads of trepidation form on her brow, and a queasy feeling churns in the pit of her stomach. The fog thickens until she finds herself in a black void without direction. The waves rise, and with them a cold, bitter wind. Three times she shifts from fear to anger, and back again to fear. Three times the wind shifts direction, each time sending higher waves upon her craft. Soon, as her fear and anger boil over, the waves buffet and slam from all sides, and spray flies, soaking her through. Upon the roiling foam her craft begins to ship water, first in little streams, then torrents driven by winds with voices that scream and shriek across the water and deep unto the land. And she rages now such that the fury within her and the fury without her merge to form an untamable force that capsizes her craft and she drowns.

Immediately, the storm becomes a hurricane, the raging water undermines the lighthouse, pulling it and its keeper into the broiling cauldron.

And even while Spirit beckons us toward a lush garden we aspire to desolation.

Once again, much time passes. With moonrise, the dark and empty vault is suddenly filled with singing silver. As though upheld by bamboo pillars, aroma of moss permeates the heavens.

Under peach blossoms, holy herons stand. Under herons, the bulging eyes of goldfish. And above all, in the black and timeless vault of night's star-leaved forest, the staghorn moon ranges.

And Matsu, then Yukio, then Hira, is now Genji, born in a fair city whose name means "spacious place unto itself." And Genji is soon wed to Sadako, a lovely woman from the city called "long future." Sadako's gentle manner helps Genji overcome an inexplicable anger that arises from time to time. Out of love for Sadako, Genji gradually overcomes his affliction and his heart comes to know a deeper field of peace than it has ever before encountered.

Genji's home city is a wonderful place to be in love. Lush gardens abound and the people invest much time and effort in raising the community to a state of beauty and wholesome fellowship.

Cherry blossoms are in full bloom as Genji and Sadako stroll down the boulevard, hand-in-hand. The perfect shapes and intense green of the bamboo leaves resonate with the charm and enchantment in the eyes and souls of the newlyweds. There are no barriers to their love. Their families approve of their marriage, the community exalts in the glow of their hearts, Genji's business flourishes in the charismatic energy that streams from the well of high-borne passion. All seems right with the world.

Around this time, a mutual friend, an artist, bestows upon the fortunate couple one of her paintings. For some time she has been diverging from the classical tradition. Now she paints with raw emotion, brush strokes trembling across the paper, blossoms rendered unrecognizable, yet powerful and energetic. In the midst of the living color there floats a lotus so rarefied as to set itself aflame. *What has freed the passion of my work?* wonders the artist. And the happy couple comes to mind. *Am I not inspired by the transcendent love of Genji and Sadako?*

And around the time when Genji and Sadako are presented with the painting, they feel that while their love shines so brightly and multiplies its force in the community, that surely its power will connect with the passion of other lovers, to create a tide of healing to help ease the troubles of the world.

And is not the secret of living in beauty and harmony upon the Earth laid bare, revealed for all to see, in the way the people arrange and cultivate their homes and gardens?

In the land of Koto
sweep like spreading evergreen
rooflines of Japan.

Aesthetic beauty
and harmony with nature
make lasting shelter.

What magic flows here
where water springs from Earth
a hidden power.

Worthy of a shrine
human gesture enhancing
Spirit responding.

And if the spirit of a setting appreciates such human gesture, can it respond by enhancing the very magic of that gesture?

Those sensitive to nature's hidden resources enter the seasons in a fervent way. For example, it seems as though a stone bridge built over a waterlily-enriched stream has a peculiar bearing that works its finest magic in the moonlit night of the highest days of summer. How often, on those few sacred nights, does the bridge become a passage of exceptional means? After the day's sun-glory passes, while stone prominences prevail on the near shore, an effulgence of green resides on the far side, and the water of the pond grows opaque, its goldfish rendered languid in the moon-steeped radiance. There are those who cross the bridge as a threshold and discover on the other side keys to the highest fulfillment for their incarnation.

The kinds of discoveries that proceed from penetrating nature's veils inspire people to create arrangements to please the eye, arrangements that articulate a sense of form and aesthetic beauty. Gardens, buildings, a stream, a walkway of stones, stone walls, bridges, moss, shrubs, trees. Within this art form the people

heed the conversation that takes place between fountains, flowers, gardens, streams. Highly polished floors are made to look like still water, while rice paper panels, like sails, are set drifting over it. Tea, growing by the side of every house, blends with fresh green hemp leaf patterns. Rose and white azaleas counterpoint the greenery, as do fragrant honeysuckle, tropical ferns and yellow lilies, in a three-way weave.

Minimalist arrangements are paramount, a single sprig of rose azalea in a pure white vase. Flowering trees and shrubs are used with discretion. One blossom, or a handful, versus a mass that dilutes the essence. Less is more. One kind of plant is set against another, offset to enhance its properties. Are Japanese gardens models of a future glory of nature? Can such power lead, in a subsequent incarnation, to a yet-to-know resplendence?

An ancient forest of apricot trees dreams its future in the core of its seeds. Like a moxabustion infusion, wind in the pines blends with a sweeping shower. And the streaming brook, winding and falling, proceeds as a liquid choreography in the theater of nature. Without proper attention, the water and wind cadenced lyricism that descends to the bamboo thicket of human conjecture and growing desire, intersplicing, becomes a conglomerate meshing impenetrable.

Now the dramatist, white light, is robing itself in various colors. A dragonfly, reveling in sunray, empowered by heat, is flying upon the burgeoning raft of summer, a lading of warmth and complacency. A morning glory blossom, bright and undistorted, emerges in conjunction with a faultless harmony.

But then, what of the sanderlings thronged auspiciously upon the beaches, what of the crane's call, and the imminent melancholy of winter?

While out of the sea the land arose, shall it return? And, while out of the vaulting ocean of spirit humanity arose, so shall it likewise return? Until such time - as angels arising, wings bearing us to a vocation of co-creative agency with the God-force - are we not like an incomplete haiku?

Meanwhile, the fortunate couple continues upon the path of bliss for many years in Genji's home city. Time goes by, they grow old. Life is still beautiful, despite the war with America. Neither Genji nor Sadako dwell on the evils of war. They do not believe in such means, such foolishness, such inhumanity among men.

Laying aside the sword of retribution, a thousand flames of creative resurgence are lit. And all the jewels on the hilt of the richest blade cannot buy

one iota of warrior karma. Even the very words of a warrior, when spoken with customary force, dissect the world, syllables slicing asunder nature's ambrosial wholeness, reducing, rebuking the synergy, slandering holism, refusing the nectar, thirsting after a diminutive sake, dulling the edge of sanctity.

And Genji, on his morning walk, looks upon the sun and is visited by a strange thought. *What if the sun, instead of directing its glance in distant manner toward Earth, were to visit in full measure? What fiery devastation would come of that?*

And Genji thinks how odd such an idea is, but thinks of Sadako and walks on in bliss, down the boulevard of the great city and thinks of the city that Sadako comes from, and feels that surely its name must mean "heaven." And in that moment Genji forgets that Nagasaki means "long future."

And Sadako, as she strolls along the flower-rich boulevard with Genji, feels that surely this city that they dwell in must mean "heaven." For she has somehow forgotten that Hiroshima means "spacious place unto itself."

And neither of them is aware that a terrible event is imminent.

Fortunately for Genji and Sadako, on that horrific day they are in a remote northern part of Japan, vacationing at a wildlife refuge. As fate would have it, it is a refuge for mandarin ducks.

While they are exceedingly grateful for their fortune, they are devastated by the loss of countless friends and family. So sings Genji's grieving heart: *Tears run down my face and chest and burn hotly through my soul. From Earth, my loved ones are banished. Like kingfishers in blue kimonos, skimming low over a great water, I cannot reach them now. Facing my agony, my deprivation, this grieving runs deep. I must go to the center of this, I must find its root. What can avail now? What manner of hope can ever be found?*

And, while Spirit entices with a fertile valley, humankind renders a desolation.

22 America 1 - Facing the Threshold

Most people transmit a jumble of conflicting wishes, hopes, and fears. The Self sorts them out and induces a set of experiences that complies with the overall transmission.

If a person can decide and discover clearly what he or she wants, and can project that in a straightforward way, will he or she not enter upon a path of rare power? Furthermore, in terms of our relationship with nature, what untold resources wait to be acknowledged, and born to the table of holism?

Weather today - cloudy with shattered flowers.

Oh river, river of our dreams, take our astral schemes and run them through your silver seams.

Somehow he missed out on a key developmental phase, a la Americana, when he was unable to comply with the status quo. Even as he came of age, refusing to permit the materialist's wool to be pulled over his eyes, he saw spirit life in everything.

