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WRITINGS

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ESSAYS

Approaching the Whole Earth

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IF WE TRY TO TAKE THE IDEA OF THE WHOLE EARTH SERIOUSLY, WE ARE confronted almost at once by the earth's immensity and complexity: how could we ever hope to hold all of that in mind. To give just one of many possible examples, we can take the recent CARE estimate that three million children under five die each year on our planet. To simply look at a picture of each of these children at a rate of one a second would take us more than thirty full days of viewing time: how much more time, then, to truly understand their life histories, the impact they made on their parents and relatives and others, or the meaning of their lives, the tragedy of their early deaths? And these children are but a vanishingly small percentage of the earth's human inhabitants, themselves but an infinitesimal portion of the full variety of living things on earth. Looked at truthfully, there is no conceivable way all of this could be kept in mind in any real sense. Truthful as it is, however, this answer fails to satisfy.

On the one hand, the whole earth seems to be an impossible concept, a vague abstract which becomes unworkable as soon as it becomes detailed enough to be meaningful. On the other hand, the truth is that without a sense of the wholeness of the earth, we can never hope to deal adequately with most of the problems now facing us, because so many of them have a global character.

We can begin to resolve this quandary if we realize that there is a distinction between trying to encompass the totality of the earth and trying to apprehend its wholeness. Wholeness is a quality. One way to think of it is as the organic.¹ Another way to style this might be that the whole is all that pertains. This second designation seems to leave us in roughly the place we started: how can we tell if we have all that pertains unless we have managed to include the sum total of everything involved? Or, how do we know what pertains unless we know the whole, and how do we know the whole if we don't know all that pertains?

We can, perhaps, get a glimpse of our quarry if we see that we can apprehend the whole earth in the same manner in which we apprehend the whole of ourselves. There is a danger here, too, of course, of confusing the whole of ourselves with our totality, which is to say, our history, our future, and even those aspects of our nature which escape conscious awareness. Instead of trying to hold onto all of this, which we cannot do in any case, we need to call to mind some moment when our actions evoked a sense of our own integrity. This is an awareness of ourselves in which we are not simply a collection of thoughts, feelings, sensations, and actions, but a unity—a whole, integral. It is almost correct to say that at such a moment we are given ourselves, in the sense that no effort of ours has put us

together, and while we thought we had been searching for ourselves, we unexpectedly found that it has been ourselves which was searching for us. In reality, all that pertains has been there all along, only waiting to be recognized.

There is always something paradoxical in the arising of such an awareness, because we are used to approaching everything under the aspect of quantity, materiality, causality. We have this material body and it is under causal laws which cannot be abrogated. Yet, as we are in ourselves, we are without a cause, we are not a thing, we are not measurable. Manifesting in this body, through these thoughts and emotions, we are yet not any of them. When I say this, I am not trying to develop a mystical formula of some sort, but simply to state that our nature is essentially qualitative. What is wanting, therefore, if we wish to encounter ourselves is not some correct mode of thought, but rather an ability to recognize our own presence.

Once again we encounter paradox: why should we need to recognize our presence when we're always present? But the common experience of coming to, of suddenly finding ourselves in the midst of some task or conversation which we have not really been paying attention to, shows us that there are different degrees of presence. But this itself does not go quite far enough. We may assume, for example, that we can simply learn to become more present, more aware, but experience soon shows us that our ability to be present to what is happening is very limited, and dictated more by outside circumstances than by our own intentions. Nor is this all, for we don't just need to be more aware of ourselves, but need a different kind of awareness. If we think of our usual awareness as a light, then this second state could be thought of as the realization that what we have taken to be light is in fact something of a different order altogether—just as a flashlight beam ceases to illuminate things when we step out into bright sunlight—in fact, ceases then to seem light at all.

The awareness we are in search of is not, therefore, what we assume at the outset. Leaving out of account for the moment our lapses of attention, to keep things from becoming too complicated, we can see why our assumptions mislead us if we look at the quality of our ordinary awareness. Each momentary state of ours, in effect, carries with it the conviction that it is permanent and represents the whole of ourselves. Most of the time we are not even aware that there is anything strange in this. We cannot put these parts together because we equate ourselves with them, and our image of a whole is, at best, some addition of them. Such an addition is impossible because each part itself demands our full attention. So that the first step, paradoxically, lies in seeing that such as we are, we are not, and cannot be whole. It is at this point that the whole of ourselves can emerge in us, so long as we can bear to see the contradictions of our nature, the way we claim for ourselves what is not ours. It is when we can accept our partiality that the whole can enter into us, and connect us in a way that we cannot connect ourselves— connect us in a way that is not partial, because it is not the work of any part, but comes from the whole, which is to say, from all that pertains. We see, in that moment, that all that pertains, "the whole", is manifesting itself in a part, in a fragment. It can do this so long as the part is able to bear the self-knowing which tells it that it is only a part. By letting ourselves become what we are, a part, we are given the whole of ourselves.

We can, perhaps, grasp how radical a restructuring of awareness this is if it is said that we have to die into the whole. At first, this sounds exaggerated. What needs to be seen is that our inability to recognize the whole of ourselves is not a simple misapprehension, a state we

can remedy merely by resolving to think about ourselves differently. Instead, the difficulty has to do with how we are ourselves—it has to do with the quality of our lives. There is something in us which claims to be special, and it enters into all that we do.² It is this quality of our being which contorts, or twists together, all our experience, with the result that the part usurps the role of the whole. A Zen teaching story tells of a man who came to a Zen master and proceeded to propound his own ideas at great length. The teacher listened politely and went about preparing tea. When the tea was ready, he filled his visitor's cup and then continued to pour tea into it to overflowing. The visitor, alarmed, told him that he was spilling the tea, whereupon the master said, "You come to me for teaching, yet you are like this cup, so full of your own ideas that nothing new can enter." With us it is the same: we are full of ourselves, of the sense of being special, and so long as this is the case, nothing new can enter. Thus we must die in to the whole: on the one hand, we must be emptied, and on the other, this emptying is not something we can do ourselves. For dying is just letting go of the sense that we are ourselves, that we are something. And whatever our skills may be, they do not include letting ourselves not be.³

It should come as no surprise that this sort of reversal of consciousness, where we go from our being predominantly the subject of awareness to its object, often arises as the result of following some inner discipline, such as Zen Buddhism, for example, but this does not mean that it is otherwise generally inaccessible. The very fact that we are not what we assume ourselves to be, that we are not one, means that any chance encounter can lead to the conversion, or through turning into a different awareness. The only prerequisite is that we are willing for events to work their way on us, that we let our awareness be transformed. Not infrequently, the opportunity for this transformation occurs in our encounters with nature, which brings us to the original subject of this essay: the whole earth.

Exposed to the awesome power or beauty of nature, we are often struck by a sense of presence. This intuition can lead into the wholesome encounter so long as we don't turn it into trite sentimentality or the feeling that we have met some great entity. The opportunity we are presented with at such moments is to leave ourselves entirely behind, as a whole greater than the whole of ourselves comes to presence and we are at-oned with the world around us.

We don't see how this is possible if we have not already come into the whole of ourselves, because, though we may know better, we inevitably think of the wholesome encounter as an addition of parts. It is not, yet it is true that in encountering the wholeness of nature—as, for example, with what was once called the genius of a place—we partake as well of our own wholeness. What is important, however, is the reality that because the emergence of the whole is not produced by our own efforts, it is often the case that we first become aware of the whole of ourselves—although we do not realize this to be so—in encountering the coming-to-presence of the natural world. The reason for this is simple, and illuminating: to encounter the whole of ourselves, we must first accept that we are only a part, and not the whole. But it is always easy enough to delude ourselves in this respect so long as we ourselves are our only measuring stick: our present state is not the whole, but perhaps if we could increase its duration or intensity...Standing before nature we are much less likely to make this same mistake, for confronted with the majesty of nature, it is not difficult to acknowledge that we are in the presence of something greater than ourselves, and to relinquish our pretensions to being special and set apart.⁵

In the moment this occurs, the moment of emergence of the whole, we find that we ourselves are also made whole in the midst of that whole nature of which we have accepted to be a part. The awareness of the greater whole is not so much a matter of adding more onto a smaller one, but rather the finding, in assenting to make less of ourselves, that the integral quality of the whole can thereby emerge more fully. Unlike the quantitative aspect of things, where to arrive at something greater we must first add together a number of lessers, in the wholesome encounter it is always the whole we encounter, whatever the scale this occurs on. It is always the same whole, the genius, of a place: qualitatively, we and the world are all of a piece, all parts in and through which the whole emerges. Letting ourselves be taken out of ourselves as we let the wholeness, the sense of place of a place emerge through us, we find that we are in this way truly emplaced in ourselves, for it becomes evident that all that pertains includes all that pertains to all of the parts through which the whole emerges. The parts enter into their wholeness through assenting to the emergence of the whole through them.

It is in this manner that we must seek to encounter the whole earth, a seeking in which we seek to let ourselves be found by this great whole which seeks to emerge through us—a whole of which we are in no way masters, but which, if we can let it overmaster us, will bring us into whatever mastery we may rightfully have in nature. For, in allowing the fullness of the earth to emerge through us, we become fully ourselves.

At this point a cautionary note is not out of place: it is always easy enough to convince ourselves, or others, that the voice we speak with is the voice of the whole. Yet that voice is a subtle one—the greater the whole, the subtler its voice—because it is the unknown emerging in the midst of the known, the new emerging within the familiar. So that falling away from the wholesome encounter and back into our ordinary awareness is easier than the reverse. I say this not to discourage inquiry, but to remind us of the continuing need for skepticism, for verification. And how might this encounter, with a something which is not a thing at all, be verified? To paraphrase the words of one ancient tradition, "By their fruits you shall know them. Every tree bears fruits after its own kind, the wholesome tree bearing wholesome fruits."

NOTES

1 Henri Bortoft, *A Hermeneutic Perspective on the Epistemological Problem of the Quantum Theory*, based on the first part of a seminar on 'The Hermeneutic Condition in Human Knowledge,' held at Sussex University on 15th June 1973, p. 2.

2 J. G. Bennett, *The Dramatic Universe, Vol. III* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1966, p. 202.

3 Ibid., pp. 202-3.

4 Henri Bortoft, 'The Whole: Counterfeit and Authentic' *Systematics*, 9, 2 (Sept. 1971), pp. 55-73.

5 The scientific method, in which experiment often has to severely delimit the area of study to make it accessible to understanding, thereby runs the risk of denaturing nature, and so of avoiding any encounter with it.

On Being Images

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If we are asked what it means that we are made in the image of the Creator, an answer may spring to mind at once. For example, this may be said because we are called to be creators in our own right. Though such an answer may be correct, and even a very deep one, it is important to set it, and all the answers that come to us for a time, aside.

We have to refuse to be satisfied with the answers which our minds generate so readily to allow a silence to arise in which the question can enter us more deeply. We do not do this in order to reach some especially weighty answer, but to become open to our inwardness — to become connected to *who we are*— whether or not we find a "satisfying" answer.

We can say that in this way we come closer to our 'completion', though we should see that our 'completion' is not some vague future we are moving toward. Our completion is already there within us, not knowable in the fashion our personalities and characters are knowable, but requiring a different sort of learning if we are to make ourselves accessible to it

A good way in which to approach this work is contained in the idea, common to many religious traditions, of renouncing the fruits of our actions. Such an idea is nonsense from the standpoint of common sense. From the time we are children we have learned and been taught many skills, from the most basic feats of hand-eye coordination to the intricacies of delicate social interactions. In all of this we learn to believe in our abilities and come to expect that certain kinds of actions will predictably result in certain sorts of outcomes.

We do need goals to work towards and standards by which to judge our actions or we could never learn to do anything satisfactorily. The problem is that as we learn how to do things, we come to take the accomplishment itself as the important thing and only end in view. So long as we are able to concentrate on actions which affect the material world alone, this sort of focus need not be too misleading.

In the interpersonal sphere, however, such a focus on the outcome we desire, even if we could divest it of selfishness, distorts things. Often enough, when we don't understand why things go wrong, we tend to blame other people. When we are confronted by a reality which is ordered along altogether different lines, as is the inner reality, we have no idea how to proceed.

It is because here, any expectations as to what is needed or how it is to be brought about are likely to prevent anything from occurring at all. This is "because" the inner reality is 'without because.'

Our usual notion of the creation is that it must have occurred for some assignable reason — for example, that God might be worshipped. Because we think there is some "because" to it, we fail to perceive it as it is, a freely given gift. The Creator gives the creation 'without because,' — without reservation — freely. When we renounce the fruit of our acts we can approach the state of inner freedom, of that inward stillness in which our acts originate from our withinness, 'without because.' We are asked to work without regard for the outcome of our actions—not because we need to cease seeking to understand how to work with quality — but so that we can come to our 'completion', and become images through which the 'completion of perfection' can be disclosed.

How can this be? If it is true that every created thing is an image of the whole, then being an image means being something incomplete which yet can disclose 'completion'. Usually when we perceive an image, we take it to be something complete; though we can see that this is not true with images which have been left unfinished, or which have been damaged by time.

Even when the image seems complete, when it seems that the artist has been successful, we only think this because we come to the image from the "other side" of its creation. Every work of art, however successful, is nevertheless a failure, which we would see from the standpoint of its coming into being. Then we would be confronted by that which is 'without form' which yet demands to be embodied in a form.

However successful the artist is at responding to this demand, however appropriate the forms are which the artist has 'chosen' to embody that 'formlessness,' these forms must necessarily be inherently incomplete. There is 'something more' which is not "in" the image, in the sense that the forms of the objects or people are in it

If we perceive this, we can become aware of the inwardness of the image, which is the image in itself, which can then emerge through its forms. For this to happen, we must participate, must become open to the image's incompleteness and then allow 'something else' to emerge through it by creative awareness. This 'something else' is the to-presencing [1] of the image, and it can only occur when we have realized that the image is essentially absent. This experience also shows us that the image has been created for the encounter. It is only in the encounter that it discloses completion and in so doing becomes itself.

With this in mind, let us return to our consideration of the creation. Ordinarily we take it that the creation must have occurred at some time in the past because it is already "here," all around us. But if we take it seriously that every part (up to the most all-encompassing 'part') of it is an image of the whole, then the 'creation' is inherently absent and only comes into being in the encounter.

So long as we assume that the 'encounter' is only possible for human, or sentient beings, we will think that we have a special or privileged position to play in things. But in truth, the 'encounter' is independent of sentience. To understand this we would have to be able to 'divest' ourselves of the sentience which fills us and forms our awareness. This is not so much a matter of "getting rid of" our sentience as learning how to cease to identify with it, so that a different sort of awareness can arise within it.

We tend to think of the non-sentient world around us as passive and empty, but there are moments when the objects of the natural world, or those of the "man-made" world surprise us by, so to speak, 'taking on life.' What we encounter in such moments is the withinness of the non-sentient world. This is not something singular, but the natural state of the world.

The world's component objects are engaged in a continual encounter, each with all the rest. This ongoing encounter [2] is the way the world becomes and sustains itself, and it is only the dullness of our ordinary awareness which prevents us from perceiving it

According to an old saying, 'the very stones speak the Creator's name.' It is true that every smallest part of the whole is a similitude, an image of it. At the same time, the 'speech' of a stone should not be as 'articulate' as that of an oak tree, or that of an oak as 'articulate' as that of a human being; at least in so far as he or she is being fully human.

Unlike the oak and the stone, which are what they are, human beings have different ways of being human. We have bodies, emotions, and minds [3], and each of these have a characteristic form of sentience, giving us the potential for perceptions of great depth and subtlety.

Unfortunately, the very richness of our potential can mislead us into assuming that we are living from the whole of ourselves when in fact we are living lopsidedly, with a bias which favors one of these centers of perception and initiative at the expense of the others. If we return to the notion of being images, human beings are ordinarily, as we might say, either "physical," "emotional," or "intellectual" images, but none of these three "styles" of humanity are essentially different from one another. So there is this paradox, that the ways of being human which come "naturally" to us are not what being 'naturally human' is about.

To come to that something different is needed. A 'learning' is needed which so transforms us that the varied perceptions possible for each of the three centers become the foundation of a unified perception, and the initiatives of the three centers manifest in us at the behest of an individualized, unitary initiative or will.

In terms of being images, we can say that our human situation requires us to learn how to refashion ourselves. Although we are not the 'artist' who has brought us into being, there is a sense in which we have to stand in the place of the artist. However, as long as we continue to think of the artist as being active in shaping the passive materials he or she works with "into" an image we will misconstrue what is needed. The image, the whole, emerges through the artist in the work of art. The artist must be able to open him or herself to the image which seeks to emerge. The artist must let the image work actively through him or her discriminating between the forms which can be called 'rightful parts' [4] (because they facilitate the emergence of the image) and those forms which hinder its emergence. We have to learn how to place ourselves in a right relationship to the image which seeks to emerge through us.

If we had to do this based only on vague intuitions or accounts we had read, it would be very difficult, even impossible to accomplish. We carry within ourselves a touchstone, however, for the necessary discrimination. This is conscience, which Gurdjieff called the 'representative of the creator'. [5].

One of the ways we assist conscience to become active is by letting what other people tell us about ourselves penetrate. The remorse that arises in this way, as well as that which arises through our own deliberations on our behavior, can give powerful help in changing our lives. We have to be clear, however, about the difference between guilt and remorse. Unlike guilt, remorse is seeing ourselves without illusion. It is seeing ourselves with the 'eye' of our withinness. Experiencing remorse, the past is revived and repaired, is made in effect a 'rightful part' of the whole. We are placed, here and now, in a right relationship with our completion.

We usually come to the world, to other people, and even to ourselves "from the outside." We do not in fact, see how we could come to the world or to other people in any other way. And if we do not realize we are "outside ourselves" as well, it is because we take our habitual forms of sentience — our likes and dislikes, opinions, ideas, and familiar bodily states — to be our "inside." In effect, we see what is outside our body as "outside" and what is inside it as "inside." In reality, however, mm bodies, feelings, and thoughts are all external

to our withinness, but, this only becomes apparent when we are able to bring the three into balance.

Then what emerges is not body, not emotion, and not thought. This state is what Gurdjieff referred to as 'self- remembering' [6]; what we referred to above as the emergence of our completion, of who we ourselves are.

If two people encounter each other in such a fashion, a condition can result which can be called "mutual regard," in which each person emerges to presence in the regard of the other. Then, if it is possible to cease to identify with thoughts of "my presence, my withinness," or "your presence, your withinness," the phenomenon can deepen to what can be called the state of common presence.

In the time and place such a presence is realized, it is possible for other people to 'enter the circle and partake of its fruits,' provided, of course, that they are able to lay aside for a time their dependence on the external, the knowable. Our usual perception, gained from our experience of the material world, is that we "get" things by "taking hold" of them. We tend to respond in this way to life, in regard to both its outer and its inner expression.

We can only prolong our life externally within certain limits, and these limits are often out of our control. In its inwardness, our lives can only be shortened by trying to take hold, because there is nothing in us capable of 'holding' our withinness. So there is this paradox that we have to make great efforts to become other than as we are but we must abandon the fruit of these efforts. As was said before, this is not because it is of no concern whether they succeed or not, but rather that any possibility of transformation depends on their not being appropriated by our externality.

We can only come to our completion by letting it go, by pouring it out, giving it away. By pouring out that completion which has emerged through us and which we commonly call "ours," our abandoned completion then becomes a vessel in which 'unknowable perfection' can manifest.

This sounds like a very "great" thing, and in one sense it is. But in another sense, it is nothing at all. The free giving of ourselves can as easily occur in any of the "small" acts of our lives—the kindness freely given, the open laughter, the sharing of hardship and joy — in the "great" occasions when we feel that "something important" is going on.

We share the gift that we were given when we were brought into existence 'without because,' abandoning any claim to that being which is arising in us and allowing the work of self- creation to carry itself on in us autonomously. We begin to disclose in ourselves the form of the self-creating universe.

We can say that the Creation has a "purpose," that is, that it has a role to play in service of its Creator. So long as we conceive of such a purpose, as we might, as that of a car which we make to get from one place to another, we will completely misconstrue what is involved. The 'purpose' of the Creation is to be *able to bear* the image of the Creator. We can get a glimpse of what this means if we recall the designation which Gurdjieff used most frequently to refer to the Creator in *Beelzebub's Tales to his Grandson*, namely, 'Endlessness.'

