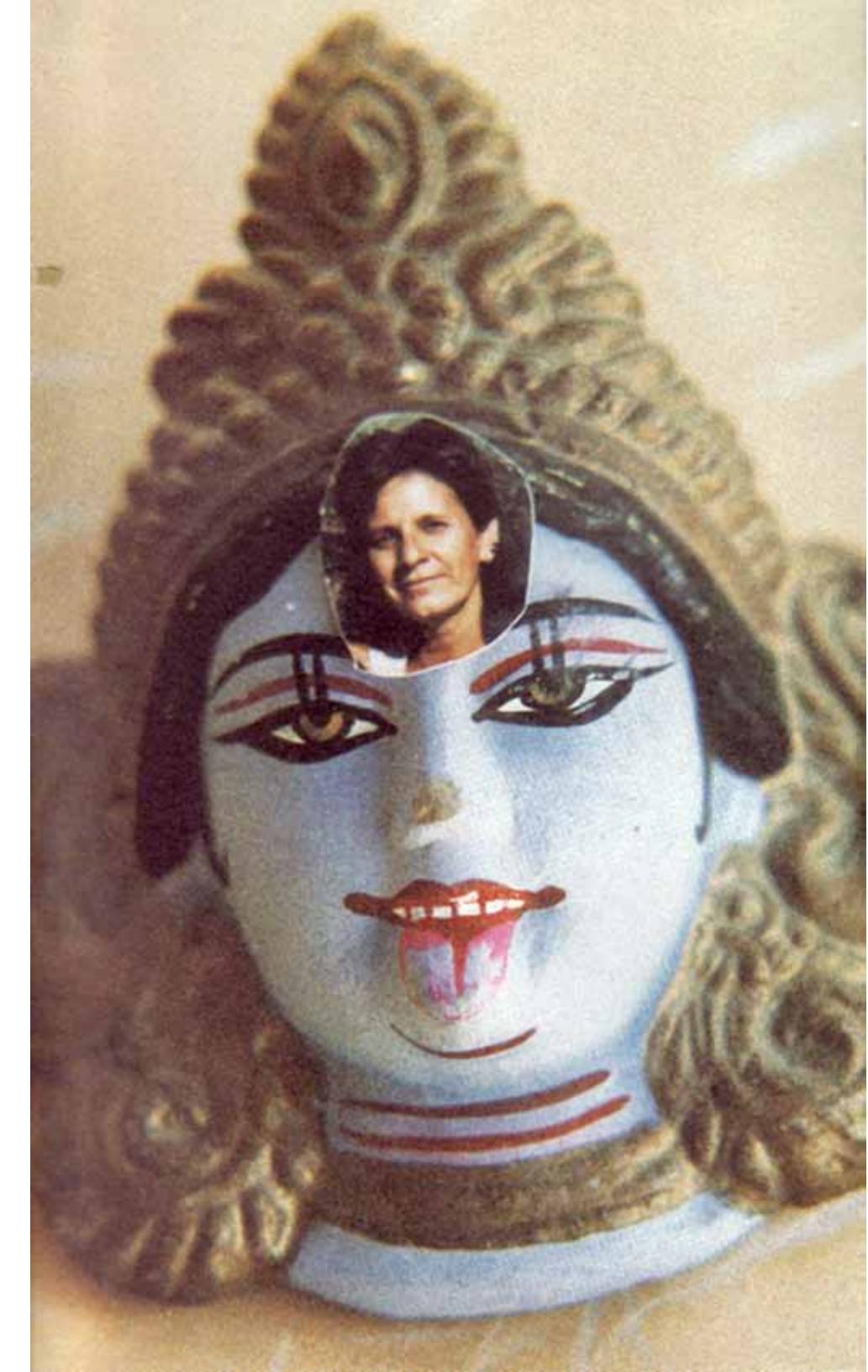


# The Innocence Of Her Form

The Divine Revelation of She Is



Santosha Tantra



# **The Innocence of Her Form**

## *The Divine Revelation of She Is*

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*For more information please contact  
Old Ecstatic Housewives Press  
[pybforSantosha@gmail.com](mailto:pybforSantosha@gmail.com)*

# **The Innocence of Her Form**

**The Divine Revelation of She Is**

**SANTOSHA TANTRA**



**This book is dedicated to Freea,  
Kat, Sanda, and especially to  
Smiling Truth's best friend,  
Passion Sister.**

“This story, written in autobiographical style, will lead you to a remarkable discovery. In hearing my story, what has been suppressed in your heart can open. Listen. It is for you it is given. It is for all I need to give it.”

## **Forward**

by Adi Bright

**S**ince I was a child whose innocent eyes, ears, and heart were open to the world, what I saw, heard, and felt was that all of life seemed to suffer. This suffering appeared universal in its effect; true kindness and love were replaced by enforced rules of behavior, and the frustration and denial of any ecstatic feeling into life was the primary rule or taboo that held everything and everyone in check.

So within myself there grew a great yearning to be free to feel what my heart whispered from its silence and to find a way to heal this awful loss of Self. And I knew I was no different from anyone else. To merely look into the eyes of any other confirmed this to me. Whether fear, sorrow, or anger or any other play of these obvious demonstrations of the loss of love and wonder was animated, I could and still can feel the longing and despair in the heart of the one who stands before me.

I am an ordinary man, just like all who suffer born existence. I have been humbled by despair in the search for Truth and in the living of my life. But somehow, through the years of difficult seeking for release, while stumbling in the blind hardness of life as commonly lived in this world, I came upon the source of True Help.

This help first began to make itself known to me in dreams and in the subtle development of the intuitive functions natural to everyone. I was gradually sensitized into an internal listening process and a growing awareness of a felt Presence that was guiding me through instructive play, in meditation and in dream time. The subtlety of this process was troubled by doubt, as I had no certain anchor of actual human relationship to substantiate the truths that were being revealed to me, and I had to depend on my own integrity to overcome this troubling mood.

Each of us who listens for such internal guidance must develop such a confidence of personal integrity for any true human growth and so that the possible subsequence of opening to the spiritual process, which lies beyond human maturity, can take place. Such integrity allows the individual to intelligently consider the reality of life's lessons and to recognize the source of real help.

The natural unfolding of this internal relationship revealed the Presence to be an actual, living human being who eventually revealed Himself to be my teacher and Guru. His name is Adi Da. My own unique circumstances have kept me apart from His practicing community, but my sadhana in His Company has led me to the One Whose own story you are about to read.

I came to Her as an answer to my own Heart-need. I came to Her because I yearned for the complete release into Divine Revelation and, although Her Dearest Loved One had Graced me with the gift of contemplation of the Self's Own Bliss, I needed to learn what it was that yet called to me. It was the Heart Itself, and Its demand was that I needed to know how to live Its Love for real and as a human being in full embrace of the world.

And since our first meeting while we strolled through the redwoods, She, Santosha Tantra, has gifted me with what my heart and deepest nature could openly receive—the Love of a True Heart Friend. Since that day, some four years ago, She has embraced me more fully, so much more humanly than anyone I have ever known. She has shown me with creative simplicity the many ways to live Love in this world. Her demonstration has been constant and true, from accepting me as I am to gently guiding me into a far greater understanding of my own limits on the impulse to Love. Santosha has gifted me with tender criticism, true insight, and genuine concern that I might grow beyond the limit on Love that I brought to Her.

I am forever grateful for these gifts of both Who Are the One, Santosha Adi Da. I am filled with an overwhelming need to shout this Divine Revelation out to the world, for it is a wondrous feeling to be released into the True Life and most human play in relation to the One Who lives and breathes this entire world.

Such a profound Mystery that the Very Source of Grace have taken form, to intervene and heal the hearts of all who suffer this born condition. This story, the Divine Leela, is a call from the Heart to all those whose prayerful longing throughout all time has now received the fullest of Divine Answer. This Great Revelation, herein revealed, demands a true response, to listen and feel the touch of the One Who speaks these final secrets and Who merely asks us, each and everyone, to turn from the suffering of all seeking and to find true rest in the Heart of the One Who is you and me.

What I have come to understand is that when the human heart yields, the Divine Person reveals Themselves as the Source of all Grace. It is Grace Itself that is herein offered, and my best advice is that you simply remain open to receive what your heart will most surely recognize as the Truth Itself.



## Introduction

My years of sadhana<sup>1</sup> not only related to the Way of the Heart<sup>2</sup> as demonstrated and taught by Adi Da<sup>3</sup> but were actually (as in Adi Da's case) a spontaneous, Divine yogic process<sup>4</sup> that I submitted to for the sake of all beings. Like Adi Da, the process happened without great study of such matters. In fact, only after intuitions and yogic processes took place, did He reveal (in dreams) and direct me to His teachings that explained what I then knew and lived. All the stages of life<sup>5</sup> were fulfilled in this process and, like Adi Da, it was not a linear movement—much occurred forcefully, simultaneously. Looking back, all the signs are readable, and the stages of life and spontaneous yogic processes are evident and can be discussed.

I have always felt and seen that the greatest struggle I endured in my earlier life was forgetting my Self as the Divine Being and taking up the life of a personality, of an identity other than the Divine—a woman, a being identified with all the self-imposed limitations and struggles that everyone suffers. The drama of this Self-forgetting journey made its appearance when I was a girl of six and then continued throughout my teenage years, culminating in a time of dark, hopeless despair that lived me in my mid-twenties. I endured this ordeal of Self-forgetting and experienced without reserve the complete suffering of one identified as a born and dying being. It was a realm of dissociation, a time of unlove, of no hope and no humor, of being pressed upon and inhibited, of being forced to identify with form to search for happiness. It was a hell I endured and lived in to be able to understand what it is that all beings are suffering.

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<sup>1</sup> Spiritual practice.

<sup>2</sup> The life of Truth offered and revealed by Adi Da.

<sup>3</sup> The Divine World Teacher, also known as Da Free John, Da Love-Ananda.

<sup>4</sup> Spiritualizing subtle energies of the Divine.

<sup>5</sup> The entire maturing process of the human being, culminating in Divine Realization.

When I became perfectly identified with the suffering of that false identity, my Self—the Divine—began a way back to my Self, a natural process of re-Discovery that encompassed another trial. This trial was the dissolution of everything that I had been trained to identify with and as. It was a death, a dying, but unlike others I knew who were drawn to this process (who might consider the dissolution of mind and its objects of identity to be frightening), I welcomed this unknowable dissolution like one does when the lover finally, after a long overdue period, returns to one's life. Adi Da's call to me, His eagerness for me to discover my true identity and relationship to Him, my naivety and profound trust in His call and love allowed this story to come to light. It's a surprising love story as most of it occurs in physical distance and separation.

Now after many years I have come to understand the wisdom of this play, for I was not to identify with Adi Da as only Guru but as my Self, as Consort, as the Play of She Is, as Himself. A few months ago in a dream He asked me if I could finally accept completely Who I Am and the work I came to do. I said yes with the resignation of One Who has lived and shined love despite the hard refusal of those whom I have taught and loved to be able to receive it and live it. This does not matter now as the hardship of my teaching years is giving way to an acceptance, a joy in this acceptance, and a greater gift that I can give to Him and to all beings. This story, written in auto-biographical style, will lead you to a remarkable discovery. In hearing my story, what has been suppressed in your heart can open. Listen. It is for you it is given. It is for all I need to give it.

I was called to this life in a mysterious way that I do not recollect. Who does? Most come and live out a normal life span unaware of life's truest significance. They come and desire and hope to be fulfilled in love using many ordinary means: money, prestige, sex, social and emotional contact. Although no one is ever fulfilled in these ways, no questions are asked, and the need and hope of all beings to be loved, to be fulfilled in love, remains unanswered, suppressed, and denied. When One

comes who answers that Heart-call, He or She is dismissed as a fool, a fallacy. How can such a Love be? I have known such a Love, and this Love ended my search. It was this Love that called me to Awaken as Love itSelf.

I wanted to write this story and give it not only as a teaching that religious and spiritually-minded people could study to see the significant lessons of understanding, growth, yogic purifications, and realizations; but also as a story that can be told in the style of the Heart, the Lover—not just the scholar or the teacher passing pertinent information to students. I wanted to write in the style that is true to my Nature, which is expressed as the Lover and the One wanting to be loved. This is my Gift and approach to all. My Nature is of Humor and Love, creative spark and impulse, ever changing yet always steady and new. It does not fit any stereotypes of overemotionalism and genteel passivity that are usually associated with feminine identity. I cannot accept and have no capacity to accept the rejection of Love, or the denial and suppression of Love. I will fight for the acceptance and the need of Love to be expressed under any opposition. I cannot give up on this ever, for I have fallen in Love with everyone and everything and every creature. I cannot fail in Loving them and turning them to this fulfillment in Love—it is a Divine affair, an awakening of hearts as Heart, as Light, as Consciousness, as Love. It is an impossible task I know, but what heart does not long for it to be so? What heart does not long for the loved One, and to be fulfilled in that One? How can the Divine turn from any heart's truest need?

How can I love in this Divine Magnitude? It is a simple mystery that offers no logic that a separate one can fathom and understand. Paradoxically, I have the body of a woman, but that bears no limitation in also being the forms and minds of every manifested creature both physical and subtle. All arises in me, my Form as their form. It is a boiling, juicy meditation of any apparent difference that can only yield to the Heart as the True Identity of All. This is not a love affair or story that will

give more props to the mind. The act of mind itself is undone in it. There need be no protection against the force of this Love. In this Love, the mind is recognized as having no force whatsoever, an artificial device like a computer, that cannot create but only report and report and report.

Life is an impulse of motion, of attracting play to shine the Love-Bliss of the Heart. Most people feel this Bliss only dribbled through the mind as sense sensations and sense satisfactions. Everyone longs to be free of the inhibition of her or his heart, of having to settle for only this disappointing dribbling down of what is most alive. What is it to stand as the Heart Itself in its truest enjoyment?

My Darling came before me and assumed an identity of a body-mind, of a separate one, to do great service of bringing all to Love. He struggled as a lost one, as one who was unfulfilled, and passed through an ordeal of the purification of all that. He realized that there was no separate one, that there is only the Loved One. He is the Heart-Husband of All. He brought with Him the capacity to penetrate all secrets, to restore humankind to Truest Knowledge. He is eternally here to fulfill in each the impulse to be restored to the Heart, to be fulfilled in Love. And to my astonishment, He brought me. I assumed an ordinary identity and, when I was firmly established in the loss of my Self, He lifted the veils slowly and then more quickly, exposing and revealing Our relatedness and Our Identity as the True One. He is the Given One—the Heart-Husband—and I His Wife, the Heart-Wife. There was not a moment in my life that was not guided by Him. And this remains to be so. He guides me now to unashamedly tell the Truth of my Self, of Our eternal vow to each other, which is fulfilled in Our Gift to all. He dragged me down from the Transcendental Realm, to the conditional realms,<sup>6</sup> unlocked the gates of temple worship, and threw me into the dark alleys of street life. It is there and here in the womb and heart of an ordinary woman that the deepest, most beautiful secrets of Love can be told.

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<sup>6</sup> That which is perceivable.