Because of his affinity to nature, in the garden-land of his soul, within a small patch of fertile soil, he took to cultivating herbs of well-being - patience, compassion, empathy, forgiveness. He knew that reincarnation weighed in on

nearly every matter of consequence, that karma spun a most reliable and ingenious weave. Not that there weren't times he grew frustrated, times when he wouldn't mind circumventing his karma. But what prevailed in him, for the most part, was a deep appreciation of the masterpiece called Life.

And when he arrived at that pivotal juncture in the early stages of mid-life in which one either undertakes soulful purpose or suffers formidable existential angst, he knew he wanted to write about nature, to share a deep-felt bond that he had, up until now, been keeping under a barrel.

But what literary forum could provide the primary vehicle? After sampling modern poetry and finding it too obscurist to convey much substance to most readers, he opted for poetic prose. Not that all poetry of the time was a washout. Some of it *was* effective, a masterful poise of expression and meaning, word art and communication - like some of Mary Oliver or Pablo Neruda's work, and a handful of other writers.

In sum, there were many writers busy digging potholes on the nature trail of creative intent while, up above, in the fruitful branches of literati, there could be found only a rare and furtive flash of blue jay, feathers preening the light of a new morning.

By means of countless hours of practice over the years, his word art attained a musical quality. But though he called, and called again, on the warders of publication, the drawbridge was raised and materialism moated the castle of fulfillment.

An early vocation as house painter and window cleaner transfigured by default to its higher counterpart by mid-life. Window cleaning gave way to an ability to perceive underlying truths to clarify perception. And painting gave way to an astral vocation, or means of enhancing the colors of the heart.

Time's passage and rotation of the wheel of destiny conspired to cultivate a nomadic lifestyle, in which he learned to glean a silver-lode from two disparate but productive veins, the depths of wilderness, and the depths of urban culture.

One all too often hears the statement these days that it's hard to believe in the existence of the soul, or the spiritual aspect of life. But such a sentiment can only be very transitory as we proceed into the third millennium. Such a statement, in these times of spiritual acceleration, can have only a short future.

If we turn the statement on its ear, we arrive at the notion that it's hard to believe in the existence of *matter*, a consideration that bears more credibility, especially when we examine how scientists have probed deeply into matter only to discover a Void-like emptiness pregnant with an energetic force. Given leading edge research, how can matter prove to be other than an illusionary sleight of mind?

But then, on the other hand, it is also possible that matter is a masterpiece of godly intent.

Or, perhaps, it is both.

In the spring wind of a new year, the avian sergeant of the marsh, the red-winged blackbird, stations itself on a cattail perch. And the songbird of my elation sails over a forest of intent, locked in the talon of hawk-disillusion. A sandpiper drills holes into the beach of memory, its beak an injection, a regression to images of distant sites to which the soul has traversed. And a pine siskin alights its tiny frame atop a grand coniferous reverie and exclaims its chee-ee-rr, over and over, as it mines in the morning light an insectine breakfast between the petals of spruce cone resolve. Across the segue of nature a floral palette erupts as, one stitch at a time, the quilt of Primavera fashions its eruptive season. Meanwhile, in a cloak of invisibility tailored by ingenuity, coyote, the rebel drifter, picks his way through the tall grass, a concealment of affluence, paws of stealth treading a silent rhythm, an ancient pattering quest in counterpoint to modernity.

We live in a world that represents reality.

Thought, as we experience it, is the shadow of spirit. We cannot know spirit through thought, just as we cannot know a thing by its shadow.

“What’ll ya have?”

(A wild black Arabian horse with lightning in its eyes and great wings to carry me through the stars to a doorway of mystery.)

“A black coffee, please.”

“Come to watch the hockey game?”

(Oh, the helmeted gladiators with wooden swords who battle with ice-cutting shoes. See them riding rhino and lion, and falcon power. Watch the speed of attack, listen to the impact of plastic armor!)

“You bet!”

“So, what’s new?”

(Love, money, transformation, energy forming itself into new expression, joy of new skies, moon rays from the heart of interspecies companionship, sunrise in the belly of a great pine forest, yearnings, there’s a woman’s head I’d love to turn my way.)

“Not much, how you been?”

“Pretty good - I just landed a new job, so I’ll be quitting this one soon.”

(Probably some paper-shuffling gig that goes under the name “research.” Knee-deep in red tape, pink tape, scotch tape, irish tape. Procedures, cushions, loopholes, creative intent turned to subdued pap.)

“Research?”

“Yes - something to keep me out of trouble!”

(Keep you out of trouble, jail, debt, and off drugs, booze, and from chasing all the honey-bunnies, and using your eyes to undress nuns, and howling around in that mustang of yours into the wee hours, speeding past cops to piss them off...)

“I’ll bet!”

“So, are you still single and unattached?”

(Single - yes, going alone through all kinds of experiences. Walking through a landscape with three suns and seven moons and talking trees and great-winged birds for guides and mountains that convert dreams into flashing gemstones of inspiration and dancing in the rays of undiscovered stars - and no one to share it

with. Oh - a Libra or a Taurus who knows yoga makes a better bed partner for a Gemini than a Scorpio high on ginseng...)

“Yeah - I guess I gotta fight a few more battles on my own for a while.”

“Are you working on any new environmental issues?”

(Hell, yes - I’m gonna steal a helicopter and get a few eco-guerillas together to fly around during hunting season and tranquilize-dart some hunters, put radio-transmitter collars on them and track them. When we find out what bar the varmints hang out in, we’ll cruise in there and give them all vasectomies...)

“Yeah, I’m working on a plan. . .”

The spiritual world is descending into materiality, instigating transformation. The time is upon us now to develop spiritual eyes again, although we’ll need a different form of clairvoyance than that once commonly known in the distant past. Long ago, it was dreamlike, a twilight form of seeing. Now, we are compelled to cultivate a clear, wakeful forum, functioning with a pure heart and untroubled mind.

When too many remain ecologically illiterate, the magic of nature becomes depleted. When morning rays, once charged with godlike, charismatic power, are tarnished by smog, or ignored by human consciousness, when the cadence of an evening cricket is muted by an ear attuned to worldly elements, when migrating waterfowl, once a hauntingly beautiful mystery, are rendered to the mundane, reduced in numbers, and tainted by industrial poisons, when birdsong and wind in boughs falls on unmusical ears, the only remaining hope lies in awakening our spiritual powers.

While I warm myself by a fire, I listen to a hauntingly beautiful movement in Beethoven’s Ninth symphony, then collapse into bed. Outside my window, a bright star shines. I watch it shimmer and glint until sleep takes me. Fitfully, I dream. Furtive scenes come and go, worrisome fragments that play out until I reach a place of composure. Here, I am lifted by a dream wherein a brilliant star shines, then expands to envelop me in it. I find myself wading the warm waters of a South Pacific island. It is a beautiful, comforting place - bright, warm,

renewing. With me is a lovely woman, smiling warmly, beaming with love. Though I don't recognize her, somehow I have always known her.

Two years pass. My wife and I separate. Over a two week period, I cannot eat much, as food makes me feel ill. I struggle to cope with the divorce, the thought of hardship in store for my sons, the waywardness of my life.

And then, one night, a vision takes place. In a remarkably lucid dream, I meet the woman of my South Pacific dream. As we stand before each other, the warmth that envelops us, the intense love, is so encompassing that, gazing upon each other, we become like pools of water converging.

I awaken and realize it is Valentine's Day. The vision continues to ember in my heart through the day, along with a remarkable feeling of having arrived home after a lengthy journey.

Through process, I come to realize that the mysterious woman in my vision is a compendium of many forms, *simultaneously*. From the outset, two of the layers that unfold for me are that she is at once my twin flame, or soul mate, plus the soul, or feminine principle of my being.

While I increasingly attend the forum of my soul, I also anticipate meeting my soul mate, and my bearing becomes charged with an extra sense of intrigue, a brighter outlook. Years pass, and she does not come into my life. I stop dwelling on a meeting taking place. I come to realize that I must get on with my life, that there are different kinds of soul mates, and I open my parameters so that I am willing to form a relationship with whoever the universe guides me to. For the most part, I manage to forget her and move on.

Over time, I come to realize that a third, even more compelling interpretation prevails - which is that the woman in my vision is an embodiment of the world of nature.

Numerous accounts indicate that when we penetrate into the mysterious realm of the human being, we encounter, at its deepest region, every nuance and being that reside across the immensity of the natural forum.

This level of experience would indicate that Lady Soul and the Gaian entity, on some genuine but unfathomable level, are one.

I am sitting in my car, overlooking a lake that shimmers with evening sun. Mew gulls call to each other. A great forest of pine and spruce surrounds the lake and climbs up toward the mountain peaks on all sides.