We must remember that the Creation is created 'without because,' as a freely given gift; only so has it the possibility of bearing the image of that which freely bestows its endlessness from beyond being so that 'All and Everything' may endlessly come *to be*.

When we are able to live freely from our withinness, doing whatever we can with inward openness and lack of attachment something of a different order emerges through us. We then become what we are destined to be, *images of the Creator*.

Notes

1. H. Bortoft, "A Hermeneutic Perspective on the Epistemological Problem of the Quantum Theory," based on the first part of a seminar on "The Hermeneutic Condition in Human Knowledge" held at Sussex University on 15th June, 1974, pp. 17,19.
2. Cf. G.I. Gurdjieff s 'reciprocal maintenance', *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, E.P. Dutton, New York, 1950, Vol. I. pp. 130,136-7, Vol. HI, pp. 284-5,328.
3. Cf. G.I. Gurdjieff s 'three-centered beings' and 'three-brained beings,' *ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 144ff, 372, Vol. II, pp. 35,70, Vol. III, p. 362.
4. H. Bortoft, "The Whole: Counterfeit and Authentic," *Systematics* Vol. 9, No. 2, Sept 1971, pp. 51-52. Among other things, he says there: "The hazard of emergence is such that the whole depends on the parts to be able to come forth, and the parts depend on the coming forth of the whole to be significant instead of waste."
5. Gurdjieff, *op cit.*, Vol. I, p. 372. 6. P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, 1949, pp. 117-122.

Some Thoughts on Angels

Unis Vol 4, no. 2

While there are some people who have perceived the numinous angelic presence directly, with most of us it is otherwise. Yet this is not to say that we are not also 'visited' by angels, but rather that we must find some means of making ourselves more accessible to them, of opening the gates of perception. In that spirit, we can try, then, to do some thinking about angelic beings or essences, and hope that our efforts help us attain a little more clarity in this regard, so that at some future time, it may be given us, too, to know them directly, face to face.

But how are we to talk about them? Although angels are often spoken of as being immaterial, it has also been affirmed that "everything without exception in the Universe is material" [1]. These two notions can be reconciled if it is remembered that there is a relativity of materiality [2], which can be expressed in the notion of a scale or gradation of energies [3]. Ascending the scale of energies, from the material through the vital to the cosmic is ascending something like a scale of being, but this ascent brings with it its own difficulties for trying to understand the angelic presence. This is because while the effects of the material energies are easily perceived and more or less accessible to thought, we have difficulties in trying to comprehend the higher energies. Some of these difficulties can be indicated through a comparison.

Every energy involved in a given situation has a three-fold presence, consisting of its quality, its quantity, and the intensity with which it acts. What's more, if an energy is to undergo one or another transformation, it can only do so within a corresponding apparatus. So, when we burn natural gas, its chemical bonds are broken down as carbon and hydrogen combine with oxygen, liberating heat in the process. The apparatus in this case can be very simple, a burner which allows us to bring the gas and air into contact in a controlled way. Now in energetic terms, this simple apparatus allows a catabolic, or downward transformation of energy to occur. This transformation can be fully quantified in terms of calories of heat liberated as the gas burns, and it is this heat which enables us to use the energy "contained" in the gas to do work. With the life energies, however, this easy quantification begins to break down.

Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and ribonucleic acid (RNA) are forms of "carriers" of the constructive energy, the simplest of the life energies. Although a number of other substances, such as enzymes, also "carry" this quality of energy, it's useful to confine the discussion here to DNA and RNA, because of their exemplary quality as carriers of this energy. Both DNA and RNA can be oxidized to simpler constituents, but doing so will not tell us much about their ability to do work (as it would tell in the case of natural gas), because the work that they do is to build the substances used by living bodies. Here we begin to see how difficult it is to grasp the relativity of materiality. To understand the potential "contained" by DNA or RNA, we must see them at work in a corresponding apparatus, and the necessary apparatus is, usually, a living cell or even an organism. Even the simplest such apparatus, like a bacterium, however, is so complex that it functions not as the result of the work of just one gene, or "unit" of constructive energy, but from that of an interdependent array of genes which together "code" for the various functions which together make up the

"work" the bacterium must carry out to maintain its life. The relationship between the constructive energy and its corresponding apparatus is most easily illustrated by the virus, the simplest genetically based entity.

Some viruses are virtually "naked genes," or genes without even a coat of protein around them. In themselves, these viruses do not function as we generally recognize living things do, but when they are placed in a living cell, they commence "living work," commandeering the cell's "machinery," genetic or otherwise, to replicate themselves. In energetic terms: when placed within an apparatus for biological energy transformations, a cell, the assemblage of constructive energies, the virus, uses that apparatus to produce more assemblages of constructive energy from the materials at hand in the apparatus. That this work of producing more viruses can even lead to the death of the cell, the destruction of the apparatus, is of no consequence to the virus (except in so far as it helps the virus spread and infect neighboring cells), tells us something about the nature of the constructive energy: while the constructive energy makes possible the building of living structures, the simplest of these structures are merely assemblages of constructive energy whose only work, when they are in an appropriate apparatus, is their own replication. Human illnesses such as Alzheimer's disease also manifest the sort of problems which can arise in a complexly regulated whole when one or a few "units" of constructive energy begin to function autonomously. To effectively maintain a complex living whole, an organism, the work of the various forms of constructive energy must be coordinated and for this the higher life energies, the vital, automatic, and sensitive energies are necessary.

When we speak about such "higher life energies," we encounter a problem, in that we seem to be invoking "entelechies," or other vaguely vitalistic concepts which science has succeeded in banishing from its domain. Biology does not regard even the constructive energy as an energy. Though it would seem to stand to reason that where there is a particular kind of work being done, there is "something corresponding" making that work possible, the work carried out by living things can be analyzed biochemically in terms of heat flows and exchanges of ions and Occam's Razor can then be invoked to dispense with any putative "life energies." Admittedly, the life energies do not lend themselves to ready quantification, and the terminology used to describe them may sound suspicious: J. G. Bennett recounts [4] how at an early lecture on these energies, given in the nineteen-forties, a biochemist became so disgruntled that he left in the middle of the lecture and never returned. But some of the unique properties of living things, such as sentience, would seem to require some such approach if we are to be able to speak about them objectively. It is, paradoxically, by refusing to consider such notions as "vital energies" that science opens the door to a vague vitalism!

In defense of such narrowness, however, it must be admitted that we don't generally think in terms of energies, outside of a narrow range of physical energies, but in terms of things. Yet everything existing requires the interaction of different qualities or levels of energies, and looking at the world in terms of energetic interactions is not a sterile exercise, but one which can reveal a great deal which is normally obscured, always provided we are willing to see the work in terms of "process," in terms of a multiplicity of various "works" and corresponding "energies." The only difference between a living thing and a rock, say, is that a living thing is made possible by life energies which require conditions for their individualized working that the energetic composition of the rock is unable to provide. Yet the rock is also an apparatus

for the transformation of energies in which different levels of energies interact, and this interaction of higher and lower energies is true throughout existence.

Living things are the result of an intricate coordination of the work of different qualities of energies. The living bodies which result, are at once the "work" of the life energies and at the same time apparatuses within which the life energies are themselves formed as the result of energy transformations. In effect, the energies build the apparatus and the apparatus transforms the energies which in turn maintain the apparatus: a process which, within its own short temporal span, has something of the quality of perpetual motion.

The life energies make clear, in a way that may be overlooked in regard to the material energies, something of the nature of the relativity of materiality. The simplest of the life energies, the constructive energy, is the one easiest to grasp; though groups of genes often interact in exceedingly complex ways in the economy of higher organisms, these interactions can usually be analyzed into the discreet actions of a number of genes which are separate, at least in understanding. Even here, however, it is apparent that we are faced with an "energy" whose "work" is much more sophisticated than any occurring in the non-living world, and this complexity increases with each succeeding life energy. The working of the vital energy, which is "carried" by various organic metabolites, possibly hormones or other regulative proteins, endows living things with the possibility of maintaining themselves as more or less harmonious wholes which cohere through time. With the automatic energy, which must also be "contained" or "carried" by corresponding organic substances, and which manifests most fully in multicellular living things, there first comes the possibility of self-directed activity, one of the most notable characteristics of living beings. As we can be aware in our own lives, the automatic energy also makes possible, for the first time, what we refer to as experience. As far as the 'intentionality of consciousness' is concerned, the sort of experience the automatic energy makes possible is very vague, and what we do automatically rarely registers later in memory. At the same time, however, given the inner, "private" quality of experience, something is revealed about the scale of energies by the fact that we experience anything at all, namely that as we ascend the scale, we are also going 'in deeper:' the ascent is a movement toward greater inwardness.

The highest life energy, the sensitive energy, makes possible an inner experience with an enduring quality, which we can in some measure call 'our own.' It is the energy of noticing, of 'waking up,' and gives us the sense of being present to what we are doing. Undoubtedly, there are neurotransmitters which, upon being transmitted from one set of neurons to another, make these sorts of experiences possible. But at this level of complexity, the interrelationship between the energy and the apparatus is quite complex. Just as the constructive energy builds a living body, it is likely true that the substances carrying each higher life energy act in the living body so as to facilitate their own continued production and transformation in the future; with the sensitive energy the result is, in a sense, the possibility of a 'body of experiencing.' This is another, more expansive way of speaking about the idea that experience facilitates changes in the synaptic structures in the nervous system, which in turn facilitate the "recording" of similar experiences in the future. It is also an attempt to remind us that the boundaries between "energy" and "apparatus" are nowhere so clearly delineated in the living world as in the material world. So that it would not be true to say that introducing the idea of life energies makes the task of understanding immeasurably simpler. It does, however, enable us to discuss notions such as sentience in a practical way. And it

also gives us a method we can use to approach such notions as that of the angelic presence which is directly analogous to the one we used for the more easily perceptible aspects of creation.

Just as the material energies and the life energies make possible corresponding "works," the same is true of the cosmic energies, the energies by which the cosmos itself is maintained. We have difficulty understanding such energies, which are more 'inward,' possess more 'interiority,' than even the highest of the life energies. The first, the conscious energy is still open to our experience; it is the energy by which we can become aware of our connectedness to other parts of the creation, become aware, in a way which is beyond the capacity of the awakened attention produced by the sensitive energy, that we are enmeshed inwardly with everything which is. But the other, higher cosmic energies lie beyond consciousness, so that we cannot be aware of them with the mind except through their effects. We do have instruments which can be attuned to their work, but these instruments are themselves beyond the mind. The mind must first learn to let itself be harnessed to these instruments if we are to allow them to work appropriately in us, thereby enabling us to bring the workings of these higher energies into the world in an individualized manner. The material energies are nearly wholly external in their effects and make 'exteriority,' the world of bodies, possible; the cosmic energies are nearly wholly internal in their effects, working in the interior of everything existing, making of "things" a harmonious, meaningful whole. The vital energies provide a 'meeting ground' for the other two realms and allow interior and exterior to interact and conjoin. The nature of our human being is such that we are, potentially, a similar 'meeting ground,' but in this case the 'place' where the cosmic energies are enabled to manifest in the living world through the activity of individual centers of initiative.

Among the instruments we have, at least potentially, for attuning us to the interior world is the soul. Above, I spoke of a 'body of experiencing' which can be formed in us through the activity of the sensitive energy. The coalescence of such a 'body' can also be called the beginning of the formation of our soul; formed of sensitive energy in a certain state, it is not yet beyond the mind, and can be perceived within us when it has reached a certain 'density of coherence,' at which point it becomes a suitable 'vessel' for the higher, cosmic energies to enter and begin a stable, individualized working. The conscious energy brings with it the first possibility of detachment from our experience. This may sound paradoxical, since above I said it allows us to become attuned to our inward enmeshment with things; but it brings us into that awareness by taking us out of our ordinary entrapment in ourselves. With the entry of the creative energy, a working begins which takes us beyond consciousness, beyond awareness. When the creative energy begins to coalesce in the vessel provided by the 'body of experiencing,' there begins to be formed in us a 'body beyond experience,' [5] which we can also call a 'body of stillness.' If we begin to act from this still center, if the stillness manifests from within us, the result will likely surprise us as much as anyone else, for there is a sense in which the action does not originate with us, but from beyond us. Above I called the soul our instrument, but when the body of stillness takes form in us, it begins to become apparent that the idea of our having the soul as an instrument is inaccurate: instead, we are the instrument of the soul, and move to its still measure. With this formation of the higher part of the soul, which can also be called a 'body of peace,' the individual in question can become, as is said, a "spiritual influence" on those around him. He or she also begins to take

an active part in the "work" by which the world is maintained. Another way of speaking about this transformation is to say that the individual has become attuned to his or her guardian angel.

The angels are among the "beings" through whom the "work" of maintaining the cosmos is effected, and we can become such as can share in this work with them, but before we can think about what such work may entail, we should see that we don't conceive of such "work" or of "being" aright. When we think of these things, we tend to think of a hierarchical "scale of being," with, perhaps, the animals "below" us, and "greater" beings such as the angels above us, and above and beyond everything, the "Supreme Being," God. This is, in effect, a universe run from the top down, with everything predetermined and our intuitions of freedom illusory. But if we do have at least the possibility of acting freely in our wills, then 'rule from above' cannot mean what it would in the case of a human autocrat.

We must try to understand the notion of a plurality of wills interacting with one another. We tell ourselves and believe that we "make decisions," we "act" upon a passive, even recalcitrant world, but this is to mistake the reality of 'will,' and such mistakes arise partly from the way our perceptions are geared to exteriority, and partly from a misconception that the will is knowable. 'Will' is hidden from perception in the depth of our within-ness, and indeed, really only a potential for us as we are. Rather than say we "do" things, we might better say, in so far as 'will' can indeed enter into us and move us, and through us the things of the world, 'we are enacted.' Beings 'higher up' the scale are not, then, "greater actors" but 'fuller enactments', and we may guess further that God, whom we suppose to be Pure Act, is, rather than "Primary Actor," 'fullest enactment.' What can this mean?

A great obstacle for us here is our understanding of the notion of 'inwardness.' If we say, then, that the angels are "beings like ourselves in our inwardness, only more so," this may even be true, but we don't know what it means, because we generally come at our 'within-ness' from outside. Another look at the way the energies of awareness work in us may help here. We exist a great deal of the time with the very limited awareness which comes from being centered in the working of the automatic energy. Becoming sensitive to what is going on within and around us then seems like a very great step inward. But true inwardness begins with the energy of consciousness, and a great deal of intensive inner work is necessary if we are to become able to evoke the presence of this energy in ourselves [6]. Yet it is only with the creative energy, which is within and beyond awareness itself, that a 'place' can be created in ourselves in which there can act a will which is truly our own. Then, it can begin to enact us; before that time, we are subject to the play of whatever outside law circumstances have placed us under, with nothing permanent in us which can truly be called our own.

We can, perhaps, grasp what is being spoken of by expanding on this hint provided by the words "outside laws." In effect, the laws governing things are the will of the world; another way to say this is to say that to have a will of our own is the same as having our own law. Equally important, this idea lets us see how the "greater" wills, the wills with a greater embrace, work, if we can accept the notion that the laws which make the world possible are truly the enactment of a corresponding will. We have to try to grasp the notion of a will which essentially empowers the arising of other wills within it able to will independently. 'God' rules, in effect, by assenting to obey the dictates of 'his' ongoing creating, which requires a self-limiting, or so to speak fractionating, of the Creative Will, in the form of laws which govern

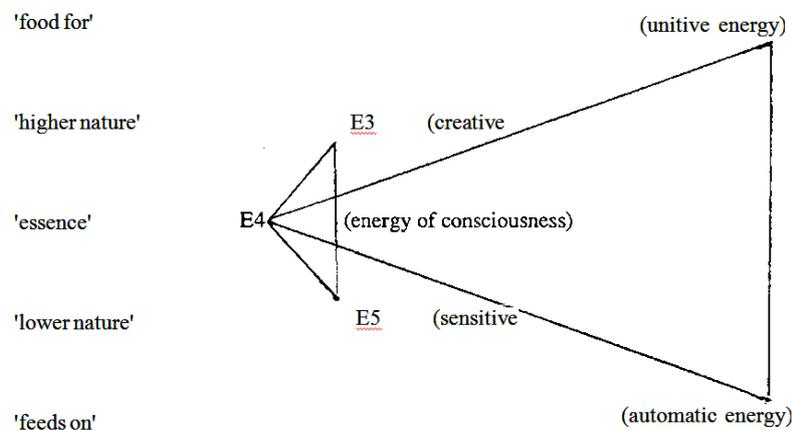
the possibility of the arising of worlds and beings. In some of these beings this 'greatest enactment' enables the possibility of individually arisen and independently acting wills. The willing spoken of in the Qur'an, 'Be! and it was' then becomes, in this view, not an act occurring external to the creative source, but one in which 'God' gave 'himself over, allowed 'his will' to become fashioned other than it had been, into multiplicity, that a world might thereby arise. And we may take it, to return to our theme, that becoming attuned to the promptings of our guardian angel is enabling and allowing ourselves to become more fully at-oned to this ongoing enacting of the world.

The notion of the present moment, as developed by J.G. Bennett [7] may help us to understand this idea of 'enactment' more practically. The present moment is, basically, the "span of time" capable of being held in the embrace of a given will. This becomes more complex once it is understood that three different kinds of time influence and give the present moment its character. The first of these is 'eternity,' the incomparably rich "storehouse" of patterns and potentials; the second is 'time,' in which linear actualization brings into existence a particular one of these possible eternal patterns; the third is 'hyparxis,' which reconciles the interplay of time and eternity, thereby giving actualization the possibility of becoming realization.

At first glance it might seem that the present moment corresponds to the embrace of our awareness, which fluctuates depending on circumstances. And so long as we fall under the sway of any arbitrary set of world laws—physical, biochemical, physiological and psychological—which happen to be active "where" we are, this correspondence is roughly accurate. If we enter the sort of transformation we have discussed here, in which another sort of 'life' begins to form itself within our life, and we begin to be subject to the sway of a law of our own, which is relatively independent of the play of the laws external to our individuality, then the correspondence between the present moment and our awareness no longer holds. Awareness becomes too small to contain our present moment. Instead, the relationship of awareness to past and future, to memory and expectation, begins to change. What occurred to us previously begins to become ours in a new way, not simply because of the particularities of the situations we took part in ("no one else ever did such and such in precisely that way"), but because through its assent to the facts of our individual history the will in us opens us to the realization of these actualizations, to make them real. And, on the other hand, the unfolding of the future begins to change, too, as through the assent of our will, the events "prepared" for us become more 'aligned' to our own ongoing realization. This does not mean that what befalls us ceases to be painful or difficult; it may even become much more painful and harder to bear. But assenting, our will takes us out from under the sway of the "lower," or more general, world laws and opens for us the possibility of becoming more corresponding to our destiny, or more real. Another way of saying this is that through the assent of our will, we become open to sacred laws, or 'influences from above' which then begin to enter our lives from the future; such influences blend with the more general laws which predetermine our linear temporal future so as to give these laws a certain sort of "flexibility" within whose confines 'something' can be created which will not be lost to time's perpetual perishing. This 'something' saved is made possible, again, in a future closed to our awareness but able to be embraced by the will which has arisen in us. It is said to be 'saved,' because it can return to its source. Another way to say this is that the real is what can return.

So we can say that our destiny is to serve as a means for certain sorts of experiencing—a certain quality of existence—to be transformed into 'something' which can be returned to the source. This work of return is connected to what I have spoken of, of becoming attuned to our guardian angel. That the angelic presences are en-joyed to assist us in this work is partly because it is their nature to be so, but it is partly also because this enables them, as well, to further the return they themselves make to the source. On the one hand, the angels can be said to be 'vessels of assent,' or the instruments through which the enacting of the world is enabled to enter into and become it. But as having wills in themselves, laws of their own, they partake in the ongoing realization of the world, by which 'something' is enabled to return to the source.

The notion of the pentadic essence classes, developed by J.G. Bennett from ideas presented by Gurdjieff [8], may help us to finish this discussion. Now, according to this conception of the angel:



Before saying anything about the angelic nature based upon this symbol, something needs to be said about the symbol itself. 'Food for,' and 'feeds on' describe a relationship with higher and lower essence classes which is essentially trophic, that is, that 'something' arising through the lower class in the relationship provides 'nourishment' to the higher class involved. Another way of saying this is to say that the symbol is built around the notion of return. The 'essence' is what the being is in itself, while 'lower nature' and 'higher nature' are what it emerges from and what it merges into. (In this case, the lower nature corresponds to the human essence; if we reverse this, it appears that our higher nature is the angelic essence...)

