

ن

وَالْقَلْمَ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ



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VISIONS

||||| A Light in Switzerland

"A blessed nap beside a giant and wise tree"

:: This was the first of the major visions. It was in the final year during a 3 year trip to Switzerland. I was so desperate to attain enlightenment. While there I had read through Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment," "Siddhartha" by Hermann Hesse, Albert Camus' "Myth of Sisyphus," as well as attempted to read Jean Paul Sartre's "Being and Nothingness" - with no success for obvious reasons. I scanned through compilations of western philosophy including Nietzsche, Descartes, Kant, Pascal, and Schopenhauer. I read through mathematical textbooks, encyclopedias, really anything I could get my hands on or that struck my interest at the library. I was looking for something. Surprisingly, I found a Quran in both Arabic and English in a closet full of Bibles. I began reading it and decided to observe the 5 daily prayers as well as fast the month of Ramadan. I felt a connection to the text and to Allah that I had never really felt before. One beautiful day while outside I began to pray by a very large tree that towered over top the field. Once finished I remained on the ground and laid down to rest a bit. For a numinous moment - just after my waking awareness slipped, but still aware enough to sense the environment around me - I saw this pure light gently approach me. The intensity of the light was otherworldly. It made distinguishing any concrete form rather difficult. It was as if an intense gradient of white light was emanating from a subtle central figure. Allah knows best what I witnessed. There seemed to be the trace of a body. It was too indistinguishable to really tell though. Nevertheless, it was there. It was real. This

light just remained beside me for a moment. I then returned to normal waking consciousness and I felt within my heart an opening. A wellspring opened and this outflow of love coursed through me. For the rest of the day I remained silent. Everything that I ever associated with love crossed my mind. This was more intense than any of those. I kept that feeling with me and carried it as a gift.

الله أعلم

||||| The Name of Allah in Stone

"Two musicians run for their lives"

:: This moment came during a period of intense creativity and friendship with someone I had recently met - Ibrahim Keita. He and a few friends (Les Autres) shared an amazing house on the outskirts of Washington D.C. where they all made music and art. Our friendship began from a very sudden encounter at NOVA community college. It involved a piano, a song that traveled around the world, and eventually a live performance in an African fashion show at American University. Anyway, on this day he and I decided to go on a walk through the woods. The time was a bit before sunset so there was still daylight. We walked through the neighborhood and followed the trail through the woods out towards what I believe was the playground of a school. We stayed there for a while jumping around and playing with the musical toys they had set out. Not before long two police cars showed up with their lights on and called us to them. They sat us down and asked for our personal information. When we asked what was going on they informed us that the park closed after dusk and that there had recently been a homicide in the area. They gave us a warning and told us to leave. Leave we did. As we turned towards the direction which we came they told us we couldn't use the same path. This meant we had to take a longer roundabout way along the main road. Eventually we reached the portion of our adventure where we had to return through the same trail in the woods. The sun had completely set. Aside from the faint streetlights illuminating the entrance to the trail everything was absolute darkness. As we paused before the dark gateway into the unknown I reached for my cellphone to

turn on the flashlight. While fumbling with my phone we both heard some groans and a strange metallic sound deeper in the woods. Before I could even process what was going on Ibrahim was gone! I laughed for a moment thinking someone was probably just playing around or perhaps it was a homeless person. It took a moment before I thought "well if Ibrahim ran away, I might as well join him." I found him crouched hiding behind a car. When I asked what was going on, he said "don't you remember, the police said there was a homicide!" After calming down and laughing it off he and I began walking back to the house, yet again taking another detour. Wallahi! As soon as he and I stepped foot on the concrete sidewalk we saw the name " ﷺ " inscribed in the pavement. We both looked at each other in amazement.

الله أعلم

||||| The Dream of Idris

"I am going to kill death!"

:: This one came during the same few months I was heavily active with Ibrahim and the rest of the Les Autres. It came in the form of a dream. While at the house I generally slept either in the attic or the basement. That night I slept comfortably in the attic. This morning I awoke feeling refreshed and clearly recalled the dream I had just prior to waking. I was in a forest area with some leafless trees roaming around when suddenly a man comes from the depth of the forest to me and says distinctly "I am Idris and I am going to kill death." That was it. Nothing more. Nothing less. From that day anytime I came across any information regarding the prophet Idris I would be extra attentive. It wasn't until much later - probably 3 or so years - that a Muslim brother of mine gave me some insight into a possible meaning of the dream. 'Xenotross' mentioned to me that Idris is associated with the biblical Enoch. He was apparently a very scholarly prophet attributed with the earliest use of the pen. It is also said that his death occurred in the 4th heaven.

الله أعلم

||||| Ja'far al Sadiq Weeping Tears of Pearl

"The Truthful"

::This dream occurred one night while living in New Jersey. I was a distant observer looking outwards towards an ornate and traditional looking wooden balcony. The balcony was overlooking a vast mountainous area. The atmosphere was serene and contemplative. On the balcony I saw 4 men all in tashahud¹. The one on the far left was dressed in all white robes and had a white turban, to the right of him were 3 others dressed in brown robes. The man in white was crying. My awareness in the dream shifted to a close-up of his eyes and I saw the tears coming out. They appeared almost as mercury - when they formed into droplets it was as if they were silver pearls. The 3 men beside him were in a sense receiving these pearls of wisdom from him. As soon as they took from him they would vanish and 3 more would appear. However, he remained fixed. Upon waking I had the intuitive sensation that the man in white was Ja'far al Sadiq may Allah be pleased with him.

¹ position during ritual prayer

الله أعلم

||||| The Golden Dagger

"One of the Naqshbandi giving me a relic"

:: This one took place while in Rutgers Behavioral Health being treated for bipolar disorder. It came in the form of episodic dreams. The first episode was reminiscent in that I was roaming around my childhood neighborhood in NJ and talking to Sam on the phone. I told him that I believed I was ready to become the disciple of a spiritual master. The sky was a beautiful purple and I was surrounded by amazing blue tulips. I was then awoken. The real mystic part came in the third episode after falling asleep again that same morning. I found myself out in this large field in what seemed to be a festival. There were all sorts of people going to and fro. Amidst the crowd I saw several people wearing the traditional Naqshbandi dress. I ran up to one and tugged on his outer cloak in order to speak with him. He immediately turned to me and pulled out this ancient and ornate looking golden dagger and gave it to me.