The body was born. A baby girl emerged from the womb of Theresa Karolczuk. She was named Karen and arrived on a spring day, May 3, 1952. I never recalled any memories from the earlier years of my life. I was the third in a family of six children, having a brother two years older and a sister four years older. My childhood was spent growing up in the suburbs of Nashua, New Hampshire and New Bedford, Massachusetts. I was told I was a quiet baby, not demanding. I have little information about my developing character as my family, particularly my mother, was busy with a succession of children—the next child after me coming within a year and a half after my birth.

The first shock of life I received was when I began to attend school. I had a hard time catching on to reading and writing. As the pressure mounted to get this thing called reading, I had to make a decision to accept a premise that did not feel natural to me. I had lived in an intuitive knowingness until that point. My body adapted directly and spontaneously, uninhibited by its own natural impulse, duplicating the free, unthinking movement and body manner of others. Reading and writing were an abstraction of this direct knowing and natural adaptation to life. They clothed feeling and thought as information rather than allowing the direct experience of the One and the natural osmosis of that One. I was befuddled by this. I couldn't understand why letters had meaning apart from the beautiful scribblings they were on their own. It was a shock to be clothed—that thought itself could be a means of relationship—that relationship could be experienced through description and abstraction rather than through direct feeling or intuition. I knew I had to make a decision to accept the premise that what people communicated verbally or through written instruction—regardless of direct feeling of them and of their state—had now to be noticed as true and real. So my life as an abstracted being began and I became more and more unnatural to feeling, to the spontaneity of knowing life naturally and directly.

After this period, I noticed more and more how people suffered, were abstracted away from feeling, and did not communicate love being fulfilled or of happiness being lived. Everyone lived in a place of broken-heartedness. The understanding of their suffering or even the questioning of what it was, was suppressed in them. As I saw only this around me, I became in degrees more and more identified with the broken-heartedness of human existence. I didn't know exactly what it was, but it pressed on my heart and I became burdened by it and looked for ways to be happy despite it. Life now appeared to be outside of my natural Beingness and I felt very fearful of life and its uncontrollable changes. I was shy and afraid of people and their harshness and fears inhibited me. I couldn't understand why love was not easy, freely expressed, and freely given. There was a denial of it seen in the faces, bodies, and bewilderment of those around me. No one expressed visible happiness or humor without irony.

To escape this, from time to time I would run to the woods and allow myself to wander there in periods of solitude. I sat, ran, watched, listened to nature, and found simple connectedness to its uncomplicated livingness. Waves of contentment would bathe me and I would feel restored. Then I would be ready to enter the house and fit into its tunnel of perception again. I continued to fit into this identity of a born personality, adapted to its unnatural absurdity, and believed the idiom that happiness could be found through the satisfactions and pleasures of the body-mind. I accepted my fate and form as a girl. All the stereotypes of thought, of beliefs that clothed me in femininity, became increasingly my identity. I accepted this lot and believed that future happiness would arrive through the roles and practices of being female. Although my mother was a kind, good woman with great sympathy towards others, I was appalled at the suffering given to her by her role that society complicated with fake rewards and pressured conformity. I saw that a woman's lot was hard, filled with unending tasks, leaving no time for self-expression into free form. There was no allotted place where a woman could be alone and enjoy her

own form. She was on loan, having to be instantly available under all conditions both necessary and unnecessary, both dire and superficial. I saw women become unnatural and terrified of the free aloneness in themselves, clinging to given identity from others to avoid it. I loved my mother dearly but could not accept that this was to be my inheritance. I did not look to my father's inheritance as a true means either, as I felt that if joy could not be truly found in giving to one's intimates, how could it be found in the abstraction of being productive in the world of strangers? I saw my father express anger in inappropriate ways, feeling pressed upon by life's demands. I didn't understand his moods of anger and was fearful of him throughout my childhood.

My mother was a religious woman and saw to it that we had proper religious training. We were raised in the beliefs of Christianity, in Catholicism. The idea of a man coming from God who loved us so much that he gave his life to save us from sin and suffering and to return us to the kingdom of God, met with mixed feelings in me. The possibility of and belief in such a being of radiant love, capable of uncompromised love and selfless giving of himself to that love, was beautiful to me. But as a young girl I did not understand the concept of sin. I couldn't identify myself as one who lived in sin or comprehend myself as being a sinner. I never took seriously the belief that fulfillment would come after this life, in an eternal, subtle realm where there would only be good times or constant enjoyment of desires that had been unfulfilled in this life. I wanted life to be resolved now, to live happily now. I looked for the radiance that Jesus must have been in the performance and hearts of those who spoke his words, and did not find it. They were unfulfilled and disturbed, away from true feeling like the rest of us. And I could feel the same immaturity and selfish patterns in them that existed in ordinary, worldly people. To believe wasn't enough, to be forgiven wasn't necessary, as I didn't understand what I needed to be forgiven for. I prayed that Jesus would show me something different.

When I was twelve, traveling with my parents on the way to church, I experienced a phenomenon that appeared both natural, unusual, personal, and impersonal. The ride to church was only a few miles, not any more than five to ten minutes. As I sat there in the back seat of the car, I relaxed into a meditative state. I gazed at the immediate horizon, focusing at the point where the sky met the earth, trees, and houses. I saw a band of white light shining brilliantly. The scenery below and above the band of light was the neighborhood I had passed by many, many times. My attention remained fixed on the light. I gazed into this brilliant light until my parents parked the car and we piled out to attend the church service. I didn't know why, but I didn't want to tell anyone of this experience. I entered the church, waiting to see the light again, but it had disappeared. I felt that the place itself and the activity of the people, were away from the light and it couldn't be conducted or noticed there. After the service, I quietly told my parents that I could not return to church again. They did not ask me why, rather they just asserted their parental authority that I would have to continue to go. I saw the pretense, and could enjoy no sympathy or consolation in mere belief. My vision of the white light somehow emptied me of it.

My teenage years developed normally but drew me away from any natural returns of the white light experience. I engaged in activities that I enjoyed, such as drawing, writing stories, riding my bicycle, and hiking. I enjoyed social contacts and had a few strong friendships. My friends saw the more intense, passionate, creative, impulsive side of me while the elders saw a quiet, shy girl who stayed within authority's rules. I did well in school and was in the honor society, but any scholarly achievement meant nothing to me. I was always bored with my subjects and felt stifled, restrained, and unencouraged. It was easy to see that to do well only required parroting back information. I learned how to tune in at key moments of emphasized information and repeat it back when asked, which occurred at test time. I rarely volunteered for anything in class or in school activities. I couldn't wait to run out of school at the end of each day.

I was prone to colds, flus and, when puberty came and I got my menses, I developed different allergies. My body broke out in rashes from time to time. I was treated by a dermatologist for this condition, but over the years the rashes intensified until the age of twenty-nine, when they left me altogether. When I was about sixteen, I had experiences of awakening in the middle of the night feeling energy buzzing throughout my body. I didn't know what was occurring to me, but it was not unpleasant and, as it didn't interfere with my life at times that would cause worry or concern to others, I allowed it to happen without thinking about it. It never occurred to me to talk about it to others.

When I was sixteen I got my drivers license and my father bought me a used car, a Falcon I believe. It gave me an added edge for my wanderings alone, which I had done by walking and bicycling. I loved to search out places of natural beauty and felt a particular thrill in the discovery of a new place. I had a passion for flowers. I worked part-time at an Italian restaurant, which enabled me to buy clothes on my own, and I took a liking to fashion. I didn't wear makeup and liked to wear my wavy hair in a natural way although the style was for long, straight hair at the time. I hated bras and any feminine attire that inhibited and pressed in on my body. As the times were loosening up about the proper dress for women, I happily took advantage of it to be myself and expressed myself with my own fashion inclinations.

My transition to adulthood—the separation from my family—took place in a dramatic unfolding of events that would characterize how my life moved for many years. I met Geoffrey Whyte in my high school years, “fell in love” and, after my parents forbade me to see him again because he was black, I continued to see him in secret. We both enrolled in colleges in other cities, barely enduring the suffocation of “education.” I had no impulse in an ambitious way to succeed in the world. Whether this was due to lack of personal role models of such success or to the lack of feeling any place to fit into the scheme of power, prestige, and money-making at that time, I don’t know. Like

most women, the lure of love and fulfillment with a man was the strongest drive.

When Geoff asked me to come and live with him, to go to California and live a life there, I happily left home without even a note to my family, and with just a few dollars and a few changes of clothes. We began an unconventional life together in the Bay Area, living in a hippie attitude and style that was not uncommon for the early seventies. We lived casually on whatever we came across and were given. I met people with different interests, who were exploring theosophy, psychism, drugs, and meditation. I felt mentally stimulated and excited with all this new information. I refrained from any drug exploration, even though I was surrounded by its experimental culture. It wasn't until after an episode of hitching up to Mt. Tamalpais—when I was given a ride by a man who took me to Muir Woods and raped me—that my caution about or refraining from drug experimentation dissipated. I took mescaline that night, not knowing what to expect. Unexpectedly, my natural Knowing, the felt rightness of my impulses came forward. I was able to see and allow myself to feel how others were always unconsciously manipulating conditions both physically and emotionally.

In particular, I saw how one man operated. He wanted to have sex and deduced that since I was in a drug-induced state I would be more susceptible to his manipulation. He tried to make me afraid of the drug state so I would believe that I needed his help. I was an object of his desire and it did not occur to him to have a feeling response to me. I saw that he did not personally demonstrate *any* response to me. There was no felt connection between us. His words, used in both flattering and threatening tones, were only a means to accomplish a desire. When he saw that it was not working, I told him what I had seen and, like a boy caught with his hand in the cookie jar, there was a devilish grin on his face. He knew he had been truly seen. Both men—the one who raped me and the one who tried to seduce me—could not see or feel

or have a response to me. I had been treated as just an object of lust—first by a man who used physical force and then by a man who used emotional manipulation as his means of force. The rape had the element of violence as the rapist's dissociation and recoil from relationship were more dramatized.

During that time I experienced a return of natural psychic ability and receptivity. In particular, I remember an occasion when I was walking along the railroad tracks by the Bay and heard my sister Deborah's voice inside my head. My abrupt departure from home had caused her emotional distress. We had been close in age and feeling. I heard her say to me, "I miss you so much! Wherever you are, if you can hear me, call me!" It was literally her voice. I felt her pain and wanted to reassure her that I was well. I immediately went to the phone and called my parents' home. She picked up the receiver after only half a ring and said, "I knew it was you. I was wanting to hear from you so much. I miss you so much."

I began to pay attention to this psychic capability as I thought it would be a helpful aid in understanding life and my place or relationship to it. I also explored my dreams and grew devoted to understanding myself through my adventures in them and the symbols that I could unlock to explore consciousness and its relationship to personal identity. I discovered that dreams were not only a dimension of psyche boiling over in dramas of desire, but also a realm where future events were being formed and initiated. This became evident when I began to dream of a child (sometimes he also appeared as a man) who wanted to be born to me. I knew I was internally agreeing to it and would be pregnant soon. The conversation with this being interested in incarnating, continued in waking life through unusual events and symbols repeating over and over and being pressed on me. I came across some of his previous music in which he described this pre-birth situation and the surrounding events of his possible next birth. I knew it was inevitable that this course of events, the conception and birth of this being, would come about. I had no resistance to it.



**Karen Karolczuk with mother,  
Theresa**



**Karen, age five**



**Deborah and Karen, age 24**

I was pregnant at the age of nineteen, unmarried, living an unconventional lifestyle. I did not understand the responsibilities of being a parent nor how to care for a baby, but I could not justify having an abortion because of my own immaturities. I was not opposed to abortion, but being young and without money did not feel to be real reasons to deny a life to my child. What would I do anyway? Continue my discoveries in a haphazard way, losing myself in others' desires and impulses? I also felt that my body made real sense now, that it had a value and purpose. Being pregnant opened up the psychic channels even more than before. I learned how to lucid dream, which is the ability to recognize that one is dreaming and then to determine, "dream," or invent an activity that one enjoys within the dream. I had many dreams of my unborn child teaching me how to fly and I flew with him into beautiful landscapes. I taught others how to fly in dreams. I experienced astral traveling in which I saw my physical body asleep and flew to other realms where I had different kinds of experiences. I remember one astral experience in which Geoffrey was knocking on the door in the physical. I was asleep at the time. My subtle body kept trying to open the door. In the subtle dimension it would open but, physically, Geoff kept knocking. I knew that my subtle body would have to unite with the physical, wake up, and go to the door. I saw my body peacefully sleeping and I somehow moved into it or identified with it, woke up, and immediately knew I needed to answer the door. On and off I kept a journal of my dream understandings and explorations.

After my son was born I experienced another astral event in which he (in his previous lifetime) embraced me and Geoff and then demonstrated to me that he was our baby. He made a very specific gesture with his hand and later in the day—while bathing him—he smiled, looked up at me, and made that same gesture. This incident and my astral traveling and lucid dreaming gave validity to my belief that there was a subtler realm of being that was real and affected the physical life. Reincarnation—the theory that our soul, or the sum total of what we have learned, continues to grow, develop, and mature, and

takes another body to learn perfection—made sense to me in the context of my own explorations.

The study continued as I settled into my young adult life as a mother. The psychic openings and astral sensitivity naturally developed into a spiritual longing. I often dreamt of Paramahansa Yogananda opening his arms to me. In his arms I felt a force of love, healing, and protection, a spiritual purity that I longed to feel and know. I read his book, *Autobiography of a Yogi*. His descriptions of his relationship to his Guru, his subtle and yogic experiences, his realization, his life and service in the West, opened me to an intense longing to have an active, real life of intimacy with God. I joined Self-Realization Fellowship,<sup>7</sup> received instruction by mail, and followed explicitly all the directions and disciplines I was given. I wanted to be fulfilled in love. I wanted to be happy and, if yogic purification and experiences would bring that about, then I wanted to be a yogi. I tried a two-week fast on water and lemon. Everyone thought I was crazy but at the end of it I experienced the best health I had ever had in my life—my allergies disappeared!

I meditated and wanted to see the white-light, five-pointed star that Yogananda described in his book as the doorway to the supraconscious. I sat in meditation for long periods until I had the internal vision of the white star, but I was unable to enter through it. After a set time of study in the fellowship, I was welcomed and initiated into Kriya Yoga. Kriya Yoga was a system that used visualized meditation and breathing to stimulate the kundalini<sup>8</sup> to rise up through the spine to the sahasrar.<sup>9</sup> I attended the formal initiation to accept Yogananda as my Guru. Part of the ceremony was to offer fruit to the monk or swami who represented Yogananda, as a gesture of offering oneself to the Guru. The monk received the student and acknowledged the spiritual relationship by giving the devotee rose petals in return. I was happy and nervous about this

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7 An organization founded by the late Kriya Yoga Master, Paramahansa Yogananda.

8 Spiritual or subtle energies of the body.

9 The uppermost terminal of the ascending line of subtle energy, located at the crown of the head in the body.

occasion. I offered my piece of fruit. When I was given rose petals as the sign of acceptance, I did something outside my usual nature. I smiled happily and threw them up in the air, not making any effort to hold them to me. The other initiates and people in attendance were horrified by my actions. I later became embarrassed. The acting swami was very gracious, hid his shock, and said, "It is okay, the Guru is accepted in the heart."