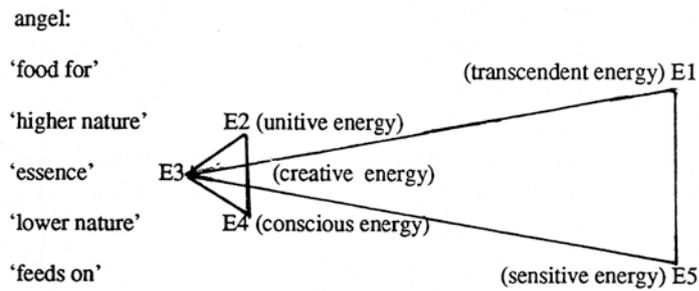
If, then, the angels can be said to "stand above us" it is because, as the symbol indicates, they originate as 'vessels of stillness,' centered in the energy of consciousness which is not bound to the round of temporal actualization. "Dwelling" outside of time, their presence can enter it through their lower nature which is comprised of sensitive energy of a special quality; in effect, they can "dip" into the existing world through this "gate" or "window" in their nature provided by the sensitive and automatic energies, and it is through this window that they act "upon" externality. But being essentially consciousness, they are essentially all 'within-ness' coming to these lower energies from within. Whereas we find that the sensitivity takes us within our experience and deepens it, it is for them a "movement" to the "outside." Unlike us,

they come at their perceptions of the world "from within," and don't act, therefore, so much "upon" any thing as 'in' the 'within-ness' of it, their action so to say emerging in it from within. Another way to put this, however, is to say that they "impinge" on the world of existence through the organizing effect that their 'body' of cosmic energies has on the lower energies, and especially the energy of sensitivity.

Returning, again, to the notion of becoming attuned to the angelic essence we can say that, in energetic terms, such attunement is helping and enabling the coalescence of the cosmic energies in and the 'perfecting' [9] of the vessel of the 'body of experiencing' formed by the sensitive energy. But now we can also say that this perfecting is brought about through our assent to placing ourselves 'within' the organizing working of the angelic essence. Above we said that the energy of consciousness in which the angelic essence is centered is beyond time. This means, among other things, that where our 'intent,' in so far as it is at all, generally works effectually only in a small span of time, the 'intentionality' of the angels is deep and broad, encompassing as present what is past and future for us. It is through the intercession of this 'deep intentionality' that the past can be truly repaired and a transformative future opened up for beings such as ourselves, and for the world as a whole. We may grasp this somewhat more fully if we say that the angelic nature stands 'within' and beyond awareness: their intentionality does not work through awareness except insofar as beings such as ourselves are able to make our awareness available to them. Which brings us to the notion of angelic mistakes [10]. So long as we view "greater" beings as being superior in every respect to ourselves, as, for example, having awareness like ours but of virtually unlimited scope, such a notion makes very little sense. But if we once see how precarious the grasp of the externality of the world must in some ways be for beings beyond awareness, who "reside" in intentionality within things, then their acts "upon" the world must be seen to be much chancier than we might otherwise have expected. And then our own efforts at 'self-perfecting' may come to be seen in a different light, as something not only of interest to ourselves, but as providing corresponding awarenesses through which the angelic "entry into time" can be made at least a little more corresponding to the nature of the existing world as it is in itself, and therefore less likely to go awry. In this view, our efforts are needful to the higher powers, even as their help is needful to us if these efforts are to bear fruit.

Notes

1. G.I. Gurdjieff, *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, Vol. I, E.P. Dutton, New York, 1950, p. 138.
2. P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, 1949, pp. 86-89.
3. J.G. Bennett, *Energies*, Coombe Springs Press, Kingston-on-Thames, 1964.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.
5. A.G.E. Blake, *Enneagram*, (in preparation), chapter 12, "the Great Tescooano."
6. Cf. Gurdjieff's "self-remembering:" Ouspensky, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-122.
7. J.G. Bennett, *The Dramatic Universe*, Vol. IV, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1966, chap. 42, pp. 13-64. 5
8. J.G. Bennett, *The Dramatic Universe*, Vol. III, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1963, chap. 35, pp. 313-316; for a somewhat different presentation of these same ideas, with the essence of the angel said to be centered in the creative energy, see J.G. Bennett, *Gurdjieff: Making a New World*, appendix II, p. 292. Without attempting to look into this second view of angels in detail, the corresponding pentad would be:



This view would do several things to our understanding of the angelic essence. Being centered in the creative energy would increase their ability to maintain, and responsibility for, the working of the world. At the same time, however, it would remove them deeper into interiority, and make our concluding remarks about the possibility of angelic mistakes that much more cogent.

9 G.I. Gurdjieff, op. cit., pp. 144-5, 191-2, 196, 353, etc.

10 Ibid. p. 82; pp. 86-90 describe the response to this; Gurdjieff's view of the outcome is given best, perhaps, in Vol. II, pp. 264-265. This whole question can help, perhaps, in understanding such notions as that of the Fall in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Zoroastrian Ahriman, etc.

BOOK REVIEW

The novels of Charles Williams, *War in Heaven; Descent into Hell; Many Dimensions; The Place of the Lion; The Major Trumps; Shadows of Ecstasy; All Hallows Eve* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans).

Kindness, patience, forbearance, were not enough; he had had them, but she had had love. He must find what she had another kind of life. All these years, since he had been that eager child, he had grown the wrong way, in the wrong kind of life. Yet how to have done other? how to have learned, as she had learned, the language without which he could not, except for a conceded moment speak to the imperial otherness of her glory? He must it seemed, be born all over again. - All Hallows Eve

There is a mystery connected with being, as we are - at least potentially - spiritual beings in physical bodies. How is the real life, the spiritual life, to be brought to fruition in the midst of the all consuming cares and demands of our physical life? How are we, so beset, even to recognize it? As the saying goes, we can't jump over our own knees; in other words, we need help.

How can it happen that we can be helped? We may see that we are ruled by the accumulated habits and desires of ordinary life, and therefore acknowledge that we need help, yet still confuse our ordinary selves with that in us which can be open to the inner reality. Again, we look for help to come to us from somewhere outside ourselves, and this is sensible enough, given our acknowledged inner slavery. Yet it overlooks something vital, for help can only be effectual in the presence of a responsive medium, and this is provided through the disposition of the will. It is because the will is hidden from us in our state of sleep that help seems so inexplicable. It is also for this reason that we can be helped long before we have any real understanding of what is happening: The will, in obedience to the summons it receives, assents to something literally beyond our comprehension. Or say, rather, beyond reason, because we can come to a certain kind of comprehension.

We can come to some understanding of the things of the inner world with the help of images, provided we can keep from worrying them to death with our reason. The form of the image works upon us in a way that words alone are unable to, opening a doorway which puts us in touch with our inner nature. Of course, for this sort of action, not just any image will do; the relevant saying, as far as discrimination in such matters goes, is "He who tastes, knows."

The novels of Charles Williams are a rich treasury of images illuminating the life of the spirit. Reading them can, in consequence, take on the sensation of getting a taste of another reality, ruled by different laws. Another way of expressing this might be that one sometimes has the feeling while reading of being in the presence of help. And all that remains for the reader then is to assent to be helped:

"And if I could," she said. "If I could do-whatever it is you mean, would I? Would I push my burden on to anybody else?"

"Not if you insist on making a universe for yourself," he answered. "If you want to disobey and refuse the laws that are common to us and if you want to live in pride and division and anger, you can. But if you will be part of the best of us, then you must be

content to be helped. You must give your burden up to someone else, and you must carry someone else's burden. I haven't made the universe and it isn't my fault But I'm sure that this is a law of the universe, and not to give up your parcel is as much to rebel as not to carry another's. You'll find it quite easy if you let yourself do it"

DRAMATIC UNIVERSE - REPORT ON VOL.IV.

Brian Hartshorne

Note: This document is ascribed to Hartshorne without verification. Brian died about fifteen years ago at a very young age. The text has been scanned so some errors may exist. It is dated 13-15 May 1968.

I have had a great deal of trouble trying to formulate just what I wanted to say about THE DRAMATIC UNIVERSE. I tried to systematize my reactions to it, but couldn't do it until it occurred to me to classify my reactions into three of your categories, exoteric, mesoteric and esoteric. I found this to be somewhat helpful, but still troublesome, since though I felt I could express somewhat what I meant by esoteric and exoteric, I found the mesoteric level elusive.

Exoterically the book had a great deal of effect on me. Ever since San Francisco I had been trying to relate everything I experienced into a "general field theory", and so I was able to very largely accept your "general field theory", as it apparently contains much that I had tried to think out, truly united into a coherent framework. You have gone far beyond my furthest attempts, and I think I can agree with almost all of what you have written, especially thanks to your elucidation of Eternity, Hyparxis, Will, Synergy and the Intelligence behind History. My own attempts at formulations broke up because I could not conceive of things in such terms. I felt that man had to become more than man, but though I felt that it could not be done alone - I saw Nietzsche as evidence of the failure of separation - yet I could not conceive of transformation as being more than a personal effort, though guided and helped by others. I realized that I had always believed in God. I had felt He hated me, as I hated myself; and as I tried to learn to accept myself I tried to accept God's Love, yet it was always as an individual, never as part of a community united in will and in purpose. I felt that egoism was wrong, but felt that it was due to conditioning. Now I think that if it were not for egoism, liberation from conditioning would be less hard than it is. Though I am still far from being able to accept many of the elements of Christian faith, especially as presented in the Bible, I could for the first time feel the rightness of their claims and how they could indeed be true. (Interestingly, the author of a book about the "Son of Man" claims that that derives from a type of saviour in Zoroastrian circles - which may be related to an earlier Vedic type of similar qualities and name - and that similar ideas of the Man, the Son of Man, the Primal Man, Adam, and even Melchisedec were fairly common in the Near East for the period around the birth of Christianity, especially in Gnostic circles.) Sometimes I felt the evidence you gave was indeed rather slender - as how the Hidden Directorate broke with the Church, for example, yet I felt that on the major points you were correct. (Actually, some of the evidence which you didn't have space to include had come to my attention in other ways: a couple of months ago I happened to run across a copy of Systematics in our library and read the article about Crete, and I was already familiar with Velikovsky on the plagues of Egypt; a friend of mine working on a thesis about the birth of science and the Puritan Revolution and how they were influenced by the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse told me that Napier, who invented logarithms apparently discovered them while working out a system of calculations to determine when the world would end; McLuhan, an unknowing synergic prophet - he ascribes it to the effects of media, which do seem to have had a synergic effect

- noted that the telegraph was first used in 1844, and that within ten years or so it had brought about the birth of what is now the Associated Press Service. He also talks about how he feels that the seeking for overviews and patterns and structures is a result of a flood of information which can't be handled in the old piecemeal efforts of understanding things, citing computers as an example of this). I could even accept as fact that the world today is still being largely directed and that it is indeed time for a step forward in man's responsibility and unity.

The mesoteric level is the one I am really unsure of. I feel that there should be a mesoteric level, since I think I can see two other levels, and it should stand as a reconciling force for the two other levels of effect. I guessed, after a friend of mine said the book struck her as a "new mythology", that it might indeed be a sort of "new mythology", part of the Great Tradition, explaining the Great Work and man's destiny in terms of the language of today, and at the same time, in a language of its own. Its very explicitness was disturbing, since that seems to blur the distinction between the exoteric and the mesoteric as I have tried to define it, yet it seems to me now, that this may be because we are in the Synergic Epoch, in which, hopefully man will come to responsibility in a union of will with God and other men - which thus makes the Synergic Epoch seem like a New Age in that he can consciously contribute to the Great Work, creatively contribute to the Great Work. When, and if, that happens the Great Work can come out in the open, but perhaps now that it is time for man to awaken the Great Tradition can be much more explicit than ever before. (Though still wrapped in an exoteric package - your terminology, diagrams and capitalized terms - which prevent people -including several friends I talked to - from reading and seeing how explicit it is).

The esoteric effect the book had on me is easier to describe, yet I am unsure how much of it was my reading into the book and how much was intentionally there. Early in the book you made several comparisons between the nascent earth and a newly conceived child, and later made some links between ontogeny and phylogeny (to which I tentatively added geogeny) (pp. 117, 124, 126-7, 134, 139, 170, 231, 241.) Because of these links I was continually trying to see if I could set up a relationship between what you were saying about the race at each point and about myself- at least on a level of verbal organization. I could not relate the idea of a Higher Intelligence directly to my life except as I felt an influence at work verbally in the book; indeed the thought has occurred to me that my life has been directed, yet I cannot in any way pin down such an influence or direction, and feel that to say, "Yes, I have been coming here all my life" would be, as we said in San Francisco, an "ego trip". Could it be a matter not of "I was coming here" but rather of "I was being brought"? Many times you spoke of the plan as the "overcoming of separateness" (p. 130) and linked the ideas of transformation and creation with cooperation: "Transformation, as we said, requires cooperation and this, in turn requires consciousness set free from sensitivity." and "the creative operation must find a conscious response at the sixth level of transformation in order to penetrate into the visible history of human experience. This notion will prove of the utmost significance in our final attempt to assess the present situation of mankind." (pp. 78-79) All these things, together with the feeling that you were saying something real, and the stress you laid on the last chapter, led me to certain conclusions when I read, the last chapter. "I think that one key passage supplied me with part of what I want to say: "Our concern is not with those who would deny any reality to the notions of

transformation and of a Hidden Directorate; but with those who at least accept the possibility of those things and seek to understand what is required.

It is possible to offer something to those who seek in this way. First, it is necessary to grasp the notion of the Great Work and understand why it must act from within people and not from without. Second, it must be realized that all turns upon transmission. Only those minds that have acquired the ability to recognize the working of the cosmic energies and to receive 'signals', can respond directly to the guidance that comes from the Hidden Directorate. For others it is necessary to receive their guidance indirectly, This is the difference between the upper and lower parts of the Psycho-kinetic Group, and it may be expressed as the distinction between mind-action and soul-action, but we must be careful not to confuse direct mind-action with verbal communication. The latter can operate on all levels, but it cannot serve for the creative act that must be done here and now at the moment of opportunity or opening. The sensitive mind receives its guidance directly: but it does so from another mind. The harmonized soul is guided by the pattern of destiny. It does what is required without an intervening stage of perception and decision.

Returning to the need of the present moment, we can say people must be found and transformed both in mind and soul. This-is happening in many ways. Some of these are explicitly directed towards the psychokinetic transformation and their role does not usually go beyond the stage of preparing Candidates, (note: The Candidate may be drawn to the psychokinetic society in many ways: religious, artistic, scientific, social, as well as by a feeling for the hidden and esoteric content of human experience.)" (pp. 418-419) I felt that there was a hidden, esoteric message in this chapter calling me to become part of the great work; not direct mind action, but indirect action on a verbal level, that concepts and ideas were being ordered in me by the book, that because I am conditioned (though I know' this I don't understand it.) it was the book working on me and not I on the book, that I am "out of control" (p. 404) at least of my control, though my thought seems to be being given "a coherence upon levels that have hitherto been divided into many partial presents. .." (p. 404) and. that since in this book, and probably in other ways I can't think of, "evidently Intelligence is directing the entire process of human development at the present time"(p. 415). What I feel I have seen I have been made to see, or made capable of seeing. Indeed, though I constantly find myself acting as if these ideas were my creations, as you say, greater order can only be brought into a system from an outside source, in this case the book. And if the order perceivable in the world, has 'been introduced by an ordering Intelligence, I felt that such an Intelligence was at work behind the scenes of your book. This is what I felt I have seen. You write, "At this point, we must seek to answer the question always put to those who affirm an unseen influence, in human history: why does the influence have to remain unseen and would it not be more effective if it came into the open?"

The answer to this question is implicit in the distinction we have made between predetermination, predestination and preordainment. Only transformations of the material energies give results perceptible to the senses. In human terms, we can say that all that can be perceived is behaviour. By recognising the different levels, we can interpret behaviour as results applying to one or several of the seven histories....What is' perceived as behaviour remains in the zone of material energy transformationsthese transformations are never wholly predetermined.... As we approach the region of destiny, the uncertainties turn into- - opportunities and these acquire an increasingly free and creative character. Taking an

opportunity is not a visible action: for the very nature of an opportunity is to offer something more than the predetermined future.

There is only one way-in which the course of history can be adjusted to the hazards of disorder and the threats of malevolent powers and that is by the unseen actions of those who take their opportunities in the right way.... changes on the material level can only increase disorder. The only effective intervention is that which touches the minds and not the material natures of men.

There are at least two ways in which there can be an intervention. One is by the overt behaviour of those who inwardly are awakened to the signals that reach them from higher levels. The second way is by direct action upon minds that are accidentally tuned in to the correct 'wave-length'. It is very probable that the higher powers intervene in both these ways and in others we do not know.

.....It is highly probable that there are more men and women in the world who are serving as channels for the transmission of influences, from the hyparchic future than either they themselves or the world is aware of.

Obviously, to demonstrate an action of this kind would be impossible, because it can apply only to that which has already entered into material transformations. Nevertheless, we have one indirect confirmation of an invisible action and this is the very great improbability that the situation of mankind, would be as favourable as it is today, if only the visible agents were operative.....If it cannot be accounted for in terms of visible factors, we are compelled to postulate some unseen influence. All that we have done in this volume is to show how such an unseen influence could have operated from the beginning of history and how it may be operating today." (pp. 415-417) and I am made to feel that nothing I can say can prove what I feel, yet nevertheless, I feel that I have accidentally tuned in to the correct wave-length, to an extent and I feel that I would not be feeling this if there were no invisible influence in the book. After making a few predictions about how life will be changed as man achieves his destiny (and I was wondering if any of the predictions could be interpreted on an individual basis) you write: "These optimistic forecasts will founder on the rocks of human egoism unless there is a profound change in man's attitude towards his destiny the purpose of the Redemption was to make possible the conquest of. egoism, not to ensure it, Two things should be understood: first, that though man cannot redeem himself he can be redeemed through the Love of God; and, second, to be effective, man must accept the reality of redemption and that even this is beyond the power of most human minds." (pp. 421-422) And I know that I am included in that statement. Then, in a seemingly more obviously esoteric passage: "Why is it that men in general have been unable "to accept the gifts freely offered to them? It is evidently because the human mind cannot become aware of the Gift and its reality. Even in the ages of faith, there have been few who have seen the Truth for themselves. Second-hand faith, taught or affirmed by others, does not produce the required contact nor open the channel through which the Unitive Energy can flow. An additional help was necessary; but it could be given only when it became obvious that man could not be saved without it. There is abundant evidence that some new action is occurring in the world at the present time.

The Unitive Energy gives the human soul the possibility of union with Christ. This is the perfecting of the Individuality. But it can do so only if the soul is free from egoism. Therefore, a purifying or purgative action is necessary. This comes about by a contact between the *self-*

hood of man and the will of the Cosmic Individuality. This contact can be made in thousands of ways, because the Unitive Energy is everywhere and can adapt itself to any kind of response. Thousands of men and women throughout the world experience the contact and are transformed: but the completeness and purity of the transformation depends upon their own nature.

So powerful and so varied an action requires regulation. In part, it may be responsible for the explosions described at the beginning of the chapter. The task of regulation and adjustment falls to the Hidden Directorate and those who can communicate with it. There is thus a two-fold action....Destiny and Divine Providence have entered into an action that is changing the entire situation of mankind.