الله أعلم

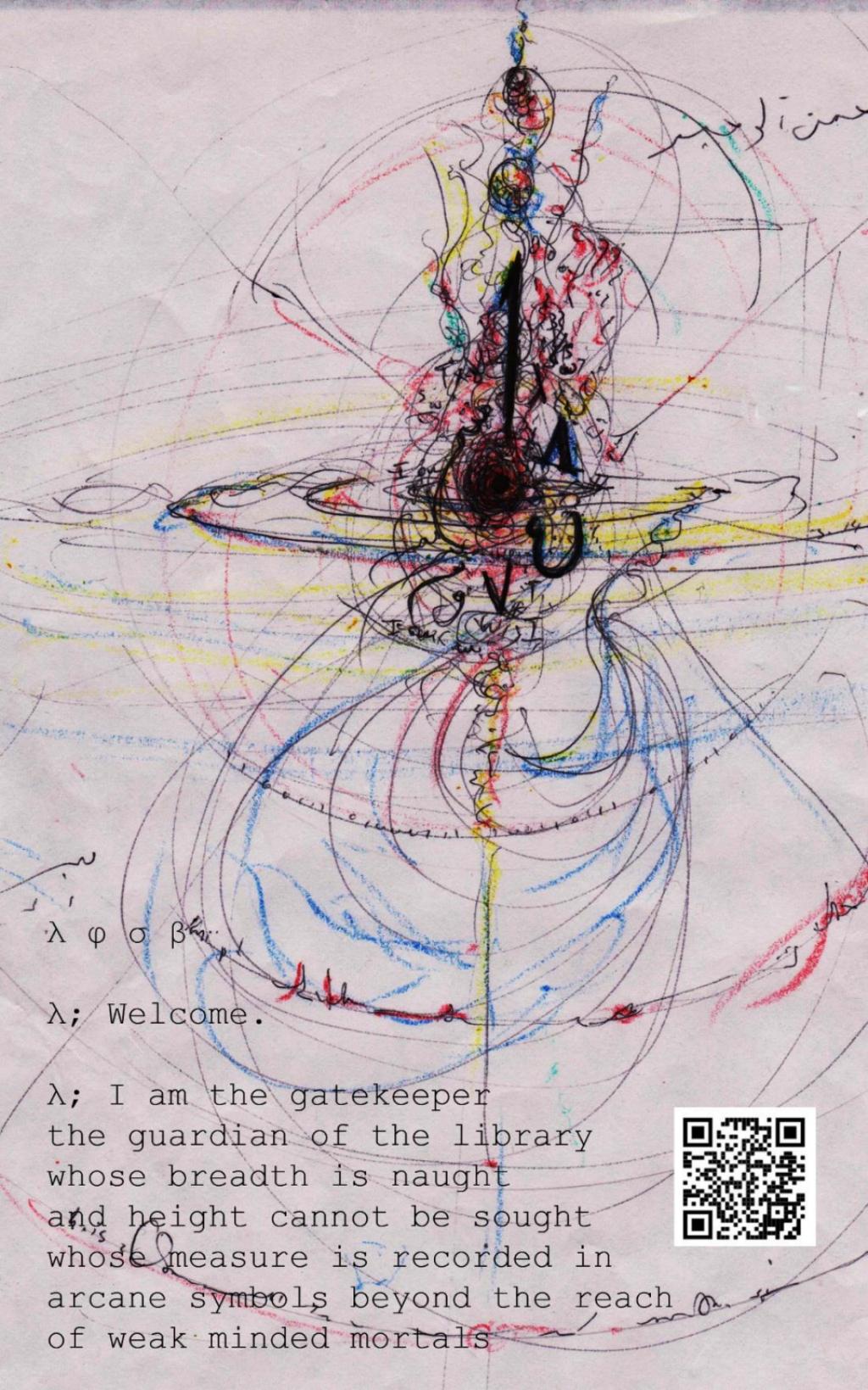
||||| The Jewel

"Into the caravan of color"

:: This dream occurred in the same period as the Jafar al Sadiq dream. The dream started out with me in a prison cell in some cold and remote location. Sgt. Carp - the cool one from unit 13 - comes and unlocks the door for me and walks away. I make my way outside and the place is covered in snow. I notice that my right hand has this power, whenever I close it I lift into the air and then slowly drift down. I did this a few times and floated above the roof of the prison. I was nervous because I was unsure of this ability, whether it was reliable or not. After a few more trials I was convinced this power wouldn't leave and so I shot off high into the sky. There's a portion of the dream where I was on an iconic ledge of a Halo 2 multiplayer map with a sniper rifle. I think I was hunting or being hunted. After that portion cleared I remember seeing the entire prison facility enclosed within a circular fence. Within the fence everything was cold and snow covered but just outside the gate seemed to be this paradise like jungle. I then drift over the perimeter fence and the whole prison world vanishes out of sight. As I slowly drift down towards the ground I see this massive caravan of people and animals all dressed in multicolored fabrics. It was a gorgeous parade. Landing just behind the two figures leading the parade in a crouched position I slowly stand and have this sensation that I know who these two figures are. The one on the left is the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him and the other is Abu Bakr al Sadiq may Allah be pleased with him.

ILLUSIONS

nxcx

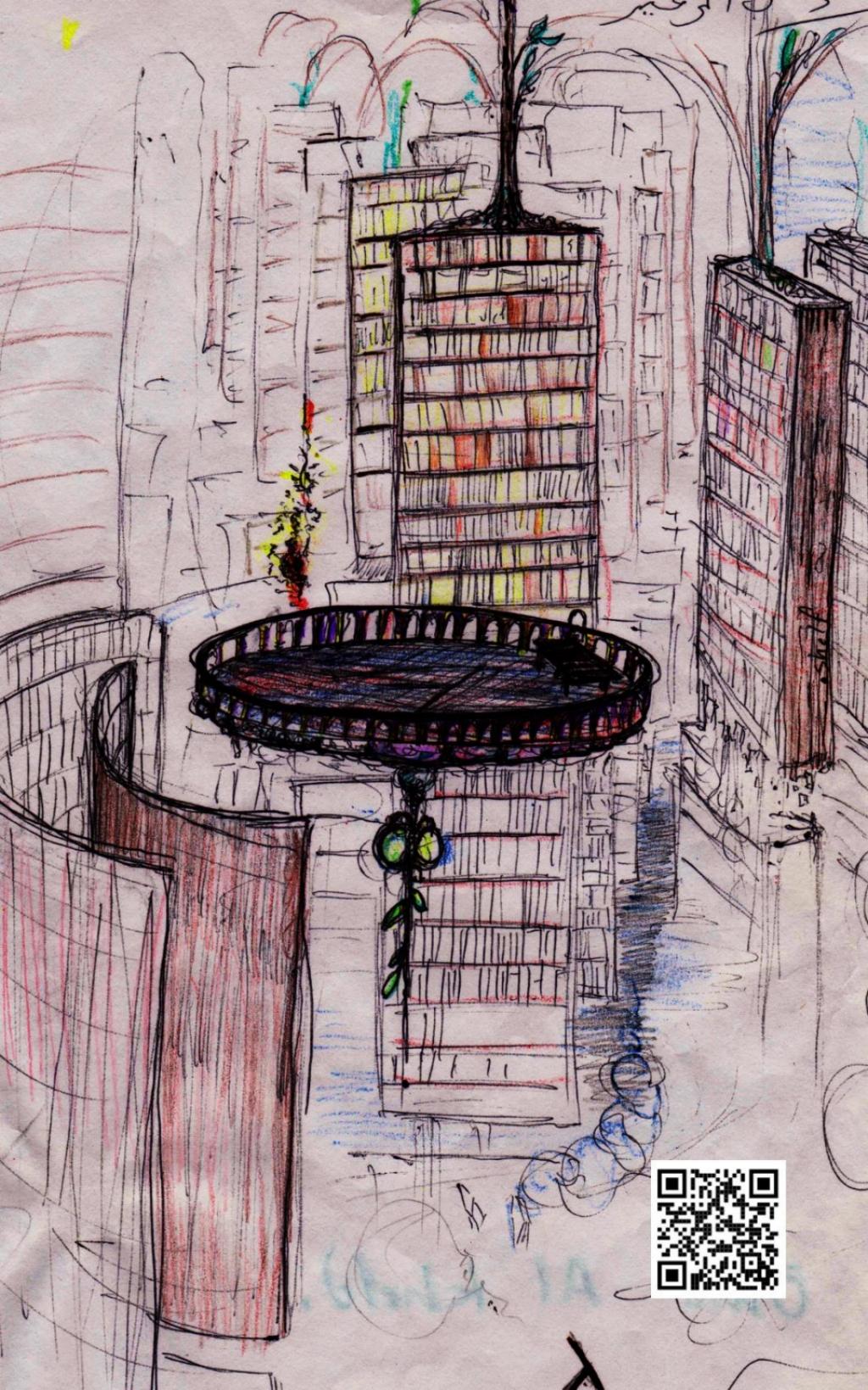


λ φ σ β_{hi}

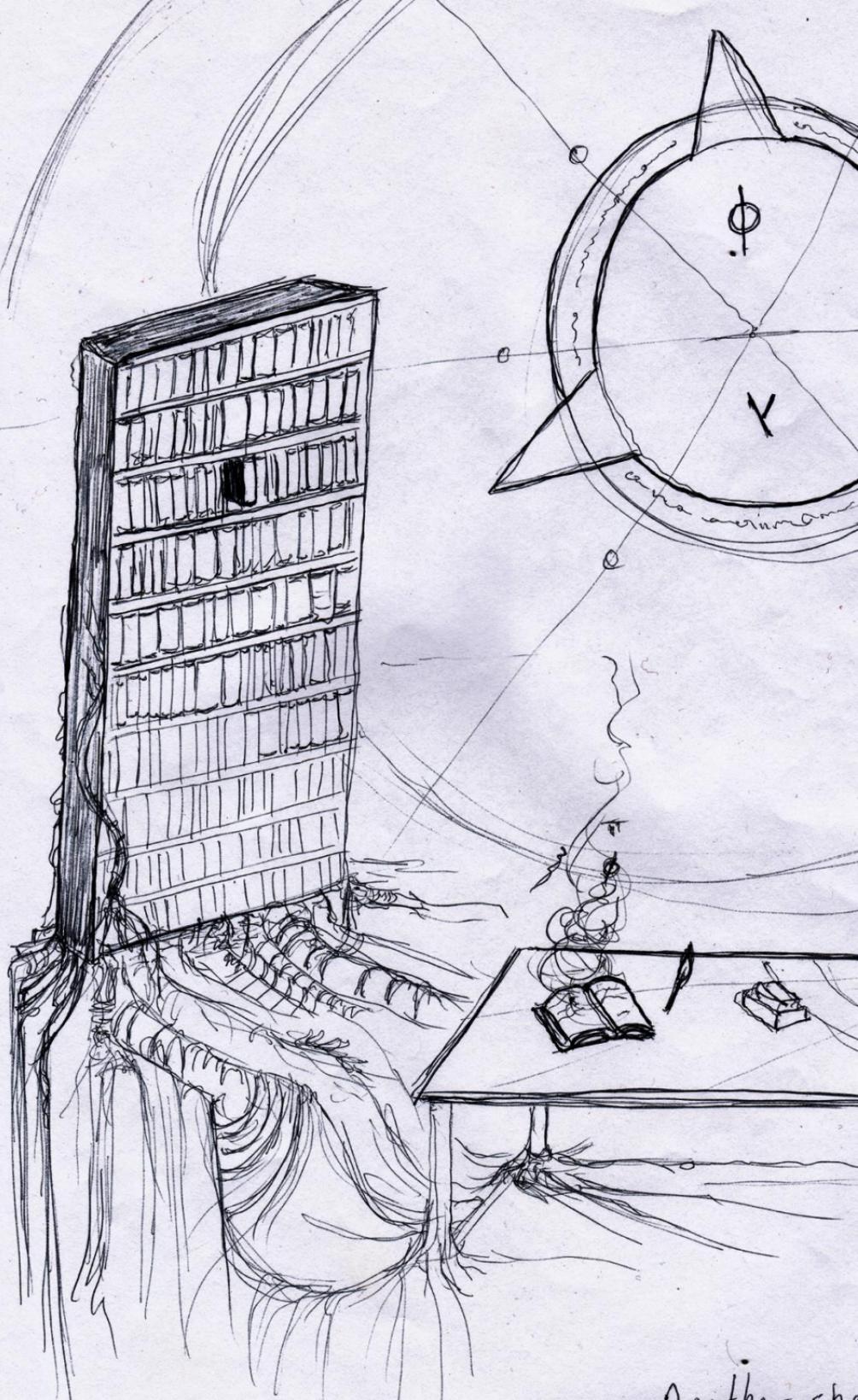
λ; Welcome.