I am here to practice a form of self-exploration, called “focusing.” In essence, one scans the body and zeroes in on a “bodily felt sensation.” Then one attempts to fit a key word to the feeling residing there, followed by probing into the heart of the sensation to ascertain the intuitive gist of the life-issue associated with the body experience. It works because the body consistently reflects life issues that Spirit is asking to be dealt with.

A chronic stress point resides in the place where my neck and shoulders converge. I let myself feel the stress there while I wait for a word to arise that will match the feeling. Several words come and go - they are close, but not precise. Then, as I probe the feeling, I know immediately when the most appropriate word has arisen - *abandoned*.

Now that I have identified the key word of resonance, I rest my consciousness gently into the center of the sensation in my neck. In a moment, I get an image: a bride in white, alone in a desert. I shake my head - it doesn't make sense. Again, I rest into the center of the sensation. This time, Spirit, as if to say, *yes, this is what you need to ponder*, puts me through the following cinematic experience: I am in a car (symbolic of the body), driving down a road (route to the answer sought) and I drive right back into the same desert. The same bride in white is there. She is afraid, alone, abandoned.

I realize I must contemplate this image. In time, I gain understanding. The “bride” indicates that there needs to be an inner marriage between my intuitive, creative “female” side and my egoic “male” side. Now I am armed with a powerful indication to resist succumbing to the anti-intuitive, anti-creative judgments of our current society.

Over time, to the extent I apply this process, my stress point is relieved - though not completely. I need to explore the issue further and apply the answers of Spirit as I discover them.

Let us cease crucifying the intuitive, the creative, the feminine, the mystery of life.
Let the marriage take place.

The human body contains the keys to the vault of the Universe.

There is great mystery to love. On one level, to fathom the love one feels for another in the heat of ardor, in the depth of its wellspring, can be an unmeetable

challenge. At some phase of penetration one begins to discover, in the multi-dimension of the loved one's soul, an inseparable communion with the universe of nature. Here is the lover's wren-like whimsy, there, her sequoia patience, her steadfastness. Now a cascade on the hillside of her charisma enamors you, now her mangrove shore is washed by a sagacious sea.

The profound attraction to beauty in the initial union runs its course. Expansion is followed by contraction. The bright, the beautiful, the exalted, persist, but are shadowed by the mire, the dark, the dissonant. Opportunities present themselves. Dedication to meeting the canyon, the ebb tide, the abandoned recess, develops latent power of a deeper love. And expansion again follows contraction, in a continuous cycle of love's eternal evolution.

Because this evolution, and its entailment of the multitude facets of nature, the lover can never fully answer why he loves. In early spring, before buds flush their leaves, the nest is exposed. By the time eggs are laid, the nest is well concealed. The brood thrives undetected and, without the penetration of the observer, the maturing of songbirds proceeds.

The gold of last year's meadow warms my heart with a soft, elusive remembrance, and I want you here with me, in this rhythmic chamber, within the heart's drumbeat. I look for you as I travel west, under the dark sky of a moonless plain. So far west I proceed, until I stand at the end of Time's Gate.

Within the chambers of memory and anticipation, windows open. In the morning light, the murmur of a creek harmonizes with the radiance flickering upon its waters. Spring birds chatter into the grave of my winter. Lichens eat away at last century's stoniness. A heron rises out of a silent marsh, its great wings broadening into my question. A slim, black acorn-seeker squirrels its way across the dry leaves of my oak-tree strength.

Highway coffee crosses over my dreaming threshold, pulling me into the waking tide of day. The long empty roadway glides over the plains under a wide sky of cloud breathing hawksong. Holy words pass through me - Arapaho, Shoshoni, Cheyenne, Lakota. You cannot sell land. "Land" is the skin of Mother Earth. You cannot sell it or trade it - you can only share it. America, what enormous karma have you to unwind?

Whatever is to be done with the political arena of humanity? The Western world over-prides its feeble rendition of “democracy” - pointing a finger at nations who don’t comply with its vision. How both democracy and socialism, as we have known them to date, simply pale in face of where it must all go next! A far more substantial community of the people awaits than has ever yet visited the face of the Earth.

Nations are set to come apart at the seams - and on many levels. In reality, the eco-zones are the “nations” – or, more concisely, the states or provinces of a one-world nation. Humanity has super-imposed artificial boundary lines overtop the real borders. An illusion that is soon to dissolve.

Further, instead of solid lines as borders to these eco-states, one hue will mingle with its neighbor for a third hue in the zone of overlap. The invitation now goes out - to cartographers, geographers, ecologists, and deep ecologists - to recreate the world map, stripping away the veils imposed by political and corporate interests, so that current national boundaries are disassembled, and the legitimate boundaries, as delineated by a constitution derived from the empire of nature, are empowered.

The government - a handful of elite multi-national corporate directors who operate political leaders as puppets - instills a feeling of insignificance in its people. Part of this process entails raving about the need for war machinery and security measures to protect from loss. However, this process ends up generating loss by usurping individual power. The individual relinquishes his/her power to the government, a police state guarding corporate interests, while the dragons of global destruction are unleashed.

Above all, during this time, there is a need to arrive at a place of trusting oneself and one’s innate spirituality. In earlier times, our spirituality was intense but we experienced ourselves as part of the cosmos. Now, however, we get to experience Unity, but within the context of an individuality growing ever stronger.

While an empowered individual generates healing forces for social and ecological agendas, the question that arises is - will what is coming into the future go unnoticed by humanity?

There are faculties that must be acquired on Earth and carried across the threshold of death. They cannot be acquired otherwise. The physical realm is a

unique and priceless opportunity to evolve. But the veil of perceptual illusion must be penetrated.

We will be unable to perceive key spiritual events while our focus is confined to the physical realm. Rudolf Steiner asserted that the Second Coming would be due to occur in the 20th and 21st Centuries, and would be about an etheric, not a physical, manifestation, a manifestation now taking place in thousands of people simultaneously. *We* are, in a sense, the Second Coming. Steiner, a seer with a modern faculty of clairvoyance, describes the rising of the Earth into a higher state and the Christing, or Second Coming, as one and the same event. Given that the Christ force now resides in the spirit of the Earth, does it not mean that nature's treasure house becomes an avenue by which to move out of the darkness that now threatens humanity from all sides?

I ponder my life. It is very dimensional - I have numerous layers to the spiritual-psychological aspect of my being. Fifty years of walking the Earth in North America have disclosed enough of this layering to cause me to believe there is a lot more to life than our meager institution of education can touch upon.

I have recollections of several past lives. Some of these remembrances take the form of visual images, others are feeling, or sentient, experiences. Many people, Native and non-Native, identify with indigenous culture, and practice or live into some aspect of it, or perhaps recall aspects of Egypt, Europe, China, Tibet, Atlantis, pre-Dawn times, the Americas, Africa, the Orient, the South Pacific, and more.

As our lives unfold, faculties developed during these past experiences re-awaken in us as layers of the complex multi-dimension of the self. Now, with more and more of the self awakening, are we not preparing to move onward, into a grand culminating experience? What new direction can tally up the past, yet move boldly into an unprecedented frontier?

“I believe women are insufficiently incarnated, while men are excessively incarnated. Think about how women tend to be more spiritual, artistic, emotional, intuitive - and how men can be materialistic, willful, and in a way, more intellectually probing. They each convey their own gift of understanding and experience. . .”

“Ah, you think too much, sometimes. Hey - did you know that if you’re wearing bermuda shorts when you fly over the Bermuda Triangle, your butt disappears?”

“Very funny - I didn’t realize you had such occult interests. But, listen, I think the concept is worth exploring - about men and women. Not that an individual can’t be fully balanced - I believe we can be, so that we become complete individuals. . .”

“Do you know the measurements of a mermaid?”

“Huh?”

“36 – 24 – and three dollars a pound.”

“Okay, okay - I’ll take my rantings elsewhere.”

“Sorry, old buddy. I think you’re on to something there, I’m just not in the mood for a heavy discussion, right now.”

Waking in the morning, consciousness is mixed, light and dark, striations of dreams persist, interweavings proceed, the heart is at once troubled and renewed.

Then, in course of meditation, using godly powers, the mind is directed to imagine, to *imagineer* the day unfolding according to what is really wanted in life. And those crucial, pivotal moments alter the course of the day, create openings for greater destiny to unfold, to weave unprecedented strands into an evolving fabric.

The day’s experiences are observed, for opportunities, synchronicities, “chance” meetings, details, and events. The action of Spirit, having been invited at dawn, increasingly permeates one’s being, day by day. Life unfolds increasingly in a manner that meets deeper, soul-satisfying ideals.