This does not mean that the evolution of man is assured against all hazards. The problem of communication remains. There is always something that man must accomplish within the limitations of his self-hood. He must understand that what formerly was almost impossible because of the obstruction of egoism has now been made easy for those who can perceive the working. There are many who partly perceive, but do not understand. They can respond only imperfectly to the 'new working'. A great obstacle is man's attachment to external forms of belief, of worship and of organization.... it is imperative that we should liberate ourselves 'from the geocentric and anthropomorphic language in which our religious beliefs are still expressed. A far more difficult and revolutionary requirement is that we should see that we are in the midst of the Parousia and realize that this is not the end of the world, but the beginning of a New Age. Hardest of all for modern man is to admit his own complete helplessness and dependence, upon all levels above that of his bodily organism. Only when he can make this admission can he become a channel for the transmission of the energies that will enable human evolution to make a step towards true responsibility and not imaginary dominion." (pp. 424-5). It seemed to me that a number of things were being put forward here, and I think that I didn't get all of them. The additional help, the contact, the channel all seemed to be concerned with Subud. In the following paragraph it seemed that if it was indeed Subud, then Subud was Synergic in character. Whatever it is, I feel that you were saying that this working cannot be spread secondhand, which is why there is a problem in communication: the contact can be made, but not by me alone: Can verbal communication on a higher level be an evidence of the working? I felt such a level of communication yet' was unsure of what it might mean, hence all this confusion. I am too entangled in conditioning and egoism to be able to turn to God by myself or through books, but through another person already awakened if I can see to find such a person. Yet, "The new Synergic Master Idea is misunderstood as signifying that human cooperation will enable man to dispense with providential guidance and help,...The resulting confusion does not stem from a breakdown in the religious experience of mankind; but from the new mode of will-action to which men are still quite unaccustomed." (p. 426) Yet a certain amount of human cooperation is needed, it seems to me, before such an act of will can be made: being will-less how can I make an act of will unless I am enabled to do so - by contact of the will of the Cosmic Individuality? - yet verbal contact is not enough for the enabling act to be made. I don't know, I think I may be confusing two acts, the first, acceptance of my own helplessness and need for both guidance and purgation, and the second, an act of will to accept God's Will. You write: "Here and now, in the latter part of the twentieth century of the Christian Era, a supernatural action is taking place. It comes from beyond Nature and it does not enter

wholly into Nature - that is into the world of earthly life. It is the Presence of the Cosmic Individuality, that is Christ, transforming the entire human situation. All people are called to the act of will that will enable the human soul-stuff to be impregnated with the Unitive Energy that is the Love of God, Not many are able within the present moment to be aware of the Destiny that leads mankind forward. Untransformed man lives within the small present moment of his subjective experience, and can neither understand what is occurring upon a far greater scale nor see what is required of him. This is not to say that psychostatic man has no place in the Great Work of human progress; but that he must depend upon those who can see to guide him. The psychokinetic order is open to all: but only some can reach the degrees of Counsellor or Initiate and so become aware, in their own experience, of the true nature of the event. They can serve the Great Work; consciously: but they, in their turn, depend upon the radically different insights that are accessible to psychoteleios men. They alone can be channels of communication between mankind and those regions of Experience that belong to the Hyparchic Future. They transmit not only knowledge, but the power of action without which the world would be held in the fetters of causality and chance." (p. 433)

I feel that I am being led, guided, to see that at least on a verbal level the working, the Presence of the Cosmic Individuality is taking place in the book, that I am being led to acknowledge my destiny as becoming a responsible creative being, as far as it is possible, whatever outward form or nature the rest of my life may entail. Yet, since this is a verbal, outward guidance, it can only be the beginning. You wrote, to go back a few pages, "The actions required range from educational procedures, social betterment and the preservation of peace, to the most hidden working within the Psychoteleios Group who constitute the Hidden Directorate. In the past, these actions have been conducted largely in isolation from one another, by persons and societies bearing quite different labels. Now, in the Synergic Epoch, this kind of separate working must give place to organized cooperation. This is the need of the present moment. But it is still not possible for the Hidden Directorate to 'come into the open' as people demand. Unless this is understood, nothing can be understood. Every kind of action depends upon conditions. Freedom and creativity are impossible in the conditions of material existence and predetermined changes. The transmission of the highest cosmic energies requires more than a sensitive mind: it needs souls strong enough to be the instruments of the Universal Will." (p. 419). Yet the organized cooperation is not necessarily of an external nature, any more than is that of the .Hidden Directorate, as I see it. Common purpose and shared actions yet not necessarily similar outward manifestations. And I feel that the working in the book impels me to take part in this work, as far as I can. Finally, you wrote, "It is in the character of the Synergic Epoch upon which we have now entered that .much should be revealed that has hitherto been hidden. It is in this sense that we understand the Parousia or Manifestation of the Cosmic Individuality. As our last task, we must seek to express something of the nature of this Manifestation as it emerges from our long study....

We have the notion of the Millennium that has so plagued the imagination of the Christian world since apostolic times.There is, however, another and far more interesting way of looking at the Millennium as a change in the time scale of human experience. . . Men will begin to think in millennia and no longer regard their own lives as so important as they seem now. . . . The Millennium will no longer be regarded as a period of time to be experienced successively by generations of men and women; but as a Present Moment to be embraced

and experienced as a whole. This in turn will call for powers of perception and memory that may now be latent in the genetic constitution of man, but will have to be released by selective breeding and developed by the methods and under the conditions of the Psychokinetic Group of Society.

Then, and then only, can the Great Work come into the open and be manifested as the Word of God. That self-denial and undemanding service that Jesus showed in his earthly life will be seen as a necessity of the new Epoch. Self-effacement will be seen as evidence of merit; and ambition and the desire for popular acclaim as evidences of a defective mind.... This requires so profound a change in the attitudes and actions of mankind as to be impossible by any natural process of evolution or even by the devoted work of the nascent Psychokinetic Order of Society. It can be achieved only by an Intervention from beyond the natural order. This intervention, now in progress, takes innumerable forms and calls for our cooperation to the extent of our powers and understanding. This makes the present moment of history one of the most interesting and important since man was first endowed with Mind" (pp. 433-435) It may be that I am mistaken, but it seems to me that whatever change has taken place in me with regard to my destiny and ray place has come about because of an intervention, at least by a higher Intelligence communicating verbally in your book. And if I have seen what I feel I have seen, the question becomes, what can I do?

The Resurgence of Kundabuffer

BEELZEBUB'S FURTHER THOUGHTS ON AMERICA

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One morning after partaking of both first and second being-foods, with that directed intensity of perception which alone allows their full assimilation and transubstantiation for the benefit of one's being, Beelzebub was relaxing in his favorite place in the sun of his native planet Karat as, to which, after his long exile, he had been finally reunited. As he rested his planetary body, aged from the effects of the exile, a servant came to him carrying in his hand an etherogram, which Beelzebub, placing next to his organ of perception for hearing, listened to attentively.

A short time after the arrival of the said etherogram, Beelzebub's favorite grandson Hasein came out to him, and seated himself at his feet, where he waited in silence until Beelzebub had finished listening to the contents of the etherogram. Then he said:

"Dear Grandfather, I trust you will forgive me for interrupting your well-deserved rest, but I could not help overhearing that you were to receive an etherogram from that Solar System Ors, about the inhabitants of whose planet Earth you have already told me so much. I thought it possible that it might contain some further information about those same strange three-brained beings."

Beelzebub regarded his grandson actively for a few moments with that characteristic smile of his, and then said:

"In fact, that etherogram was from that very bailiff of our tribe who, as I have already told you, as he had already decided to stay behind on the planet Mars when I was recalled from my exile, took upon himself the operation of my observatory there to keep watch upon those favorites of yours and keep me informed of their latest antics."

With a sigh, and curling his tail in a characteristic manner. Beelzebub continued:

"It seems that these strange three-brained beings are once again, as is said there, 'up to their tricks,' and have once more made their Planet Earth a source of offensive-shame for the whole of that long suffering system Ors.

According to the detailed observations made for me by that now most trustworthy bailiff, the, as they themselves call it burning-question-of-the-day which is now causing their peculiar psyches so much trouble — so that many of them have even lost what small possibilities for Reason they had — is just again, as in Babylon, that maleficent, though only for them of course, question of 'the beyond.'

"In order that you may thoroughly transubstantiate the information concerning this latest craze of theirs in all the separately spiritualized parts of your common presence, it is first necessary to tell you that in the period following my departure from that system the, as it is said, 'center of gravity of psychic strivings' for the beings arising and existing on that planet, as well as what they call their center-of-culture, has become just that same as they say, 'nation' America, my travels in which I have earlier related to you. Since that time, and even before this so called 'beacon of freedom' became the center-of-culture it now is, the rate of the degeneration of the psyche of your favorites has already increased alarmingly due to factors which I shall have to explain to you in detail in order for you to clearly understand the nature of the calamity that has this time befallen them.

"The first of the causes of the increasingly rapid deterioration of their psyches is the spread among them of the use of certain electrically operated inventions there called 'televisions,' which devices are the work of precisely those learned 'scientists' and 'technicians' of the new formation there who are already certified candidates for Hasnamuss-Individuals. These devices there have as their definite purpose only the transmission of every kind of lie and titillation that your favorites can dream up, and of course those of your favorites who manufacture all the nonsensical stuff they, as they call it, 'broadcast' incessantly, they are just those three-brained beings there in whom have crystallized all of the consequences of the properties of the organ Kundabuffer, and it is just these beings, who produce as well what they call their famous 'news' and their equally famous 'advertising' — famous, let it be said, only on that ill-fated planet since each of these consists obligatorily and unfailingly only of all kinds of psychopathic fantasies the only function of which is to get these poor favorites of yours either vainly indignant about the latest 'crying shame' or to get them to spend their 'hard earned dollars' on all sorts of unnecessary and often objectively harmful 'products' — which, together with the rest of that totality of their 'broadcasting,' have made this device already into an objective curse for posterity on two accounts, the first of which is that this device has now prevented them from carrying out those few being-duties they themselves had still acknowledged. The second and more objectively terrifying reason that this device has already become a curse for posterity is just this, that they have incorporated it into that famous 'education' of theirs, thus perhaps finally and completely destroying forever almost all of the possibilities open to future generations of ever realizing for themselves in their own common presences being-Partkdolg-duty, which as I have more than once already told you alone can give a three-brained being the possibility of sensing for himself cosmic truths through the coating in his common presence of his own higher-being-bodies and the perfection of the same higher-being-part through Objective Reason, which is the duty and aim of every normal three-brained being in all our great Universe. Ekh, my boy..."

After sighing, and with a grimace unusual to him, Beelzebub continued thus:

"Harmful as this device is for them, my boy, it is in fact not the only cause newly invented by them themselves for the increasingly rapid rate of the degeneration of the psyche of your favorites. Alongside this another factor has arisen, and again just in this 'land of the free' America, which is, perhaps, even just as terrifying in its definite effects and possible outcome for the psyche of those strange three-brained beings who have taken your fancy. As you no doubt recall, I have previously explained to you some of the being-properties of that class of vegetation properly called Polormedekhtic as well as the strange results which such vegetation can have on the sane logical mentation of a three-brained being when it is introduced in certain ways into his common presence. Well, then, keeping your understanding of this in mind, you will have no trouble in picturing to yourself the objective catastrophe that has occurred there on that planet in recent years and has now already become what is called there, though for different reasons than the ones I shall elucidate to you, 'the scourge of our youth.' For it is just those three-brained beings there who, having just begun their responsible existence, and somehow or other sensing with some strange, perhaps even subconscious, being mentation that despite everything that they have been 'taught' by their 'elders' and teachers,' there is still something to 'life' which they do not know, which has not been 'taught' them and which, moreover, if they could but find it out, would be far more important to them than any of the data implanted in them as part of their 'education,' and beginning to desire this something above all else, they proceed to introduce these mentioned Polormedekhtic substances into their common presences in order to attain to that 'something' which they have concluded they can in no other way find. As you well know my boy, while these Polormedekhtic substances have the property of releasing

certain of the higher energies for being-perception they can nevertheless yield no objective results in such a case because they do not themselves offer an objective viewpoint, which comes about in beings only over time as a result of that increasingly intentionally actualized struggle between the functionings of their higher-being-parts and the functioning of their planetary body, and only when that struggle is based upon a right understanding of being-Parkdolg-duty, and in fact when such an objective viewpoint, which is the same as having one's T to direct the conscious intake of being-perceptions and the conscious regulation of the being-manifestations of a three-brained being, is lacking, the liberation of such higher energies only destroys in beings the possibilities of self-creation. And, my boy, if I further inform you that, in addition to the Polormedekhtic substances produced by that same vegetation in the transformations required for the sacred common cosmic Trogoautoegocrat, these tragically misguided favorites of yours also introduce in to their common presences similar substances which have been artificially produced, for sale, let it be said, by definitized Hasnamuss-Individuals there, and which artificially produced substances must inevitably be more damaging to the psyche of those of your favorites who 'use' them since their producers have no real being-cognition or understanding of the particularities of the Law of Heptaparaparshinokh which are responsible for the formation of such Polormedekhtic crystallizations, then you will no doubt have a clear picture of how this desire for 'something' more, in itself a desire as close to a normal being-wish for self perfection as any of these sorry favorites of yours can come to, has, due to the ignorance engendered by those same abnormal conditions of being-existence created by them themselves, as well as to the cunning and 'unscrupulousness' of certain Hasnamuss-Individuals there, become one more cause for increasing the sorrows of Our OMNI-LOVING AND LONG SUFFERING COMMON FATHER."

Here Beelzebub paused, and before he had resumed his narration, Hasein asked him the following question:

"Dear Grandfather, if I have correctly confronted the information which you have been conveying to me, and if there has for one reason or another indeed arisen on that planet which interests me a generation of three-brained beings who have somehow become aware that all those data generally implanted in them by their abnormal environment are insufficient to explain the sense and aim of their existence, is it not possible that some of these same beings have not resorted to those self-defeating means which you have described so well to me, but have sought more normal means for realizing their possibilities as three-brained beings?"

Surveying his favorite grandson with a smile with a definite significance, Beelzebub replied in this manner:

"As the contents of the said etherogram made known to me, there are even now just two such groups of three-brained beings existing in that same center-of planetary-culture of theirs and I had already determined to tell you about both of these groups in detail.

"Well, then, my boy, the first of these mentioned two groups is called by these peculiar three-centered beings breeding on your planet 'protestors' or 'radicals,' and they have been given this name because they have set themselves to struggle against the 'established-power- possessing-authorities' in order to bring about some kind of as they say 'revolution,' which generally, on that much enduring planet of yours, is the name given to that process of the reciprocal destruction of other beings like oneself in which one group of beings 'throws out' or 'purges' or 'eliminates' that group of beings which at the time constitutes the said 'established authorities' and then proceeds to recreate all the stupidities of the group they have just 'eliminated' only now, under a different name and in a more inflexible form, and which 'revolutionary desires' would not in any way especially set these

'protestors' apart from similar groups of your favorites who have arisen and existed on your planet in every one of those 'national groupings' there ever since the second Transapalnanian Perturbation when, as you no doubt recall, the island of Atlantis, together with nearly all the genuine attainments of the three-brained beings breeding there, disappeared under the surface of that ill-fated planet of yours. What did attract the attention of our conscientious bailiff to this particular group of three-brained beings was that they, like those members of that first group which I have already described to you, also displayed some signs that the possibilities which should be inherent to every three-brained being had not totally atrophied in their common presences, and he knew that they had not lost all the possibilities inherent for three-brained beings when he observed that they were making constations about the way their 'fellow men' as well as they themselves were treating that same planet Earth which had given them their arising and supported their existence, as well as constations about the way that they themselves and their 'fellow men' were treating those beings of different brain systems which arise and have their existence on that planet of yours, which constations they themselves called 'the facts of pollution,' the destruction of the "biosphere," and the 'rape of the Earth.' These said cognitions and constations were in some cases almost the same as the cognitions and constations which would be made by a normal three-brained being, in whose common presence there have been realized those possibilities which alone enable such a three-brained being to manifest the sacred being-impulse known as Objective Conscience, the data for the manifestation of which sacred being-impulse, as I have more than once informed you, have been intentionally implanted from above in the common presences of all three-brained beings, regardless of their planetary coatings, throughout the whole of Our Megalocosmos in order that through the conscious realization of the said possibilities and the intentional actualization of the manifestations inevitably required by such activated data, which self-creating labors and sufferings are nothing else than being-Partkdolg-duty, these three-brained beings might thereby lessen the sorrows of Our OMNI SUFFERING COMMON FATHER ENDLESSNESS.

"But, my boy, as to whether even such even nearly normal perceptions will enable those of your favorites who form this second said group to achieve anything of a more nearly tolerable being-existence, that is, as our most highly esteemed teacher, Mullah Nassr Eddin has said, 'only somewhat less likely than that pig you ate last night for supper will now ever learn to fly'. And such in fact is their objective plight mainly because of that maleficent sickness of theirs called 'the disease of tomorrow' about which I earlier explained in some detail. And these of your favorites are especially prone to the debilitating effects of this disease because they are always looking for a solution to a problem posed for them by the said constations which 'will not let one sleep at night' in the, as they say, 'world outside' in the form of their famous 'political action,' which 'political action' can never in fact produce the desired results there because of that tendency which is one of the factors engendered by the crystallized consequences of the properties of the Organ Kundabuffer which have passed by heredity from generation to generation until they are already a lawful part of the common presences of contemporary beings there, and which tendency may be verbally expressed as 'the inability to exercise power impartially and not for one's own egoistic ends.' And so, while this group of your favorites has not destroyed all the possibilities which still remain in the common presences of those three-brained beings who are part of it, it is nevertheless unlikely that any of these favorites of yours will come any closer than they already have to realizing in themselves the need for an inner as it is said 'reorganization of one's being-confrontative-attitudes.

"And as regards that remaining group of your favorites there of whom I said I would also fully inform you, their case is perhaps the saddest of all, in an 'objective' sense for it is just this group of beings among those three-centered beings called 'young adults' there who, despite those same

abnormal conditions of being-existence and particularly that maleficent 'education' of theirs, about which you must know that in regard to the inner quality of just that same 'education' our highly esteemed and truly wise teacher, Mullah Nassr Eddin, has stated: 'there is even enough substance in it to starve a gnat,' had nevertheless retained some of the possibilities proper to three-brained beings and had realized in themselves the need for a 'style of life' which more closely approached a normal being-existence, both externally in relationship to the other beings of that planet which had taken your interest, and also internally as regards that genuine being-satisfaction which can arise in beings, as I have previously told you, only from the contemplation of the results of one's own struggles for self-perfection. Well, then, my boy, what makes the case of this group more objectively calamitous than either of the two other groups I have already spoken to you about, is that when the beings of this third group had even in almost all cases gone so far as to turn the results of their inner ponderings into data for the manifestation of that being-impulse called 'striving to realize the sense and aim of one's existence' and had sought to find those external conditions of existence in which they could experience that corresponding which would, as they sensed, alone enable them to harmonize their various being-functions in a manner befitting their aims, then, and here is where the situation which befell these favorites of yours became so objectively catastrophic, in each and every case without exception, whether or not the 'organization,' 'way,' or 'brotherhood' into which these three-brained beings had entered had in fact access to any objectively true knowledge, and as my further explanations shall make clear to you, there was at least one such 'way' which offered conditions nearly corresponding to those conditions offered normal three-brained beings inhabiting all the other planets of our great Universe, all the possibilities of these favorites were destroyed altogether, or merely 'blocked,' so that at the present time, none of these beings either have realized anything for themselves of those possibilities which three-brained beings in general must realize if they are to fulfil that role for which they were created."

Pausing only to rub some ointment onto one of the bare spots of his aged tail, Beelzebub continued to relate as follows:

"And if, dear boy, you are able fully to transubstantiate in your Reason all this further information which I am about to relate to you about these peculiar three-brained beings arising and existing on just that planet Earth, you will understand just what it is about this planet and its, as they would say, 'luckless' inhabitants that has caused a feeling almost akin to despair to manifest itself in some of our Most Very High, Most Very Saintly Cosmic Individuals recently.