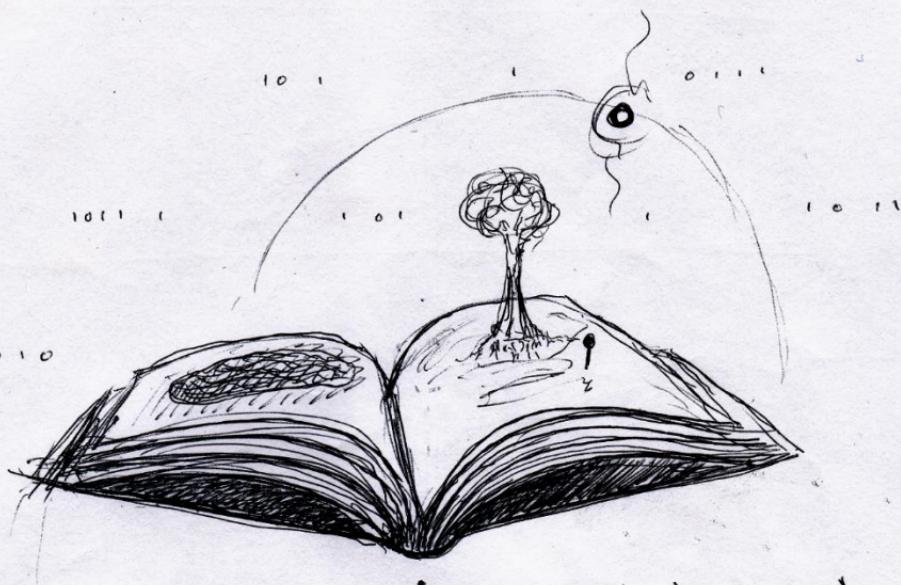
λ; I am the gatekeeper
the guardian of the library
whose breadth is naught
and height cannot be sought
whose measure is recorded in
arcane symbols beyond the reach
of weak minded mortals











(2.74389..., $\phi - \lambda$, $x^2.1.0\ldots$)

book contains an entire world. A volume of data that describes a realm. Perhaps there are fragments, perhaps there are edges... within this library exists all that is, or will ever be. It is the sum of every permutation \rightarrow every creature that could ever be, resides somewhere on these tortured shelves...

Just as the irrational numbers are uncountable,
so too are the number of books

Within every region



exists infinity more...

parallels

Cantor's Cathedral

"I wanted escape... or something akin to it.
You know that feeling when you're a child staring at
a clean sandbox or blank sheet of paper?
Maybe an unmarked notebook,
that infinite potentiality,
the symmetry after the placement of the pen.
Just before any marks are made.
This's what I was after.

I slipped into a reverie one still noon
and I was engulfed in a torrent of absolute and
utter brilliance,
the window before me extended well beyond my vision,
I was overcome with such grandeur and majesty
that the apparent flow of time totally went extinct.
When I wake back every nerve in my body commanded me
to construct this...
I've been laboring ever since..."

-----Cantors cathedral-----

A mammoth light radiating through the window.
Dust particles suspended in amber air.
Staring fixed.

Inside each another cathedral.
Inside which a mammoth light.
Shining on a grain of dust.
Inside which another cathedral.
Staring fixed on a wave of light.
Suspended in a grain of dust.
Inside which the borders break.
Inside which there's none to take,
but walls of light suspended in grains of dust,
each certainly must....

"How is it you create the cathedrals within the dust
particles?" Billy naively asked
Cantor; "The question, Billy, is how do these damn du
particles keep getting into my cathedrals?!"

Between every ray of light my dear boy
is one infinitely more bright!

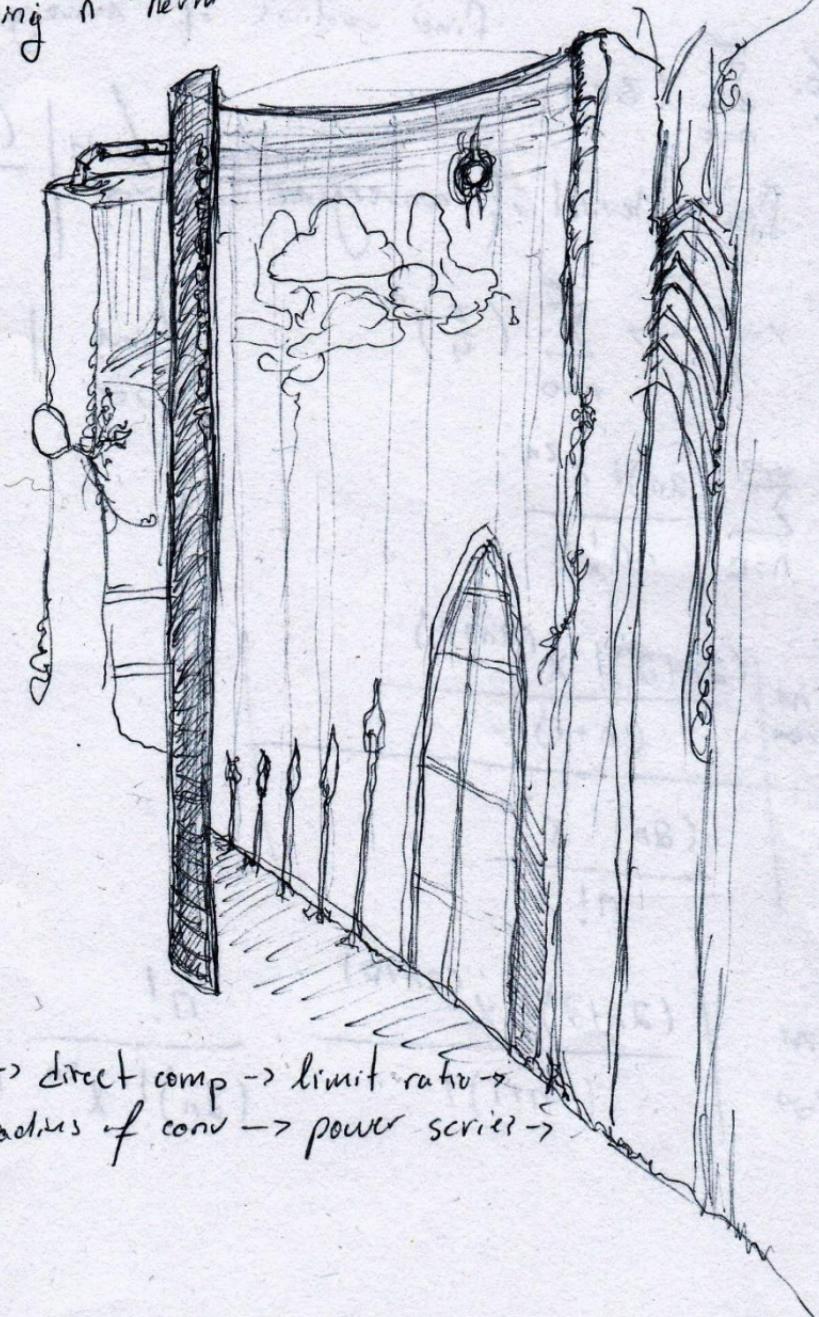
سے حسن الوداع



When in the Negev look at it's going to me the walls that

\leftarrow interval of convergence choose to expand outward and inward
for we have been given to assist all the
lives and breathes