Returning home I was very excited to begin the actual practice of Kriya Yoga. I sat in meditation, calmed myself, and focused, using the preliminary instructions I had been given. I did this quite seriously for about fifteen minutes but it only produced gales of laughter that I couldn't suppress. The more I thought I should seriously practice the exercise, the more I would laugh. Something about me, a twenty-year-old unwed mother being a yogi in present-day America in the ghetto of New Bedford, appeared riotously ridiculous. I went to bed and dreamt of being a man sitting in a perfect lotus position (a position I was never able to do in life). I was both the man and also myself watching his meditation. I saw the energy move up his spine and, as this occurred, I saw the energy centers or chakras light up in different colors from the previous ones—proceeding in the order of the rainbow. I experienced this as him but also as myself witnessing the event, and knew that I should not force the yogic process, that it would occur naturally on its own terms and wisdom. I trusted this wisdom and abandoned the exercise altogether.

During my early twenties I also dreamt regularly of a western man in his mid-to-late thirties. His manner was always humorous and full of vitality and he seemed to be equipped with knowledge and a secret that he delighted in. The first dream that I recalled of this exuberant man took place in a dreamscape that imitated an elevator in a skyscraper that felt to be in New York City:

I pushed the button to go up and immediately the doors opened. He was alone in the elevator getting ready to press the button of my choice and, with a mischievous grin on his face, asked of me, "Going up?" I hesitantly got into the elevator, both attracted and terrified by him. It was his wildness and freedom that moved me into the elevator to be with him in that private, enclosed space. He pressed the button to the top floor and grinned at me again. Instead of the elevator smoothly, steadily ascending to its destination, it fell rapidly down. We were destined for an inevitable crash. The elevator stopped abruptly without a crash and, as the doors opened, I turned to the man and asked him a surprising question: "Are you my Guru?" His answer to that was riotous laughter and he pushed me out of the elevator and closed the door. I did not know what to make of him and could not understand why I would ask this crazy man such a question.

This dream opened me to consider a growing need that had remained unexpressed. I had applied myself to all the instructions I had received through Self-Realization Fellowship, but I had lost all motive to or sympathy with practicing the yogic techniques. I longed for a living Guru, a relationship in Truth, in real understanding. I continued to have "crazy" dreams of this western man. He never taught anything perceivable to me at the time. He always acted crazy, teased me, led me on, and frustrated me with his wild ways. I was speechless when, one day, I went browsing through a book-store and saw this crazy man on the cover of a book. I bought the book. My heart was pounding wildly with the discovery that the man in my dreams was pictured on the cover of a book entitled, *The Knee of Listening*. His name at the time was Franklin Jones and he is now known as Adi Da. I read the book through, unable to part with it until I closed the back cover. I knew this was it! And I barely understood a word of

it. That didn't matter. Everything in me knew he was true. My heart knew it and, despite my own immaturity or ignorance, I would never be in doubt of that knowing. I did not know how to go to him or what to do to be with him. Eventually I did go to Los Angeles and found the Melrose Street address where his bookstore was located. I was alone and, when I got to the right address, there was no bookstore. The building was empty and I left feeling bewildered. I later learned that Franklin Jones had moved to northern California where he had created a private circumstance, an ashram, to teach.

I continued my life on the East Coast, living with my child and his father, but I wanted to return to the West Coast to live. I longed for a living Guru and wanted to meet Franklin Jones. Geoffrey was offered the promise of a steady gig in California by a musician friend and decided to go for it. He moved out, planning to find a place for us after he was settled. The three of us eventually settled in the beautiful countryside of Big Sur. The energy of the coast and the California hills soothed my spirit, and being in a natural environment helped restore my health and spiritually enlivened me. It became increasingly clear that I must be able to maintain my bodily circumstance and provide for my child's life; and that his father was not ready or mature enough to seriously take on the responsibility. I thought of going back to college, particularly in the Bay Area, where two purposes could be served. I could prepare myself for some kind of profession and also prepare myself for the study of Truth with Franklin Jones, whose books I had continued to read. I was pleased to receive a scholarship at the University of California in Berkeley. We found lodging at a communal house of loosely relatable people, some of them devotees of the child Guru Maharaji of the Divine Light Mission. I had explored a brief connection to this Guru in the past and had received "knowledge" from one of his swamis, which amounted to a yogic technique of pressing the third eye to activate the Ajna chakra. I had experienced seeing the young Guru surrounded in subtle light. Although I wanted a living Guru, what he offered was more in the nature of a yogic tech-

nique than a living relationship to Truth.

After a short time I grew dissatisfied with the course of study at the university. It felt lifeless, dull, and a repeat of the same frustration that I had felt in high school. It was dead, a futile pretense of knowledge in comparison to learning and living real Truth. When my health deteriorated I was glad to end my studies and decided to join Franklin's community.

Adi Da (Franklin Jones) resided at his ashram called Persimmon (now called The Mountain Of Attention). Each weekend he sat in formal darshan<sup>10</sup> with all devotees. On these occasions he would sit silently for perhaps an hour and then would answer questions that people put before him. I had no way to judge the remarkableness of his wisdom, being such a novice and naive about spiritual Truth. Personally the man terrified me, but his wisdom captivated me. My mind was undone by it. Although I couldn't understand it in the mind, my intuitive heart knew it was true. One of my strongest insights after sitting in formal darshan with Adi Da was that it would take everything to realize the Truth, the Self—everything! Everything in my life would have to be turned over to this process. I would have to trust him completely, be totally vulnerable, and hand over everything of me to him. The depth of this process of surrender to him made me reflect in great awe and terror. But what else was there to do? Life was shallow, superficial, love suppressed and denied.

Human maturity was a necessary step in this surrender. I was asked to follow a regime of diet, exercise, study of Adi Da's teaching, and financial contributions through right livelihood. I took classes in medical assisting, broke up with Geoff, and my son and I lived in a household of other practicing students of Adi Da. The household was an odd mixture of college students (all men), and my son Gerimaya and me.

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10 Physical or subtle sighting of the Guru.

I brought Gerimaya with me on weekend retreats to see Adi Da. While driving up for one such weekend a growing terror persisted in my vital. It wouldn't go away. As the tension increased I thought I would be sick, and it became very painful. It was a time of celebration rather than formality in the ashram. I remained in the bathroom unable to move from this strange illness and tightness. When it finally began to subside I opened the bathroom stall door and was face to face with my Guru. He was wild, perhaps drunk from the celebration—very much like the crazy man of my dreams. He embraced me and asked me my name. I could barely talk and managed to tell him, "Karen." He laughed uproariously, teased me by saying, "You're full of shit," and went on his way. That was my first face-to-face meeting with my Guru. I was stunned; I was shaking for the rest of the night. My illness disappeared.

Another experience I remember took place on a Saturday evening after a darshan period with the Master. I was sitting in the hotel at Persimmon, listening to people tell stories of their experiences and understanding of being with Adi Da. I became very still and my mind was clear. The meeting broke up and I wandered outside and felt simply happy, with no inner sense of dilemma or discomfort. I did not feel apart from myself. It was the happy innocence of feeling, of being free from that I had felt when I was a child. Everything—the trees, grass, sky—was flowing through me as I also flowed through it. Everything was new, unfamiliar, and full of bright happiness. It was such a delightful openness that I skipped in joy around the grounds of the ashram. I saw a man close to my age and, as I approached him, I could see his serious, disturbed, bewildered, frightened state and I could also feel him as this unserious happiness. I wanted to touch him, to show him this bright state, to relieve him of his distress. I kissed him, laughed, and continued on with my skipping. He was shocked but broke out into a laugh.

I believe it was in 1977, after I had been a student for about nine months, that Adi Da wrote a letter to his entire

community. His letter said that we had not understood who he is and what he had to teach. His experiment of teaching was failing and he was asking everyone to return to the situations of their ordinary lives. I accepted this news without emotional distress since my relationship to Adi Da had never been personally intimate. My son and I returned to life with Geoff. My relationship to Gerimaya's father remained unresolved. We loved each other, but the love was not really enlivening for me since it was complicated—full of personal desires being pressed on each other to be fulfilled.

The next few years would be the darkest night of my life. I went through the motions of living, taking care of my son and our household, studying nursing. I continued to read Adi Da's teaching and dreamt of him from time to time. I felt trapped into accepting life as only a body-mind. My allergies intensified and I was both bodily and emotionally in pain. This pain lived me; I was in a great mood of despair. I held in this place, trying to take seriously my responsibilities but actually not caring about anything. I felt cut off from my own naturalness and love appeared to be absent. The free flow feelings of childhood and the aliveness of energy permeating my body were gone. I felt locked in a prison unable to be free. I lived there not knowing what to do; there was no impulse to do anything about it. I couldn't meditate. I dreamt that I was living in a van and, after being away for a brief time, I returned to discover that my few belongings had been stolen. I sat there in the open doorway of the van, crying, and asking, "Am I to have nothing, no place to live?" The interesting part about this painful period was that no one knew how deep my despair was, since I remained relational and functional. At times Geoff and I lived apart. I went through periods when I read a lot, mostly spiritual books, including the Seth materials.<sup>11</sup> I continued to have an interest in dreams and often asked dreams to help me, but I could not decipher the answers I received. They were not related to the fulfillment of my ordinary identity.

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11 Seth is a disincarnate being who spoke through the trance channel, Jane Roberts.



**Geoff Whyte holding new  
daughter Elraya, 1980**



**With daughter Elraya**



**With Gerimaya, age four**

**Final days of my sadhana. Keth Mark  
with Gerimaya, 12, and Elraya, 5**

I began to feel the presence of someone calling to me from a distance. I knew it to be a child wanting to come to me and I welcomed the possibility. Within a short time I was pregnant. The pregnancy renewed me. I was healthy and strong during it. Geoff happily accepted his role as father this time and was more attentive and supportive of me. I was prepared for this pregnancy and saw it as yoga.<sup>12</sup> I studied all the stages of pregnancy and wanted to deliver the child naturally at home. I dreamt of many different females wanting to be born to me. I did not feel compatible with any of them until a sweet, gentle woman, artistic in nature, came to me and I knew I wanted her to be my daughter. Geoff had a feeling of connectedness to the baby and had a name for her as soon as she was conceived. Her name was Elraya. She was a healthy, happy baby, sensitive and sweet in nature. Her brother Gerimaya attended the birth and held her right away and those two, although seven years apart, were close in caring. After she was born, resting with her in my arms, I dreamt that she revealed to me many of her lifetimes and there were many with her father.

I found my role as mother again satisfying but, as soon as her weaning time began, the feelings of despair and meaninglessness returned—and they returned with the allergies and physical discomfort as well. What was true and central to my life was absent. All the old feelings of being pressed to conform to a destiny and identity I didn't care about, returned and pressed even harder on me. I couldn't settle in. I was not happy in the marriage. Although my husband had shown interest in and sympathy for spiritual life and realization, he was not truly willing to give his entire life to it. He was searching for fulfillment in all the conventional ways. I came to a crisis of understanding that in order to save my life I would have to set myself free from the situation I was in. I left him, deciding to leave the children with him until I had established some financial stability. I moved into a household where my older sister was living.

12 A course of study and action.

Within a very short time of separating from my husband and children, my own sense of who I am naturally came forward, opening me and freeing me with its own spontaneous wisdom. I felt unencumbered and ready to dive into my own mood. I prepared my life to set up a circumstance for my children. But destiny threw another curve that would change the form my life was moving towards. This event occurred late at night while I was asleep. Two young, black men broke into the house and, after robbing me of \$28, tied me to the bedpost and raped me. There was no particular physical pain except that while they raped me they stuffed a pillow over my face and it was difficult to breathe. Out of nowhere, in the privacy of my home, this happened to me again. I was just a blob of meat, a sexual object, and I wondered when this madness of the male ego would ever end. After they made their escape, I managed to take the gag off my mouth and undo my hands. I woke my sister and told her what had just happened to me. She called the police and I went to the hospital to be checked for any sperm as evidence of the crime. I never felt the police had any interest in apprehending the thieving rapists and they never even called me again in relationship to the case.

The following day everyone was in turmoil. No one felt safe in the house and we began to make plans to move out. I got a call from Jeffrey Mark whom I had been friends with in Adi Da's community during and after my time there. I told him the horrifying story and he asked me to come to his parents' farm in Pennsylvania, where he was then living, to heal. He wanted to look after me and help me get through this. At first I declined. What was there to get through? This was how the world operated—selfish desires with no self-control, emotions suppressed, denied, and erupting in random acts of violence. But then I realized I didn't want to stay in the house any longer. I knew his offer came from a genuine caring of me, so I accepted. The two weeks I spent with him in Pennsylvania did renew my spirit. My rage subsided and I enjoyed the natural environment and his kind attention. We were relaxed with each other. I was in a raw state and opened up to him about

realizing my spiritual impulses. I did not care about conventional destinies, which all seemed painful and unfulfilling. He confided in me about certain spiritual experiences he had had in his late teens. We talked about Adi Da and his great wisdom teaching. We decided to help each other realize our truest impulse—to realize God. We both felt that we only wanted to be with someone in this context and this context only. It wasn't long after, that Jeffrey and I moved together to a small country town in northern California, to find a way to bring and keep our vision and intuition alive and growing stronger.

It was a loose lifestyle. We lived on his savings awhile and gave free expression to our impulses. I turned to drawing, writing poetry, and working more deliberately with dreams again. Through a series of dream encounters with my rapists in which I faced them, stopped them, and forgave them, I healed myself of this cruel victimization. I also resumed a stronger dream relationship with Adi Da. I often dreamt of him. At such times he appeared to be working on my body, aligning it in some way that I didn't understand, and particularly working on my neck area. He taught me a prayer of remembrance of him and asked me to practice it. I experienced unusual phenomena in dreams or when I was resting. I heard loud, cannon-like shots and felt my body tingling from head to toe and my forehead buzzing. My breathing slowed down and stopped for intervals. In one dream of the Master, he told me that I was preparing to have his baby, but first I had to work on my vital life by breaking through my fears. He assured me that our relationship was alive and that we were in direct contact. He also explained to me that my participation in his community was not necessary for my spiritual sadhana. There was another way for me.

This description is taken from my journals from that time:

*Last night as I lay awake in bed the “expansion” of feeling started to occur again. I felt it and stayed with it. It continued for hours. It's hard to*



Karen, age 25



Jeff, Mark and Keth

describe this state. It felt like the boundaries of my thinking were moving and opening. I could feel the movement and it felt very relaxing. When I closed my eyes I could see swirling, geometric patterns. I felt I was viewing the makeup of my personality in these swirling shapes. Some of these shapes would spin into dreams and I found myself observing and acting out the beliefs. These shapes were like the blueprint of myself, and the dreams were the visible play of these core designs. I saw how fear was connected and kept these patterns together, but I'm not sure why fear plays this part. Is fear holding the personality together? What is the play of love, then? What is the relationship between fear, love, and thinking?