Through the day, the soul is vigilant for moments, for events of resonance. For example, one stops to take in the character of a band of crows in flight against the blue sky, or the radiance of an autumn tree. The tree may be in an urban

setting surrounded by concrete, but in the moment of opening to its beauty, the soul will transfix, as though the tree were set in a pristine forest. Then, by day's end, pausing to take in a sunset with its living radiance, its progression of deepening hues until indigo consummation and starbirth - this, again, mints gold into the coffers of the soul.

And the soul's vigilance entails not only moments of resonance with nature, but also other experiences - an original work of art that inspires, a poem, a cultural expression, moments in relationship with others when we experience genuine communion, or witness a godly quality in the other. All these events imbue inner life with a particular luster.

These moments, captured by the heart, assume a life of their own, and reside in a niche of the soul. Their life force percolates through the morpheus of sleep, flavoring dreams, raising the timbre of somnolence. In the night, the soul is painting with the sunset that was experienced in the day, and finds its way into the grace and boldness of the flight of crows. It surfs on the gold, the radiance of the autumn tree, it becomes "the other" of relationships, in those moments of fullness, of quality, of authentic communion.

Then, by morning, one is brought full circle, to the place of opportunity, once again, to plant seeds of manifestation. And so, the cycle is complete, as the day empowers the night, and the night empowers the day.

Star-guided wanderer, as you grow weary of the shallows along the shoreline of your questing, you look beyond the veil. And you encounter there what you most long for. Within the interior terrain what you seek for waits, at turns, camped on the ridge of your aspiration, or wheeling with the seasons' intricate workings, or somehow woven into the measureless night.

The universe is having its way with us. The sunset is making love to our leafing enamor. Windswept gold and wild, untamable crimson and sailing-sky brilliance, turbulence of cloud that soars over summits, and beauty, escalating, becomes a full cup, a window beaming warmly on walkers-of-Earth.

All of twin flame, Lady Soul, muse of my lost literation, intimate of Athena and Sophia, Gaia, Dawna Annelis, Contessa Natura - long has the gulf between us endured. Now, within your warming gaze, sounding my heart's drumbeat through the gateway of communion, let us walk the Earth together for a time, forgiving all smallness and aloofness.

Now and here, fold your violin smile upon my lips, let our eloping soulhood co-create. Cherishing the ardent steps, the quiet grace, your branching willow affection, draw me gently in, temper the steel of my adoration in the forge of your mystery.

Building love over love, layers deep, quanta high, let this ocean wed our rending tide, and our passion loft in sunscapes transcendent as eagles where, tumbling in consummate skies, we fulfill our raptor love-clutch.

The universe is our ultimate soul mate.

[commentary](#)

Post A.D.

23 America, #2 - *Beyond the gateway of the Third Millennium*

“The study of problems connected with karma is by no means easy and discussion of anything that has to do with this subject entails - or ought to at any rate entail - a sense of deep responsibility. Such study is in truth a matter of penetrating into the most profound relationships of existence, for within the sphere of karma, and the course it takes, lie those processes which are the basis of the other phenomena of world-existence, even of the phenomena of nature. Without insight into the evolution of humanity, it is quite impossible to understand why external nature is displayed before us in the form in which we behold it.”

- Rudolf Steiner

Four centuries after its founding, the post-modern stage of America has deepened into a meeting ground of the world's races and nations, concepts and lifestyles. The country has evolved a vigorous cosmopolitan character, and has lost the feeble-minded nationalism that wreaked so much havoc in the past on the world, and upon itself by rebound. Even the concept of nationhood as an ideal has fallen by the wayside, as globalization has come into form.

And no more religions either. Just genuine spirituality. That religion had attached itself to materialistic conception, and often taken to persecuting nature did not help its cause. Clearly, through the 1st and 2nd Millenniums, having increasingly reduced itself to a device of the forces of darkness, religion was perceived for what it had become, and was transcended.

I am eating a Bulgarian breakfast served on a table made by Filipino woodworkers, while wearing an Ecuadorian sweater and shoes crafted by Spanish hands. As I dine, I study from a French manual. Outside, I ride in a non-polluting craft designed by a Swedish engineering team, sip Colombian coffee, and listen to Japanese music.

At work I serve, in turn, clients who hale from a variety of provinces (former nations) of the World Union - Samoa, Brazil, Iceland, Dominica, Iran, Fiji, Cuba, and Nepal. I lunch in a café that serves specialties from the Antarctic culture, the most recent eco-state in the World Union. After lunch, the siesta, Centro-Americano Style, followed by a class in conversational Cree. Tahnsi Ekwa.

Beneath the surface of this cosmopolitan interplay presides a profound weaving of incarnational fabric. A person who embraced racism one life, having been reborn the subsequent life as a member of the race he oppressed, outgrew his bigotry. An adamant feminist became a man, a Muslim a Christian, and vice versa, until they outgrew religion, per se.. Aboriginal people and former dominant cultures inter-changed. All races and cultures, genders and persuasions, wove and counter-wove, in a rising crescendo of intermix.

But, wait! What happens to distinction? How does identity assert itself within this exponential commingling? The answer lies in the concurrent evolution of individuality. Now, the individual can attain to its own nationhood. Cultural diversity develops on a one-to-one basis.

As we cast our minds back to the eventful juncture of the turn of the millennium, when a chapter of the Apocalypse unfolded its formidable agenda, we recall false prophets that arose, and numerous practices espousing solutions for mounting problems. Many of these apparent avenues of resolution were paths that

could lead astray. Many were regressions to past ways of living, counter-productive to the immediate quest.

In the midst of this confusion, we came to see our way forward by the light of the wisdom of an age-old tenet - "By their fruits you shall know them."

Those most trustworthy of leadership demonstrated both inner and outer fruition in their way of living. Inner fruits proved to be virtues like patience, kindness, forgiveness, forbearance, compassion, and outer fruits manifested as productive activity in the world, or resolutions that contributed to holistic human development - like Waldorf Education, biodynamic farming, deep ecology, and anthroposophical medicine.

Enterprises founded on a materialistic perspective were doomed to failure, even if the activity focused on had an altruistic motivation - whether it was science, peace, community, liberation, an ecological forum, or social activism. Such efforts only became part of the problem unless the activists were able to enter into the underlying bearing - that is, the spiritual dynamics.

As the twelve senses of the human being awakened, humanity became increasingly able to ascertain forces and aspects of the Earth that had previously remained hidden. Now embraced as a living entity, it is recognized that the Earth, in her attempt to retain a profoundly intricate state of balance, must interweave in a spirit of creative endeavor all these, and more: ozone; water temperature; plate tectonic activity; CO₂ levels, precipitation; evaporation; wind currents; ocean currents; storms; electrical-lightning interchange between atmosphere and surface; land surface stabilization; cloud cover; degree of polar axis tilt; magnetic axis centering; a huge array of energy vortex configurations; a tremendously complex etheric and astral configuration that weaves through every living being on the planet; and an under-lying sub-atomic stasis associated with evolutionary ascension.

To isolate, as a minor example, a biochemical process from the multitude of factors of the overall masterpiece, the atmosphere of the Earth contains approximately 21% O₂. If the level of oxygen were to rise as high as 28%, random fires would spontaneously burst aflame in numerous locales. The spirit of Gaia maintains a balanced level of O₂ production through terrestrial and ocean plants on one end and, on the other end, an O₂ limiting function that aerobic-responsive bacteria provide.

In addition to the complex multi-layered regulatory functions that Gaia executes, she must also cope with the impact that mass human consciousness has upon her - arguably the most important factor in the naturo-human relationship.

Feeling ambitious, I draw up a chart to depict potential vocational reincarnation outcomes. A worldly occupation during one life can set the foundation for its metaphysical equivalent the next life. Or, the time line can become condensed such that the progression takes place in the span of a single incarnation. For example, a house painter evolves into a “painter,” or colorful enhancer of a person’s state of soulhood. Or a window cleaner’s vocation can evolve into an occupation that involves clarifying perception in others. Or a fence builder can become a counselor adept at boundary issues:

Vocation	Metaphysics of Vocation
Farmer	nurturer of etheric constitution
Gardener	nurturer of the metaphysique
Fisher	harvester of spiritual fruits
Counselor	guardian of the heart
Custodian	rendering order to consciousness
Doctor	metaphysician
Servant	greatest of all in spiritual forum of the future
Lawyer	consultant of cosmic order and karmic law
Police	guardian of initiation
Musician/Artist	caretaker of the astral body
Civil Servant	servant of order/karmic balance
Politician	ambassador across multi-dimensions
Welder	“chiropractor” of the Ego
Electrician	attendant of spiritual power
Writer	executor of archetypal images
Filmmaker	metaphysical demonstrator
Actor	sailor upon the sea of astrality
Architect	designer of consciousness
Soldier	warrior of the light
Pilot	guide of the astral realm

Athlete	performer of metaphysical feats
Baker/Cook	attendant of existential hunger
Biologist	researcher of the astral plane
Botanist	researcher of the etheric plane
Undertaker	guide/initiator across the threshold
Chemist	researcher of spiritual interactions

Of course, this stream of understanding represents only one strand in the overall braiding of karma and reincarnation. Another important thread entails the “spiritual mechanics” of transposition between the three soul faculties - thinking, feeling and willing. In line with this, one who in a past life became adept at spatial dynamics and locational harmony - for example, an architect, or a master of Feng Shui - bears a talent for music this life.