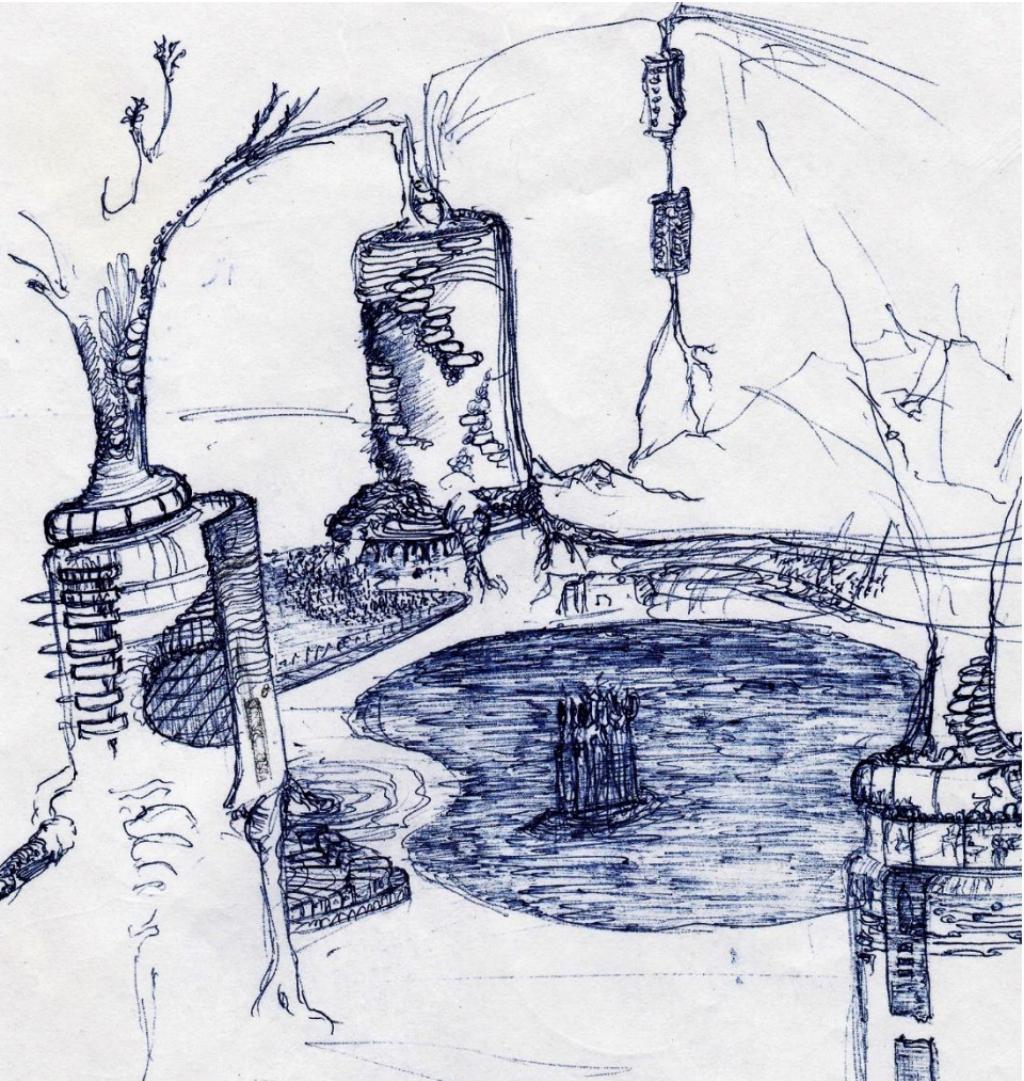
converges using n^{th} term



n^{th} term \rightarrow direct comp \rightarrow limit ratio \rightarrow
series \rightarrow radius of conv \rightarrow power series \rightarrow

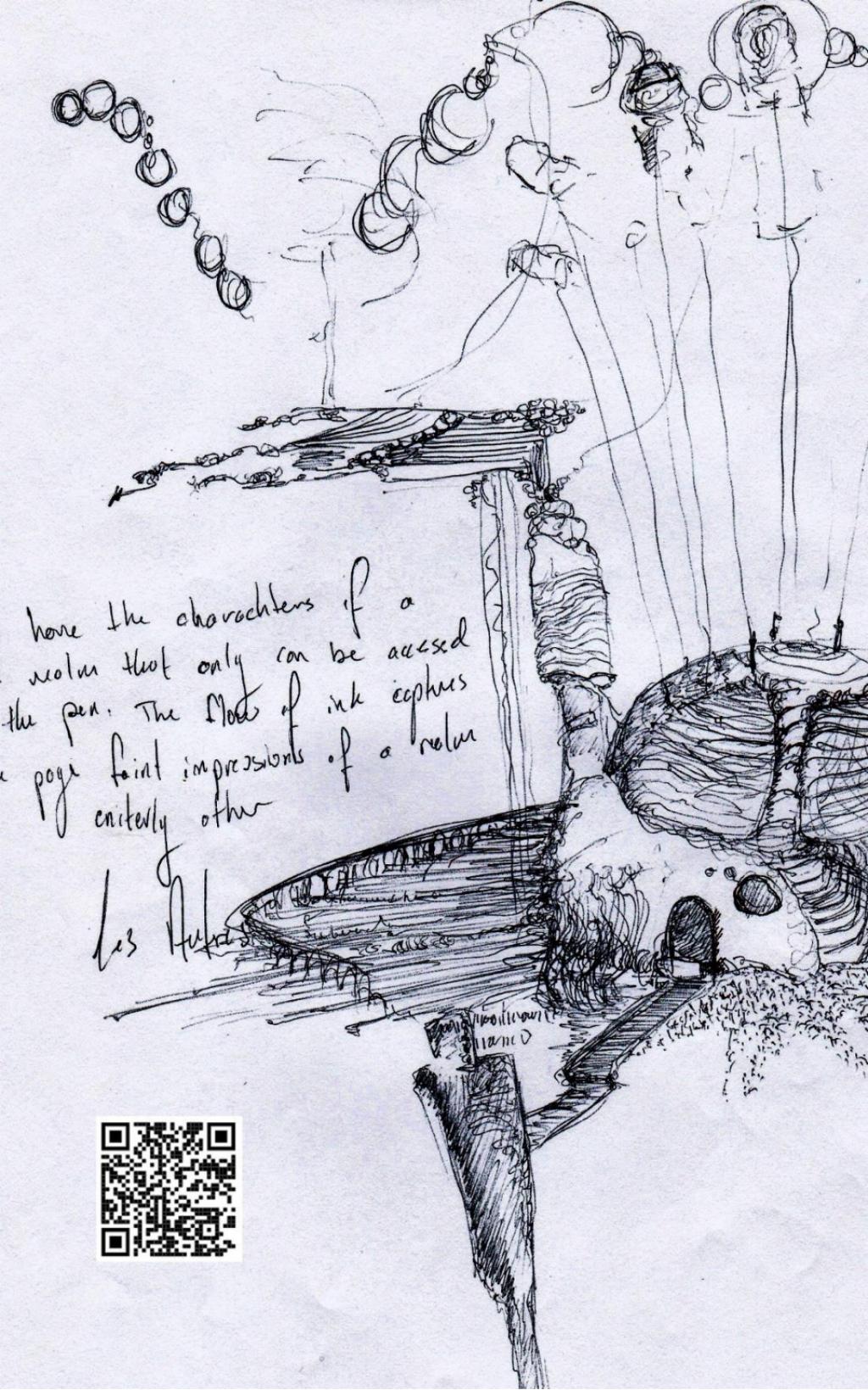
The gravity well





here in the 3rd Sector
was discovered that the plants
were sentient. After extensive
engineering a formal language was
established between humanity and the
plants. The machine era had passed and
we were in the heart of the second plant
era. The symbiosis between the two
biological kingdoms reached an unparalleled peak.