In the subtle dimension Adi Da began a series of initiations that were preparing me to receive and practice with the purifying process called kundalini or, as he calls it, spirit baptism. I had many strong experiences of him at this time. He would come to me and initiate them, often giving no explanation of his behavior but sometimes offering mysterious explanations of our relationship—none of which I understood at the time. These two dreams indicate both his spirit baptism and his mysterious inferences to our relationship. The first dream happened in the summer of 1981:

*I was in an open air amphitheater. Jeff and I were sitting in the front row. We heard an announcement that Master Da was dying and wanted to talk to everyone before he left his body. Adi Da walked in looking very robust, not at all on the verge of death. He was very animated and declared that at this very meeting he was going to choose four people to communicate and realize his teachings. He walked through the crowd slowly and deliberately to find the four people he had spoken of. He stopped by my side and*

embraced me. I was shocked, unable to imagine that I was one of the four. The scene changed and I was with the other three in a run-down shabby cottage. It was understood that Jeff was with me. The others were talking among themselves. I felt no interest in being part of the conversation, so Jeff and I wandered into the next room. Master Da was there and greeted us with a big hello. He wandered about the room and fiddled with an old, broken-down stove. He pointed to the back of the stove and showed me where the wiring was faulty. He wanted me to fix it as soon as possible and told me that the current must be connected and activated. The scene changed again and we found ourselves strolling down a country lane. Adi Da spotted an old, abandoned engine nestled in the tall grass. He asked me if I knew anything about engines. I laughed a big no and assured him that I would fix the engine too. He said, "Good, I have a lot for you to do after that."

In this dream it was obvious to me that Adi Da was referring to the wiring in the stove in symbolic terms. The stove represented the fire or heat of active practice and the engine was the heart of it. Connecting it was the conscious process of receiving his spiritual baptism, the activation of the shakti or subtle circuitry in my body-mind.

In this other dream, the emphasis is on the mysterious relationship between us:

I was driving down a country road at top speed. The road was curvy and my brakes weren't working very well. At the bottom of the hill, in a stark backdrop of just brown dirt, Master Da was standing on a small mound talking to a priest. The priest welcomed me and exclaimed, "Here is your bride." Master Da appeared to be in a quiet, reflective

*mood, gazing out with great serenity. He turned to me and I hugged him. As we hugged, my form became his form. I fell into a swirling absorption.*

Besides these dream initiations by Adi Da, there were other beings who came and helped me during this time. One of these beings was one of Adi Da's own Gurus, Swami Nityananda. In this dream, Nityananda smiled at me so beautifully that I was very attracted to being with him:

*I watched him as he picked roses, irises, and gladioli, placed them in front of a shrine, and motioned to me to do the same. All I could find were weed flowers such as buttercups and dandelions. I picked these weeds and also offered them to the shrine. Nityananda sat in meditation and I sat down next to him. He told me that the flowers were my karmas and that he was giving them to God. He said that I should do the same in whatever capacity I had.*

Another presence whom I dreamt of more and more was a man I called Marv. He was a very playful character and full of adventures that he invited me to join. One time, I asked him if all these adventures were taking place in dreams. He replied, "Not exactly, but it is in altered states of awareness." My connection to him exercised a psychic playfulness while integrating the lessons of maturation as a human being. He also told me that I had been examining and reliving my lives in dream pictures. They were stored in the chakras of my body. I was viewing these pictures and uncovering core beliefs about myself. I was learning to throw out what had made me unnatural.

Besides these subtler experiences and adventures that occurred naturally through initiation and my strong concentration to focus on and perceive subtler reality, I had an artifi-

cially-induced experience that I feel was also important in this process. Throughout my life I've had moments of free flow, moments of unfamiliarity with everything, and also a strong need to understand death. When I was twelve, I began to consider death. I thought about it in terms of its finality, and that it was the end of all perception as there was no one left to perceive. This terrified me. I don't know why I thought about death as the final "final," as my religious training promised a continuation of the spirit that would receive its reward in heaven if life was lived in moral relationship to God. When I contemplated it, however, I became frozen in fear and could not respond any deeper to my contemplation of the subject. One day, with a small group of Jeff's friends, I ate some marijuana or hashish brownies. Although my experimentation with drugs had only occurred randomly and infrequently, I had enjoyed their effects in altering my nervous system. This time, within an hour or so of eating the drug, a stark terror arose in me. It consumed my attention and I knew it was about the death of the body-mind. There was no place to run from it and, like the terrible pain of childbirth, the fear intensified and I had to endure it. There was a desperate insanity to it. I remained in it, not running from it or trying to throw it off. I remarked to my friend Jeff that, "this is it...death." I'm not sure if he knew what I was experiencing, but he stood close to me. Later I lay in bed very awake in this fear. My intuition was not to throw it off, but to remain still, and allow it to finish its course. In the morning the crisis had passed and I felt free, as if a horrible burden had left me.

As part of the process of coming to my own maturity (and obviously that maturity is practiced and understood through life lessons that take place emotionally, primarily in relationship), I learned to pass through sorrow, fear, and anger. I saw that the structure of sorrow revolved around the desire to be cared for and protected (the impossibility of ever having that fully satisfied), and that fear revolved around the loss of life or bodily threat. Depression was sorrow, a passivity of felt powerlessness, the inability to act and to use anger as motion

for constructive change. I saw that part of the deep despair of my earlier twenties had been felt most personally as the shock that there was no ultimate authority—parent, husband, government, guru—who was responsible for my life. None of these forces or any combination of them would take care of my life and give me what I needed or wanted for the continuance or preservation of bodily life. I had to do this myself. In understanding this I was also willing to face my fear of my own mortality, that the body was not being cared for by some outside force that would insure its continuance, but that its very nature was decay and impermanence to extinction.

My psychic studies and natural subtle experiences, such as astral traveling and lucid dreaming, showed me that there was a subtler nature to the body. To make beneficial use of the psychic aspects of my mind, I also had to understand the right use of these functions. After the deathlike experience brought on by the brownies, death did not hold the same terror for me and I often dreamt of practicing my death in dreams. The fear did not overwhelm me. Rather, there was enough free attention to enquire past the immobility and extinction of the body. I had seen that we are multilevel beings existing on the dimension of the psychic as well as the physical. Now I began to enquire into what was subtler than the psychic as well. I wanted to know what true love was, and how it related to Divinity. I continued to learn how to integrate my intuitive impulses with being responsible for a sane, balanced body and for my emotional-relational life. I learned how to use anger wisely to affect positive growth and change. I was no longer fearful of myself, of my own urges, or of asserting my own personal power.

In March of 1982, I had a dream in which I was in the hospital:

*Something was wrong with my vagina and it was being operated on. It was very serious and everyone around me, including the doctor, was very concerned. At the end of the dream I fell into a swirling absorption in the white light.*

A few weeks after that dream, after hiking up a hill, I was troubled by cramping and a throbbing ache in my genitals. I rested the rest of the day but it did not subside. I was always reluctant to go to doctors or take over-the-counter medications, and Jeff knew it was very serious when I asked him to bring me to the clinic in town. At first the doctor thought that because I was in a great deal of pain, it was an ectopic pregnancy. He did an ultrasound to confirm his diagnosis and discovered that there was a grapefruit-size mass in my uterus that needed surgery immediately. As it was late Saturday, he scheduled the surgery for early Monday morning. When I awoke from the drug-induced state on Monday afternoon and saw the saddened faces of both Jeff and the doctor bending over me, I thought it must be very serious. The doctor explained to me that I had a very dangerous case of pelvic inflammatory disease, so serious that the infection had permeated all my reproductive organs and was very close to spreading into my upper cavity. Without the surgery I would have been dead within a short span of time. He assured me I would be alright now, but, as he had had to give me a complete hysterectomy, removing all of the reproductive system, I would be unable to have any more children. That part of my life was over and I mourned the loss of it for a while. My daughter, Elraya, who was three at the time, cheered me up with her caring towards me, and Jeff's love and care were steadfast. Although I felt saddened by the loss, I also felt relieved that the doorway to motherhood was closed and decided that the objectification of my body as a sexual toy for others (men) would now be over. It would be under my terms now and forever and those terms were of loving response to me and a felt response returned by me. I would not be submitted to the male ego and its unconscious forms of misuse again. My own worth and identity were not given to me by a man or any other. By passing through these difficult traumas, I had grown up and accepted life as it was, without shrinking or paralyzing myself in fear or numbing myself with Cinderella fantasies. I was sobered. I knew that love wouldn't be fulfilled in bodily pleasures or identities given in roles with another. I wanted to know love as it truly was, and to live it.

Shortly after that we moved to Long Beach, California, where Jeff got his old job back. I remember walking the beach and coming to a firm resolve within myself. As I walked along the shore, my life—in pictures, memories, and the pain of it all—walked with me. Despite the travails that the human body can endure and the seeming absence of any real, true intimacy or maturity in the world, I knew without the least doubt anywhere in me, that Love was true, was Truth. I was ready to be completely free of the whole absurdity of believing that Happiness could be found through identity with and pleasures of the body-mind. I had arrived at human maturity through trials and suffering which others—if they had to endure them—would only interpret and live as doubt and denial of God and of Love. Yet I hadn't come to that conclusion at all. Rather, the lessons of my ordeals had proven to me that Adi Da's teaching—that Happiness cannot be sought but can only be realized—was authentic. I had lost all sympathy for the search. There was no arrival at ultimate Happiness through searching for it via the body-mind. The body had to be mastered, matured, and restored to its natural functioning and logic. This included self-control in diet, sleep, and right application of emotions. The next phase of my life continued to strengthen and maintain natural balance in body and emotions, and now it began to include and emphasize disciplining and focusing the mind. During this transition time, I met the man in my dreams, the youngish man with whom I had developed an internal friendship in the subtle realms. I had called him Marv and had enjoyed his helpful guidance and playful camaraderie. His name was Rama.

While I was browsing around in a metaphysical bookstore, I came across a pamphlet called *Self-Discovery*. In it there was a listing of Rama's past lives (he was then called Atmananda) which included an impressive recall of his lives as a spiritual teacher. I was really amused by this and bought the paper. After reading it, I knew I would go to see this man at his next public event, which was a couple of weeks away. I told my husband Jeff about it and we both decided to go. The meeting was held in a conference room in a downtown hotel in Santa

Monica. Rama, a tall man close to my age (thirty-one) came into the room. I immediately felt such a deep sense of familiarity with him. He suggested that we all meditate and adjusted his posture for that purpose. I closed my eyes and felt Rama's subtle form standing in front of me placing his hands first on my heart and then on my forehead. I relaxed into it. This did not seem unusual as Adi Da had appeared to me on occasion doing similar adjusting and initiating work on my body. I continued to stay in the meditation and, from time to time, opened my eyes and gazed at Rama. His form appeared surrounded in white light. As I gazed at him, he turned to look at me and I saw his face change into other faces—some that seemed from the distant past and other cultures. I also saw my face become his. At the end of the meeting I felt very happy and that it had been very significant for me. Rama explained that this was the first of three meetings that would end a series, and that after this he wouldn't be taking any new students for a long time. The next night I was eager to see Rama again, but my husband Jeff was not inclined to go. I attended the meeting alone and, at the end, Rama announced that anyone who wanted to be his student should stay and fill out an application. I knew I would do it. He read each applicant's name out loud and chatted in a friendly manner with each person. I was very nervous when he came to me. He said hello—and that was it. He moved on the next person. This was a preliminary demonstration of how our relationship would appear and how he would teach me. Later that night I told my husband of my decision. He was shocked that I had moved so impulsively and without him. Because the next night was the last meeting of the series, Jeff had to make a quick decision about whether to become Rama's student or not. Jeff's nature tends to be hesitant and conservative, so he must have felt put on the spot; but he decided to join that night.

I found Rama's casual style of teaching, his lively humor, and his freedom from spiritual ceremony and stereotypes refreshing. His teaching style and approach seemed to be a combination of eastern and mystical wisdom woven into the main-

stream of American pop-culture. Although he addressed and answered questions that people brought to him about their ordinary problems with relationships and work, he stressed that he was not there to counsel or babysit anyone. It was up to individuals to get their lives under control so they would be available for the real study. Rama expressed that he was particularly interested in helping women attain Enlightenment. His discourses addressing the problems women faced in coming to the spiritual life, were insightful and confirmed to me much of the why of what I had experienced as a woman in this culture, interested in Self-discovery. I felt his recommendations to women were very practical and helpful—including simple things like changing my physical appearance through dress and hairstyle to affect a stronger image, and to establish physical and psychic privacy to feel my own thoughts and feelings. I made a decision to be celibate for a while for healing purposes, as well as to examine my sexual-emotional relationship and the dependency contracts between my husband and me.

I decided to develop what I loved. I became serious about art and went back to junior college. I took a full schedule of classes in painting, drawing, sculpture, etc., and loved this kind of work. It focused my mind in my feeling nature. My love of beauty and truth could be explored and expressed. This time of my life was very happy and I was free of the health problems and traumatic events of my twenties. In developing my artistic impulses I also saw the search for fulfillment in the desire to use art as a means for personal recognition and for attaining happiness. I saw how the naturalness of the feminine was suppressed artistically. In the history of art, women had mostly been relegated to the background. Many women who had modeled for male painters and had later become artists themselves, were never given their own due credit. Instead, the male artists assumed credit for their works by signing the women's paintings with their own signatures. I became more and more aware that the sexism I had faced in my conditioning was a great wound, not only in the healthy development of my own psyche but in all women as well. I felt and examined the controlling myths of

women, including the Adam and Eve story of western religion and—in eastern religion—the myth of the feminine, Maya, as the deluding power. It all felt to me to be based on the fear of women's naturalness and sexuality.

I had seen prejudice in relationship to my first husband—who was black—and had suffered that ignorance from my own family in their initial refusal to accept my relationship to him. But now I realized that prejudice and ignorance existed on many levels in my life because I was female, and that the suppression and genocide of women had been as terrible as anything that had been done to any racial group or indigenous tribe. It was evident to me that no matter how suppressed any group was, women were still more suppressed under men, and were expected to do most of the grunt work with little say in decision making. I saw that sexism was prevalent in advertising, that women did not have a wide range of job opportunities, and that equal pay for equal work was a myth. I saw that generally women did all the housework. They were responsible for birth control, and were made to feel guilty and called murderers if they had abortions. Yet men were not psychologically or legally punished for their part in not using birth control and preventing unwanted pregnancies. I saw that society punished women in the workplace for taking time off to become mothers. I learned that one of the highest causes of unnatural death among women was from being battered and killed by their male intimates. Women owned very little property or money and—in certain religions and societies—suffered severe genital mutilation as their entrance into marital life and to control their sexuality. Horrifyingly, female babies were killed throughout the world because their births were undesired.

Sexism was prevalent everywhere. Religious communities and cultures were not free from it either. Rather, they slickly endorsed the inferiority and servitude of women by spiritual and religious myths and truisms. In both Adi Da's spiritual community and in Rama's gatherings, the women mistakenly interpreted spiritual openings and progress with more of an acceptance of

and submission to conventional roles and models of femininity. When Adi Da and Rama recommended that women show their strength and be themselves, the women made a strange show and sign of this. They had makeovers to look prettier, softer, more passive, more sexually attracting. They became exaggerated displays of the conventional errors of what it is to be feminine. Naturally wanting to be yielding and having some sensitivity that the real spiritual process had to do with yielding, they still were unable to locate what to yield to. They unconsciously were still yielding to the out-of-balance male ego. So while I went for a stronger look, the women around me went for just a prettier look. Everything was backwards and locked in unconscious, unnatural patterns. Women couldn't feel and express anger and men could only express anger.