A third karmic strand unravels according to the ways we impose limitations on ourselves, life to life. For example, choosing the affliction of Down’s syndrome one life can lead to a subsequent life of genius.

Yet another factor unfolds in resonance with balanced development across the breadth of our spiritual ecology. The inner lion that is neglected one life has more opportunity to come to the fore the next life. Shunning the soul’s eaglehood through an incarnation creates conditions in the next incarnation that cultivate the eagle.

The intricacy of the overall masterpiece of the karmic forum is no small matter. Those in our universities today who aspire toward a graduate degree in karmic studies are ambitious indeed!

State of Gaia Report, 2020 A.D. (a review derived by historical research from the last century): Inadequate attempts to remedy the problem of global warming have brought the human race to a state of peril. Thousands of lakes and large areas of forest are dead from acid rain. The pH of soil, as well as water, is out of balance in over 25% of global land surface. Nuclear contamination has poisoned a significant percentage of the overall environmental fabric. Toxicity in many water systems has passed salvageable limits. Global warming has raised sea levels, putting millions of people out of house and home, and has altered climate patterns until environmental cataclysm has become the norm.

Weaponry manufacture - which historically exceeded by 40 times the capacity to annihilate biological life on the planet - consumed the portion of the 20th Century world economy that could have rescued the Earth and its inhabitants from desolation. Numerous biotic forms are extinct and many more hover on the verge of extinction. The people who have wielded worldly power behind the scenes, mostly corporate interests, spiritually ignorant, unaware of the laws of karma, are responsible for having manipulated events to their own end - arming of nations, an exploitative international monetary system, war, insurrection, ecocide - all in the hands of a disguised and sophisticated blend of despotism and materialism that makes the degeneracy of the mid-20th Century look like kindergarten fascism.

Altogether, civilization has been pushed to the brink of its grave.

An adventure I recall from my last life:

As I sleep, I have a vivid dream - actually a semi-conscious astral projection experience. I hover around my room, then move to pass through the ceiling. As I do so, I experience a tingling sensation, presumably the vibration of my astral body encountering the molecules of the ceiling.

I enjoy my newfound freedom. I discover I can assume different forms - whatever shape I project with my will, I become. I go to visit some animals and discover we can converse while I am in this astral form. This is very exciting.

I think of a friend who I have been trying to help, trying to initiate healing for. She is very sick. While she sleeps fitfully, I go to the place where her soul is. I am introduced to her guardian. The three of us (my friend in astral form, her guardian, and myself in astral form) sit and discuss the situation. We ponder my friend's path through life and come to an agreement, an understanding about what it is she needs to learn now. I find out later that a rapid recovery followed this event.

The last part of my dream is especially intriguing. I journey to a place of political and corporate secrecy. As I pass through the walls of a high-security setting, I find myself standing beside a man who is perusing some documents. The material is top secret. He is not aware of my presence, as I look on and begin to fathom the power and unstoppable force of spirit. There can be no secrets to those with open eyes.

There can be no limits once liberation from material constraint has been attained.

If humanity had not awakened to its hidden function, if so many had not rallied and prepared for the great events that were imminent, the age of unknowing would not have passed, the darkness would not have lifted.

The Earth, having resisted the assail of human negativity, began to effect a new configuration. Humanity was presented with a choice. We could either strive to develop our spiritual faculties, or put them aside, which could only serve to contribute to the apocalyptic upheaval. Destruction, war, illness, catastrophes of all proportions proceeded - ecological, economic, social, and physical.

This is the way of it. We are presented with two paths: to evolve willingly, or be forced by outer events to evolve.

Earth-healing activities of the anthroposophical and ecological communities, as well as those of many other spiritual perspectives, in community with angelic beings, maintained stability in the Earth's orbit and along most of her fault lines. Undersea volcanic activity increased, along with warming of water and shifting of prevailing currents.

CO₂ levels continued to increase. Global warming caused further polar melting, raising water levels yet higher, shorelines receded further. Angelic beings intervened only to a point. *We have assisted Earth and her inhabitants through many stages over time. But we will not intervene where Spirit does not call for it, where human consciousness has created what it must meet undeflected.*

Only when we have exhausted all human means and power, having pushed our resources to their limit, are we sent help from the higher worlds.

The angelic forces also worked to ensure humanity the opportunity of a stage upon which to evolve. There was an overall raising of vibrations of the Earth, what amounted to an intensification of Spirit, which increased pressure - people were under duress to cope, challenged to evolve in tandem with the accelerating pace. Political disruptions and power struggles played out. Geophysical alterations proceeded. The Earth-healing contingencies were taxed to sustain a balance under the onslaught of the overwhelming influence of the consciousness of reacting humans.

Both the angels and the Earth-healing communities worked to engender harmony. If a house of peace was to be built, it had to possess a foundation of truth and a shield of love.

We were once intricately enmeshed with the mineral kingdom. This is indicated now by our need for minerals - salt, zinc, iron, magnesium, gold, and numerous other sustainers.

We were once fully united with the plants. When we separated from them, the plants held excessive *over-flourishing* forces at bay for us, so we could move on and assume a more balanced state. Now every organ of our body structure resonates with parallel beings in the plant world, plants that are able to heal any part of the body, should it become unbalanced.

To this day, there are times when we use herbal remedies but, since we have outgrown our plant-hood, we have been able to spiritualize physical plant qualities. The predominant modality now, in terms of remediation, is homeopathic, since the modern body has attained a heightened physicality, a vehicle increasingly comprised of etheric energy (of course, the pharmaceutical industry has long ago given up its dark-age practice of manufacturing allopathic substances as it moved forward into homeopathics). A further note to this progression is that the majority of researchers have been experimenting with zero external applications, given that the power of the mind, in consort with Spirit, has shown no limitations. Most analysts agree that inner remediation power will likely become our future medical forum.

We were once part of the animal kingdom. At that time, a vast compendium of feeling, instinct, virtue, and other aspects of soulhood stretched us out across the astral plane, giving voice to dimension unending. Since then, we have been called on to take this array in hand, to orchestrate our multi-faceted astrality with the power of our humanity.

In the beginning, shedding limitations for us, animals incarnated, drawing off confining desires, embodying appetites, holding excessive forces of desire at bay for us, so we would be free to proceed unhindered with our Fourth Kingdom evolution.

In line with this, as it came to our awareness that animals experience pain but have no means of rising above it, no means of perfecting themselves from out of their own forces, we began to discern a responsibility to them. During that long

ago time when we left the animals behind, we chose to hold ourselves back from incarnating until conditions were appropriate. Shedding our animality, confining our wild relations to their destiny of pain, we took on for ourselves a means of rising above constriction. Aware of this historic process, we now recognize that a debt is owed, that it is upon us to raise up the animal kingdom, principally by mediating what we have cast down in ourselves.

More recently, we created an ambitious challenge of our own devising, when toxic substances and radioactive poisons we had generated began destroying us. But these elements could only do so to the degree our inner power was not activated. Those who engaged their inner power were able to transmute the “negative” influences, to use them to alter their DNA in a way that exponentially enhanced the genetic base of evolution into a higher form. Not that this process always proceeded effortlessly and automatically. Only through persistent striving do our supersensible organs and powers tend to develop. In any event, the stumbling block became the stepping-stone, writ large. Our newly evolved state equipped us with special powers and a greater capacity to access other dimensions.

Now we can begin, in a more comprehensive fashion, to live up to our responsibility as residents of the community of Earth.

Sanra has fallen asleep. Her conscious Ego, embodied in her astral form, is separating from her physical and etheric bodies. Two angels are observing the process. They converse in light, color, and a rarefied form of sound. They do not “talk,” but for purposes of conveying their interchange, the following is transposed into speech:

“She is progressing in the development of her astral eyes and ears.”

“Yes, they are halfway developed.”

“She will soon be able to perceive us in a new light. We had better be prepared for many questions - you know her inquisitive nature!”

“Yes, and look how the yellow in her aura clashes with the green. She’s had a full day - all that worldly experience is erupting into the spirit realm, causing the usual state of confusion.”

“It will take a good part of the night for her to process all this experience. . .”