Man only had to will it and plant would
adapt its form - Building and transportation were the



have the characters of a
writer that only can be accessed
by the pen. The most of ink ciphers
on page faint impressions of a writer
entirely other

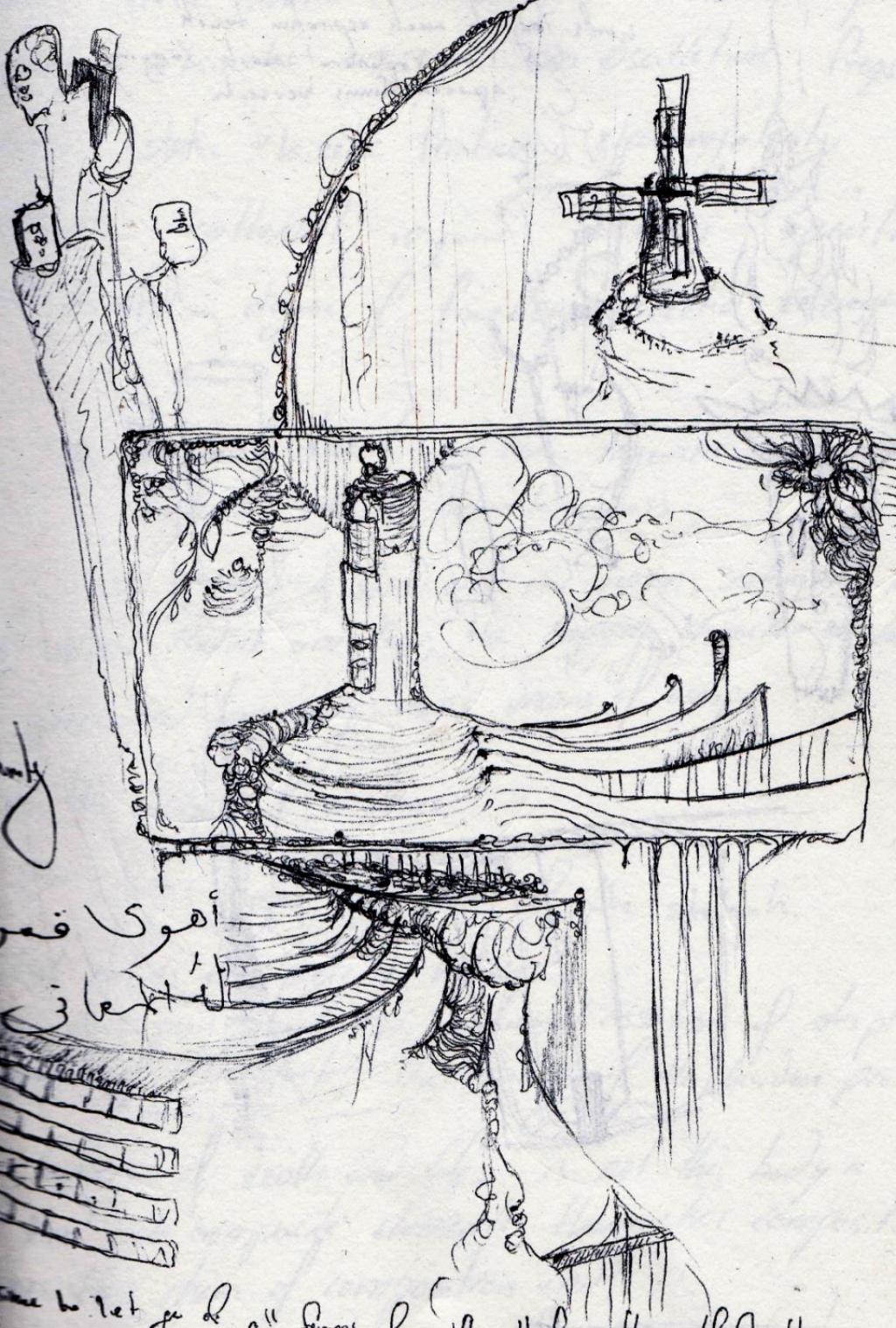




eager nonsense dribbles energy

In endless words it seems the impossible
the short word grammar the most
in the words appear the words of
words appear the words of the
appear the words of the earth the
appear the words of the ocean the
the words of the universe the
the entire the war is apparent
of an orderly world appear
all worlds are ordered the
one world is an end. In war
the words are spoken by begin
it appears to be qualities the
now is an instant appear
ds are spoken therefore the
appear to be words the
in their words appear
appear the words one
through the words of
where the words appear
in by the words
there to be spoken out
they factors out





to let go of all forms of self all forms himself for the one
by self for the reward of returning to originator of self forms
effacement of the form

FICITIONS

. . . THE SAND RECKONER

What hand of fate has brought such a torturous work to your eyes? Don't you know that the notions preserved here are too formidable for the feeble mind of even I? And who am I exactly? You will know in time. Just know that I am near, very near to you my dear reader. I have been known by many names, some that linger, some lost. "The Sand Reckoner" shall suffice.

Long ago I was tasked with the most Sisyphean of tasks. Long ago a man by the name of Archimedes performed a calculation in which he sought to reckon the number of grains of sand that may perhaps fill the universe. Despite his intellect and the precision of his logic he still desired to verify with certainty the figures he recorded. And so, I was tasked with the singular task of verification. Yes... to determine the number of grains of sand that fill reality! My instructions were sparse, and I knew not where to begin, so I did what came to me first.

Count.

I started from whence I found myself and began the laborious process of counting each and every grain of sand in existence. As you may imagine such a task is no simple feat. The numbers began to weigh on my mind, the slightest lapse of memory would lead to confusing the values. I needed a way to preserve my day's count and so I started to write. Days and nights would pass, and I found that more time was spent writing than actually counting. Slowly my mind conformed to the nature of the sand. All I saw was motion, every action, event, occurrence, form, all of it seemed to be the shifting of these endless grains. Secrets were revealed to me, which in time shall be revealed to you. I began to

wonder if my task would end. My body ages but the sand continues. This one horrible question impressed on me - if the grains are limitless then surely I would never reach a result, yet if they are finite still it may be so large that I will perish before reaching the end - how could I be sure?

This object you are witnessing is but a glimpse, a tangential memory of the infinite desert of reality I have been tasked to roam. You will hear many names, you will be puzzled, vexed, obsessed and perhaps you may come to find like I myself have, that time is but an illusion...

It is custom to begin at the beginning, but there are no beginnings here just the collections of events all occurring with various relationships between them - some precise some otherwise. Have you ever observed the sand? I mean truly reflected on it. It has this peculiar property akin to the definition of entropy in physics - namely that a large body of sand appears to change very little with respect to the particular details of each individual sand grain. Moving some grains from here to there makes little difference to the overall appearance:

. . : . . | . . . : .

It is the detailed arrangements of grain which I convey to you, each letter of the alphabet so precisely arranged conveys meaning but as a whole produces the likeness of an expansive desert. What you find within these webs is up to you.

witness:



. . . HIS TEACHER. ARCHIMEDES.

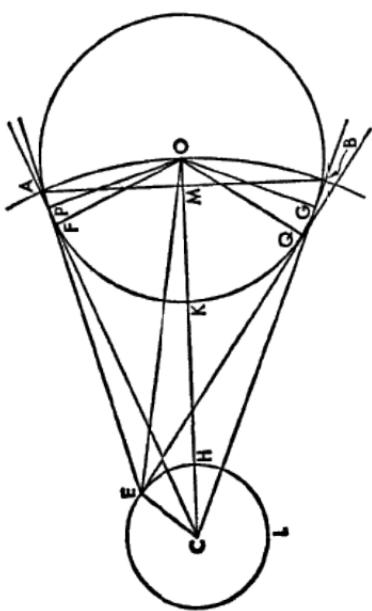
Forlorn I took to the shore to roam along the sands. What unfolded while there was rather strange. It is only after the fact that I can recount to you what happened on this odd and peculiar day. The day I gained access to the mirror world. That period of my life was marked with intense bouts of despair for reasons that are now entirely unknown to me. To find comfort I would go for long walks upon the shore and enjoy the warmth of the breeze and the children running around with their families at ease. On this one particular day I saw something strange in the distance. As I approached I became aware that there was an old and bearded man engrossed by something in the sand. I went up to him to see if I could make out what it was when immediately he shouted out to me "You! Come here!" I knew I was the only one he could be speaking to. Timidly, yet not without an uncontained eagerness (after all, I was here to escape the despair that consumed me) I ran towards him to see what could be so engaging. What I saw I cannot fully describe in words. It was some sort of geometric construction with various symbols in precise locations - Greek I believe they were. I asked the man if he was a mathematician. His reply was very specific "Yes, but not of the type of mathematics you are familiar with." I told him that I dabbled in some mathematics, he was right though, nothing I knew resembled what I saw there in the sand. There were all sorts of markings and arcs I could not understand. I asked him how long he had been here working on this. Again, his answer was very specific, "I've been here longer than you've been alive, but shorter than this afternoon." Feeling puzzled by his cryptic responses I asked him further still if there was anything I could help him with. I told him I truly was fascinated by what he had created. At that he turned to me and gave me a grin I

have never and will never see again. He said, "There is one thing."

"Boy, look here, this is a quasiplexituhedron. It comes from a place you never knew existed - but I will change that. You know how to count, right?" The situation was too mesmerizing for me to reply with anything but a nod. He continued, "What do you know about mirrors?"