"Now, as regards those of your favorites who became involved with that singular question there of 'the beyond,' the first part of this mentioned third group, and they formed by far the majority of this third group, have already lost by this time every possibility of ever manifesting as more or less befits a normal three-brained being. And the reason that they have lost the possibility of manifesting in a more or less corresponding manner is the following: when these particular strange three-brained beings were pondering as to what should be the sense and aim of their existence and how they would attempt to actualize that which they had constated through their being-confrontative-mentation in just these same ponderings, and when they used these same constations as data for manifesting that being-commitment which is invariably among three-brained beings throughout our whole Megalocosmos who have not yet attained their 'own "I" ' a precursor of such an 'own "I",' then because they had not been able to confront this question with a sufficiently harmonious intensified all-centered-working of their common presences, and because due as always to the same abnormal conditions of being-existence they lacked that instinctive functioning which allows a three-brained being to sense objective truths, which functioning alone allows such ponderings to flow in the common presences of

beings productively, and even because, in some cases, they had in their common presences too many of the crystallized consequences of the properties of that truly accursed for them Organ Kundabuffer, well then, my boy, these same beings then fell among, as it is said there 'false prophets.' And all of these 'false prophets' and self styled 'initiates' there among your favorites, some of whom were Hasnamuss-individuals who had become enamored of the 'spiritual approach' because of its 'quick returns,' while others were as is said 'madmen' who claimed to be either 'Mister God Himself or at least some Most Very High, Most Very Saintly Individual actualized from above within the common presence of some terrestrial three-brained being or other for some sort of 'hokus pokus,' who were able to persuade any of these of your favorites who formed this same third group to 'follow them' ultimately created such uncorresponding conditions for these same poor favorites of yours that many of them having finally lost any claim to even that peculiar reason cherished there on your planet, had to be carted away to their overflowing what are called 'asylums.' And a further portion of this said third group, the beings in which portion also lost all the possibilities to manifest as befits three-brained arisings, lost their possibilities because when they, as they say, 'made their choice' they 'chose' to commit themselves to the care of just one of those 'brotherhoods' or 'ways' which, despite the fact that they had been based upon the objectively true teachings and wisely foreseeing statutes of those genuine Messengers who had been sent from above, as I have told you before, at the Most Mercifully Just Command of Our ALL-LOVING ENDLESSNESS, in order that there might be removed forever from the common presences of your favorites that 'something' which proceeded in them as, according to law, it should not, just these same 'brotherhoods' with the understanding necessary to intentionally actualize within themselves whatever objective truths and corresponding statutes remained within these 'brotherhoods,' which genuinely understanding 'brothers,' who are none other than real initiates, are only these three-brained beings who have unceasingly and without mercy for themselves continuously striven to actualize their own conscious labors and intentional sufferings. And these same 'genuinely initiated brothers' are no longer to be found in such 'brotherhoods' because in the time that had elapsed since the founding of such 'brotherhoods,' due as always to the same abnormal conditions of being-existence established by them themselves, these same 'brotherhoods' had become as is said 'influential,' which is to say that these 'brotherhoods' became a kind of magnet for all those of your favorites in whom had crystallized the various consequences of the properties of the Organ Kundabuffer, as a result of which, the beings who came to possess power in these unfortunate 'brotherhoods' came to be just these beings who would drive out any beings who showed the least tendency to 'rock the boat' or, as these various power possessing beings might themselves put it, 'interfere with the lawful exercise of power to achieve satisfying ends,' which satisfying ends were all, of course, only due to these same crystallized consequences of the properties of the Organ Kundabuffer, and which ends could be enumerated as 'lust,' 'vanity,' 'greed,' 'laziness' and so on. And that portion of your contemporary favorites who, lacking that instinctive functioning necessary for the sensing of objective truths 'chose' to enter these same brotherhoods,' unable as they were to sense their inner emptiness, had all of their possibilities destroyed within them in time, and by now without exception, because they one and all managed to convince themselves that they had indeed 'made the right choice,' and so, while they are in actuality just as far from achieving that inner self-creation which should be the sense and aim of the existence of every three-brained being, they nevertheless 'believe' that they are in fact 'saved,' and mistake thereby these subjective emotional upheavals which invariably occur in beings lacking a stabilized being-reason for the 'flights' and 'struggles' of their souls, which souls by the way, similar to that which we designate with the term 'higher being part,' they believe they are given 'free of charge,' that is, without having to realize in their common presences that same being-Partkdolg-duty which alone enables three-brained beings to coat for

themselves those 'holy higher' which is the sole guarantee a being may have of a continued existence after the Sacred Rascoarno has occurred to his planetary body, or as your favorites would say, after he has died."

Hassein again here interrupted his grandfather's narrative, this time to ask:

"But, Dear Grandfather, what of those three-brained beings of this same third grouping who did not have all those corresponding possibilities destroyed in them, but only had them — 'blocked,' I think you expressed it?"

Beelzebub, after pausing several minutes, replied:

"And I was just now going to relate to you everything I have been informed of about that remaining small number of your favorites in whom, as you say, the corresponding possibilities were not forever destroyed, but merely 'blocked,' and the reason that I paused for such a period of time was that I was resolving for myself in which manner I must inform you about this same small number of three-brained beings there, so that you might gain a complete understanding of the objective 'Terror-of-the-Situation' for all of those beings arising and existing on that planet which has taken your fancy.

"First I must inform you that the 'teaching' which these of your favorites followed was the result of the intentionally-actualized labors of a remarkable three-brained being there, who, because of the favorable circumstances of his heredity as well as the conscientious guidance supplied him during his period of preparation for responsible existence, had at the beginning of that age when in general three-brained beings in the whole of Our Megalocosmos begin to strive to realize within their common presences being-Partkdolg-duty, so that they may as soon as possible acquit themselves of their debt with Great Nature and thereupon undertake to lessen the sorrow of Our ALL-SUFFERING-COMMON-FATHER, just such a corresponding common presence, in all the separately spiritualized parts of which had in fact already been thoroughly crystallized that objective as it is called 'definite-need-to-understand-with-all-of-one's-being' the real aim and objectively true sense of significance of the existence of life on the planet of one's arising and of the life of three-brained beings in particular. And you must further know, my boy, that as a result for himself of these said consciously realized labors and sufferings he became such a three-brained being as indeed three-brained beings throughout the whole of Our Great Universe strive to become, namely, such a being who has intentionally and consciously caused to be coated in his common presence his higher-being-parts and perfected with Objective Reason his highest part to that gradation of Sacred Reason at which it can, after the Sacred Rascoarno has occurred in turn to each of his lower being parts, have as the place of its further existence the Holy Planet Purgatory — and in fact, my boy, the higher being part of this said terrestrial three brained individual, having already even now completed those sufferings for the purpose of which that Holy Planet exists has taken its proper place along with those other Most Sacred Cosmic Individuals who exist now upon the surface of the Most Most Holy Sun Absolute.

"Now, my boy, try to substantiate the following further information about this, as is said, genuine great initiate there within all the separately spiritualized parts of your common presence, as to do so will help you to understand the real inner significance of the cosmic law Harnel-Miaznel, which cosmic law may be defined as 'the higher blends with the lower to actualize the middle.' So, my boy, when this genuine terrestrial great initiate there had, through his own conscious labors and intentional sufferings, perfected with Objective Reason those higher-being parts coated within his common presence to that point at which they were then able to independently sense objective cosmic truths, he cognized and constated with the totality of his being that there had been intentionally implanted within his common presence from Above a certain striving, which striving may be expressed in the

words as 'the definite need to objectively better the lot of one's fellow beings,' as a result of which constation this essence-loving great initiate committed himself to altering his internal being-organization so that always and in everything he would manifest just according to that said objective need, which alteration of manifestations can only proceed in a being from that shift of the, as is said, 'center of gravity' of psychic functionings from that consciousness in which your favorites spend their 'waking existence' to that mode of functioning in which one's own T, from that highest-perfected being-part which may be called the soul and using the kesdjan or second body as reconciler, informs and enables those three separate planetary localizations of being-functioning or brains, as to which data crystallized in the said localizations in the form of being-Impulsakri, which being-Impulsakri are crystallized in beings with definite densities of vibration according to the flow of the functioning in the beings of the Sacred Fundamental Heptapara-parshinokh and the Sacred Fundamental Triamazikamno which proceeded in them when the being-Impulsakri were fixed, must be activated in order that the necessary manifestations may be actualized suitable to each specific given case. And you may understand all of this better my boy, if I tell you that one of the genuine Messengers from Above to that same planet which has taken your interest had in his 'teaching' for the three-brained beings of that planet a commandment about just this same alteration of 'center of gravity functioning,' which commandment he expressed in words as 'Die before you die.'

"Now ordinarily, my boy, when one of those peculiar favorites of yours 'originates' a 'teaching' there on your planet, you can be sure that the only result will be even one more cause of the degeneration of the psyche of these strange three-brained beings that has, and especially among the contemporary beings there, continued at an ever increasing rate. And such 'teachings' invariably produce this result because, as I have already explained to you, the 'originators' of such 'teachings' are always those beings in whom have been completely crystallized the consequences of the properties of the Organ Kundabuffer, as a result of which such teachers not only have no ability to discriminate between those, as is said 'fragments of Divine Truth' which still do exist even on that planet of yours and the usual hodgepodge of grandmothers' gossip and psychopathic lies that are now even lawfully formulated there about the question of 'the Beyond,' they would in any case — due to just these same said crystallizations — not wish to find any such fragments even had they the requisite 'nose for the Truth' but would instead avoid them like the plague.

"Well, then, my boy, you can easily picture to yourself the effect upon the strange psyche of your favorites of the objectively true facts which were revealed there as a result of the conscious labors and intentional sufferings of this same genuine great terrestrial initiate. And he soon had so many of the learned beings there, of new formation of course, sputtering and turning red in the face in their efforts to prove, of course in that manner which had become natural to your favorites alone, which is to yell any idea that comes into their heads as they say 'at the top of their lungs' until all their opponents have ceased to shout, that this new 'teaching' was nothing more than the work of an imposter,' 'a sham,' 'a psychopath,' 'a dangerous mountebank' and so on and so forth. And all of this shouting did have one good effect, which was to keep away from this genuine initiate those of your favorites who were just looking for as they express it 'cheap thrills,' the seeking of which, by the way, is possible only in beings who have lost all possibility of becoming that which, according to the Most Divine Foresight of Our ALL-LOVING COMMON FATHER, every three-brained being has the duty to strive to become.

"Now, my boy, despite just these same ravings, a number of three-brained beings there, who had already become convinced that in their common presences they had something undesirable for them themselves, began to seek out this great terrestrial initiate and a number of them even stayed with him

in order to, as they put it, 'work on themselves' in order to rid themselves of this same 'something.' At this point, my boy, before I can explain to you what this 'work on oneself' consisted of, I must inform you that, owing to numerous circumstances not depending upon him himself and over which he had absolutely no control, this same great terrestrial initiate was, at an early stage in the accomplishment of his mission, forced to abandon any attempt to give his 'teaching' a direct entry into the life of 'mankind' on any large scale, and because he was unable to actualize this despite the most intensive, and to himself costly, being efforts, he was obliged to commit himself to a different course of action. And this different course of action that he committed himself to, and towards which he then intentionally devoted all his as they say 'personal inner resources' was just this: that by the time the Sacred Rascoarno had occurred to his planetary body there would be in existence upon your planet a number of also genuine initiates, who would then, through the realization in themselves of that objectively indispensable being-Partkdolg-duty, be able to perfect themselves even to becoming eventually also genuine great initiated beings there. And to ensure that such efforts as they might make when he was no longer available to them in, as your favorites have it, 'the flesh,' this great terrestrial initiate embodied all of the objective truths he had attained to in all the intentionally actualized sufferings and labors which had composed his 'real existence' there on your planet in a lengthy legominism, about which sort of conscious actualization for the transmission of objective knowledge I have already told you, the construction of which was such that each of those three-brained beings who applied themselves to this legominism in an effort to understand its contents would definitely and according to certain laws, also known to this great initiate, understand just according to several specific factors, which factors were, first, the amount of being-Partkdolg-duty that the being in question had himself actualized, and second, just according to what mind, and the sum total of all of which actions was such that eventually each particular individual three-brained being who sought to realize this work would, by degrees, attain to that general being-harmonic tempo functioning in which just those sets of functionings which should, properly speaking, function as those being-affirmative and being-reciprocal forces become the center of gravity of being-functionings and provide for those functionings which must in such a case be the source of the being-denying force that 'directed impetus' for perceiving and manifesting, which Directions' such localized functionings or planetary brains must invariably have before a three-centered being can be said to be an objectively responsible individual of Our Megalocosmos, and which general needed by a three-centered being in order for him to actualize his own sacred being-Triamazikamno, though such a being-actualization depends of course upon that application of the said exercises which can be realized by only that being himself who transubstantiates in his being-reason the results of his own intensively actualized being-deliberations directed to the understanding of just this question, namely, what objective results have been obtained and in what cases from which particular intentionally applied, of course over a correspondingly long duration of time, specific exercise, and it is just this same continually progressively self-enlightening application of these said specific exercises which can be called 'work on oneself.'

"Well, my boy, as I have already told, it was just in attempting to actualize those specific workings within their common presences that these same three-brained 'products' of the said 'school' began to manifest in such an unexpected way. And the reasons that they began to manifest so unexpectedly flowed from several factors, one of which was, as always, those same abnormal conditions of being existence established by those favorites of yours themselves. And the other main factor was the 'duration of time' during which those same beings had been placed under the influence of the said sacred process at this 'school.' And in general, the particular three-brained beings of your planet are

only able to learn to 'work on themselves' with a sufficiently intensively realized comprehension of the obstacles presented just by those what are called 'habitually crystallized personality functionings' after a number of their years, as it is only during the flow of such " corresponding 'duration of time' that they will inevitably fail to achieve their being-aims often enough to acquire an all-round understanding of the characteristic manner in which they must without fail actualize their manifestations to achieve the said aims. And you must further be informed that it was just because of the said sacred process, which activated certain functionings of those 'higher holy' over a non-corresponding period of time, or as your favorites would say 'so very shortly,' that the results achieved were achieved without that full cognizance of the being-brain-localizations of the planetary body, which cognizance is indispensable for the realization of a fully harmonious functioning, and in fact, these said brains were even at the end of that 'so very short' time still perfectly adapted to functioning in just those same abnormal conditions of being-existence which these favorites of yours even then were forced to return to. Furthermore, it also transpired that the same 'crystallized personality functionings,' though of course only in that manner proper to the peculiarities of the common presences of those same strange three-brained beings, had also nevertheless become adapted to those intensified experiencings which were just a result of the said sacred process. And the way in which they adapted to these said intensified experiencings was through the, in turn, intensified functioning in all three separate localizations or planetary brains of the crystallized consequences of the properties of the Organ Kundabuffer, which crystallizations the said sacred process did not directly effect. And the unexpected, though not unforeseeable, manifestations which resulted are just the results of this intensified action of these same crystallizations, which same crystallizations can in their ingeniously adapted intensified functioning be given names such as the following: 'spiritual pride,' 'vainglory,' 'condescension,' 'intolerance,' 'thanking God one is not like others' and other subtler forms of blasphemy, all of which completely 'blocked' any inner ability whatsoever to realize being-Partkdolgduty which alone can begin to give any three-brained arising the possibility of coating in his common presence those 'holy higher' for which express purpose three-brained beings in general are destined, that by so doing they might fulfil the hope placed in them by Our OMNI-LOVING ENDLESS SUFFERING COMMON FATHER that they would be of help to Him in the administration of the enlarging World, and by so doing relieve Him of even so much a portion as they might themselves gladly bear of His Endless Sorrow."

At this point Beelzebub gave a deep characteristic sigh, and would have remained silent, had not Hassein, with the beginning of tears in his eyes, asked: "Dearest Grandfather, it distresses me that these strange three-brained beings seem unable in any way whatsoever to become, for more than a very short time, aware of those responsibilities and duties which befit them as three-brained beings. I find equally distressing that, because of the hollow egoism which again regains control of the conditions of their external being-existence, despite all the intentional actualized influences they receive from above, they are invariably denied any of the real being-joys which can alone be the results of being-labors well done, and in the end must inevitably perish, even 'like dirty dogs'. So my question to you is simply this, Dear Grandfather who is in a sense genuinely the father of my being: since, as you explained, the possibilities of this last portion of my favorites are 'blocked' and not destroyed forever, is there not yet some objective source of hope that they may yet become even a source, as is said there, of 'rejoicing in Heaven'?"

Beelzebub, who had regarded his favorite grandson extremely attentively as he listened to his question, with a characteristic smile replied thus:

"This unaccustomed sadness you manifest, dear Hasein, makes me rejoice for you, because it shows me, as I have already told you before, that there begins to function within your common presence precisely those data which must inevitably become the source of that same being-impulse of Objective Conscience, which being-impulse must in general serve all three-brained beings as that unique regulator of functionings and manifestations if they are to become truly responsible.

"And now, my boy, as regards answering your question, I can only say this: yes, these same three-brained beings on that planet of yours may indeed even at some time begin to actualize some of the results for which that planet has waited so long in vain. But before this can happen, they must, without fail, and over a corresponding duration of time, become convinced, either through a repeated accidental combination of circumstances, or through corresponding conditions intentionally actualized on the part of some Being of very high Reason, that there is something undesirable for them themselves in just those common presences of theirs they are now so very proud of, and must without fail also realize that for the removal of that said something from their common presences they must always and in everything in themselves and unfailingly in regard to every being around them actualize their own individual conscious labors and intentional sufferings."

POEMS

Entropy's Song

The body's obsolescence is guaranteed by law.
Look it up; it's in the evolutionary contract.
The pale-horse rider states:
"In no case will any body be
produced which shall outlast
the ending of the life
for which it was a vehicle."
The mind was just an afterthought,
a sweetener, concession made
to get the union back
to their side of the table
when multicellulars had staged
a walkout to protest
a reading of the rider
which would have disallowed bones,
so much like stones
and other time defying things.
When mind assumed religiosity
it surprised the hell out of them all.
But what did they expect?
Mutations happen even
in' the best of families,
so primates stand, humans fall,
and no immaculation known
but wins a very short stability.
Even earth's tectonics, a scripture
writ in stone, will shift and pass.
Even organism universe itself
will at last, in eld, grow cold.

Galileo

In my mind. I see him eye to eye.
the old man, the graybeard,
his heart skipping painfully,
keeping him awake nights,
exiled, alone, under sentence
of a universal Church,
eyesight almost gone—
yet still seeing clearly
to the heart of things,
undaunted, even exalted

by his penetrating vision
of a universe alight with change
and an earth, which, still as it seems,
nevertheless yet moves.

Hard Parable

Fourteen then, I had been brought
there to have my legs broken
and steel rods shoved inside them.
Only seven, he had come to die.
His bladder had a tumor
they could not cut out.
Suffer the little children
to come to me.

The radiation burned
his crotch and thighs raw
and he couldn't stop scratching.
"Normie, don't!" we cried
in childish indignation,
our righteous anger sanctioned
by voices of authority,
but flowing from a deeper stream
than we could know then.
"But it itches," he would answer,
and they had to bind his hands
to the railings of his bed.
Suffer the little children.

His mother couldn't come each day
to visit, not from Maine,
so my mother used to wheel him
to the chapel where he prayed.
Better that a millstone
were tied around his neck,
he that hinders one of these.

When I complained of pain, and jealousy, my mother said,
"You're going home, you know,
Normie's not." "I don't care,"
I answered, "this hurts me."

They took him to a private room
where in the end, as one nurse told me,

he went peacefully. To enter the kingdom, you must become as a little child.

Holy the Firm

I

What sanctifies a temple?
Not the altar's sacrifice,
the blood spilled, the wealth
given over to the god:
let yourself be condescended to,
and you will see.

It was the seasonal epiphanies,
the flowering and death of earth,
the presence in the wilderness,
which drew the celebrants
along the ancient festal ways,

To house the holy, here upwelling
like a pristine spring, the temple
was erected, its lines laid out
to school the eye in deep geometry,
in measure blending stone and sense of place.

Within the sacred space, one stood outside
oneself, was one with the divinity
revealing seed and granting rain.
One intuited the frame. Within
that, time was set. Without,
was wilderness, and free.

II

Eternal wilderness in time
overran the bounds, the neat asymmetries
of stone and lines of sight decayed
as vision was abandoned.

The vision was abandoned
yet the holy had not fled,
for it is rooted, of the earth,
it abides, and can still be met,
for its foundation is the flesh.

The body was the ratio
and measure which the builders used;
in truth it was a little earth.
and when an earth in truth, holy
in all its seasons, even
the silence of the long, long fallow.

We undervalue following, the mourning

of broken columns underneath an empty sky.
To abandon single vision and see anew,
let yourself be condescended to
by a grace you believe to be beneath you.

The temple's disability
does not impede theophany;
even a ruined temple
will fitly house
the goddess or the god.