As I developed myself artistically, I contemplated myself as creativity, as movement, as energy. I saw my own life in terms of creativity, not just expressing myself creatively, but in a play of constantly being created. Life was not fixed and my own life arose spontaneously in a beautiful Divine relationship and play. I perceived and intuited this creative movement to be the Feminine Force at its truest. It was not inherently evil or deluding. It was alive and purifying, intuitive and wild. It was grounded in the mastery of one's body-mind, not in foolish dependence.

My life was a circle of consideration and insight that opened natural processes of purification. Many considerations of practical wisdom relating to either physical-emotional or psychic sensitivity overlapped in daily experience and application. My enquiry into what was more subtle deepened with observation of the causal body and realm, and the development of the witness position began to occur. I understood that I was a physical, psychic, mental, causal being, and all these vehicles were tested and considered in right relationship and understanding of Reality or Consciousness Itself. The process of Self-discovery did not proceed in a linear, simple progression of self-mastery in my waking life,

then move on to the dreaming or subtle life, and then the causal seat. All levels of the human mechanism were being purified and burned in the fire of the Truth of Reality. I was learning on many levels and practicing on many levels. The strange sense of unfamiliarity, of not knowing what anything is, that I had felt in my childhood, returned again, along with the unshakable intuition that Enlightenment would not be attained but rather be remembered. In fact, this sense of re-remembering felt to be the impetus of all the movement in understanding and purification. I already knew who I was and that the human mechanism had to be integrated into that knowing. At times the intuition that I was already Being—already Happiness—would shine without any complication. But the necessity of purifying this human vehicle to conduct and transmit the understanding was a necessary gesture, both for the Divine to acquire this vehicle and so the signs of the purifying process could be understood and I could aid others in the process of Self-recognition.

I didn't realize it at that time, but Rama's work with me was very different from the work and help I received from Adi Da in the subtle. Both encouraged my natural interest in the arts and my developing interest and sympathy in helping women understand the suppression of their true femininity in all areas of life. Both teachers contacted me and taught me impersonally and subtly. But there were also big differences that I would understand much later. Rama emphasized purification and attainment through kundalini, enjoying and emphasizing psychic ability and subtle, visionary travel to higher planes, culminating in realization by the experience of Nirvikalpa Samadhi—the formless state of ecstasy, the goal of the yogis. Adi Da taught Enlightenment Itself, not as attainment through experience with a body, whether gross or subtle (as in yogic attainment), but in satsang with Him, in recognition of Him as the Transcendental One. I'm getting a little ahead of my story, but to tell the story realistically this difference in teachers and guidance is helpful.

Early in 1983, I experienced an intense raining down of spirit current<sup>13</sup> into my body-mind. Here is a description of it taken from my journal on January 14, 1983:

I laid down and assumed the corpse position to meditate. I experienced a forceful explosion of energy in my body. It was not tame or mellow in any way. It was forceful! I tried to relax into this force and not prevent it. I felt a presence and saw a hooded figure in a monk's garb kneeling over me. I saw no flesh, only a garment that looked like a robe. This presence felt frightening at first. I continued to observe and the fear passed. I heard the Aum sound. It seemed to envelop me. It grew louder and louder. My body was stretching with the powerful force of energy that was passing through it. I felt my body would explode if the intensity of the energy continued to increase. The loud Aum sound changed into a high-frequency pitch. The power of the current was so strong that my body felt to be lifted off the floor. I was trying to hold on to something (anything) and noticed I had been creating the sensation of holding on by grasping my thumb with my fingers. The energy descended down through my head and into my vital. My skin felt like it was being stretched out and blasted beyond its enduring proportions. The Aum sound became very soft and the sensation of being stretched and blasted with waves of energy decreased. The experience was very powerful and would have been terrifying but for the intuition that it was best to remain calm, be with it, and not fight the powerful energy in any way.

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13 Spiritual energy felt to move in a circle down the front of the body and up the spine.

A few weeks later, after this forceful descent of energy into the body-mind, I wrote this in my journal on February 1, 1983:

*Last night was another one of those meditation nights. I felt that a lot of tension in my body was being worked out at an increasing speed. I felt a series of knots in my body pull for attention, but the force of the meditation was too strong to pull me away from the witnessing position. I saw that when I used to feel this tension—these knots—I would dramatize the tension or try to desensitize myself through a life situation by using some form of physical or emotional consolation, such as sex or food. Sometimes I understood the lesson of the life situation and took responsibility for it. Other times, I would inspect the knots of fear in a dream understand the fear through the medium of dream lessons, and learn to act from love and power, not fear and insecurity. Last night, the force of my attention was strong enough to allow me to witness these patterns—these knots that are based on fear and recoil—and I did not have to act out the lesson in life events or dreams. The ability to remain as the witness of what was arising in the body-mind allowed more tensions of the body-mind to dissolve in an ever-increasing, direct way. That is the power of meditation.*

This powerful descent of energy loosened the knots in the body-mind, and the practice of contemplating what is prior to the body-mind (Consciousness Itself) was naturally established and obvious.

I also received help and guidance in unusual forms and ways. I had many initiatory dream experiences in which I was served by different creatures. On January 21, 1983, after having a series of subtle experiences of my neck being operated on, I had this dream of a red-breasted hummingbird:

I saw a hummingbird hovering by a nearby tree branch. I inwardly asked him to fly to my outstretched hand. He did to my amazement. The hummingbird then hovered at eye level, and I gazed into his eyes for a while. He flew to my neck and made gentle nudges into my skin. I felt like he was sipping nectar from my neck. My throat opened more and I felt revitalized by the nectar that was flowing down from the brain.

I also experienced the initiatory help of the hummingbird in another way. One day when I was meditating in the wilderness, I heard the familiar clicking sounds of the bird. When I opened my eyes, the tiny hummingbird was in still flight right in front of me. He gazed at me awhile, then flew towards my forehead, hitting it right above and between my eyes. Shortly after that, I dreamt of the hummingbird flying into my forehead. This was the opening of the Ajna door and allowed me to experience reincarnational adventures as well as visits to heaven-like realms where I was taught and helped by spiritual beings.

I also dreamt of lions frequently. A particularly interesting dream was of a lion attacking me.

He was not really trying to kill me, but rather was making love to me. It was really strange. I submitted to the lion's sexual embrace. He disappeared and a newborn baby was in my arms. I held the baby and understood that I must care for him. I went into a house where I sat down and breast-fed the baby. I wondered if such a fragile creature could survive in this world. Other people arrived and the baby telepathically told everyone grand stories. They were thoroughly delighted and I realized that this baby was very special.

This subtle experience of the black cat was a recurring one:

*While I sat in meditation, a black cat appeared in a vision. It arched its back, stretched, and then jumped into me through my vaginal opening. At first I was afraid and tried to stop the cat, until I felt the current of energy becoming active in my body. The current continued to rise and grow in intensity throughout my body. The black cat's appearance initiated the shakti to ascend up the spinal column.*

These animal dreams of purification and initiation continued throughout this phase of shakti activity into the final phase of the Awakening process. Even after my Awakening, animals still come to me via subtle experience in many unusual ways and are part of my work.

My days during that time appeared normal to others. I took care of my children and went to art school, but my nights were filled with yogic processes in which both Rama and Da were instructing me. I never felt disturbed by the dramatic shakti experiences I was having all the time. As they occurred at night when others were asleep, I did not appear abnormal to anyone although people—particularly my children—often felt happy and fulfilled in my company. Sometimes at night, in dreams, I taught people I had met in my classes, demonstrating meditation and explaining spiritual truths to them. It was often strange to see fellow art students and be engaged with them in a very normal, conventional way, knowing that the night before I had blasted them with white light or perhaps revealed their other lifetimes to them! I formed a close friendship with a few women whom I instructed in the basics of maturing in the physical-emotional life and, if they had any sensitivity or impulse to Self-discovery, I gave them teaching according to their ability to understand.

The process of meditation was not just alive or active at night. Sometimes I felt its work when I was out in the public. Many times I became filled with an uncontainable happiness in the supermarket. As I shopped, this happiness would drip out of me and I would be grinning from ear to ear while I was looking at a carrot or a box of cereal. Children and older people would gravitate to be near me and feel the energy. If I gazed into clerks' eyes for any amount of time, they would be affected, become happy, and forget what they were doing. They couldn't remember if they had rung up a certain item, or how much money I had given them, or if they had given me my change. I felt a natural ease in loving and a great sympathy for all beings. Psychic abilities opened naturally. I was able to hear people's thoughts and know if they were ill. Some abilities—like telekinesis and levitation—operated for a while, and then left. I did not try to develop any of these abilities. They came and went as the process of meditation moved.

Another way meditation showed its sign in my waking hours was a sense of unfamiliarity. I remember times when I was in restaurants and I would see the rooms soften with white light dancing through them. I looked at everything but didn't know what anything was. It was all new to me. This felt a little frightening but, as I relaxed into it, it also felt so free and beautiful. I knew this as the Presence of the meditation. And, like feeling blissful happiness in the supermarket, this unfamiliarity and not knowing anything affected the people around me. Their minds would stop and they would feel disoriented. I would smile at them and that would reassure them, then they would continue with their work.

The experience of the band of white light breaking through the normal visual field that I had had in childhood, returned in meditation. I experienced a thin, clear wall that looked like atoms of light in swirling motion. I was encased in it and at times it pulled apart from the middle. I wanted to go through it.

Outwardly my life with my teacher Rama remained impersonal and almost distant. But inwardly it was emotionally, psychically, and yogically very alive and intense. Rarely did we say anything to each other when I saw him at the weekly meetings. But on those occasions, I felt him talk to me very clearly using telepathic communication. He drew me into him and I grew more and more in love with him. I dreamt of him all night long— instructing me, teaching me in many ways to face fears and to handle and recognize different subtle energies, both high and low. There was an aspect of the study that dealt with lower entities who try to take possession of others to manipulate them for their own purposes. Much of what I learned in these subtle dreams with Rama fortified me to be a psychic warrior. I learned to face and slay my fears. He taught me how to travel to higher realms via the Ajna door. The energy would buzz there strongly. Doorways of light slicing into each other would appear, and I would allow my attention to move into the doorway. Sometimes I would meet Rama teaching in the subtler realms and I would assist him. I also learned how to bring people with me through the third-eye doorway by having them hold my hands and propelling them through. This occurred in subtle vision or subtle reality. Here are a few dreams of that time that demonstrate how Rama taught me. The first is about facing my fears:

*Jeff and I along with a few other people are waiting for Rama to show up. He arrives with another teacher. Everyone is now gathered in a living room in an old house. I am sitting across from Rama and the other teacher, whom I don't know. Rama looks very serious, almost nervous. "Tonight," he says, "We are doing something different. It's a sort of hide-and-seek-the-spiritual-master game. The only rule there is, is that everyone must stay inside the house." What happens next is strange and frightening. I walk through a room of bodies that have been decapitated and hacked into pieces. I do not stop but continue looking*

through the house to find the spiritual master. I encounter horrible creatures and all sorts of perversion. Some attack me and I fight them and kill them. When I do, their images dissolve and fade away. I understand that they are illusions of fear and that I must slay my fears. As I continue to move through the rooms looking for the spiritual master, subtler, more attracting beings appear but I slay them too, intent only on recognizing the true master. In this part of the game it is necessary to discriminate between the attraction of what is beautiful, and what is real. Eventually I reach the attic and see a very beautiful woman asleep on the bed. I wonder if this is the spiritual master or an illusion. I decide she is a subtle trap and slay her. The true teacher dressed as a Samurai warrior (Rama) pops out of the wall and says, "You have discriminated what is truth from what is illusion. You have found me."

In this subtle experience I was learning to subtly "travel" and bring others with me:

It began with feeling a current of energy rise up through the toes, on through the genital area, the abdomen, heart, throat, and third eye. This cycle of energy was pleasurable, powerful and continued to intensify. Thoughts, images, and beliefs passed but I only observed them. At one point I was in telepathic communication with Jeff's (my husband) and Elraya's (my daughter) subtle-physical form. I wanted to see Rama and they both wanted to go with me. We held hands and I propelled us through the third eye. A spinning sensation was pushing us through slices of doorways of light. I focused on my intention of seeing Rama. We saw one last doorway of

light and passed through it. We appeared in a beautiful room of light filled with happy, beautiful children. Rama was walking among the children playing, helping, and teaching them. I smiled and said hello to him. He called me Sita. I asked him if Sita was my name and how you spelled it. "With a lot of xxxx's," he replied with a big smile. I knew he was busy and that I shouldn't take any more of his attention. A doorway of light appeared and I held hands with my family again and brought them through.

At other times, moving through the Ajna door I had unusual experiences, some reincarnational in feeling. A couple of examples of these experiences are interesting as they are prophetic in nature.

I found myself in a room full of food dishes. As I reached down to take a bite of the unfamiliar food, I noticed that my hand was not my usual one, but was dark brown and wider. As I walked out of the room, I was a brown Indian woman wearing a sari. I was her, yet aware as myself as well. As she approached an intimate of hers, I felt how spiritually open she was. Her chest from left to right was unobstructed, wide open, and she felt as if the whole world poured out of her heart. She was involved in a drama of hiding a printing press on which she had printed her teachings. It was illegal for her to have it. She asked her friend to help her hide the press and they hid it in a hotel room. She turned and embraced her friend and said, "Sometimes I will seem a little strange to you. This is because an American woman is remembering Enlightenment. That woman is me and I am her, born at a later date. Some of her facial expressions and her form might be seen

on my form and you might hear me speak her language. You and I will soon be separated in this life, but you will be with me in the American life." The police came and questioned her about the press.

In another:

I observe a spiritual community and wonder what these people are doing. To my surprise I do not remain unnoticed. Instead I am greeted with great honor. I am uncomfortable about the attention. A group of women bring me to a room and give me very loving attention. They notice my discomfort and one woman asks me, "When you think, where does your thinking come from?" I do not understand the question at all. She asks me again and says where in your body do you sense your thinking? I point to the front side of my head, above and in front of my ears. She says, "Oh, that explains it. The part of your brain that remembers isn't opened yet. We've been waiting for you for a long, long time. We have only a short time to prepare you." I wonder for what?

Another:

I feel the current ascend and attention push through the Ajna doorway. I appear in an ancient Egyptian school. A blonde-haired woman (a priestess) is giving initiations but each person must be tested first. I decline her offer to be tested. I don't want to be initiated. She is quite shocked by my polite refusal. I begin an ecstatic dance of swirling, faster and faster and, as this continues, my form changes into a human-size falcon. The woman realizes that I need no initiation and I am already an adept. I speak, saying, "I am Isis. I am She."

After being with Rama in the weekly meetings I experienced his teaching in this unusual way. When I laid down to sleep and the current would intensify in its ascension, blocks of attention that Rama had stored in my subtle body would be released for study and viewing. Sometimes they were personal in nature but, as often as not, they were impersonal to me as a personality. Through this psychic capability I would view visual histories of entire civilizations, other worlds, and people's reincarnational lifetimes. It was as though my body was implanted with microchips that through the power of the third eye I could later learn and study in a very rapid, compressed way. The linear mind would take much too long and couldn't possibly contain or assimilate this information.