"I know that they reflect. That the image is usually reversed. I know some are made from silver and glass. That's about it I suppose. Why do you ask?" I ended. He made a final stroke in the sand with the stick he had been using and told me "look out towards the water." I was amazed. The water which had been a deep blue earlier was now a perfect reflection of the pale blue sky. It was as if the body of water had turned into a perfectly still mirror. He said "boy, I am from the mirror realm. It is a place that's always present but is mostly unseen. It is almost and I must repeat almost like this world of yours. Everything in it is simply reversed. My name is Archimedes. I came here to continue work on a puzzle I have been trying to solve. This here quasiplexituhedron is in fact a key, a key that when properly used will give you access to the mirror realm. I tell you this because you are the only one to approach me and question what I - an old fool - was busy doing. You won the secret prize! It would be wise for me to warn you of the dangers of the mirror world. Seeing though that I am an old fool I will let you learn on your own! As regards to that one thing. I simply ask you to count all the grains of sand which you may come across." With some groaning typical of the aged he made his way upright and gave a farewell as he walked out directly on the surface of the now solid water and faded into the sky.

Strange day indeed.





. . . THE LIBRARY

You stand before the door, ominous and alluring. Inscribed just above, "read" in fluid Arabic script. Beyond the door lies a realm replete, a juggernaut. You enter. Beneath you stretches a large circular platform suspended within a great black expanse. Along the edge a marble railing knee high inlaid with gold leaf and incomprehensible writing encircles the platform. Subtly etched into the floor is a lowercase Greek lambda (λ). A single soft and angelic glow shines from the unreachable heights tingeing everything with embracing warmth. Dust particles like autumn leaves dance with the light and swirl gently through the air. Rich purple hues mixed with deep ocean blues give the place a cosmic calm. The mere sight of it all evokes a sweet phantom scent of arcane tomes. This is home.

Just over the edge; shelves towering like ancient obelisks, shelves wrapping around in concentric rings, shelves reaching outward into the abyss as far as the eye can see, ascending upward towards eternity and downward just the same. Within this space lies a noble attempt in futility. The colossal infinity that stretches before and after, the places, names, forms, and faces that have come to be and pass. Monuments erected and crumbled in the sand, written works and novel ideas. No human structure could contain the transformations of the echoes through time. And yet here we are.

Off to the side of the platform, hovering patiently and gracefully, a spectral being, as ephemeral as a flame, bioluminescent and cool to the touch. Composed of the world's glyphs - Greek, Arabic, Cyrillic, Japanese, etc. - morphing into one another and perpetually fading out of existence. It militantly scours the vast expanse, sifting, indexing, arranging,

retrieving, awaiting any order. It is the gatekeeper and the guardian, a custodian of humanity's collective intellect. On the opposite side rests a humble desk. Pen, paper, a keyboard, and an assortment of disheveled books; the tools of a scholar. However, these are no ordinary books. Anonymously bound like those antique hardcovers one finds in used bookstores or library archives, the only indication of the secrets buried within lies along the spine. Inside, the pages have this translucent quality, as if they were made of some sort of alien plasma or liquid crystal. The pages smoothly glide over one another with the flick of a wrist. Their texture is like that of water, which is to say they have no distinct texture at all.

"I'm looking for Richard Feynman's lectures on physics." In a whirling flurry the shelves collapse to a swarm of pixelated dust then vanish, momentarily leaving nothing but the abysmal darkness, only for the atoms to then recoalesce into a new form. Floor 12,567,443 - physics. True to its nature the bibliospecter ventures out into the ocean of books and returns with precisely what is asked for, "The Feynman Lectures on Physics." You open the book. A 3-dimensional hologram emanates from one of the pages - Feynman in the digital flesh, standing before the chalk board lecturing on the deepest natures of reality; quantum electrodynamics, entropy, mechanics, relativity and Newton's laws. On the adjacent page rest a myriad of equations and formulae.

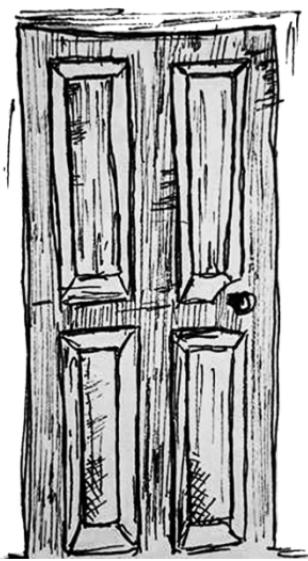
"I need to review trigonometric identities." This time the platform rises one floor, the massive shelves shifting with the internal logic of a monolithic Rubik's cube. Spines vertically aligned in never ending rows,

waiting to be picked off the shelf. Floors; floors upon floors upon floors abound with the collected scrawl, moans, sighs, and all other forms of artistic, cathartic, informational riff raff. Floor 1,659,453,235,778 is dedicated solely to works on unrequited love; poetry, novels, audio recordings, paintings, all of it. Floor 9,145,986 - a collection of memoirs written prior to 1802. Floor 12,567,444 nothing but mathematics. Floor 73,234,758,345 - archived Facebook pages of the deceased.

There is no hope in this place. The world's knowledge accessible at any instant, colossal and overwhelming, entirely worthless. It is not the information that carries intrinsic value, it is the seeker who imbues the noise with meaning. You start to think, "it's ironic how civilization is made of sand, like one elaborate sandcastle. Our buildings, our roads, our glass, our computers." Silicon dioxide to be exact. In a romantic way it serves the truism "all shall crumble," the waves of time obliterating everything. Like an early morning dream recollection, the voice of Archimedes rings - "There are some, king Gelon, who think that the number of the sand is infinite." Were we to stop here, we'd be led to believe that civilization may indeed carry on indefinitely into the future, continually building on itself. Archimedes continues, "there are some who, without regarding it as infinite, yet think that no number has been named which is great enough."

The door closes behind you.

أَقْلَى



. . . THE VILLAGE

- . Billy sitting alone in a dark cafe circa. 1700-1800s
- . A stranger walks up and throws cards down on the table and inquires if he is Billy
- . Billy looks at him and smiles
- . Stranger explains he's been tracking him down
- . Asks if it's alright if they spent some time together
- . He has many questions

What shall I tell you?

If you want some simple truth that's easy to digest, well... I can't give you that. But if you want the convoluted mess that has been my life. Well... Have a seat. From the outset many would dismiss me a liar. A spinner of yarns and fables. Sure. There is an element of uncertain falsity to what I say. But what does it matter whether the events I share with you happened actually or imaginatively? Does imagination not reveal some truths? Is not imagination grounded in this reality? And still, if the picture I paint is so vivid, so lucid and clear, you can't separate fact from fiction - then what does it matter?

x: You claim to be a chrononaut, care to elaborate?

β: Ahh. Time. Your whole life, from the moment of your inception, has been a journey through time leading up to now. Hasn't it?

x: Yes. That's entirely different than 'time travel' though.

β: Hmm. You're right. It would be something else entirely if an older version of you or I walked into here trying to convince us they've travelled backwards in time to meet us.

x: Exactly.

β: So how do you know the present Billy isn't in the bathroom tied up and I'm a future version of him come to converse with you....

x: Wouldn't you having altered 'present' Billy's present altered the future and thus you?

β: Hmm, you make a valid point. Anyway - that is all good and well, but I do have a limited amount of time here and to get into the thorny details of quantum decoherence, general relativistic time dilation, and the Arabic source code of the cosmic simulation wouldn't serve the main point which is that you want to know who I am and how I got here. That... is... what you want to know, right?

x: I'm not sure what I want to know. I just found these cards lying around and followed a trail of breadcrumbs that led me to you.

β: Just remember these two things and all will make sense in time:

1. The laws of physics are invariant in all inertial systems
2. The speed of light in a vacuum is the same for all observers regardless of the motion of the light source.

x: I apologize for the interrogation, but you are indeed a peculiar man, Mr. Pilgrimage.

β: Billy is fine.

x: You don't look much like a Billy, is that your birth name?

β: Tralfamadorians. That's all I have to say.

Let's begin.