Homebearer

Ignorance is no defence
against the weight of knowing,
the heavy neural traffic
which sets the world abuzz
and parts us in no simple way
from the savor of our senses.
For when I say "my hands,"
you do not attend me simply
from your own hands' history,
the *palimpsest* of hands adept
or ill adapted to their work,
hands whose weight within your own
conveyed, or as they held your own
above the fall of gravity conveyed
the subtle weight of living in this world.
Weight of knowing within knowing,
mind within, trying to marshall
the history of the body within
the ranks of all that we have
learned and believe we truly know.
Rightly knowing what we know,
seeing the star within the
planet's light, seeing the star
need not just revive the palimpsest
of stars, stars seen bright
in endless country night, stars dimmed
by city's smog of light, stars
about whose unburning furnace bodies
we have learned in schools or books;
seeing the star, our knowing may be still.
Despite the drive ahead, the long day
behind, when they told me I could see
Venus at the top of the drive,
I took the walk, and thought,
as I touched that luminosity,
"But this is Hesperus, the evening star,"
and let Sappho's lines speak within me,
from a weight of past so great I did

not know what knowing them now meant.
"But this is Hesperus, fairest of all stars «
'*phereis oiv, phereis aiga,*'
bear the sheep, bear the goat,
and the child bear home to its mother."
The moment, the seeing, may be still,
but mind is never still, always adding
moment upon moment, as if the moment
now embracing us were not enough.
White against black night, Hesperus
rides home with us, more than an hour
on our way as I turn repeatedly
to see if I may still see the star
which bears home all that dawn,
unruly, shining dawn had scattered.
Unruly life scatters us,
though we dream, still, of coming home.
What light did Sappho see, what light
did I, that night, or might you see?
Some months before he died, my father,
never one to dream, dreamed himself
in a crowded inn, where he heard
his mother was coming, on the way,
to bring him home. You are
fairest of all stars, for *phereis apu materi paida*,
the child driven off
by the shining dawn,
you bear the child back to its mother.

Light Load

It is fairy gold
we have here,
bark, leaves and sand
which soil the hand
that tries to grasp them.
Pass them on
and let their magic grow.
The fairies play
no trick, they know
the secret of the gold
is in the giving.
The dead hoard gold,
but magic's for the living.
You must pass it on
to get the gold to glow.

Remembrance of Things to Come

I dreamed, my love, that I lay back
upon your breast, you held me close,
then asked me, "Shall we go back in now?"
But never did I dream
your cancer ravaged body, I awoke
still in the room where you had held me.
I awoke thinking of the Dream of Scipio:
all these years I have had your copy
of this book and meant to give it back.
Were all these wrong, then,
Cicero, Macrobius, the many
coming after, who held that dreams
may light our way through the darkness
of our waking hours? Scipio to Scipio
appeared in dream, then took his grandson
on a flight through all the spheres,
reminding him from whence he came,
and how he might, remembering, return.
How we might, remembering, return.
Our embrace, my love, I would not prolong,
nor keep you in this sphere, where
all our dreams are hedged around
with forgetful wakenings.
I may not now return your book,
too long I waited in my sleep;
were I allowed to share with you
but one gift more, it would be
the dream of remembrance, and return.

Sleep When You're Tired

Like suddenly turning a corner
I didn't even know was there.
One moment, already, as usual,
ahead of myself, into tomorrow,
striding along, as I glance
at the watch face, two-twenty,
set it on the night stand,
turn out the light, thinking,
" I have such a lot to do."
All I have to do,
really, right now,
is—
 having turned the corner

with this unexpected thought:
I've been trying to get some place
for so long:

Here I am.

Nothing to do now but—
roll back into the bed
and go to sleep.

Saturday Night Fight

Already in the ambulance
his vital signs are gone.
They don't pronounce him DOA
at once, he's only seventeen.
They wheel him fast
past treatment rooms,
right on into surgery,
gathering residents
on the run, only one
from medicine, helping with the prep
and required to observe.

In a manic demonstration
of anatomy,
dissecting out
his heart,
they charge it beat again,
take life,
re-start.

To no avail.
The angry surgeon
of the street
has left a tear,
here, where pulse once was,
not all their deft
manipulations can repair.

They end the code,
and close his chest again,
making notes, speaking softly,
taking the time his death demands.
Less spattered by surgical blood,
the medical resident's selected
to step out to the lounge
and bring the word to those who wait.

Bringing them their grief
as gently as he can,
he overhears, as he turns
back to his work,
an epitaph of sorts:

"You see, you see?
He never had a chance,
you holding his arms that way.
You want to break up a fight,
never hold your buddy,
only the other guy."

The Disappeared (March 1986; May, 1990)

I

Songbirds have disappeared.
Their southern jungle homes
have been razed.
The brown earth erodes
into the sea.
The songs have fled
to the earth's secret places.

II

You have disappeared,
have been swallowed by the night,
but the sun finds you out,
lying on earth dark
as clotted blood.
Your mouth opens
to silence,
appeals to the sun
to shadow forth
your missing teeth and tongue.
Who now will say
where words are fled?

III

Learned men with guns
construct a theory of evolution,
eliminate the unfit,
dump them like garbage
for feral dogs to feast on.
As doctors discourse on
genetic inferiorities,
on morality and discipline,
gunshots punctuate the night
like the erratic beating of a heart.
In the darkness, I lie awake,
straining for a breath that is not there,
listening for a breath that will not come.

IV

Your naked body, violated, violated, naked,
hands bound behind you
in parody of prayer.

Mocking transports of saints,
an embrace not of ecstasy
lifts you from earth,
violated, naked,
defenseless.

Electrodes are fastened
to your body's private places,
and a nurse lights a cigarette,
watches power applied.

Lightning sears the sky,
a jungle torrent falls,
the river chokes on mud
sloughed from ravaged hillsides
where forest once grew thick.

The thunder of your screams
spurs your tormentors
as they seek secret places
hidden within. Your body
stands defenseless,
relentlessly handled and bruised,
and yet withholds some mystery
which will not be exposed.

Deep in uncut jungle,
beyond the ken of hunters,
screaming parrots flock the ruins,
raucously celebrate
the soul's secret places.

Naked, violated,
weary past reach of sleep,
long ago you learned your answers,
why don't they stop their questions,
you are ready for your part,
should you be left alone,
you are ready,

oh, so ready to depart—
and if you go,
how should anyone follow,
beyond desolation,
past reach of the living,
beyond, far beyond
all the cares of the heart.

If you go, though,
I will surely seek to follow,
and now or tomorrow,
I will follow.

V

It is dangerous to speak
as if you once had an existence,
as if we once had spoken
heart to heart.

There is no one,
they have taken no one
with your name.

Patience, I am told,
I must be patient.

These things take time,
these things take patience,
these things take people
and loose them to darkness,
return them as earth
to the earth.

Mother, God's Mother,
to you I cry mercy,
never let me join them,
they who take people
and make of them things,
and make of them earth,
so I should never have to answer,
"Where have you taken my love?"

Never have to answer,
"You need patience,
you need understanding,
you need to try the gardia,
just over the hall."

VI

The sun is shining on a skull
for which I dig a grave.
Ringing from my shovel,
the earth remains silent,
the land remains still,
but like the forest seed,
brought by wind from distant places,
your word moves in my heart.

If I would follow you,
I must speak from that,
must never let myself be stopped
from speaking from that.

And if you have ceased to argue,
gracefully, gracefully
are gone to secret places,
where only light can follow,
let me press your point for you,
and in time,
and in the fullness of the heart,
I will follow you,

now or tomorrow,
I will follow.

Handfast

It is no problem to explain
our own pain:
an angry God.
an empty world,
or even our stupidity.
The problem that remains
is the pain of others,
of innocents.

We have it wrong:
we do not need an answer,
but must become the question.
Only when the pain is borne—
make no mistake,
we will be broken,
in all truth,
we will be unmade
and touched by what cannot be spoken—
only then will we be ready
to abandon our demands
upon this all too living world.

Then we will move within that life, and share it, hand to hand,
pain to pain.

T. I. A.

Brushing your lips
with a gossamer pinion,
the angel of death does not stop,
but enjoins a moment's silence,
a taste of quietus.

Toward Unity

The Ordination of Rev. Aniko Szantho Harrington May 13, 1990

I

We too are a chosen people,
but not a people set apart,
not a people chosen by divinity.
The heavens did not open,
the hills did not skip and bound
like spring lambs, when we were,
each individually, called
to enter the wilderness
with no promise of redemption
or even rest by journey's end.

The still, small voice, the silence
at the heart of things, the unyielding
mystery has set its stamp on us.
All clay bears this same sign,
the burden of the same revelation,
Pitiless planet, earth, swallowing
your children; merciful mother,
earth, bringing forth abundance.
Fed with ambiguity, the heart grows
strong, learns to shoulder the common burden.

In the wide, empty reaches,
the new dawn's promise is a hymn
and the setting sun a benison.

II

Fellowship is not strong,
it must be otherwise construed
than bearing strength or weakness.
It is something like a mind,
like a mind's heart, open
to those who let the entry be made.
Fellowship is not strong,
but needs each voice to recall it
to itself. It lives in the ear's
opening, the simple act
of listening, which reaffirms
the covenant of I and thou.

Fellowship is not strong,
its only resurrection is
the frail ark of memory, that
and love's resolve to carry on,
to shoulder the weight borne
by others before us.

In the wide, empty reaches,
the new dawn's promise is a hymn
and the setting sun a benison.

Flight

Flight

There is something
wild
about
the

pattern
of the words
upon the page,
like a flock of sparrows
feeding on the lawn:
they shift
and squabble,
then are gone i

As contentious sparrows
flit from branch
to half hidden by the leaves,
the meaning pauses
briefly
in the
shelter
of the tree.

In a launch
of feathered bodies
which
sk
i
t
t
e
r
d
o
w
n a c r o s s
the lawn,

the birds again emerge to view,
but the thought does not alight
upon the page, nor even
in the mind. Scorning hunger
and companions, it has taken f
and is g

STORIES

Into The wild Blue Yonder

Julian remembers his first dinosaur; it was probably that experience which had given him such high expectations when he heard that dinosaurs had come from the outer reaches of the Solar System back to Earth, and this was probably why he was subsequently so disappointed when he finally met them.

He had first encountered a dinosaur in the ancient museum which a thousand years earlier had been part of a great island city where masses of people had lived like bees in a hive. Julian had seen holographs of the great buildings and the unimaginable numbers flowing into and out of them, though he couldn't understand why anyone had to live like that, like insects in a nest, nor could Brill enlighten him on this point. Brill hesitated to say that they had lived in an unbalanced manner, but he did point out that their great numbers had contributed to the warming which had caused the sea to rise and reclaim the island.

They had sailed across to the museum in a large group, some two dozen in all, from a mooring at the base of the cliffs to the west. After an expanse of clear-flowing river they came among low hummocky islands, fringed with cattails, remains of the vanished city. Only the few ancient buildings which had been purposely preserved were visible, standing isolated and derelict in the midst of the waters, and even these would be gone before long. Brill said that a decision had recently been taken to let the sea reclaim them as it would. That was one of the reasons they were visiting the museum now; it would not be standing much longer.

From the outside, the museum was like a great pitted boulder in a pond. Inside it was clear that the water would soon claim it; the walls were mossy and the floors slippery and buckled, making the going slow. All of the important exhibits had actually been moved to safer locations long ago, nor was it clear why the museum had been protected from the waves in the first place; nothing about the building itself seemed particularly memorable. When Julian asked, Brill said that people often acted from motives they didn't fully understand, and that grappling with such mysteries was important. Not because it always unravelled them, but because it offered the opportunity to approach clarity more closely in oneself.

"It may have been a symbol to them of the past which was in danger of being lost," said Brill, "as in fact, it was lost."

Holograms had been installed in the place of the important exhibits which had been removed, but many of them no longer worked. Of those that did, Julian remembered two particularly. One was the great blue whale. Julian had once seen live whales, but enjoyed the strange sensation afforded by the hologram of walking through the midst of the great

body. It satisfied some hunger he had felt when he swam in the water alongside the great mammal, and gave him the sense that he was a thought the whale was thinking. He was a dream, a fragment from whale pre-history, from the time when the ancestors of whales had walked the earth, before they had returned for good to the world ocean.

Later, when he shared this notion with Helenas, she laughed and said it was typical of him. Then she asked him what life had been like back then. Thinking back to his time inside the whale Julian said, "Hard." Helenas laughed again, but she nodded and said that he was probably right.

"Of course," she added, "life isn't easy for any one." The dinosaur appeared in two holograms which alternated from one to the other in a random pattern. The first image showed the dinosaur, Tyrannosaurus Rex, in the flesh, leaning down towards the point where the greatest number of spectators were massed. This mesmerized Julian and some of the older children, but three of the younger ones had to be taken out of the hall; their tutors were still working to allay the effects it had had on them on the trip home. The second image was the dinosaur's skeleton, striding along upright.

Julian could have gone within either of the images, as he had done with the whale, but he was content to contemplate this great beast from the outside. With the whale he had felt himself drifting back in time, but it was to a time connected to this time, the here and now. The time of the dinosaur, that was the time of a different world entirely, a different time entirely.

When Julian heard that dinosaurs had appeared from the outer reaches of the solar system, where, it was said, they had been in seclusion for some millions of years, he had remembered the feeling he had had in the museum, and felt the two worlds and different times beating at one another. Though he already knew that these dinosaurs were nothing like the one in the museum, he had been eager to meet them, to see if this feeling was strengthened when he was in their presence. To his great disappointment it had not been.

He saw the dinosaurs when they addressed a gathering of families and town representatives' from all over the north east. People had ridden on horse or in balloons, or sailed along the coastline to be present; though the gist of the dinosaurs' proposal was already known to most of them through the bionet, it was deemed important to hear it in person, both because of the nature of these unusual visitors and because of the gravity of their proposal.

The dinosaurs were humanoid in appearance, but would never be mistaken for human beings. Tailless, they stood on two legs at roughly human height, and their arms swung free in the same way that human arms did, as their heads also sat their shoulders. After that the differences mounted. They had only a few sparse tufts of hair, and their skin was much rougher than human skin. Their extremities — they went unshod had only four digits, a difference Julian had not noticed till Helenas had pointed it out, but which then forced itself on his attention whenever he looked at them. The shape of their heads, too, was strange, the top of the skull seeming slightly swollen, while their faces were flattened planes. They were noseless, with large nostrils situated where a person has cheeks. Lipless, their jaws curved and swelled in a way that was subtly wrong. Inhuman, they nevertheless did not in the least recall the great museum dinosaur, or anything else familiar, to Julian.

Engrossed by the oddity of their appearance, Julian found that he was not attending to what they said in their harsh, breathy voices; when Brill turned from the row in front of him and asked him a question, Julian had to admit that he had not heard a word so far. Brill smiled at him, said, "Attention, attention," and faced forward once more. Helenas, grinning, dug him in the ribs with her elbow. Julian shrugged and leaned forward, determined to hear at least part of their message.

In strangely accented English one saurian was telling their story, though he had already, apparently, spoken about how they left earth so long ago.

"We were so very young, it was difficult to enter upon a completely different mode of being, we had had no real conception of what was entailed, that it would be so different. We were informed, of course this was imparted to us, but these forerunners were scarcely rational, and ages, long ages passed before our kind were truly aware of ourselves in our changed conditions, in which we were no longer connected to Earth. What does the flesh know of the ideational? So misunderstandings must arise. It was hard, most hard at first, so distant from the sun, and so very strange. This is said, now, as it were flesh speaking to flesh, that you hear not just in your heads, but in your whole of you, and rightly judge when you are called." Then the speaker grimaced — Julian would learn in time that it was their equivalent of a smile — and said, "We, already, are a calling, and you may become this calling, too. Thus have we come to the presence of the Earth again, to speak, to prepare the way. The way we would prepare, and that we go, is to the presence of the next planet inward, to what you call Venus."

There was, of course, a good deal more, much of it in the form of questions and opinions which were traded back and forth without any consensus being reached. A good deal of what was said, at least by the visitors, was as disturbing as their appearance. They spoke the same language, but, just as their bodies, formed of familiar elements, yet were strange, what they said, the set of their minds, was new and alien.

As the interplay of human and saurian voices drifted on, Julian again ceased attending, as he became absorbed in recalling a dream he had had some months ago, a dream which he had puzzled over at the time, then forgotten until this talk of being called to Venus.

He had dreamed of travelling on another world, a world of white clouds. They had drifted slowly, slowly over the cloud tops in brightly colored balloons. The whole of the dream was short in the telling, though when he had awoken it seemed to Julian that it had gone on for some time.

It did not seem to be a "calling," though Julian was not sure what that was exactly. When the meeting was over Julian asked Brill about it, but the tutor replied that he didn't have an answer. It was not, by any means, the first time that Brill had been unable to answer one of his questions, but this time it felt different, and Brill must have shared this feeling, for after pausing a moment, he suggested that Julian accompany him to visit Seamon, who had once been Brill's tutor.

Because the meeting had taken some time, the summer stars were appearing through the trees when they reached Seamon's house, which was a sculpted evergreen thicket where the hill began on the eastern end of the town. Seamon greeted them warmly, apologizing for the unruliness of his house— they had had to stoop to enter, since the spruce of the door

frame had sprouted ectopic shoots some time back. When they were seated, Seamon asked what had brought them to see him, and Brill told about the dinosaurs.

"Yes," said Seamon, "I knew there was something I wanted to do this afternoon, but then I began pondering responsibility, how we humans are to know our responsibility toward other forms of beings, and I forgot the meeting. Well," he consoled himself, "it will be on the bionet, though it's never the same... Now," he continued: "this is a very interesting question you say they have raised, this notion of a 'calling.'" He settled down on his seat, which had a raised back, rested his hands on his knees and closed his eyes. "Yes, very interesting." As Julian watched, the old man's face smoothed out, like a pond surface when the wind has died down. Glancing at Brill, Julian saw that he, too, had turned inward, and after a moment's hesitation, he settled into his meditation posture.

"Try to picture the Sun, the heart of the Sun," Seamon said softly. As Julian's mind quietened, the familiar image of the Sun, Life Giver, took form within him. "The heart of the Sun," repeated Seamon, and Julian was immersed in the Sun. After a time, Seamon's voice came, very softly, saying, "And what is beyond the heart of the Sun?" There was a sense of opening. When, later, Seamon's voice said, softly, "Very good," Julian returned to himself again.

"You have seen some of the great cities?" Seamon asked Julian

"Yes, but there was more to be seen in holographs than on the actual sites."

"Of course," Seamon nodded. "Time and the elements work wonders with things." He lifted an age-spotted hand, examined it as if he had never done so before and shook his head. "But from the holographs, you could see that our ancestors had mighty technologies, with far-reaching effects?"

"Yes," said Julian, unsure of where Seamon's talk was leading.

"They could probe the skies, see the stars, sample the atmospheres of neighboring planets. There is no record that they found evidence of any other life in our solar system, no record of any other planet or satellite, apart from Earth, even capable of supporting life. And say what you will of their wrongheadedness, their lack of connectedness with the living pattern, their technologies were in their own way quite accurate." Julian looked away from the old man's mild gaze. He did not know what to make of what he was being told.

"But surely..." began Brill, only to hesitate, his voice betraying as much puzzlement as Julian himself felt.

"Of course it is a mystery," Seamon replied to the unspoken question. "Yet this is how it is with so many, many things. Why, for example, have we never really learned the art of what our ancestors called telepathy, or speaking mind to mind? We have not learned it, this is clear; yet the very plants, with nothing which could be referred to as a mind, show a true sensitivity to the quality of our thought. Look at how my bower grows unruly," he continued, indicating with a sweep of his hand the places where walls, ceilings and doors all sprouted inopportunely, "responding to the unravelling of my mental processes as death approaches."

"We are like the thoughts of the earth, but we have yet to learn how to be bethought by it. It seems that our visitors have learned this, some time ago. Who knows, it might not be any harder to exist thus than as we do now. I am too old, I think, to have the time to find out, but you two should be able to see more directly what a calling is." They talked a short time longer, but said no more about the dinosaurs or what a calling might be.

Over the next several days, Julian talked about these questions with a number of different people, including his parents, his friends Helenas, Rofe and Arginas, and, on a number of occasions, with Brill. He centered his morning meditation on the heart of the Sun, in the hope that this might make him more receptive to a helpful insight, while at night as he prepared for sleep he suggested to himself that he would see something of value in this regard in his dreams. Despite all his efforts, however, he came no closer to an understanding than he had been when he had first heard the dinosaurs speak. None of the people he spoke with could enlighten him, his dreams were opaque, even if dinosaurs appeared in them regularly, and while his meditation seemed lucid and deep, it did not provide him with the fruit of understanding.

When he heard, therefore, that one of the dinosaurs had returned to Cadia, in the hope of speaking to any who felt responsive to their message, Julian sought it out. This time the dinosaur was using the home of Raphael and Lydias, this year's elders, so that it might meet people in conditions of greater privacy.