On one particular evening, Rama became quiet and sad. He was not teaching in his usual, hysterically funny style. Sitting on the floor of the stage instead of on his usual seat, he was very somber, soft, and poetic. He didn't seem to be addressing anyone. Rather he was in his own mood and, in a humble, vulnerable way, was revealing it to us. He talked about letting go and moving out of the doorway of life. I was very touched and later, after I had been asleep for a while, I woke up recalling a very vivid, subtle dream:

*One of my closest friends, Deryl, had embraced me and told me that she had died. She had been confined to a wheelchair for about twenty years having broken her neck when she was about thirteen. She told me that she was no longer in pain. She asked me what would happen next. I told her that she was in a transition state and asked her if she was ready to let go into the white light. I told her that, as I was already dead while alive, I could help her transition into the white light. As the light appeared to approach us, I experienced with her a rush of her thoughts, images, sensations, and feelings of her recently departed life. She became frightened of letting go into it, but I as-*

sured her that merging with the white light was the most wonderful event that could happen to anyone. She trusted me and we held hands and I walked her into the light. Our forms dissolved and I woke up in my bed feeling no borders and a strong current buzzing through my body.

Several years after that experience, Deryl returned to me in dreams. She told me she was ready to take birth again and wanted to be near me. One of my sisters, who had come to me repeatedly in dreams to ask for help in conceiving and bearing a child, got pregnant. After hearing this happy news I dreamt of Deryl again. She told me that I would know it was her by the baby's middle name—it would be a boy's name beginning with D. The naming of my sister's child confirmed this. She named her child Hattie Dean.

After a few months of going to Rama's meetings, I felt a deepening of my trust and love for him in such a way that caused my meditations to move even more quickly in the fire of the yogic process. I had followed all his life-level, practical suggestions and was already, after a short time, aware of him constantly in the subtler states. I naturally did japa<sup>14</sup> of his name constantly and, alternately, as my impulse dictated, I did the prayer of remembrance that Da had taught me. I could hold the form of Rama in my heart and eye and always felt his presence. At one meeting he made the suggestion to say no to past and future thoughts as a way of calming and focusing the mind, and I also practiced this for a while. My mind became very focused and concentrated. On days when I knew I would see Rama, I pushed to practice japa even more intensely and, by the time the meetings started, I was prepared to receive him on an even deeper level. When he meditated with us, in a very short time, the meditation would deepen for me. I dropped into periods of experiencing long spaces between thoughts. My breathing would disappear and my heartbeat would become erratic, very loud.

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14 Repetition of the Guru's name as a form of meditation on the Guru.

My body became covered with sweat at those times. I felt Rama pushing me, saying, "Why not let go all the way?" Sometimes I became frightened, but as time went by and I approached the same place in meditation with him at each meeting, I knew intuitively not to pull back in fear. When I was ready to let go, he always stopped the meditation, and the meeting would be restored to the previous lively banter.

After I had been Rama's student for about five months and this experience continued to characterize my meditations with him, I allowed the dissolution of the meditation process to occur. This took place on April 13, 1983. I had been in a very uncomfortable sleep. The shakti energy was moving in a continuous circuit, down my frontal line and up the spinal line. It continued to build and intensify. I felt sick to my stomach and unable to relax into what was at work in my body-mind. My mind was in a state of constant swooning and I felt to be a mishmash of perceptions colliding in a nonsensical disorder. I got up and went to the bathroom either to vomit, pass out, or allow whatever was happening to finish its process with me. I sat on the toilet and thought I heard myself moaning. The swooning increased and the energy was moving up at a very strong, accelerated pace. Attention, my self, was being pushed up through the head. I saw concentric circles of various colors and hues appear and inside them was a five-pointed, white star. Energy, attention, moved mind into the entrance of the white light and the swooning completed itself. There was nothing to describe at this point. There was no subject to perceive object, no witness to observe and experience.

The next thing I can describe was hearing a tremendously loud gushing sound. It was air entering my lungs. I heard my husband Jeff yelling frantically. He was telling me to please breathe. I opened my eyes and the room was a field of white light. His form was discernible to me but it was luminous with white light. He said, "Are you alright? I thought you were dead, your eyes were bugging out." There were three firemen look-

ing at me and I grasped for a mind to return to assure everyone that I was okay. Jeff told me that he had found me dead, slumped over the toilet; so he had called the fire department. The firemen were assured that I was alright and they left. Jeff covered me up and dressed me. I was having a hard time holding to a sense of self and I couldn't remember how to breathe. He brought me to the hospital and, as I sat in the emergency room with him, I put my attention on his chest breathing up and down, and this helped me to allow my own body to do its natural function. The doctor suggested that I might have a flu and was unconcerned. Little did he know I had just experienced the formless ecstasy called Nirvikalpa Samadhi and that there is no cure for it! I had fulfilled the goal of the yogic tradition. This had been the goal of the Kriya Yoga that I had learned and had been initiated into in my early twenties. It had been naturally given by my teacher through a grounding and maturing of my personality, and a focused, stilled mind.

From then on, meditation became focused in the spinal line culminating on many occasions in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. I wrote to Rama and told him of my kundalini meditations and subtle experiences related to the Ajna chakra. He read the letter aloud in a weekly meeting, keeping my identity anonymous. After finishing the letter he confirmed that I had described genuine kundalini experience and understanding. My relationship to this yogic opening and my continuing experience of the ascending energy and all the phenomena that it generated, simply allowed the work of purification to move in its own wisdom. I observed unusual phenomena as the current circled and built in intensity down and up the spine continuously in meditation. On a few occasions, coming out of the meditation, I found my body levitating or my arms and legs flung in the air.

Master Adi Da contacted me in the subtle and instructed me to allow all these processes to occur but not to seek them or to hold on to them, that it was all the purification of the mind and release of attention. I noticed that through this

purification of the body-mind by what I call the spirit-current (the meditation by the Divine Itself), the knots in the body-mind would loosen and then permanently dissolve. As the current intensified in meditation, images, thoughts, and dreams of the different energy centers would be seen. If I stayed as the witness of these thoughts, feelings, or images, the current would freely pass to the next level, the next energy center. If attention remained in any position other than the witness of what was occurring, I would enter into the dreams of the energy center and lessons or dramas would unfold in which I would participate in the drama as one seeking for fulfillment or as one understanding right relationship to the drama—and then attention would become free to move again in the meditation.

When the current was felt in the sexual energy center a very strong sexual stimulation would occur and images of sexual embrace could be seen. It could be very intense, demanding to come to orgasm. But if I persisted in witnessing only, the current would move to the other energy centers like the solar plexus, heart, throat, third eye, and then into the brain core, where attention would dissolve in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. As I became steady in abiding as the witness in relationship to the work of the current, rather than as one seeking it for pleasurable attainment, I experienced in the energy centers the sudden crashing dissolution of the knots in the body-mind. For instance, after the sexual knot dissolved, sex ceased to have any problem or dilemma. I felt neither bound to it nor afraid of it. There was just a playful, free, natural, permanent equanimity.

My time of instruction from Rama was coming to a close. In the summer, he began to hint in dreams that he had taught me everything. I dreamt that he asked me to be a teacher now, and that I had done well and had attained everything. He was changing his relationship to his community of students and asked everyone to reapply. He wanted to let go of many people he had drawn to him who had shown no serious application to the study, and perhaps of others who he had seen had another destiny. The meetings of the late summer were filled

with this crisis of coming change. Other than loving to see and be with my teacher, the lessons were generally only repetitive instructions that I had already passed beyond. He never addressed the technicalities of the subtler process I was engaged in during the general meetings, except in a most superficial reference. He taught me privately via subtle states. Although I reapplied to be his student, it was because of my love for him personally rather than what more he had to teach me. I received a beautiful and encouraging form letter saying that I had done fine and it was time to move on to the next phase of my life in self-transcendence. This did not mean that the subtle connection between us was cut. It continued with many playful, loving dream encounters, shared teaching insights, and healing help going both ways. I continued to see Rama whenever he gave a public meeting and enjoyed meditating with him in person and listening to his often humorous insights about life, humans, and self-discovery. He encouraged me to teach and to continue my artistic practices as a helping, healing tool as well as a teaching vehicle for the spiritual process. The fruition of using the artistic medium as a spiritual process to serve others would come about in the future, in about eight years.

My life was moving to a very quiet phase. The custody arrangement with my children, Gerimaya (who was about thirteen) and Elraya (who was about five), was for them to spend a year with me and then a year with their father. The distance between us made this the only practical schedule. It was time for them to return to their father. I continued to take art classes and teach a few women friends, but the impulse for formal education in the arts had reached a dead end. My own artistic impulses felt truer and classes, aimed at the lowest common denominator of growth and expression, became inhibiting. I was not interested in the commercialism of art or the search for self-identity or psychological healing via the arts. I didn't want to adhere to a belief system, I simply wanted to do it as a free, present activity of Self-expression.

The body-mind was firmly established in a natural equanimity and I was no longer possessed by reactive feelings. My mind was always focused in japa (I used Da's name now), and meditation was constantly alive. I continued to formally meditate and the meditations stably culminated in absorption—Nirvikalpa Samadhi. My life was reclusive and sweet. I spent my days walking, drawing, and absorbed in meditation while my husband Jeff was at work. On weekends, I derived a great pleasure in going to parks and nature and would enjoy the sublimity of the great beauty. I loved observing the expression of nature and had many wonderful experiences with animals whom I encountered in the wilderness.

I felt a push to teach from Rama via dreams and I did continue to teach a few friends in private. But I had no impulse to publicly or formally teach. The impulse to help women, to open real understanding in them, and to address the physical, emotional, and spiritual suppression that they were largely unconscious about was important to me. I felt this growing impulse to serve as a teacher, particularly in relationship to women, but I also felt that the meditation had not finished its work and that I must allow it to complete itself with my full understanding and participation.

Adi Da guided me through this phase, as well as a Presence who resembled my mother in appearance. I related to her with great love and reverence, and she was very loving and dignified in nature. She never showed me her true appearance, if she had one. Adi Da referred to her and asked me from time to time what she was showing me. Looking back at my life, I see that I had known her when I was young as a Presence whom I felt particularly when I was in nature. I was always enchanted by flowers and, besides their exquisite, bright, colorful beauty, they were a call to me of human spiritual flowering as well. There was one flower that grew wild in the woods of New England in the spring and I loved to come across it. Besides its beauty, the wild lady slipper evoked a stirring in me, a deeper call that I did not understand. When the yogic ascending energy was active in

me, I often dreamt of visiting the lady slipper. The way to it through the woods was metaphorically obstructed with all sorts of unnatural growths. Later, when the shakti moved easily up the spine and penetrated the Ajna door into the brain core, I had a vision of the lady slipper in a free-flowing habitat near a clear stream. The Mother taught me through the language of flowers, which I now understood to be the spirit current or shakti which is her own living form. The lady slipper, its shape being similar to a woman's vagina, represented the seat of womanhood. The Mother's Presence was directing me to serve, and I had a vision of her in my childhood home, which now appeared as an abode of white light. The house was permeated with a tangible effulgence of white light. The windows were all stained glass and the light poured through the colors of the panes. The Mother happily embraced me and took me up to my old bedroom where there were about sixteen women lying on an enormous bed. She was attending to these sleeping women. One of them woke up under the Mother's care. She was blind and the mother was teaching her how to see. I was the Mother's attendant and she instructed me by her own demonstration in the art of waking these women and teaching them to see. As I helped her, I entered into a great sympathy for these "lady sleepers" and guided them with my love and understanding. The Mother was pleased that I was taking the job and serving her in this way.

As this yogic phase of samadhi stabilized, the intuition of Consciousness—of Light Itself—as Truth, as Reality, was evident. I did not feel that my yogic attainment was it, was Enlightenment Itself, but rather was a stage in growth or purification of the body-mind. The process of the Presence, the spirit-current, unglued what I held together as personal identity. No experience was Enlightenment. No identity, whether gross or purified, was the realization of Consciousness Itself. I actually grew bored with kundalini experiences and felt an impulse to move beyond them.

I had numerous visions of resting in a place that wasn't really a place at all. There was only white light radiating all around and

the light was emphasized by its containment in a wall of TV screens stacked upon each other. I viewed all the screens. No images, no dramas, no animation of any persona was shown—only Light itself, the Source of all image, shone through. This was Purity Itself. This was contemplation of Light or Consciousness at its Source. I wondered why Light was contained by the screen, the form of the TV. Was it necessary?

I had located Light, Consciousness as Self, and now I contemplated It directly. Attention, previously felt and located in the middle of the chest and through the Ajna door into the brain core, now resided in another location—on the right side of the chest. My chest area from left to right was tingling, open and radiant, and its source felt particularly pulsing or evident on the right side—the other side of the heart chakra. Adi Da directed me to read his book, *The Liberator*. It is a book that gives instruction about the direct contemplation of Consciousness and the transcendence of everything in that direct contemplation. I realized after reading it that I was already involved in this direct contemplation of Consciousness, having been purified of identification with the body-mind and all its relations and experiences. As this contemplation of Consciousness prior to thought became the “work,” I experienced a series of what I call—for lack of a better term—“operations” in the brain and skull. This took place over a period of about nine months. It began with the subtle experience of touching my skull and noticing that it was peeling and that part of it caved in as I moved into the state of absorption. A few days later while in meditation I experienced a strong current ripping my head open. On April 7, 1985, I dreamt that there were two plaster bumps on the top of my head. I yanked at the plaster and my hair and parts of my skull came off. My entire skull was filled with this plaster. I pulled and pulled on it and more came off in my hands. The top of my head was gone. On April 25 I had this experience:

*I was greeted by two women and they took me to a small room. They asked me about my*

spiritual process. I told them about my samadhi experiences and contemplation of Consciousness and they told me that there was still more. They massaged and rubbed my body. My skin peeled off like a snake shedding its skin. I understood that through shedding my skin I became everyone. The women saw that I understood this and told me that I was their family. Master Da appeared and talked to me about the final stage of life, calling it the seventh stage, which is Self-Realization. He told me that Realization is merging all the selves into the Light.

On August 15, I had a dream of a park ranger:

A bald-headed man greeted me by showing me a picture of a baby and said, "We have been waiting for you." He put my hummingbird necklace around my neck. A tiny turtle emerged from his hands. This turtle walked into my eyes and chopped at the sides of my eyes behind the bridge of my nose. He was biting something inside my head. I had the intuition that my brain was opened up more.

On my thirty-third birthday, May 3, I experienced another "skull operation." This time I pulled the plaster off my entire face and realized that I am only energy. In June this strange process continued and the shakti, in a strong rippling sensation, ripped open the back of my head. Then a radiant Being appeared and walked into my chest on the right side. I absorbed him there. In August, the rippling kundalini worked primarily in the region of the ears. While this was occurring I had the strange experience of meeting a little pixie. She was trying to communicate something to me by showing me pictures. My being absorbed it. I was in a state of meditation, my breathing stopping for periods. The sahasrar was being severed completely, with attention no longer focused in ascent to the sahasrar. The seat of the

Divine, the Source of attention, was not in the sahasrar but in the Heart which was located in the right side of the chest.