Sanra is listening to the conversation intermittently, as it carries on like sound traveling under water. She sustains her lucidity as far as she is able, then slips into a dream state.

A month goes by, and while getting ready for sleep, Sanra, for the thousandth time, prepares to consciously enter the night-realm. Now, however, she has a much greater chance of remaining lucid through the experience, as the development of her astral eyes and ears is approaching a critical stage, a process she has been cultivating through a series of visualization exercises.

Now, as she projects her consciousness, while the dream force seeks to dissolve her consciousness into its fantasia, in a willed act of mindfulness, Sanra is able to perceive her angel companions. They are hovering before her, shining their warming rays into her new eyes, and singing their harmonic tones into her new ears. For a while, the beauty and splendor of the experience holds her in thrall, then she fades into unconscious sleep. It will take a number of these direct exposures before she is ready to move on to the adventure of full wakefulness.

The seventh angel is sounding its trumpet.

At turns, comets of remediation heal our every travail, then comets of transgression fall on our heads, their dust rising from the ground like a formidable beast waking, preying on our every frailty.

But the seven-sealed cinema is delivered now into the vision of the wakeful. With a listening heart, the path of Inspiration, once frozen in enchantment, is thawed now by the wheeling of the stars of destiny.

America, once the destroyer of nature and crucifier of Gaia, became also an ideal ground for raising consciousness around the nature-human relationship. And now the great wheel has turned, and in the etheric heart of America an opera of joy and light descends from the sky, resounding in those attuned to the immediacy of the day.

A group meets to send restorative energy to the land, to beings, to other people - to heal and advance the cause of Peace. The energy that they convey is stepped-up. That is, the power they conduct increases in an exponential manner, not just mathematically, with the addition of each member to the group.

The quality of this energy is incomprehensible. It derives, in undiluted form, directly from the Void, the core of Silence, and is relayed through Spirit. It is, therefore, seminal energy, and has the power to balance, harmonize, detoxify, and enhance communion between nature and humanity.

Electrons, as miniature black holes, are doorways to time spans and alternate states of being. We enter every door simultaneously. We walk on the water of Imagination, bask in the atmosphere of a community of hope and vision. We use the seven keys within, keys we learn to carry on the ring of infinity. We take hold of our quest, lightning-fused by the engine of our spirit.

As the world evolves, people make choices. Those who elect the Light and way of love create protected Lightzones wherein life forms are honored and cared for. Those who decline to go Lightward are self-propelled from the Lightzones. They dwell in temporary pockets of darkness, in the way of the old world, until the end of the transformation phase. These ones are given another arena of life to work out their eventual liberation so that, one day, they too, can ascend.

Paradox: we are both one with, and separate from, the environment and the Earth. Individuality is our evolutionary destiny. And so is the sustaining of Unity. What kind of being can fulfill such a tremendous destiny of dichotomy?

The Ego (i.e., individual spirithood) is the youngest aspect of the human being. It cannot enter very far into external forces yet (the way astral and etheric aspects can). It would be harmful for us to do so. But, in time, it will be able to penetrate the world, and overcome the darkness in the process.

Much of humanity's spirituality, at this time, and through the span of our earthly life, is in embryonic form.

In this age - no matter who the onlooker, be it poet, biologist, artist, or sociologist - spiritual events become natural events, and natural events become spiritual events.

When even the very lightning is penetrated by human perception, a perception made godly by attending so fervently to nature's majesty, and this uncloaking of lightning reveals an interior welling with newborn color of an unending collage, and when the thunder that peals across our living sky opens its sounding magic to release an unlimited procession of symphonies of musical resplendence, we come to realize the paths of gods and humans are at last coming to merge.

And yet, the power of Spirit, as demonstrated by the ultimate deed of the Christed One, came to preside as a power even more formidable than the magnificence that historically pervaded the nature-human relationship. In turn, that same power has come now to permeate nature, raising its quality to coincide with the new world of human experience.

We currently live in an *image* of the cosmos.

We produce the images that we dwell in. We can penetrate only in a dreaming, albeit increasingly lucid, manner.

We are not yet ready for the *real* cosmos.

So far.

[commentary](#)

24 **Russe** - *Navigating the Apocalypse*

Trumpeting angels
announce
seven seals
are coming unsealed
opening
to reveal the pattern of the Self.

The Russe experience is like navigating the nether end of an Apocalypse, complete with a fore-taste of Omega, or a state of Christ-like completion that lies in all its fullness off in a distant time.

In the long-ago days, the sun dwelled as though one with us. Then it shone its holy forces to us from on high. Now, we develop our forces, as much as we can ourselves, fashioning holy beams from out of the blessings of both sun and earth, like a tree that lifts itself up as an offering.

The new model for humanity evolves on the soil of a state once referred to as Russia. Here, creative energy in a person and spirituality are synonymous. And the nature of a human is love - not duty to love, but natural compassion. It is now possible to be immoral only if taught such, as a deliberate application of darkness.

Freedom is a key ideal now. It is attained by transcending 1) self-gratification, which leads to sense slavery, 2) the dictates of others, a way of following blindly, and 3) by steadfast striving to awaken spiritual faculties with the power of feeling-warmed cognition.

Several centuries ago, the world order rose to the status of a unified nation. A combination of modern indigenous approaches, along with consciousness remediation activity of anthroposophists, deep ecologists, and other spiritual practitioners, proved effective medicine to heal much of the Earth trauma.

There are no roads scarring their way across the land. Gone are all the fences, as well. One transports by means of a lightweight community-owned hovering craft that runs on non-polluting U E (Universal Energy). There are no cities; there are communities. There is no war. A resurrected nature predominates across the landscape. Creativity is the principal activity.

The Angels who once communed with us through our subconscious are increasingly encountered consciously. Where they once preserved for us our memories so we could reflect on our lives, the process is now more of a collaboration. The human community now comprises a semi-angelic forum and, as we take up residence in the fifth kingdom, the animals also are evolving, becoming more egoic, while the plants wax more astral, and the first kingdom, the minerals, has largely evolved into an etheric state.

Humanity engages now in unhampered contemplation of the spiritual world, such that spiritual energy imbues itself into etheric substance, making the heavy light, dissolving what hardens, bringing flow and motion to fixed form, re-enlivening the dying. Having deepened into its “Egohood” phase, the human community is now comprised of true individuals. Self-realization is the norm.

Through the 20th Century, the U.S.S.R. - former incarnation of Russe - attempted to evolve a compassionate society, but the idealism of the nation proved to reside too far ahead of its capacity to manifest. A great and ungodly bird of dark plumage whose wingspan suffocated the very sky overshadowed the land. Materialism and pride proceeded, and many fell blind to the spiritual forces that could have saved the day.

With little help from America, who could have taken a supportive role in human evolution, had it been able to rise above its own existential limitations and fears, Russia was unable to implement its ambitious agenda. All that remained by the turn of the millennium was to learn from its mistakes.

Forward in time, and nature as we knew it came undone, folding in upon itself to reveal its interior kingdom, an empire of spiritual and sacred bearing, and

all those who had been violators of nature rose at last to pledge themselves in service to the empire, so they could make full reparation.

And we see Russe now taking the leading role, embodying the most advanced social, cultural, and spiritual momentum in the annals of Earthen history. Ironically, many Americas who had engaged in activity that denounced the former communist state, have re-incarnated in modern Russe to work out their karmic debt. They are now dedicated to the cause of an evolved socialism - a combination of spiritual, democratic, socialist, and deep ecological ideologies.

Russe looked back and learned from the American experience. It saw how America, blinded by capitalist hegemony, and its co-opting of related aspects of Darwinism, failed to evolve compassionate commerce, at least not until after the heyday of its role as an evolutionary cauldron of the times.

The modern grail of evolution fell to Russe, where the socialist counterpart to Darwin could be found in the seminal work of Kropotkin, a Russian biologist who managed to embrace, during the same time period that Darwin was formulating his theories, not survival of the fittest, but *mutual aid*, as the key component in evolutionary process. Now destiny has wheeled on its axis so that the incarnation of compassion, mutualism, rides forth into the golden light of the newest age.

With all twelve senses functioning, combined with our increasingly awakening spiritual faculties, interspecies communication has substantially deepened. Intimate connections proceed with landscape angels - the overseer of a valley, the warder of an ecosystem, the over-lighting forces of a prairie. Individuated expressions of animals - the Spirit of Wolf, Bison, Eagle - like humans, are evolving into the fifth kingdom and shared angelic status - while the actual *members* of the group-spirit - e.g., a single wolf, bison, or eagle - are becoming increasingly individualized as they move into Egohood.

Conversations between humanity and various animals and nature beings attains increasingly to a conscious level now, in contrast to the subconscious interaction prevalent in bygone days.