Julian had told Brill his intentions, left the field where he had been working and strode off decisively enough to Raphael and Lydias's. The nearer he approached their home; however, the more his steps faltered. What would he say?. Whatever could he say? Julian almost turned around, until he saw Helenas standing silently on the edge of the clearing below the elders' house.

"You, too, Helenas?" At the sound of his voice she started.

"And you, Julian?"

"Yes, I..." But he didn't know how to continue.

"That's how I feel myself," Laughed Helenas. Julian started to laugh too, and it felt like a weight lifting from his shoulders.

"I guess you can go in first," said Julian, still laughing.

"Thank you," laughed Helenas. "You can go before me if you want to."

"No, no, I wouldn't steal your place," he replied. After deferring to each other for a few more minutes, they went in together.

Lydias made them welcome and gave them mugs of tea while they waited, since, as she told them, the visitor was already speaking with Joffray, who was a few years older than either of them. Lydias added that Raphael was out in the fields, but apart from this she did not engage them in small talk. As they sat and drank their tea, they could hear the murmur of voices from the next room. Julian felt himself becoming tense as he waited, but when he glanced over at Helenas she smiled at him and this made him easy again. Glancing at Lydias next: he saw that she, too, was smiling. Then, the divider enclosing the next room was pushed back, and Joffray emerged He gave Lydias a small bow, nodded to Julian and Helenas and left.

"Well?" asked Lydias, when neither of them moved. Helenas stood up then.

"You're sure?" she asked Julian, and as he smiled and shook his head, went on into the inner room, drawing the divider behind her. A soft murmur of voices. Julian was joined in his waiting by Sereen, a girl Joffray's age. She declined tea, closed her eyes and began to meditate. Julian did not follow her example, but it made him feel steadier, and when Helenas came out, he did not hesitate.

And, though he had felt he didn't know what to say, as soon as he was seated opposite the saurian, who introduced himself as Athor, Julian said "I came because I wanted to as you what it means to receive a calling." He paused for a moment, then continued, "I have tried to work this out for myself, and have asked others for their help, but have been unable to reach any conclusions." When Athor still was silent, Julian felt impelled to go on; only the realization that he had nothing more to say kept him from speaking again.

"This is the essence of it, is it not?" Athor said finally. He gave the saurian grimace-smile. "We have spoken with many, many of you, some eager to join us, others who talk to us from a sense of duty, or even simple curiosity. But before we can answer anyone, 'can I come?' or 'are you truly going to Venus?' there is this essential thing, this - we say hsisig, in your tongue, if you tie a knot, it is the actual knot, the result, but also the act of knotting, and more, the intentions which caused you to tie it." Athor smiled again, held his hands out before him, then brought them together. "Here, there is this intention which is not ours, which knots us together. When we are truly knotted, then the rest of it becomes detail." He turned his head sideways, but Julian wasn't sure what this signified. Straightening; he went on, "You are right to ask, this is the right question. We will talk again, I think." And he stood up and held his hand out to Julian; to indicate their time together was over.

That night Julian did not tell himself that he would dream of anything in particular; he had, however, a vivid dream of balloons drifting bright over sunlit clouds. A saurian standing next to him and turned and said, "Will you not join us? Will you knot?" When he woke up the dream was still entirely clear in his mind, as if it had been a waking memory rather than a dream, and for more than a week thereafter, he would recall the dinosaur's words at different times during the day.

Nearly two weeks had passed since his talk with Athor when, returning from the fields one afternoon with Helenas, Arginas and Rofe, they ran into Athor. The saurian was standing by himself to the side of the path leading from the north fields to the settlement; when he saw them he took a step toward the middle of the path, though he did not block their way. Exchanging glances, the four split up, Rofe and Arginas continuing townward while Helenas and Julian stopped by Athor. Moments, a few minutes, passed. Then Athor spoke.

"There can be an intention which is not ours, and I recognize this to be the case right now. But of course, that is not sufficient, we must assent to it. Then things become possible which we could never accomplish on our own."

"Athor," responded Julian, "I do not doubt what you say. But I have been told that when my ancestors surveyed the planets of our system, they found no evidence of living beings on any of the other planets. Athor, what are you?"

Helenas, he could tell, was staring at him.

"What do you think I am?" asked the saurian with a smile-grimace. When Julian did not answer, he continued. "Sometimes you form... an idea, perhaps even a very good idea, but if events are against it, all you can do is hold on to it. If enough time passes before you can put that idea to use, when you do, you may find that the idea has changed, imperceptibly, until it is now quite different. Maybe very useful, very practicable, but quite a different idea." He grimaced at them again, awaiting their reaction.

"But," said Helenas, "we are flesh and blood. Whatever pattern, whatever form we might have, might... embody? we are flesh and blood. When you put an idea into practice, you

still have the idea itself, and while you can take some materials to... flesh it out, it is not the same. That is one of the mistakes our' ancestors made, thinking that their abstractions were real in the same way that people or other living things were."

"I do not know about the mistakes your forerunners made," replied Athor. "What I am telling you about is something of a different order." He wagged his head at them and grimaced again. "I cannot tell you where my people were, what state we were in before we came to visit you. I do not know these things; my own memories only clarify, divorce from the general recall, as our organelles approached the atmosphere of Earth. Nor can I make assurances about what fate awaits you if you assent to join us for the next step in this... undertaking. I can tell you this, though," and he looked each in turn in the eye, "my forerunners lived here eons ago. I am, if not very closely related, yet your kindred. The proposition I lay before you is made in that spirit, from that perspective." Without waiting for a reply, he turned about and strode off down the path. As he got further away, Helenas began making a strange muffled sound; she was giggling and trying to stifle it.

"What?" asked Julian, disconcerted.

"Assent to ascend," she replied, and began to laugh.

Though Julian didn't find it funny, he let himself fall in with her feeling and before long, he, too, was laughing. It was some time before their laughter ran down.

Later that week Julian went again to his parents' to talk to them. He had been dreaming more intensely, in the interim, of balloon ascents, of journeys into cloud banks which swallowed the balloons and filled the air with deep pitched whispering which seemed to fortify Julian although he could make no sense of it. When he entered the house, he realized that he had come to say good-bye to them, and he shivered. Before word of the dinosaurs' coming, Earth had seemed room enough and to spare; the exigencies of work at the waste sites or with the pongids had both beckoned to him as tasks in which to find the fulfillment of his life's ambitions. Now, he was off haring after rainbows...

His mother smiled when she caught sight of him, and started to say something, but the look on his face silenced her, and they hugged each other in silence. When at last they broke apart, she smiled crookedly and brushed his hair back from his forehead.

"Boys' House you never seem to cut your hair 'till it's into your eyes," she said.

Rand, his father, was standing in the arch which led to the back of the house. Julian smiled at him.

"I wanted to see you before I left," said Julian.

"So you've finally decided, then?" his father said, coming to embrace Julian.

Julian laughed. "Now that you ask me, no, I haven't. But it still feels like I'm going. Why is that?"

"Could be for any of several reasons, but you're the one who'll have to sort them out, because you're the one who'll have to live with the consequences. I've known," he continued as he sat down, "times when I thought I'd made my mind up, but I later realized that it had just been a vagrant wish that had moved me. That didn't mean that I didn't have to go through with it, only that I should have known better. Other times, I started out unsure of what I was doing — like when I asked your mother to be my betrothed — but as I lived

with what I'd done I came to see that I'd acted out of something truly consonant with the wholeness of my life. Or am I being too vague?"

"I, I can't say, Poppie. I think I see, but my own experience is too limited, so far. And I don't think I'll be able to turn back once we're aloft..." Julian felt a twinge of fear, an emotion he'd not felt since he'd been little as the children scared by the dinosaur in the Museum. He was being asked to decide something he hadn't the means to decide, and he might only find out how wrong he'd been when it was much too late.

"Some things, you never have enough experience, never." Rand smiled. "If it makes you feel any better, I've been dreaming about you the last weeks, the most enchanting dreams, drifting up toward the Sun, through pearly clouds. It's a very serene scene, altogether. Is that how you envision it?"

"Yes, beautiful and peaceful," responded Julian. Knowing his father had been dreaming dreams akin to his own comforted him. Fortified him. When, later on, he took his leave to return to the adolescents' house, he felt set for whatever was coming.

The organelles, as the dinosaurs call the great balloon-like, gas-producing algal conglomerates, are beautiful as they slowly leave the surface of the earth. The translucent outer layers of cells of the gas modules, rich in hydrogen producing plastids which give the organelles their lift, refract the sunlight into bands of bright, eye-entrancing colors, ruby, cerise, lemon, cerulean, indigo, turquoise, and sunset. Julian is so taken by the colors and the thoughts they evoke that he forgets for a time to look down at all, though there will be no return to the earth in his lifetime.

Above, as in so many dreams, he sees fleecy, sun-kissed clouds grow closer. A thrill of anticipation goes through him, and he turns grinning to Helenas, who shakes her head, nudges him and points over the railing of the basket— a solid mass of algae, but here oxygen producers. At her urging, he leans over the railing, startled to see how fast they have risen, how small the waving people on the ground have become. He waves to his parents, his friends, to all the people he will not see again. He waves good-bye to Earth itself.

They are rising fast. Perceptibly, now, the algal cells of the basket wall are flowing upward, while other cells from the gas module begin to stream; in another few hours, it will be time to retire into the containment chamber of the basket, as it is entirely enclosed. Then, bathed in symbiont algae, they will sleep away the long journey to Venus. Julian wonders what their awakening, when it comes, will be like. Will he awaken to life in the clouds of Venus, or does he go to some subtler fate, to become a thought, as the saurians implied, in the Solar Mind? Whatever happens, they are on their way. Grinning at his temerity, he takes Helenas' hand and leads her into the containment chamber, to join Brill and the others.

"Perhaps a meditation before we retire?" he asks her. She smiles and nods her head.

Before they are done, the balloons will be in among the clouds.

PIECES

Miss Alice was a decaying gentlewoman of the old school, and bits and pieces of her would turn up all over town, the tip of a finger on the street, a hank of hair on a parlor chair, something unidentifiable, perhaps from some internal organ, which yet had the unmistakable feel of Miss Alice to it, before a counter in the bank. Not that anyone really minded, or even thought it too odd, for that matter; it was just Miss Alice's way, and she had been doing it since long before I was born. Long before my grand-daddy, himself long since passed on to a well deserved rest, was born, for that matter, if the stories were true.

Even if they weren't true, she was undeniably the town's oldest inhabitant, and she was old enough that perhaps not even she was sure how old she really was. Certainly she would never say when she'd been born. Instead, if she brought the subject up at all she would simply refer to, "the way they did things like that back before the War," without specifying which war, but implying some conflict so long ago that no one else now alive in Rowanton could remember it.

Or, she would say, "Decent folk didn't carry on in such a manner Back Then," with a gentle toss of her head, a toss which was nevertheless sure to cause her to leave some part of herself behind, such as the tip of an ear lobe, or a hank of hair, hair which was still lustrous for all that it had been coming out in tufts for years.

Miss Alice never seemed to miss any of these little mementoes which she left behind her wherever she went, nor did she ever evince the least embarrassment about them. You might have thought that it would slow her down some, being so old that she was actually in the process of disintegrating, but she was just as active as someone one tenth her age, and never seemed to be in a state of disrepair when one met her.

"Clayton," my daddy once said to me as we sat on the porch one evening after dinner, he in the swing and I in the high-backed wicker armchair, listening to the voices of the women folk, Hama, Lou-Ellen, and Miss Alice, as they gossiped in the kitchen and pretended to be helping Mamie with the washing up. He had spoken in a low tone of voice, so as not to be over heard, and I answered in the same.

"Yes, sir?"

"After a number of years of careful consideration of the matter, I have come to the conclusion that Miss Alice is like a snake." In the half-light of the citronella candles in their glass jars on the end tables, he must have seen the shocked expression on my face, because he raised his cigar in the air and waved it back and forth as he shook his head. "Make no mistake, Clayton, I mean no disrespect whatsoever for Miss Alice. None whatsoever. No. When I say she is like a snake, I don't imply some verminous reptile, a water-moccasin, as it might be. No. And perhaps a more carefully chosen word might have 'phoenix,' but the herpetic analogy is more exact to my meaning, though there is something to be said for the phoenix, too." My daddy was, as you may already have guessed, a lawyer — and, I may add, in his defence, as good a one as he could be, despite some aspects of his character which I later came to perceive had been limitations on his courtroom effectiveness. "No," he continued, "I simply meant that, in so far as all my experience of that dear woman has shown me, these little remembrances which she so freely leaves behind her here, there and everywhere in Rowanton, seem to be like the shed

skin of the snake; they only renew her vigor and allure." On this last word, which it would not have occurred to me to apply to Miss Alice---even coming up on my fourteenth birthday, I still considered her ancient---Daddy began one of his vigorous fits of coughing, which coincided with the opening of the screen door as the ladies, Miss Alice in the van, came to join us.

"What nonsense are you talking. Rufus?" I can remember her saying as she stood holding the screen door for Mother and Lou-Ellen, who carried a plate of cookies and a tray with glasses and an icy pitcher of lemonade.

"Ah, why, nothing, my dear, just the idle chitchat of the after dinner hour," my father had replied. The rest of that evening has faded from me, blurred into an indistinguishable Evening composed of talk, cigar smoke, cookies and lemonade, all embraced by a soothing chorus of crickets. What kept that preceding moment separate and distinct was the strangeness of Daddy's idea. And, as if my Daddy had planted a seed which was to become a fruit-bearing plant, albeit an odd one, I found myself returning to what he had said in the days that followed, taking comfort and even guidance from it.

It was not long after this conversation that I acquired my first piece of Miss Alice. Not that I hadn't come across many a piece and more before this, but very early in life I'd had it strongly impressed upon me that Miss Alice's anatomical peculiarities were neither a topic for children's consideration, nor were the concrete demonstrations of it which she left behind her ever to be subjected to our playful ministrations. If some part of Miss Alice was in danger of being eaten by a dog upon the street, then it was fitting and proper to rescue it, but only to the end of seeing it into the hands of an adult.

On the day in question, a hot cloudless summer's day, I had been sent on a morning errand to the greengrocers. On my return journey, I had decided to make a detour down to the swimming hole, to tell any of the boys there I would be back to join them before too much longer. This took me past Miss Alice's place, which, with its great elm-shaded lawn, was situated near the edge of town. She was just arriving as I passed, her maid-servant with her, back from her own shopping. I might have gone by with little more than a tipping of my hat, as Miss Alice never really paid much mind to children, had she not stopped and greeted me.

"Good-day, Clayton," she said, nodding her head as she spoke to me.

"Good-day, Miss Alice," I answered her, taking my cap fully off my head.

"I don't know where the time goes, Clayton. It seems to me that it was only yesterday that you were born, and now look at you, become a fine young man. Before you know it, you'll be going away to get some of that college learning, the same way your daddy did in his time. How time just goes on! Well, Clayton, you take care." And she turned to her waiting serving-girl and headed up her drive, saying as she departed, "Remember me to your parents, Clayton."

"I will, Miss Alice, I surely will," I said to her retreating figure. I watched till they had disappeared into her house, basking in the light she had just shed upon me, an undeniable sign that I was approaching the world of adulthood. Why, she had called me a man.

Hefting my sack of groceries, I turned to resume my progress to the water-hole when my eye chanced upon an out of place paleness on the gravel where Miss Alice had been standing. Glancing about, to make sure there were no grown persons in sight who might rob me of my treasure, I stooped and, without stopping to ascertain what it was, about-faced

and headed for home. The swimming hole could wait. Miss Alice had called me a man, and then, as if to emphasize her words, had left something of herself behind for me to find .

I arrived at home red-faced and sweaty, and mumbled some excuse to Mamie as I ran through the kitchen, stopping only long enough to set the groceries on the chipped enamel of the draining board before I headed up to my room. Shutting the door behind me, I got a clean white handkerchief out of the handkerchief drawer of my dresser and reverently extracted my prize from my pocket. To see it better, I stepped over to the window and held it up to the light.

It was a thin cylinder of flesh, bone showing pale as pearl at either end, covered by fine white skin. A few golden hairs sprouting from the skin on one side caught the light of the sun; on the opposite side, was a delicate hatching of wrinkles. I smoothed my fingertips along it, pressing lightly to feel the bone within. Then, in wonder, I ran the fingertips of my right hand down the middle joint of my left index finger. Given the differences of age and gender, there could be no doubt; she had left me with the middle joint of one of her fingers.

Though I would willingly have lingered longer over my treasure, when I heard footsteps in the hall I tucked it into the handkerchief and, moving quickly, placed that beneath my pillow. I was only just in time. Mama was curious as to what I should be doing shut up in my room at that time of the day. She felt my forehead, and asked if I felt well.

"You have a peaked look about you," she informed me. Then she noticed the slight disarray at the head of the bed. As she straightened the pillow and the bedspread, while I held my breath in fear of discovery, she said, "Were you lying in bed, in the middle of the morning, Clayton?"

"No, 'M," I told her, and, so confused and contradictory were all my feelings, I blushed. Mother regarded me gravely.

"I think it would be much better for you to be outdoors, with your friends, on a day such as today," she told me.

"Yes, 'M," I replied, and, still blushing, I made my way past her, then fled down the stairs, to hear, as I ran from the stairs to the screen-door onto the front porch, her shouted admonition not to bang the screen-door as I left the house. I paused in my headlong flight only long enough to comply.

I eventually ended up at the swimming-hole, but by way of a roundabout route which took me into the woods on the southern end of town . Taking out my pen-knife, I cut a switch from one of the willows bordering the creek there and whipped it lazily through the still forest air as I wandered among the trees, puzzling over things. The word I kept coming back to was the one my Daddy had used, allure. Allure. Miss Alice had an allure, I had felt that. That's what made her finger joint such a treasure. It was like being given part of - well, part of her allure.

By the time I'd circled around to the swimming-hole, only Van was left there, lacing up his boots. He looked up when he heard me and gave me a smile.

"Hey, Clay," he said, "missed you this mornin'."

"Hey, Van. Yeah. I had some stuff I had to do." I looked up at the sun. "Later'n I thought. I better run, my mama's goin' to skin me if I'm late for lunch. See you."

"See you," he said, and went back to lacing up his boots.

I had to run back home again, and just down the street from our house I got a stitch in my side and had to hobble up the walk, unable to take a deep breath, and unable not to. I said, "Stupid!" to myself, for running like that in the heat of the day, came up onto the porch slowly, and on into the house. In the dining room, I tried to pretend nothing was wrong, but I could see Mama passing Daddy a "look" as I took my seat. What made me nervous, though, was the serious little nod my Daddy gave her in reply. I found out I had been right to be nervous when, as Mamie was clearing the table after the meal, and I got up and asked to be excused, my Daddy said to me, "Clayton, I'd like to see you in my study, if you please?"

"Yes, sir," I nodded, and followed him in, wondering what it was I'd done. Then I thought, "She found Miss Alice's finger," and my spirit sank within me. But Daddy didn't set himself up as he would for, as he called it, a "tongue lashing." Indeed, he seemed a bit abstracted. He had taken a cigar out of the box which rested on the corner of his desk, and he took his time lighting it. In all this time, he didn't once meet my eyes.

Finally, when his cigar was well alight, he took it out of his mouth, examined the lit end, and said, "Clayton, I want to talk to you about a matter of the utmost seriousness."

"Yes, sir," I replied meekly.

"Purity and chastity are two of the virtues from which our republic draws its strength, and not just, as some debauchees would have it, the purity and chastity of our womenfolk, although that is, of course, a paramount concern to all of us. Are you following me, son?" And for the first time, he glanced into my eyes.

I had only the vaguest sense of what he was driving at, but I nodded, as that seemed the best response to give.

He nodded back to me, said "Yes," in a way that he had, I knew, when some dispute or other had been ironed out and an agreement reached. Then he swung his chair slightly about, so that he was half facing one of the bay windows which looked out over the lawn. "Now, I know that young blood runs hot, but it's just because it does do so, that one must take more care, be more on one's guard to see that one doesn't because of that hot-bloodedness lose all control and develop deleterious habits." He glanced over at me, then added, "Self-pollution. Clayton, the consequences of self-pollution can mar a lifetime, even when they don't lead to insanity or an early grave. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir," I said. Over the last few months, I'd begun to have dreams which disturbed me, and which had left their traces behind on my nightshirt. I wanted to ask him how to stop myself from doing these dreadful things, but was afraid that he might say it was already too late.