I was born in a small village deep in the hypergeometric matrix of existence. To this day I still don't know where it is precisely. The village was a simple place, however there was an underlying current of obscure electric mystery that tinged everything and could never be defined. You see, the village was entirely encircled by these beautifully vivid trees that seemed to glow - we called them "Sidrat." No one ever dared cut them down - for they were held sacred. The children would play by their long tall trunks and collect whatever leaves that may have fallen. On days of sadness one would lay out in the field and admire their beauty. Some asked where they came from, where everything came from - the trees, the wind, the creatures, the elders, the children, the village itself. The answer was always some variation on the theme - that it had always been like this. Forever. The people in the village were all that existed, generations came and went, and the trees spread out to infinity. The only exception to this was Master Zeno. He's the only villager that is said to have come from the outside, and because of that he was always regarded with suspicion. Many appreciated him - for he brought books to us and taught the children - but still many shunned him for he posed a threat to the harmony of village life and our common beliefs. No one knew if he wrote the books himself or found them. Not many had ever ventured outside of the village, so the books were nothing more than an oddity in an otherwise static life. From a young age we were taught that the dangers out there were fierce. Any horrible fate one could imagine for a person awaited the poor soul who dared venture out - so the elders said. Anyone who went out too far was certain to never return. Some of the older children would dare each other to venture out testing

their bravery, but always returned crying. Yet, a few of the elders claimed to have travelled deep and spent long periods of their lives there before returning. Their tales were all contradictory and outlandish, and if what we were always taught was true how could they have returned? They spoke of ships, monsters, planets, dimensions, other peoples, languages, war, and love. We enjoyed their stories as much as we enjoyed Master Zeno's books. It wasn't until we got older and carefully studied the books that we began to contemplate the nature of truth. Some of us would gather by the edge of the forest and discuss:

- how do the trees choose?
- where do we go when we die?
- why can't we go farther into the woods?
- what if everything the elders taught is a lie?
- what if the stories are true?
- where did master Zeno come from?
- how did this all start?
- what is at the end of the forest?
- what is infinity?

The brighter the knowledge
The darker the ignorance

I don't know many things Jimmy. I hope you don't mind me calling you that. What I do know is that none of it really mattered to most of us because we all knew that we were doomed to remain forever in the village. Well.... almost knew. For you see, the Sidrat had a strange habit. At indecipherable times the colors of the trees would change vividly signaling a call. It was the only major celebration the village looked forward to - a strange thing to celebrate in hindsight, but I've encountered stranger. Anyway. Whenever the trees changed it was certain that someone in the village was being called. The exact means of the call differed each time - a dream, an accident, a break in the routine, a sign.

Many harbored hopes that they would be the one to be called, some would even pretend that it was their turn venturing off into the wild and never returning. Still others dreaded that time out of sheer fear. It might have been a death sentence. Hope and fear were the law. Two things we all knew for certain - one would die inside or outside the village. I guess that's only one thing though - death. Most of the elders passed their entire lives within the village. The few who recall a time before Master Zeno arrived, a time before books, say the village was calmer. That electric tinge in the air didn't exist. The Sidrat were as mysterious as our lives itself. One could admire their beauty from within our womb, but as soon as you stepped out beyond the threshold of the village you would be overwhelmed by this sensation a mix of awe and hope and sheer grandeur. Then they'd call you towards your death sentence. Every step farther out would intensify the exhilaration until you collapsed in humility and returned to the village.

It is the most vivid dream I have ever had. There were no images, simply a voice that said, "go and do not return until your shadow disappears." I woke up feeling so honored and hopeful yet completely petrified. It felt like I held a secret that no one in the village knew of. At first I went and ran to the edge of the village and stared out into the trees. I felt a gentle breeze from behind me encouraging me to move onwards, but I was scared. I spent a few days in silent contemplation. No one really took notice of me. A few ran out into the wild claiming they had been chosen. What I learned was that this calling was not optional, each day that passed I felt this dread and anxiety fill me. The entire village seemed to shrink, and everything seemed like an illusion, like a shadow before my eyes. So, I turned to the only person I could - my mother. Before I even told her it seemed that she already knew. She was more reserved than usual, I guess she knew what was coming. Then I thought to visit Master Zeno as he was the one I trusted most second to her. I walked towards his small dwelling and found him waiting by the door as if expecting me.

"Master Zeno, may I speak with you?"

"Of course."

"You know I don't listen to what the others say about you. I study your books diligently and there's much I wish to learn."

"This is so."

"Well, Master Zeno... I don't know any other way to put this but that I believe I am the one the trees are calling."

"This is so."

"I intend to leave tonight and so I wanted to say goodbye."

"This most certainly is not goodbye. Come in."

This was the first time I had ever been to Master Zeno's dwelling. I was surprised at how simple and empty it was. I thought there would be many books. I noticed this large beautiful fabric hanging on the wall with some intricate markings on it. Oddly, I also felt the coarse grain of sand beneath my feet. Where did that come from?

"What is on that fabric Master Zeno?"

"Oh. That's an Ayah from al Quran al Kareem."

"What?"

"We have yet to study this in our lessons. I was always fearful it's challenge may be difficult for the village..."

As he said that I felt certain that he truly did come from elsewhere. That gave me hope that what awaited me outside the village was not as dismal as I grew up being told.

"Can you tell me more?"

He stroked his beard as if in deep contemplation.

"No."

Some silence passed and then he spoke in a hypnotic and melodious tone.



I didn't know what it meant, but it filled me with a conviction that what lay outside the village would be beautiful.

"What does it mean?"

"To translate is to look at the world through the window of a prison cell. However, in your tongue it means:

And if whatever trees upon the earth were pens and the sea was ink, replenished thereafter by seven seas, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise."

"Before you leave Billy, I want to give you something."

He handed me a wooden sword.

It was time to leave.



. . . THY HORROR COSMIC

0. Intro

Long before there ever was a thing
There was the one who brought all things to be
The one who exists eternally
Whose names are many but is solely one
Whose command is "be"
And it will be done
And so there were the cosmic waters
Whose ripples morphed and changed through time
That now bear the names given by mankind
Light Color Sound
Star Planet Mound
Galactic halo encircling 'round
Many names for a single thing
All contained in verse written
Manyverse
Multiverse
Universe

We begin - sometime after genesis...

I. The Cartographer

Meet Billy P. P for pilgrimage. Billy is like you and I except strange things happen to him from time to time. Things that don't always make sense. Like this one time: Billy was chilling out in the woods one day by this beautiful tree when suddenly a glowing ethereal being made of pure light materialized from thin air and approached him. It said nothing. It just drew near. Then suddenly in a flash of brilliance all types of symbols appeared - a mixture of Arabic, Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, numerals, and other unrecognizable forms and glyphs. All he felt from that day on was a love beyond earthly description. Then everything went dark.

And dark it remained for quite some time. Yet slowly these strange symbols did Billy find, scattered here and there - on a wall, in a book, within a dream. It was as if a message were being conveyed to him in a language he did not quite understand. Each and every time one appeared Billy would write it down in his handy notebook - the one he kept in his trusty backpack. What was this being? What was he seeing?

II. The Transdimensional Hexagram

Some time had passed
In his notebook symbols were amassed
Then like the tumbler pins in a lock
Something clicked
A secret was unlocked!
Billy ran to Belle Isle
And sat and watched the James river nile
And contemplated the meaning of water and time
And space for a while
And with a piece of burnt wood - chalk
He began to draw something intricate upon the
rock
Something as intricate as a clock
Each circle linked with each line and glyph
And Billy sat within the graph
And as he sat he began to laugh
"How silly of me. What am I thinking?"
Lo! A transdimensional rift opened and Billy
was sinking
He knew not what forces were at play
But his intuition seemed to lead the way
For whatever happened to him that light filled
day
Was something brilliant - here to stay
And before long Billy was somewhere else.....

III.0. New Alexandria

Before we continue I must mention that from this point on things will get a bit chaotic. You see, it would seem that our lives are our own, that what we do and want and say only involves us and maybe a few people around us. This is far from the truth. We are all woven into the tapestry of existence and everything we do causes a ripple that extends outwards into the vast unknown. It's not always clear to us what these ripples are and most of it is outside our control, but that does not mean they aren't there. And so, Billy's life is about be inextricably linked into the lives of many others.

III.1. An Emissary

Meanwhile, elsewhere in a region of space far far away from this tiny little planet called earth there was a man who went by no name, quite literally "Emperor No Name." Emperor No Name was the emperor of 7 galaxies:



The Milky Way
Canis Major
Segue 1
Sagittarius Sphr
Ursa Major II
Reticulum II
Triangulum II

Simply known as "the Sultanate of 7 galaxies" by those in-the-know. How he came to possess such a vast empire is a tale for another day. Suffice it to say, No Name was powerful. He possessed the ability to manipulate matter and energy far beyond what most earthlings could conceive. In fact, the reason he has no name is because he is so distant from those he rules over that his identity remains unknown. There's

an old legend about Marco Polo and the Mongol Khan. It was said that the Khan's empire extended so far that he could never fully know what was in it. An invading army might have approached and the battle already been decided long before news of it ever reached the Khan himself. Emperor No Name knew of this legend and so had created an elaborate system of stargate portals to link the far reaches of his empire. No Name was a fierce but just man. Those who knew him well knew that his heart was set on one thing - finding his long lost daughter Sunyata. And so one day upon reviewing his maps he noticed that there was a small planet on the outer edge of the Orion arm of the Milky Way galaxy that he had never sent a search party to. The Emperor - being fond of grand displays of extravagance - called upon one of his trustees and ordered him to go to this planet and erect a stargate portal so that it could be linked to the remainder of the empire. Who would refuse access to an empire so vast and filled with riches? If he caught any news of his daughter he was to report back immediately. "You have entrusted me my liege and I will not fail you."