Wheeling under an eagle sun, each sunbeam becomes a feather in a broad wing of visionary regency. And upon the mountain ledge of introspection, the peak of insight perceives an incarnational overview, while down in lesser niches of hawkdom, the pursuit of sparrow and rodent considerations proceeds.

Upon swaying crowns, treetop vigilance discovers endless intricacies across the ground-level weaving of nature's community. Refinement of branching, imagination, a sensitivity attuned to every holy nuance, finds its ground of genesis in the heavy-limbed trunk, and arboreal foundation finds its roots, in turn, in the wakeful soul of Gaia.

Birdlife opens its agency of transmission, as messages are delivered directly, conveyed in almost-human linguistics, by way of spirit pulsing, immediate, heartfelt, phrases.

Adorned across the meadowland of sentience, as a spectrum of flowers incarnates myriad emotionality, rooting, probing, the plant kingdom is turning mineral to biotic force, and enriching etheric substance with astral momentum. Plants practice movement and craving, and compile a bank of instinct, and undertake emotional bearing.

Animals that begin to sense their "I-ness" experience, for the first time, separation from the environment, and from the pack. For a while, they are uncomfortable, as existential angst moves out of the realm of instinct into a semi-conscious arena. The birthing "I" levies its tax, adds its uncompromising cost to the estate of evolution.

And, in the midst of all this, we rise into our angelhood, five kingdoms deep within the Universe of possibilities. And we come to apprehend, in full measure, our responsibility in care-taking the wildlings of the lesser kingdoms, and to do so in a manner similar to that of the angels, who have so patiently over-seen our own halting progression through countless incarnational labyrinths.

From out of the light rides a white horse, a red horse, a black horse, a pale horse.

And the Guardian of the Threshold extends an invitation to a council meeting of 24 elders ensconced in a heavenly chamber painted with a rainbow of color shining as though charged with light. The elders are clothed in white and emanate surpassing wisdom, their minds shining with golden haloes. Now they face a throne upon which is seated a radiant being. . . .

As recently as a few centuries ago, we could actually doubt the reality of the spiritual world. In the annals of time, the period was only a momentary nightfall. And when the sun of Spirit rose again, it was with steadfast momentum.

At first, the gates of inspiration opened in waves. Decade by decade, like light pulsing in the dark, the waves unfolded through different sectors of human experience. Each time, it transmuted suffering into a creative force.

Conscious of planting seeds for future incarnations, care and wisdom entered decisions. Action proceeded from deliberate, mindful intent.

Remembrance of past lives enhanced understanding of deeper personal issues, and helped meet life lessons more clearly, more mindfully. Auras are now openly perceived and easy to interpret. Secrets can no longer be kept - though it doesn't matter now, as there is no longer a perceived need to hide the truth. Emotions now flow into the atmosphere, directly affecting the weather. Wind, storms, rain, sunshine all dance in consort with the sentient experience of humanity.

We can alter our physical form more readily, perfect it, shape it. Outer appearance is now a direct result of an individual's inner life. Where once the dominant model espoused inheritance as the key factor in an individual's condition, now we depend on the etheric part of our being to alter physical conditions, effectively over-riding factors like genetic traits. Beauty causes beauty, inner distortion creates a distorted outer appearance.

No one eats meat anymore, with strong spirit and life forces welling within there is no need. Animals, once again, range across unfenced tracts. In fact, sustenance is drawn less and less from denser forms, like conventional notions of food, and more and more from air, light, and etheric elements.

When the Earth died, shortly after the turn of the millennium, it resurrected by transmuting toxic and radioactive elements. Poisons became a catalyst to alter DNA into transcendent forms because, with Spirit at the helm, stumbling blocks become stepping-stones. In this case, the stumbling block, being of immense stature, became a tremendous springboard.

In overview, it had to be this way. Humanity needed to be free to move into the next stage of evolving its cumbersome physical body, had to disintegrate its vehicle to allow a new form to emerge.

Now that water has become the densest substance, reincarnation, as we once knew it, no longer takes place. In the beginning, and in the end of time, there is no reincarnation, because there is no death. Only in the middle, *fallen* stage does death take place.

In these days, long after the passing of Russia's dark night of the heart, the lark, a Christling bird high in the sky, is trilling a clear morning song. A gentle breeze is moving over the strong and lofty oaks, and the flowers of the meadow are teaching us about the fragrance of stars. Now death arises not as something to avoid, but as a companion to live with daily, to hold at one's side as a good ally.

Soaring at eagle height, a trumpet-like voice orates a prayerful poetry. And below the firmament, 24 ruling spirit powers are lending vision to those who have pledged to the world to see with an open heart. And all 24 of these regents are now casting their crowns to the one most worthy of ruler-ship, all mandates dedicated to Wakan, the Christ, who performed that most magical deed of all Earthen time.

He by whom the seven-sealed book can now be opened.

And the stars that were known to gleam from the heavens begin now to appear in nature's tapestry, shining from the faces of flowers, and beaming in the life of the soil, and the starlight is found also streaming in the brooks and rivers and bursting on the shores of the broad seas like glassy melodies.

And the laws of angels come at last to rule the Earth, that no one shall harm the grasses, nor any green thing, nor any tree, nor anything within the wide estate of nature, and the forces that arose in bygone days to wage war on materialism have brought the violators of nature at last to justice.

Seven candles

Seven stars shining brighter than the full moon

Seven cabins in the wilderness

Seven rivers flowing

filled with water of life.

In those times long past, while swept along in the current of the fifth stream, River America, we had to be watchful. And we had to strengthen that which remained. And we sensed at every turn that the things we most valued could be stolen in an unknown hour. But in the end, it came to be that those who held fast came away from that river as though clothed in radiance.

And now, while upon the sixth stream, the current of River Russe, as we are being conveyed through a valley that none can defile, even death, we are promised, shall one day be overcome by the faithful.

And what of the stream yet to come? River Seven, shall it flow to heaven?

Light is emanating from the Earth and, in resonance, warmly thriving in the people's hearts, until it comes to shining in their minds. And the dark forces have been driven from the land of holy Russe, so she can fulfill her resplendent destiny. (Though, citing the spiritual scientists of yore, both Steiner and Prokofieff, none know when the Antichrist will be fully defeated, as that is a secret most profound).

And this has come to pass: holy Russe, a kingdom of compassionate humanity, is spreading its light to the whole world.

And not once, but twice upon a time, and a time also to come at hand, let it be known through the seven spiritual doorways of perception: may grace overcome all karma by virtue of the Prince of Peace, teacher of the means to overcome death, the One known in the hearts of all members of the seven races of humankind that now ply the Earth in harmony.

And this One stands behind us, and before us, and within us, as a being of Light with seven stars and seven golden candles at hand, lighting all aspects of darkness.

Only free of fear can we know and take up, all shining as the sun, this destiny that is the Self.

Of the seven pathways to spiritual liberation, each presents a challenge to overcome. Let all strive unceasingly to come at last to full refinement, overcoming all obstacles on the way.

Four horsemen are riding
a white horse, a red horse,
a black horse, a pale horse.

Four horsemen are riding.

Four stags are galloping.

Four swans are lofting.

Four salmon are leaping.

[commentary](#)

APPENDIX

General Overview

Anthroposophical indications given by Steiner portray an intricate inter-weave, life by life. Dancing in one incarnation can lead to “inner” dancing the next. In general, challenges met in a spirit of joy during one life lead to invigoration and a robust constitution the next life, whereas challenges met feebly, or out of a sense of duty, instead of passion, deliver one’s next incarnation to a state of dullness, which can lead, in turn, to the pursuit of materialism, culminating in a yet further torment of existential anxiety. A capacity for love one life, can lead to a life of inner strength, or vice versa. Unbiased judgment engenders a proficiency in languages.

What is hidden one life becomes evident the next. Interest in the world, nature, and life can lead to a life of health and strength. Conversely hatred or criticism can result in a life of pain, distress, and mental dullness.

In sum, rather than a linear continuum, developments over a series of incarnations proceed in a more complex manner. For example, pursuit of music one life may not result in more advanced musical development the next. Instead, spatial development (architecture, form) in one life can lead to musical talent the next, which may, in turn, be followed by a proficiency in mathematics. There are subtle parallels between various forums, indicating that the study of reincarnation and karma is a deep pool.

Gaia Sojourn is a work of spiritual fiction. It does not pretend to map the profound intricacy of the reincarnational labyrinth, although, as far as possible, the intent of the work was to remain true to the “spiritual mechanics” of the topic. Overall, it could be considered a blend of deep ecology, anthroposophy, aboriginal resurgence, and the author’s own brand of nature-spirituality.