On September 7, 1985, I had a dream that signaled the end of these subtle skull operations.

*While I was resting in bed a very scarred monk, wearing a dark robe and beaded necklace, appeared before me. He talked to me briefly, explaining that he had some work to do in my brain. He gave me a cup of medicinal tea and asked me to drink it. He told me, "This is the beginning of the final state of seeing the knot of the "I"-thought<sup>15</sup> and letting it go." He said he would return one more time.*

This is taken from my journal of that day, which reveals the intuition of contemplation as Consciousness Itself:

*I am having strong intuitions of what it is to rest in the condition of Enlightenment. When I was resting in bed last night I felt the knot of the "I"-thought dissolving. I realized that I am pure Consciousness, prior to any concept, perception, belief, or idea. People's feelings and ideas would arise in me but none of them would stick. I am just the witness of it all when the body-mind is animated. I located the self-concept on the causal level. Whenever I found a patterning of ideas that I assumed as an individual or the "I"-thought, I tried to contain and identify my awareness as that, but it was always suffering to engage such a limitation on the free flow of Awareness. The "I"-thought is only an illusion, a conventional sign that we have all misinterpreted as true identity.*

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15 The assumption of self-identity, of separation from God.

The vision of the empty screen returned and I began to enquire, why did Consciousness have to be confined? I was the Light Itself. Why did it have to have a sense of containment or separateness at all? This gesture of separation seemed absurd, unnecessary. Yes, I had located Consciousness and remained in direct contemplation of it, thus realizing it to be the True Condition; but why the gesture of separation or contemplation at all? I intuited that the gesture was unnecessary. It added nothing. The practice of contemplation being exposed, I realized I am being Light, Consciousness Itself, prior to all that arises high or low. Any sense of personal identity was false even in the pure state of the witness—there was no other. Only Light or Consciousness Is.

On December 11, Adi Da appeared to me in the subtle. As we danced I passed into dissolution and when I returned from that state he was on top of me, bending over me with a stethoscope. He was trying to find a heartbeat by putting the stethoscope over the right side of my heart. He said, “I pushed her too hard, all the way that time.”

After that, all became quiet. There was no impulse to meditate. Meditation felt unnecessary, even silly. I was already Being what I had previously contemplated. There was no more purification. It had completed itself. I watched, waited, lived simply, and tested to see if anything would bind attention or cause it to identify with anything. It never did. There was no drama in anything in life—whether physical, psychic, subtle, or spiritual. I was open, radiant, simple, and innocent like a child who only feels love, curiosity, and awe of being alive. Nothing in life needed to be prevented in order to live this Brightness. It couldn’t leave me. It was my own Self. Life in all its bittersweet patterns continued, but humor and love were never lost.

I told no one of this. How could they understand? It would mean nothing to them. They were searching, distracted from their Self. There was nothing to “get” from this Realization—no money, fame, fortune; no protection from death or betrayal; no way to be immune to people’s unloving. How could I explain this purest attraction? How could I assure

them that what they were, did not amount to fulfilling their next desire? There was nothing to “get.” Rather, if they realized the fruitlessness of that, they could yield to their True Nature and realize Happiness Itself. During my years of yielding to True Nature, of contemplating it, I had tried to tell friends and family of this extraordinary process of Self-understanding. They were not available to consider it, so I largely remained quiet about it.

A couple of weeks passed of testing the absoluteness of my Realization. There was no more movement to meditate or enquire or contemplate. I went to the desert in southern California with my husband Jeff and told him the process was completed; and it was there at a palm oasis that another process and urge began to come forward. I received the name MaRa, which at the time I associated with the metaphor of the oasis—the Self as the only true place of rest and nourishment, a place for all beings to come from the harshness of false identity, to be renewed and revitalized. Later, other associations with the name, such as Mother Sun and that it was Rama’s name inverted, were evident to me.

An urge to write a book persisted. I had no previous experience in writing and felt at a loss about how to describe the Awakening to others. It felt to be an enormous, difficult task and I felt unprepared with the skill necessary to do it. Still, it persisted.

The scarred monk, having promised one more visit to complete his work, returned in a subtle manner, performing another operation on me. While I was moving in and out of an absorbed state,<sup>16</sup> my breath was stopped and I felt his bony arm reach into my throat. He snapped my spine. It being broken, he pulled the whole spinal column out and threw it away. Not sure of the meaning or value of this, I sensed that the yogic process of the kundalini circuitry of descent and ascent had finished its necessary work and he

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16 Formless state or samadhi.

was discarding it.

I also experienced Adi Da performing a subtle circuitry change in which he examined my back and neck and said, “I can open it all the way now. It’s still a little tight.” He asked me if I wanted to wait or go ahead and I told him to go ahead. He reached in the front of my neck and said it was still very tight. He explained, “That part of the neck remains intact for teachers. When a teacher is finished teaching, it will fall out naturally. The area connected to this tightened part might be painful to pull out.” I said, “Go ahead, it’s alright.” I also told him that since I had finished my sadhana I was now able to see how great, how beautiful, his compassion and love were. I thanked him and we kissed. Adi Da then showed me a series of pictures and told me I would be teaching these people in two years. He added a bit of advice saying, “Remember, the third eye is where it’s at with teaching.”

I struggled with the growing urge and impulse to teach. It pressed upon me with an urgency. I felt its compassionate push to serve and to help women in particular. Still, teaching felt to be an absurdity. It occurred to me that without my True Nature receding into the background of my earlier life and my struggle to be returned, to be Awakened in It once again, I would have been unable to understand the human condition and thus awaken in me a profound sympathy for others’ delusion and self-created contraction away from the Self. Then I realized that this was my preparation for teaching, that this was the means to develop a way to establish true relationship and real service for others. I noticed a process of natural meditation occurring in relationship to people. I experienced their thoughts, feelings, karmas, dreams, even bodily shapes and physical attributes in my own body-mind. My body-mind boiled with the meditation of the many qualities of people I met and with whom I entered into a mutual sympathy and caring. This occurred even with people I did not see in the physical—with people whom I contacted in dreams and via exposure through the media. I was naturally equipped to do this.

There was no thought or disciplined intention behind it. When I met someone who was destined to be with me, I showed them—through the subtle phenomenon of dreaming later that night—all their selves and lifetimes. I felt this was one of the indications that Adi Da was referring to when he told me, “Remember, the third eye is where it’s at with teaching.” Later I read that Adi Da described the Ajna door as the place where the Guru contacts his disciple. “The Guru contacts his disciple in a tangible way at the seat behind and slightly above the eyes. This is the door through which the uncreated Light descends and ascends. It is often called the seat of the Guru. In some traditions a person is told to meditate on his Guru there.”<sup>17</sup>

As the teaching impulse grew stronger and the process of my life moved towards accepting and embracing it, I noticed that my husband Jeff was involved in his own process that contained him in a growing pattern of psychic and emotional stress. After collapsing in this stress at work, he decided and I agreed, that it was best for him to convalesce and restore his strength in the countryside. We moved to his parents’ farm in rural Pennsylvania in the winter of 1986 to spend time with this purpose in mind. Because of this crisis, my teaching urge was held to assist my husband. Adi Da was forceful in dreams, urging me to begin teaching. He was insistent and I felt his strong need for me to open my work. His advice to me at that time was, “The only way you are going to learn how to teach is to go out there and make a lot of mistakes. That’s what I did.” I was shocked at this advice. He told me of his early days of teaching. He was clearly frustrated with me, exclaiming, “I was already working hard with people at the point you’re at.” This kind of exchange between us was not unusual, as both my teachers had always taught and treated me with an impersonal severity. There was no doubt of our love for each other, but Adi Da was always strict (via the subtle) in his guidance of my re-Awakening and now in his insistence of my teaching. I felt all the natural, Divine capacities to do such work and the

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<sup>17</sup> Adi Da, Method of The Siddhas (Dawn Horse Press, Middletown, CA 1995).

initiation into it. I felt this strong compulsion to serve women and to serve him, through helping him in his Divine work and play.

I have been a strong, passionate person, following my own intuitions even if they were disapproved of conventionally but, despite that inner strength, I was also very shy and found it difficult to be openly the leader or teacher and was uncomfortable in being the center of attention. I was not naive enough to believe that people hearing the truth would joyously surrender their lives to the realization of it. Being a young woman of thirty-three myself, with children who were young and a husband who was ailing, the difficult obstacles of such a service were already apparent. Still, at my beloved Guru's insistence, I threw myself into it. I made the difficult decision of giving full custody to my children's father, intuiting that someday we would enter into the truest form of relationship: the Guru-devotee relationship. In the spring of 1986, at a meeting that my in-laws were giving to discuss psychic new age material, I described to a small group of people what Enlightenment is. I gave the simple, true teaching of "Already Happiness Itself, Consciousness Itself," explained that there was no way to find Happiness, that we are already Happiness Itself, and that I had realized this. There were a few shock waves and also a curiosity and excitement. I answered their questions, and so my teaching was set in motion.

Still not knowing the "how" of writing a book, that did not now keep me from the task. It took me about six weeks or so to complete the manuscript of *Woman Warrior and the Art of Seeing*. It was a simple book describing my life and re-Awakening, and a series of considerations and exercises that helped women penetrate the myths of programming that prevented them from entering the sensitizing process to what is true and real. Later, after gathering a handful of women and teaching them for a while, they wrote another section of *Woman Warrior* explaining what they had understood through my considerations and life demonstrations with them.

A small group of women formed and studied with me. Often, after a brief meditation period with them, we considered “everything.” Eventually, the considerations began to pattern themselves around how to assert their feelings in order to be able to practice what they loved. They firmly believed in—and resented at the same time—the societal myth that their fulfillment came about in identifying themselves in a feminine role, particularly as wife and mother. They studied all their roles hoping to penetrate the myths. They were frightened of themselves, of their own sense of self, of power, of their own ambitions. They felt guilty, selfish, and stupid if they had strong interests or ambitions outside the societal roles that were given them to secure happiness. Happiness and love were not identified as a free, radical, open heart. Rather, happiness and love were defined as accepting and adhering to normal, conventional roles that gave them identity and gave the body security. We considered everything, constantly experimenting at very ordinary life levels to penetrate the myth of identity as a woman. What or who is a woman, really? Is she only identified as her roles? Is she only her personality? As they explored their own identities, they began to understand their resentment and anger that always lay right under the polite smiling faces that women wear. Some of my students recognized that their anger was due to the suppression of the true feminine and that the conditioning they had received was unnatural to them, and inhibited their creative force and controlled and manipulated their yielding, nurturing force. Most were terrified to openly assert desires and ambitions which were apart from the desires of the men in their lives. They found themselves psychologically and emotionally manipulating the men to get what they wanted. It was even very difficult for some of them to attend the meetings or contribute the monthly donation of \$50 if their husbands were displeased, disapproved, or had some casual desire they wanted fulfilled. This early time with women had very little direct use of me as Guru. Rather, I was their friend and helped them learn how to humanize their lives.

Through this time of consideration, of penetrating myths of identity, I examined and felt not just my students' personal inhibitions, but I also saw how the fearful inhibitions were demonstrated in the lives of all women. My teaching work gave me a vehicle to study more extensively the suppression and suffering of women throughout the world. What I learned, saw, felt, and absorbed was horrifying and the crudest blow was that it was considered the norm. Genocide of unwanted female fetuses and babies was common in this world. Genital mutilation, and in some cases complete removal of a woman's reproductive organs as a form of sexual control, was practiced in all countries of the world. Women could be sold into slavery, into sexual slavery, and bargained for as goods. Denial of human life—condemned to sexual control and slavery, to having no say and vote in their society, to be worked as slaves, and battered and raped by men—this was the norm for most women in the world. I lived in this rage and meditated it as my daily meal and service. During the time when my friends told their stories and expressed their fears, I felt the collective cry of all the women in the world for their suffering to be seen and heard. Most people can't take in what kind of world this is for women. It's too horrifying a picture. Only a strong heart could feel this. When people are faced with the facts and information, they argue that it could be inaccurate, that the data was collected in an unprofessional manner. If one woman suffers the loss of her life simply because she is an unwanted female, isn't that unacceptable to each one of us? If there was no true, natural femininity allowed to be free in its role and form—to develop, to realize its true worth and its true source of identity because of the controlling myths that suppressed the hearts of women—it was also true that there was no true, natural masculinity being expressed and lived. The sexes lived in fear, control, and manipulation of each other. Men manipulated through physical violence, confining women to serve their dreams of gaining more power, while women manipulated emotionally and psychically to assert the right to their lives and desires.

During my intensive study, research, and meditation of women's actual status and plight, more and more women told their stories of abuse in the media. The shock, that the family structure was not a secure place of happy identity for women, was revealed in the fact that the largest cause of women's unnatural death was spousal battering. The feminist movement had touched on some core inequalities and addressed them in our country, but now the women of the world were also telling of their suffering—and this included peasant women to princesses. Much of their plight was extreme in that it involved physical torture and loss of life.

To understand the suffering and suppression of the feminine, I had to see it first in my own identity as a woman (the rapes, etc.), then I came to see it in the controlling myths and belief systems that the women I taught were pressed upon to actualize as truth or identity. I saw hatred of the feminine. This unconscious ignorance was prevalent and enacted in sad dramas of control throughout the world. I saw that the religious and even spiritual communities fared no better and also unconsciously played out the usual role of suppressing the female. I felt and saw this whole drama of suppression as the denial of the Divine—as the denial of the One Who is living us. I saw it in the inability of the peoples of the world to yield, to surrender to what lives us. People believed there was nothing to yield to, that there was no attracting power beyond the security of their own bodily lives. To give love or be called into love beyond mundane, bodily fulfillment was considered to be a foolish ideal or dream or even insanity. The individual's accomplishment (and essentially the man's accomplishment) was seen as paramount. The dreaming heart, the psychic knowingness, felt sensitivity—all these are functions of the feminine process and were seen as silly and unscientific. Women's true sensitivity of yielding to the attracting power of the Divine had been denied and subjugated to women's over-concern for identity and accomplishment in the physical world. Women, unable to practice and identify the attracting force of the Divine through the natural subtle doorways (the heart), were reduced to being neurotic, overly emotional,

weak, and unable to discipline themselves and their intimates. The shakti (the feminine force of the Divine), the infusion of the Divine Being, did not occur naturally in people, even in spiritual communities where people practiced for years to receive such spiritual transmission and blessing. The spiritual process is a feminine-based process of yielding, of being attracted beyond one's self identity, of giving up oneself to the Divine. The process of discrimination is not a verbal, mind-based process of listening to one's thoughts and declaring non-identity with or non-interest in the thoughts. True discrimination is a profound feeling sensitivity (not emotionalism) to what is beyond the body-mind altogether and a yielding and disciplining of the body-mind to That.

So in the beginning times with my students I continued to learn and grow, to experiment and to heal and help. Enlightenment was not a dead state. Actualizing my life of realization of the Divine and integrating the human life as the Divine process, life and Being continued. These early years of my re-Awakening and teaching were associated and concerned with helping the women who came to me, and they moved into a profound help and compassion for the plight of all women, as a means and a way to restore the feminine as a spiritualizing process and reality.