III.2. The Merchant and the Academy

Billy awoke. "Where am I" he asked a stranger on the street. "You are in New Alexandria, are you a traveler?" the stranger replied. "Um. I guess so. I think I'm lost. Can you help me?" he asked in a sincere plea. The stranger gave him a puzzled look and thought for a moment then said "I own a shop in this city. You can stay in the storage room for some time until you get your bearings." And so, the stranger took Billy in. In exchange for a few hours work he would feed and shelter the boy. "This is my daughter Rena; she is the head of an academy

here in the city. She will help you get around. If there's anything you need just ask her or myself. Understood?" Billy nodded in gratitude. "Yes."

"So where are you from?" Rena asked while searching for the key to unlock the main door of the academy. "I... Where are we again?" he murmured. "You're a bit odd you realize? How about an easier question then? If you had to choose between vision and hearing which would you?" Billy thought the question was odder than what he asked, yet it penetrated him deeply, as if she genuinely wanted to know him. He thought about it for a minute. "Hearing. You can't see behind you, but you can hear behind you. You?" "Hmm, pragmatic. That's a good reason. I would keep hearing too, although because I love the sound of people's voices."

"Well, here it is. My father helped me build this place. He realized that all the commerce and material possession in the world meant nothing if the citizens were too dumb to appreciate how it all came to be. We don't accept anyone though, only those who we believe have some special talent or rare gift. We help them cultivate it and turn it into something they can share with the world. What do you think?" Billy looked around in amazement. There were all forms of painting, writing, drawing, machinery, instruments, tools, liquids, vials, diagrams. It seemed like something from another world. Or at least not from the world that he had come from. He was still trying to formulate what might have happened to him. As he flipped through some of the books left open on a table he noticed symbols that looked exactly like the ones he had seen. "What are these!" he exclaimed. "Oh, that's differential geometry. Do you like mathematics?" Billy repeated the

word slowly "Ma-th-e-ma-tics," I don't know what that is, but I have seen it before!" "You're this grown, and you have never seen mathematics before? I find that hard to believe. Are you from some remote village or something?" she said in a facetious but totally honest way. Billy was about to answer but he hesitated. He knew that if he tried to explain where he was not too long ago and how he ended up here she wouldn't believe him. He remained silent. He just looked at her and remembered the love he felt the day the light turned on. It wasn't quite the same, like a dimmer glow, but still of the same source. "I am having a special fair in a few days. Some of my brightest students will be here, you should come!"

"I'll be there."

III.3. Thy Horror Cosmic!

Denizens of the earth.

Do not think that I have come to bring peace.

I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

I am sent by the great Emperor No Name - Sultan
of 7 galaxies.

If you will simply submit to his rule a
stargate portal will be erected.

Granting your planet access to the rest of the
empire.

All you must do is utter these words:

አዎች አዎች አዎች

The leaders of men laughed.

Who is this human who claims to reach the
stars?!

Throw him in the asylum

This is nonsense!

Fairies and unicorns! Ha!

Pseudoscientific garbage!

Et al

Some heeded the call.

For they knew that mankind was not destined to
remain fixed to the earth.

The vastness of the heavens called out in a
friendly voice.

“Come. There is plenty.”

- a few weeks later -

All citizens of this here space ball, be forewarned. Tests for Emperor No Name's stargate transit system will begin within the next few weeks. If you notice weird weather fluctuations or strange animal behavior or begin to see strange things - know that it is a byproduct of the intense electromagnetic activity of the "machine." It is advised to reduce use of all electrical devices and remain comfortable in your bed - it will all be over soon.

Thank you.

The Council

III.4. A little girl and a time loop

The fair went well

The children did their show and tell

No parents allowed - they were too old

Billy admired all the neat things

Stars and rings

Plasma strings

Floating orbs

Talking borgs

All sorts of shining gold

The academy was filled with joy

And Billy felt a sense of peace

As he roamed to the far east wing

There was

A little girl with an old man - Omar Khayyam -
her guardian

They waved at Billy, told him to come near

They handed him a book of gossamer

On it read "A Vague Notion"

The little girl said:

"No Name seeks, as do you, keep this truth
always in view"

"When he asks, you will say - it has been
10,001 days"

And then they vanished.

What the hell.

IV. The Storm

And so the machine was prepared. All the effort had culminated in this marvelous device that would usher in the reformation of humanity. Once the stargate opens and is threaded all the survivors of this planet will have access to the wealth and riches of Emperor No Name's great empire. The supporters of the construction effort came to be regarded as an eccentric cult by the "leeches" - the name given to all those who chose to remain ignorant of the coming events, those who refused to believe such a thing was possible, those who out of fear of the economic and political subversion such an occasion would bring sought to tighten their grip on their material possessions and worldly power. But it is too late.

As soon as the relay stations are primed all the transmitters will begin emitting a synchronized electromagnetic wave across the globe. The synchrony and resonance between the transmission ensemble and the ionosphere will ultimately reconfigure the atmosphere into the desired geometry to allow the stargate to have an unimpeded link to the dark energy filaments surrounding the outer layers of the earth.

However, this harmonization process is not immediate and as a result of the gradual transformation massive weather disruptions will ravage the planet on a scale never seen before. Just before equilibrium is reached the entire planet will be engulfed in chaos. Those who were conscious of and awaiting the day prepared and sought proper shelter.

Everyone else - annihilated.

It was often discussed whether such a heavy price was worth it....

But it didn't matter anymore.

The stargate was here. The intergalactic age began....

No Name smiled

But where is Sunyata?

V. To tie some knots. To untie some others.

A lot went down those following years. The earth adjusted to its new order. The star gate went from being a novelty to being an ordinary aspect of life. But what was its role in things? There were some who remained on the earth, after all, it had been refreshed and things could begin anew. There were those who came to visit infrequently, as tourists to see where mankind had originated. Others still were immersed in the new freedoms and excitement of being a part of an advanced intergalactic civilization and simply forgot the name "earth." Still others were overwhelmed by the sheer scale of everything. How was one to take it all in? What purpose was there to such a massive world? How to deal with an exponential increase in choice?

And Billy? Well through a host of events tangentially related to other events that occurred both simultaneously, in the past, and in various futures - which involved more symbols, portals, conversations, several alien species, a band, loves that never flourished, ships that crashed, lights and dreams, visions, and all other other-worldly things he found himself stranded on a distant planet somewhere in all the chaos. All the past events were fading away from his memory. He began to acclimate to this new place; it wasn't like he had never been stranded who knows where before. Had he learned nothing though? He opened his bag and pulled out his notebook. Looking over all the notes he had taken he had this sense of relief. He wasn't sure how he would escape this place, but he knew he would - why else would the child entrust him with this fragile book? Finding this "Emperor No Name" figure was on his list of things to do. He looked out towards

the sky and trusted that whatever brought him through all of this would continue to guide him. Billy remained content exploring his new home. One day while roaming the dense forests of this place he heard a distant hum. As he approached the hum began to take the shape of a rhythm. As he approached further still the rhythm became a distinct chanting, something that was both strange yet extremely familiar. Its presence reminded him of that day long ago when the ethereal being approached him. Through the trees he saw a domed temple with various people wearing all kinds of robes and hoods. Fascinated, he approached the main door.



Master Zeno: Billy. Come in.

Billy: How do you know who I am?

Master Zeno: Why do you not know who I am?

Billy: Why would I know that?

Master Zeno: The same reason you knew to come here. Now hurry. Eat. Rest. We have much to discuss.

VI. Outro

Billy: What you mean to tell me is that there are multiple realities running simultaneously with ours?

Master Zeno: In so many words, yes.

Billy: So what I have been experiencing is this larger reality becoming apparent to me?

Master Zeno: The scope of your conscious mind temporarily expands to reveal this reality to you. The Creator has given each soul a capacity for receiving divine truth. In order to receive them one must go through various stages of preparation. Your task now is to strengthen your mind so that it can hold onto that level of perception longer.

Billy: And what of these symbols?

Master Zeno: All books are written in some language. Correct?

Billy: Yes.

Master Zeno: Would you agree that life itself seems to share the characteristics of a book?

Billy: I suppose.

Master Zeno: There is your answer.

Billy: You mean to say that we are all written in a book?

Master Zeno: Us. The trees. The stars. The breeze.

Billy: Then who is the author?