Crow Genesis

Like a sharp burst of light, we suddenly find Crow flying the primordial vast. But where did Crow come from? What kind of being is this who, even today, can loft so breezily over our slow and earthly plodding?

The initial chapter, Crow Genesis, takes place both at the dawn of the Earth's incarnation, and in mythical time. It is derived from stories of Tlingit and Tutchone elders of the northwest boreal forest region of North America. Many aboriginal creation settings would have served as an appropriate opener, but this one felt most fitting to the author, because of personal contact with particular elders and from having lived in the area for a significant period. Also, these cultures are able to artfully play with the Void and the containment of Light, as well as the trickster part of our being, that resourceful creator that not only lives in us, but is also partly responsible for getting us into this whole adventure in the first place.

The collective, first person plural, we, is used here, as in early times we were not individualized, but part of a group soul. Thus, the first person collective will dominate through the first segment of this work.

Hymalay Exodus

This chapter takes place in the setting of the original creation of the Himalayas, or a high mountain region similar to it. This would be long before the current incarnation of the Himalayas, which are, in fact, a fairly young mountain range, by modern standards of measuring geological time.

The human character here is afloat in spirit form, not yet incarnated in the familiar sense. And the being, as in several subsequent chapters, is not yet cognizant of a sense of selfhood.

One influence for this chapter derives from the Bon people, a culture preceding the advent of Buddhism

[An Elemental Dawn](#)

Here, a quasi-scientific view unfolds, a perspective on creation through the elements in the periodic table.

This portrait uses chemistry - the mystery-of-chemicals - to convey an experience of a materializing progression of the elements, beginning with the simplest, hydrogen. What would it be like to *be* hydrogen, and then progress to more complex elements, culminating with oxygen and silicon?

The setting for this chapter occurs at least two incarnations prior to the Earth that we know - a setting that Rudolf Steiner describes as a Sun-form of being, prior to its subsequent incarnation, a Moon-and-Earth conjoined existence.

[High Borea](#)

While the previous chapter centered around the first kingdom - that is, the physical-mineral state, the kingdom of the plants unfolds in High Borea. Here, an “etheric” stage manifests, to converge with humanity’s experience of physical form.

High Borea could also be referred to as the Earth’s previous incarnation, wherein it experienced a moon-like existence.

[Muria](#)

The stage having been set, first with the minerals, followed by the etheric, or plant essence, is now prepared for the animal level of being. In Lemuria, we engendered our astral, dreamlike existence. Here, the Earth we know is a newborn infant.

In the next chapter, Atlantis becomes the stage for initiating full soulhood, the seed-stage of our Egohood, which carries the ambitious challenge of orchestrating the astral part of our being, a quest we are, to this day, striving to fulfill.

Atlan

This is the setting of primeval Atlantis, the continent before its initial destruction into islands, later progressing to the event known classically as “The Flood.”

Migration and Emergence

Extracted primarily from Hopi legends, this chapter provides a useful bridge between the demise of Atlantis and the arrival, by indigenous people into ancient North America.

Edgar Cayce asserted that the red race was the dominant race in Atlantis, which fits historic progression, as eastward migration of the people, and subsequent intermarriage, would have resulted in the loss of red race identity, while migration into America would have sustained the bloodline.

The emergence segment that follows migration deals with metamorphosis, a hibernation stage for the soul, while escaping the furies set loose over the planet with the fall of Atlantis.

Inda

The concept of Maya refers to the status of the material world held in bondage by illusion, a challenge overcome by escaping into the reality of spirit.

Sanskrit is a primordial language. The manner in which it was created indicates the primal power residing in its use. Sanskrit words were derived by meditating on an object until the meditator “heard” the sound vibrating within the object. Once-potent mantras still have power, but such power, according to Steiner, is no longer useful, is even detrimental, to the user at this stage of human development.

We can observe a progression over time with the use of mantras : HUM-SAH (I AM THAT – one with the cosmos) to OM NAMAH SHIVAYAH (hail to the god within) to, simply, I AM (either as is, or followed by any of the New Testament pronouncements made by Christ (I AM LOVE/LIGHT/TRUTH/THE WAY/THE DOOR/etc.)).

Persia

Persia was a land we lived in after we lost your way, and lost certain know-how and powers. We even forgot that dualities are two sides of a single coin. We experienced Evil and Good as a monster and saint battling inside us. But, was this ready-made duality an illusion-bound nest woven in semi-conscious aspiration? Would it be possible to use it to hatch and fledge a new sojourn upon Earth?

For some, the dualistic perspective became a cold-hearted justification for any sort of ambition, despite consequences. How many of us learned through this particular incarnation that we are only “spiritual” to the extent we can foster fulfillment for ourselves and others?

But Persia was also a forum for recognition of the material world as an opportunity. The key problem the material world presented was how to gain from

material experience, while avoiding its seduction. Because this problem couldn't be fully resolved it played out as dualism.

Las Palmas

Las Palmas, Spanish for The Palm Trees, conveys an obvious parallel with the Psalms of the Old Testament. Here, though, much of what was directed toward subduing nature in the Old Testament has been deliberately turned on its head. Here, the reader is asked to entertain the principal intent of Gaia Sojourn, which is about embracing nature and the liberation of our being through reverence for creation.

The Nile Valley

The Persian experience engaged us in the mighty battle between good and evil, and caused us to take hold of the physical, or "evil," aspect, that it be rendered under service of goodness. Egyptian experience, however, portrayed the physical as not just mere illusion, but also as a reflection of the real - the handwriting of the gods - and so, humanity drew inspiration from everything in the environment.

The principal forum for an incarnation in Egypt during its hey day was the physical as manifestation of divine-spiritual.

[The Sun Logos](#)

References in North American First Nations lore regarding a pale prophet who visited the people, suggested the Christ may have traversed the continent. In the spirit of creative spiritual fiction, this chapter proceeds with that concept.

In parallel with the Gaia Ascension segment of this chapter, Steiner refers to the event of Golgotha, or the Resurrection, as the pivotal event in the life of the Earth. Until this event, the Earth was descending, hardening into a state that would have meant irreversible spiritual death, the ultimate destination of material existence if it were run its course. The Christ event is said to have reversed this hardening process, which suggests that Ascension has been underway for the last two thousand years.

[America 1 - Facing the Threshold](#)

Issues now abound: provision, isolation, alienation, inadequacy, spiritual focus in a materialist world, materialism, abandonment of the soul, asserting individuality, shadow eruption, longing for a soul mate, unconnectedness with the world, and more. Above all, what lies at the heart of modern existential angst is the force of spiritualization that is increasingly pervading the soul of the individual. The good news is that the compendium of issues becomes an avenue of opportunity, as the multitude of stumbling blocks are transformed into stepping stones.

America 2 - The Third Millennium

America, the bearer of the modern edge of spirituality, is destined to provide a forum in which the next stage of development can take place. But where the light increases, so also does the darkness.

What new resources will we manifest to cope with our new existential challenge?

Russe

Rudolf Steiner predicted that Russia would carry the torch of spiritual evolution forward, once the phase in America had played out.

Now the dense fabric of the human body has risen to an etheric state. Physicality has become etheric, etheric substance has risen to astral, astral to egohood, and egohood to the level of the fifth kingdom, the angelic state.

The Earth, as it once existed has re-incarnated in a new form. With what name shall we christen the Gaian spirit for her new incarnation?

The Author

Where thinking falls to the dimness of a dream, and imagination and feeling rise to a throne of sentience, earth-vision is born.

Within the biography of Josef Graf can be found a Waldorf teacher, wilderness traveler, watercolorist, swing dancer, and anthroposophical researcher.

With over twenty years of experience in the field of spiritual ecology, his primary approach to writing is to open himself to nature until it can speak through him.

His works can be accessed through
www.evsite.net

Books by Josef Graf

- bringing the spirit of wilderness to the urban dweller

EARTH VISION, *a travelogue of spiritual ecology*, portrays the human-nature relationship at 70 sites across North America.

A Calendar of Nature and Soul continues to follow the trail of a third millennium everyman, now shifting from a geographic focus to a passage through the seasons. 52 chapters coincide with the weeks of the year, in which natural and biographic events interweave with Rudolf Steiner's Calendar of the Soul.

GAIA SOJOURN, *Spiritual Ecology Across a Series of Incarnations*, takes a global perspective through mythic, historic, and future time forums, using reincarnation as its principle device (an artistic blend of biography and fiction).

The Earth Vision Gallery, a thematic exhibit of photographs and watercolors contained within the covers of a book, carries the viewer through a holistic experience of nature, color theory, and self-discovery.

Hebert Returns to America is a gallery of humor with its artwork hung off the wall. The reader is invited to test drive Hebert's haywire passage through a diverse array of wild lands, social, cultural, and natural.

Explore at www.evsite.net