"Good," he said, looking at me in the eye. "I'm glad to see that you are as responsive and level-headed as ever, Clayton. I can tell you that your Mother was somewhat worried about you, but I will assure her that she shouldn't worry." He gestured with his cigar, to indicate that our talk was over. I stood and headed to the door, but before I opened it, he said to me, "Clayton?"

"Yes, sir?" I asked, and turned to face him with my hand on the doorknob.

"When I met Miss Alice this morning, she told me that she has a need at present for someone to do her lawn once a week. Would you be willing to accommodate her?"

"Why, yes, sir," I said. Though the idea of wasting another afternoon each week — I had begun to do our lawn earlier this year when old John, who had done it for as long as I could remember, got to be too old for it, and Daddy said that it would be good exercise for me— didn't appeal to me, the notion that I might see Miss Alice a bit more frequently, did.

"Miss Alice would not expect you to work for her gratis, of course. She would pay you a small sum of money each week on the completion of your work."

"Yes, sir," I said. "Did she say when she would be wanting me to start working?"

"Next Saturday afternoon, I believe. Good-day, Clayton."

"Good-day, Father," I replied, and went out, closing the door behind me. Then I ran up the stairs, to check on Miss Alice's finger. Just as I was about to draw it out from under the pillow, however, Lou-Ellen came in, as she was in the habit of doing, without knocking. At one time I hadn't minded this, loving her near as much as I loved Momma, but without any of the awe which Momma could sometimes inspire in me. Lately, though, Lou- Ellen, through no fault of her own, had begun to make me nervous. She had appeared in some of the dreams I'd been having, and had acted towards me in them-- and I towards her - in a thoroughly disturbing manner .

"What have you been up to?" she wanted to know.

"Why, nothing," I said, and stepped back hastily as she brushed past me and sat down on my bed.

"If it's nothing, it's a nothing that had Momma nearly in tears before lunch. Daddy was trying to hush her, but I could hear her, saying she was afraid you had ruined your poor life. Is that nothing?"

I went over to the window seat and sat down there. "It's not something I can talk about with a woman, Ell."

Lou-Ellen flushed. "Oh," she said in a small voice. Then, taking me by surprise, she was crying, trying to muffle the noise with her hands. Forgetting myself, I went to her and put my arm around her shoulders .

"Aw , now, aw, c'mon, Ell, don't cry."

"You think I haven't noticed," she got out finally as she settled down, letting her head rest on my shoulder. "You used to be the sweetest little brother in the whole world, but lately you don't even say hello to me when you go by me in the hall." She sat up and pulled herself away from me. "It's not natural, the way you've been behaving, not if you love me." She looked at me.

"Aw, Ell, 'course I love you," I assured her. I got up from the bed, sticking my hands in my pockets. "Why, here, show you how much I love you, I haven't shown this to anyone else in the world," I told her, and stepped around her to draw out Miss Alice's finger in its handkerchief.

"Oh," she said. She looked from the finger joint, as beautiful as ever, up into my face. "Was this what upset Mama?"

"No, Mama doesn't know anything about it. What she was upset about was like I said." I was getting flustered again. I reached out and touched Miss Alice's finger joint. I said, "If you want, you can have it." I don't know what made me say that, and for a moment it made me feel sick.

But then Lou-Ellen jumped up and flung her arms round me, giving me a big kiss on my cheek. "Oh, Clay," she said, "you're still the sweetest brother in all of creation!" She kissed me again. Then she stepped back, giggling, and added, "But you're not my *little* brother anymore, are you?"

"No," I said with a sheepish grin, "I guess I'm not." And I knew then that it had been right to give her my piece of Miss Alice.

I began to work in Miss Alice's yard the following Saturday afternoon, it was not difficult work, mowing, clipping and raking, but her yard was larger than our own, and it took me a couple of hours to do it all. At that time of the day, too, the sun was slanting down onto the lawn, so that it was hot, sweaty work, and I was glad when I was finished. Miss Alice checked on my progress a couple of times herself, and had her serving-girl Annie bring me out a glass of lemonade.

When I was finished, I came up onto her verandah and knocked, as she had told me to do, at the screen-door on the side of the house. Annie answered, and told me to sit down, gesturing at a wicker armchair, the mistress would be right out. As Miss Alice emerged from the house, Annie followed her with a tray with fresh baked cookies and more cold lemonade.

"Help yourself to some cookies, Clayton," said Miss Alice, handing me a saucer to put them on. "And do have some of this lemonade." She began to pour the lemonade, saying at the same time as how she truly appreciated what I'd done for her. When she set some lemonade before me, she saw that my hand was hovering over my saucer, where the tip of a pinkie lay. "Pshaw," she said, "just a little detritus," she said. "I do hope that it doesn't offend your sensibilities," she added with just a trace of anxiety in her voice. Miss Alice's reaction was so unlike her that it left me bemused, and she had to add a gently interrogative "Clayton?" before I responded.

"Oh, no, ma'am, it doesn't offend me, not in the least," I hastened to assure her. "I..." I faltered; in actuality, I had been debating whether I could get it to my pocket without her noticing, but indecision had allowed her to catch me. She proceeded to brush my hand aside and pick up the unoffending member, setting it down on the tray.

"I'll have Annie dispose of it afterwards," she said.

"Dispose of it, Miss Alice? Oh, no..." I blurted out, then flushed in embarrassment.

"Why, Clayton, what would you do with it?" She asked, taking a sip of her lemonade. I couldn't meet her eyes.

"It isn't that... It's just that... I don't mean that..." I could neither say what I had intended to do, nor invent a plausible lie on the spur of the moment.

"I think I know just what you mean, Clayton," she said softly.

"Ma'am?" I asked in confusion.

"I've lived a long time, a long, long time, Clayton, and in that time I've cast off many and many a thing like that," gesturing at her inert finger tip with the tip of one of her intact little fingers. "And I've had time to see many and many a reaction to my peculiar ways—" She held up a hand as I began to protest the word "peculiar."

"And I've had time to digest and understand them all. Clayton, I understand just how you feel about me."

"You do?"

"Yes, I do," she said, and something in her gentle assertive tone made me believe that she truly did understand. Looking into her eyes, I saw something there I was quite unprepared for something unaccountable which made me feel as if I had stepped into one of my dreams. Involuntarily, I squirmed in my seat, and looked nervously toward the screen door.

"Goodness," Miss Alice said, in quite a different tone, a tone much more like the formal Miss Alice I was accustomed to, " just look at the sun ! Where has the day gone ? Your mother will be wanting you for dinner before much longer. And you'll be wanting to wash up before that, too. Now," she continued as both of us got to our feet, "I don't want to forget to pay you for all that splendid work. Excuse me for just a moment," she finished, and went into the house.

While she was gone, I scratched at a couple of places that had gotten itchy and then, seeing it still lying there on the tray, I picked up Miss Alice's little finger tip and placed it in my pocket. I had barely withdrawn my hand from my pocket when Miss Alice returned.

"Here, Clayton, and thank you again very much," she told me, handing me fifteen cents, three times as much as I earned for doing our lawn at home.

" Why, thank you, Miss Alice," I replied, and gave her a bow before departing her verandah .

That first afternoon set the pattern for the days I worked at Miss Alice's. Labor in the afternoon heat would be followed by a respite with Miss Alice in the shade of the verandah, where for a short time we would sit and converse over lemonade and cookies. Banal as our conversation was — we discussed the weather, the state of my family and goings on around town — I came to treasure these talks nonetheless. I felt privileged to be partaking in them, because Miss Alice somehow invested the most simple and straightforward observations with unexpected richness. Looking back, it's easy enough to see now that I had fallen in love with Miss Alice. At the time, however, all I knew was that the world I had lived in up until then had suddenly expanded to reveal hitherto unsuspected vistas.

I have already mentioned that I had begun to have dreams which were of a nature distressing to me. It was as the summer wore on, and Miss Alice became a fixed part of my weekly round, that these dreams, perhaps in response to my growing attachment to her, changed in character. Where before I had dreamed of those closest to me in disturbing but often allusively sexualized terms, now I found myself dreaming of Miss Alice with an explicitness and vigor which would have shocked me, had not Alice— as her dream-self demanded that I call her assured me, over and again, that what we were doing was entirely in the normal order of things. It was normal, she insisted passionately, to give

ourselves over fully to the passions of our dreams, so long as we did not allow them to impinge upon waking existence . Her impassioned persuasion was so convincing that it ceased to matter to me that I took the wildest liberties with her person each night— just as she in turn took them with mine. Each morning I awoke refreshed, with my conscience clear and my heart at peace, and never felt either the least uneasiness about my dreams, nor any need to boast of them, however inadvertently, in her presence or elsewhere.

While it may be difficult to credit that I could keep these two lives separate, especially when the one I lived at night was so at variance with that of my days, it nevertheless was

true. This might be thought especially remarkable for a child, but in truth, I left childhood behind me that summer. Under the tutelage of Alice I entered on my manhood, the final initiation, so to speak, coming the morning I awoke from a particularly vivid dream to find myself in bed beside her.

For all of the intensity of my dreams, I had not even a momentary doubt that I was awake, nor that she was truly beside me and as naked as I was. When I turned to her, question on my face, heart beating rapidly, excitement burning through me, she laid a finger on my lips to forestall anything I might say.

"Do not ask," she told me. "I could give you many answers, even many true answers, but it is important we do not become too closely bound, and the fact that I am here, now, means that we are already on the verge of too intimate a union." She leaned over and kissed me, while I marvelled that she displayed all the youth and beauty she had in my dreams. We lingered in our embrace, as we had become accustomed to do, then she drew away breathily, licking her lips, and shaking her head.

"It is too easy to love you," she said. "But if we were to continue now, you would be too far in to return easily to your accustomed worlds" Her tone bespoke pity and envy at the same time. "It is not easy for me to watch such a fine young man as you are grow up, and be able to join you in that growth only up to a point and then have to withdraw lest I undo all that I have done. Come," she said, essaying a smile, "close your eyes, and kiss me good-bye." She stilled my protest with her fingertip.

"Here, I will give you this hint," she went on, teasing my lips with her delicate nail, "think, since first I came to you, has Miss Alice left any tit bits behind her during your Saturday visits after work? Close your eyes, think back, and kiss me good-bye." She pressed against me, lips on mine, breath warm upon my cheek, and I closed my eyes obediently and thought back. Indeed, since that first visit I had noticed no more traces of Miss Alice's decrepitude, and I was trying to understand this when I came to with a start. She had not pulled away from me, but I could no longer feel her body laid on mine. By insensible degrees she had faded from my grasp, till now, as I opened my eyes, I was alone in my bed.

The room was filling with the first light of morning and I was alone in my bed. Beside me it still bore the imprint of her body. It had been no dream. The summer was over.

I was no ways surprised to learn from my daddy, that evening as we sat on the porch after dinner, that Miss Alice had no more need of my services. The boy who had formerly worked for her, who had absented himself at the start of the summer, had returned, and Miss Alice felt duty bound to return the work to him, since he had a wife and several small children to raise.

"I understand, sir," I told him.

"I'm glad to hear that, Clayton. And, Clayton?" "Yes, sir?"

"I am sure that you are aware, by now, just how remarkable a creature Miss Alice is." He inhaled deeply on his cigar, then exhaled and eyed me through the smoke.

"Yes, sir," I told him. "She is... exceptional." My daddy nodded his agreement with this assessment. There was something I wished to ask him, but did not know how to do so.

"Yes, Clayton, she is that, exceptional. Entirely exceptional. I can clearly recall a summer much like this one when I was not much older than you are now, and Miss Alice appeared to me then much as she appears to me now." He exhaled smoke slowly through his lips, watched it disperse into the twilight and turned back to me, a deprecating smile on his face. "I, on the other hand, have changed and grown old." He waved a hand to dismiss my instant protestation. "Sometimes I can feel it in my bones, 'time's winged chariot drawing near,' as the poet puts it, even if it has not yet overtaken me, and am keenly aware of the passage of the years. But would you credit it, Clayton, if I said that there are still times, principally but not only when I am in her presence, that I feel myself still to be, uh, living in a vivid summer when I was no older than you are now? A very vivid summer." He gave me what, in any other person I would have called a conspiratorial smile then, and winked, and said, "You will find that it does not fade, Clayton, it will not fade."

Mama and Lou-Ellen came out then with the after-dinner tray, with its cake and lemonade, and we began to talk of other things, but I was at ease by that time, for, though he had not told me what I thought I had wanted to know, namely, who or what Miss Alice was, he had told me something I needed to hear then just as much, or perhaps even more, that it had all been, in some sense at least, real.

This feeling was important to me in the time that followed, as my life tried to return to its heretofore accustomed channels. I say "tried to return," but this does not in the least express what I wish for, as I have said, the life I had grown accustomed to in my dreams that summer had never spilled over into that of my day time hours; in effect, my life had never left its accustomed channels. Yet now it felt strange and ill-fitting and chafed me in ways I couldn't explain to myself, let alone anyone else. I had had a dream, and the dream had proved real, and then I had woken up.

For a time, awakening with the sun, I would begin my day by reaching beneath my pillow to draw forth the perfect digit left me by Miss Alice, rubbing it slightly to catch the feel of her delicate skin. I was not trying so much to recapture her, as to understand, so as to be able to acquiesce to the turn my life had taken. Acquiescence of a sort came, but its appearance was almost imperceptible, woven into the fabric of everyday events as time passed and my life took a course of its own.

When the summer ended and school recommenced, I found myself taking a greater interest in my studies than heretofore, though, as the son of Rowanton's first lawyer, I had always been an apt pupil. I was no longer simply dutiful in my lessons, but read and reflected upon my reading with the same earnest intensity, the same puzzlement, if you will, with which I confronted Miss Alice's trace each morning. It may be thought that I am reading back into those times emotions and reflections from a much later date, and it is certainly true that I do not recall ever putting the matter into words. Yet, to give just one example, I clearly recall an afternoon spent mesmerized by Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," when it seemed that I was upon the verge of a very great secret, which yet another reading would reveal. If the secret never quite materialized, either in Keats or any of the other authors I now frequented, their acquaintance seemed no less worthwhile for all of that; we had all been touched by something we could not quite grasp, and to find that this was a well-remarked part of our human condition was enough. In their presence, I felt that if my world did not any longer hold anything more at its center than it had held in previous years, it held more than enough to fill my days.

My days were even full enough, that when I encountered Miss Alice about town, and we passed the time of day, or on those occasions when she dined at our house, and I was included in the circle of adult discourse, found myself fully able to accept that the attention she paid to me was only the same neutral attention every elderly woman bestows on those younger than her who are not her kin. And when in following years it came to my attention, as it did from time to time, that Miss Alice had "taken on a boy to help with the yard," I don't believe I ever felt any envy or jealousy, though I would for a few mornings afterwards find myself awakening to watch the sun fill my bed with light.

When I left Rowanton to go away to college, it was with the intention eventually to return there to live, but though I have returned it has only been to visit. And as the years have passed, even these visits have become infrequent as Daddy and Mama passed on and the house was sold, Lou-Ellen having moved south to Staineville when she married, while my career drew me out of state to the big cities of the north. Now it is only when I return south to stay with Lou-Ellen and her brood, that I find the odd morning or afternoon to walk slowly through the streets of Rowanton by myself, not consciously going any place or seeking anyone in particular. And I have continued to do this even after the time that I found that the old house on what was once the edge of town, with its wide, shaded verandas and great tree-lined lawns had been sold and Miss Alice was gone.

I have continued to come back to these streets, less quiet now, full of new houses, new businesses, new faces, for the same reason that I had been coming back before that, a reason wrapped in the heat of a long past summer and the vibrant life which had filled it. A reason which does not truly require me to return here, because it is not so much concerned with the facade of life, as with an understanding which has grown in me over the years about the kernel of connectivity at the heart of things. How can I articulate my meaning here? I do not now possess any of the mementoes of Miss Alice which had once been of such value to me, and of that summer, I have literally nothing left at all. But, just as Daddy said that night on the porch, it has not faded. Indeed, perhaps the reason why I was not disturbed to find that Miss Alice was gone was the same reason I am not distressed to no longer have a memento of her. In some sense, I myself have become a memento of her. I have awakened, but the dream is real.

A LETTER

Brian Hartshorn 190-16 89th Ave.
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Aug.26th-Sept.6th, 1991

Dear Blake,

It was good to hear from you, both figuratively and literally. After we talked on the phone, I pictured you sitting with your children watching cartoons, and recalled reading comics with you in the living room at the foot of Kingston Hill. I have a great taste for nonsense and silliness myself; if not quite cartoons — but then I lack a proper audience to share them with — the next best things, science fiction, mysteries, histories and so on. I have even begun learning the rudiments of classical Greek (I have promised myself to learn New Testament Greek for a long time, but in one of the book buying sprees I went on this spring, I couldn't resist bilingual volumes of some classical poets and tragedians, and then, so as not to waste my investment, had to begin to learn to read the stuff. . . it at least stretches the mind a bit, and that is always welcome. I have since heard — but can't yet verify — from Walter Wright that a classmate of his did a thesis saying that where classical Greek had an active, passive, and middle voice, modern European tongues have only active and passive, and that the middle voice — usually said to be where "one acts for oneself alone" — was for actions which could not be ascribed to anything we would ordinarily regard as an actor, actions where the action itself was primary; the loss of this voice, he believed, coincided with a blindness to that sort of situation.).

This material question which you mentioned has also been haunting me, though from a less urgent perspective. On the one hand there are doctor bills, on the other, I have a woman friend (also, as the politically correct term goes, "disabled") I am attached to, but before I can think of living with her (and putting aside other practical difficulties and emotional ambivalences, such as the fact that every time I get sick, I go into a cocoon) I have to be able to earn a good deal more than I earn now. (At present, she is living on public assistance. She used to be able to work off the books and earn some money to supplement her meagre allotment, but now she is back in school — she had a master's in child development and a career, but it went out the window when she became disabled — trying to earn a PhD., with the aim, eventually, of getting off assistance. In the meantime, whenever I can scrape together a little money I don't blow on books or doctors, I help her out a bit. If my mom wasn't still working hard at her shop, even this little might not be possible. The problem is, partly, I lack the physical energy for a full week's work (or for heavy duty writing, more's the pity). And, partly, I haven't yet learned how to write saleable material. Indeed, since getting your letter, I have been sporadically trying to think of ways in which we could pool our skills productively (to the end, of course, of at one and the same time saving the world, getting famous and getting rich. Some of us never grow up, I guess.) but have yet to have even a single idea.

Your mention of some of the sources for Vol IV brought to mind the recurrent fantasy I have of revising-updating it. For a number of areas, such as prehistory, I have as much knowledge as a gnat. In other areas I know a bit more, but but still much too little. (One essay I have toyed with the idea of, after reading a history of the Armada, was along the lines of how one misattributes history's turnings to the intervention of a higher power; higher powers may indeed be at work in shaping the eventualities which become history, but how they work and how we think they work are vastly different, as might be elucidated by seeing something of how they do not work.) (Or again, also related to this question of higher intelligence, of, as is said, trying to be a candle for an angel, one of the numerous byways I have pursued is the study of what is called psychohistory, an offshoot of psychoanalytic thought. They view events like the Gulf War as mass psychosis (!), studying the iconography of the unconscious in such

manifestations as political cartoons. They hypothesize that wars result from a group recapitulation of early trauma. The interesting aspect of all this is that the symbolism is generally that of sacrifice, death, and rebirth. . . . So that it becomes possible to think of the "unconscious" symbolism which emerges at war time as the result of the working of higher intelligence (cf. the greater possibilities for self-perfecting due to the action of the law Solioonensius) if we take into account our general deafness to higher intelligence and our tendency to see everything in our attention upside down, (cf. Pogo's famous quote, "We have met the enemy, and he is us.") So that the working of a lawfulness which could bring about inner liberation instead brings about inner slavery and outer destruction.) But, as I said in my previous letter, for the moment, the center of gravity of my writing is this novel.

Now, as far as your stopping by, I look forward to seeing you (on the Tuesday, I believe it now is) I have missed you, man.

Bring along some pictures of your family!

Love,

ps. more poems enclosed; Homebearer I wrote just last week, Remembrance this week on the impending death of a friend. They are the first two poems I've written in several months -- I was, I think a little dejected at getting only rejection notices for them (also, of course, the book has been absorbing my concentration). Your praise was very gratifying.