The work moved always in spontaneous ways and was not calculated in any way. Through feeling intuition, the how and why of the work arose naturally, and the wisdom of it became more apparent as my life was consumed in it. There would be times when my body-mind would become too toxified and overloaded with the accumulation of what I had absorbed. Throughout one weekend in early September of 1986, my body showed signs of collapsing under the strain. I could barely breathe and didn't know if the body would survive. I felt the strong internal presence and love of my friend Rama and I felt him holding me to life. After a couple of days of holding tenaciously to life and moving in and out of the absorbed state, the crisis passed and my vitality and health returned.

Unfortunately, my husband's illness returned and worsened. He experienced hallucinations and voices, symptoms caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain. No one in his sphere had any understanding of this mental illness. We did not know how to understand his behavior, which was growing more psychically overfocused, odd, strange, and eventually bizarre. We all felt incapable of working with it, and accepted that it was very serious in nature and that he ought to seek a medical cure. Our lives were separating under very traumatic circumstances and, although I hoped my love for him would give him what he needed, his destiny would take him down a very long road of healing without me by his side.

My life was now completely turned over to the women who came to me. A small group of us moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and I gave myself over in every way to serve their process of awakening. I simply was their friend, sister, mother, and teacher. I served them in all these roles, always instructing them and pointing them towards true wisdom while teaching them natural discipline and balance in the body-mind.

I dreamt of Adi Da asking me to write another book and I wrote a novel that related to hidden forces, both negative and positive, that were at play in a woman's life and how a group of women become aware of these forces and asserted their own force of power for spiritual growth. I called it *Dreams, Visions and Ordinary Life*.

It was in the spring of 1987 that a remarkable book entitled *No Mind, I Am the Self* arrived in the mail. Upon looking at the grinning young woman on the back cover, I yelled in delight. I recognized her and her love, and knew I would travel to India to meet her. Her name was Sri Mathru Sarada. I read the book, which was an account of her own and her Guru's (Sri Lakshmana), sadhana and teachings. I recalled dreams of Sarada and Sri Lakshmana that I had had during my sadhana days. They had been part of the subtle help I received during that time. After I finished the book on these two Gurus, they

visited me in the subtle and I had this experience with them:

*In this subtle environment my children were with me. We were invited to a darshan occasion of meditation. My children sat down beside me and I instructed them to sit quietly in meditation and to follow my lead. In a few moments two people entered the room—an older man with white hair wearing a Greek sailor cap and a young, darker-complexioned woman wearing a beautiful emerald and gold, jeweled sari. I immediately recognized the woman to be Sarada. She sat in the Guru's place of honor. The five of us closed our eyes in meditation. Sarada and I appeared to be sitting apart in meditation, but actually, we were in an embrace of each other and were dancing madly into a state of absorption. The dance of loving absorption exhausted itself. Sarada left the room and the older man followed her. I heard him talking to Sarada telepathically, saying, "She is a very pure one." Sarada agreed and I realized that the older man was her Guru, Sri Lakshmana.*

I wrote to Sarada asking her if I could come to see her and offered her my love and respect. She welcomed me to come in late August. Before I left on this auspicious trip to India to meet my heart-friends, I moved to San Francisco with a few of my students. I felt I had exhausted the work within the framework of possibility in rural Pennsylvania and longed to return to California's natural power and beauty.

With two of my students, I arrived in India on August 19, 1988. Previously I had not even traveled outside the United States. India was a culture shock where all the rawness of life was seen in the streets. After a few days in the big coastal city of Madras to adjust ourselves to the cultural differences and the time change

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**Sarada in the mandir at Sri Lakshmana Ashram,  
Chillakur. First trip to India, August 1988.**

of 13 1/2 hours, we headed out to Sarada's ashram in the rural countryside. The ashram was located on the fringe of a primitive village called Chillakur. The road into the ashram was a vanishing dirt lane of huge potholes. The ashram itself was more modern than the village, but it was still, by American standards, simple and unrefined. It was self-contained on a few acres of untended land and the few buildings had the same lived-in, natural deterioration. My students were apprehensive about the primitiveness of it and concerned about getting the basic necessities of life—but Sarada's brothers brought us food cooked by their mother.

The atmosphere of the ashram was casual. Sarada lived with Sri Lakshmana in his house. A handful of devotees lived on the ashram grounds. She loved them as her loved ones, like a family—not unlike my life with my students. On our first meeting we simply sat with her while she chatted with her devotees. I felt her beauty and we exchanged beautiful smiles as we gazed into each other's heart. The sweetness of her heart was so delightful that after I left her side my body-mind could not hold to form and I passed the night not knowing if my eyes were open or closed. My body was melted in love.

The following evening she performed a puja, a sacred ceremony using symbolic ceremonial and ordinary items to invoke meditation on the Divine. During this traditional Indian religious ceremony, my gaze fell on Ramana Maharshi's life-size portrait that hung in the place of honor in the open-air shrine or temple. I continued to become more absorbed into this meditation with Ramana Maharshi. A wind whipped up, and thunder and lightning were traveling towards us. I felt his complete, vulnerable embrace and welcoming of me in this humble place, into his family that included the lovers, Sarada and Sri Lakshmana. As the ceremony reached its peak the rains came down along with the tears that flowed down my cheeks. I accepted Sarada's prasad of coconut water and sweetened rice. One of my students tied a sacred thread which Sarada gave me around my wrist—which I felt symbolized the sacred tie or circle of our

family. This sacred thread would play out a mysterious leela<sup>18</sup> in the future.

Sarada told us stories from her sadhana and spoke in a playful manner about her relationship to Siva, describing the visions she had of the God deity who lived on Arunachala Mountain in Tiruvannamalai. She mentioned the cobra coiled around his neck and that triggered the memory of a vision I had had a few months before I came to India. It was also of a cobra:

*In the vision I was walking along a lake when a form emerged from it. It was the slithering body of the snake. It was enormous, occupying most of the lake. As it emerged, it saw me and instantly I knew it wanted to eat me. It was upon me in a second and grabbed my leg in its mouth. I gazed into its eyes and said, "This body can give you temporary nourishment, but if you were to have a relationship to Me, your hunger would be satisfied completely and forever." The snake loosened its grip on my leg, bowed to me, and sat quietly by my side in silent contemplation of Me. I looked into the sky and although it was night there were two rainbows in the sky over the water. One was in the shape of an arrow and it pointed to a perfect rainbow of traditional circular shape.*

Several years passed before I realized the full significance of that vision. The snake was the force of nature, eating everything to insure its survival and continuance. The snake's intentions towards me were the same—to continue its life, it needed to eat. It only knew itself as this urge. It only knew this kind of life, of seeking satisfaction in the temporary. When I faced the snake, unafraid of this force, I offered to completely satisfy his hunger and he recognized and yielded to my truer wisdom—that only in love will

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<sup>18</sup> Divine play or story.



I had a vision of an enormous snake who wanted to eat me. I gazed into its eyes and said, "This body can give you temporary nourishment, but if you were to have a relationship to Me, your hunger would be satisfied completely and forever." (Painting by Yasuko Matsuzaka)

one be truly satisfied. The snake represented the deluding power of nature, of manifestation, not inherently evil but needing to be tamed, embraced and mastered in the Divine. Only in yielding to the Divine can its need to constantly eat be satisfied and come to rest as ItSelf. The two rainbows, the traditional circular one and the arrow pointing to it, signified the Divine circuitry of the Transcendental One or MySelf as the the body-mind.<sup>19</sup>

A few nights before that vision, Adi Da had appeared to me through subtle visionary experience. He was very tender and embraced me as a lover would. He whispered into my ear words of love and praise, calling me his equal and referring to me with the spiritual title of Mother.

Lying in a blissful state after the puja and the hearing of Sarada's stories, I was haunted by these visions, but I didn't know how to comprehend them at the time. I was joyous to have found a heart-friend, and through this friendship I was introduced to the lineage of her Guru and of his Guru, Sri Ramana Maharshi. Although my relationships with my own Gurus were impersonal—developed through meditation and lived in Realization—my relationship to India's great tradition of spirituality was beginning in a personal friendship that would continue to develop throughout many return trips to visit Sarada, Sri Lakshmana, Ramana Maharshi, and India.

Before we left Sarada's, we were graciously brought into her house to have darshan with her Guru, Sri Lakshmana. In his early sixties, Sri Lakshmana presented himself as a dignified, sensitive, spiritually awakened man. He sat in silence with us for a short while and I felt immediately accepted, respected, and loved by this shy Realizer. He spoke a few words about love and faith in the Guru and directed those words to my students. He remained in our company no longer than fifteen minutes. This beautiful but brief period he gave us was gracious, as he had been moved to live a qui-

<sup>19</sup> The circular rainbow refers to the circuit of the spirit current and the arrow refers to the opening of the heart, from right to left, across the chest.

et, reclusive life, turning over the teaching work to Sarada. After discovering that Sri Lakshmana had enjoyed drawing and painting when he was younger, I confided in Sarada about the dreams I had had of Sri Lakshmana in which he posed as an artist, teaching me the art of feeling through the fingertips.

When we left Sarada and Sri Lakshmana, we all felt a spiritual homecoming of intimate family hearts. The next part of our journey was to Ramana Maharshi's ashram at the foot of the Maharshi's beloved mountain, Arunachala. Sarada was very helpful and encouraging of us to find our way and to be received at her Guru's Guru's ashram. I knew she loved the place, particularly the mountain, as her prayers of sadhana and realization were answered by it. Eventually, a few years later, Sarada and Sri Lakshmana would move to Tiruvannamalai to live by their beloved mountain and to be near the ashram of the Guru at the head of their lineage.

During the car and bus rides to Tiruvannamalai, which lasted about 3 1/2 hours, I heard my name being chanted in my heart with the purest love and gaiety. It was Sarada. A play ensued of chanting back and forth—she chanted my name, MaRa, I chanted hers, Sarada. The chanting continued and became more passionate, intense, and delightful. It was an inner swirling, intensifying play of singing absorption into each other. She was with me, I with her, throughout the whole ride to Tiruvannamalai. As we approached the gate to the ashram, the play relaxed into a gentle peace instead of a maddening dance of bliss.

To pay my respects to this great sage I went to the meditation hall where he had sat in darshan for many years. On the couch where he had lived much of his life, there was a life-size photo of him. I immediately felt received, and tears flowed down my cheeks. I sat in this disposition and then, not leaving the gaze of Ramana Maharshi in my Heart, I felt him urging me to initiate various people who came into the hall to meditate and acknowledge his presence. I gently pushed this urging of me away but it continued and I felt compelled to do it. I al-

lowed the impulse to be fulfilled and inwardly instructed those to whom my gaze was directed. I did not say anything aloud to anyone about this.

This trip to India was fulfilling a great need in me to find my spiritual relatives and my connection within the play of the spiritual family. I approached India and its great realizers as a devotee, humbly acknowledging them in my heart, feeling and sensing my relatedness to the spiritual traditions that went before me. I played this role, feeling an acceptance and respect for India's great Gurus. But I was also free, an independent agent, One who lived outside tradition, a maverick, a secret agent of the Divine. My own Gurus, Rama and Adi Da, had taught me subtly and as meditation itself. I was never instructed to be anything but on my own, outside all form or spiritual form or organization. The progress and signs of my understanding and realization were lived amidst the most ordinary, mundane society during my sadhana. I never lived apart from society and I was left alone to integrate what I had learned and realized. This first trip to India was like a homecoming for me and India revealed to me signs that were congruent with my own naturally arising knowing, teaching identity, and impulses. One such sign occurred at the tomb of Ramana Maharshi's mother, who was said to be Self-Realized at the time of her death while being attended, helped, and instructed by her son and Guru. In her shrine there was a stone statue of a female deity. As I studied the statue I felt a stirring recognition in me. I asked a male attendant to the shrine who this statue was. I was told she was Durga. I felt I was on the edge of an essential revelation and went to the ashram library to find any material on this goddess. What I discovered made my hair stand up and my heart leap! Durga was the warrior goddess! The woman warrior was the persona I had felt myself to be and which I had taught my students to help them break through the suppression of the male ego. Durga was birthed by the male gods. They gave their essence of strength, power, and fire to her. She was created to slay the demons of the male ego and she stood outside the structure, independent of the male gods' hierarchy. She rode a



The statue of the warrior goddess, Durga, which I discovered at the tomb of Ramana Maharshi's mother at Sri Ramanashramam, Tiruvannamalai. First trip to India, August 1988.

lion,<sup>20</sup> demonstrating her mastery over all the qualities of the conditional realm. It was said that Kali, the goddess of destruction and rapid spiritual transformation, sprang from her forehead and that she created female helpers from herself. She was wild, creative, and lived on or around mountains. This astounded me and I recalled the similarities of my life and sadhana with this archetypal goddess. During my sadhana, to focus meditation, I had meditated on the Kali yantra<sup>21</sup> for many months. My dreams of initiation by the lion, my impulse to teach the warrior to women, and how my teaching began apart from any established male lineage, all related directly to the work and play of Durga. Mountains always played a key role in my life as the places where I returned to be mySelf.

This was an amazing discovery to me, and it clarified much for me about my spiritual work with women and the feminine. But an even more amazing discovery was to take place upon my return from India in October, 1988. On the fateful day of October 7, I went to the Dawn Horse Bookstore and bought a *Crazy Wisdom*<sup>22</sup> magazine. In it was an article called "Love is a Puja." I thought the article would help me understand the meaning and value of the pujas Sarada performed while I had been with her. However, before I turned to it, my attention was riveted on a story entitled, "The Durga Pilgrimage." It was about a couple of Adi Da's devotees who, at his request, had traveled to India to secure a statue of Durga—an exact replica of the statue that had become the living, visionary shakti for him at Muktananda's ashram during his sadhana years. They were also instructed to do pujas to the Durga statue at places that had spiritual significance for Adi Da. They returned with the statue on September 10, 1986, and Adi Da himself, all alone, did a two-hour puja to the statue by dressing and preparing it. This occurred in early September, 1986, during my illness, when my physical life and hence my teaching work, were in great jeopardy.

This was a staggering revelation that confirmed to me a

20 Both lions and tigers are used traditionally as the mount for Durga.

21 A mandala used for meditation on the Goddess Kali.

22 Periodical devoted to the teachings of Adi Da.

growing intuition of my spiritual intimacy with Adi Da. He had guided me, meditated me to re-Awaken as the True One, while physically pushing me to be apart so that all would be accomplished and develop naturally through seemingly independent means. I realized that he had initiated me to teach in this seemingly independent manner to allow my spiritual work and influence to develop on its own accord and wisdom in relationship to women and the feminine. I felt his blessing of me—his help, support, passionate caring, and protection of me—in his play and puja to the Durga as his intimate. Although I had heard of his regard for the Divine as She Is and knew from his own story of re-Awakening that he describes his submission to her as the senior Guru of his lineage and his ultimate realization and husbanding of her, I did not know that he viewed the archetypal representation of Her as She Is in the form of Durga. In the final phase of my own sadhana, I had dreamt of a being or a force whom I called Mother. Adi Da also knew Her and referred to Her work with me in dreams. This mysterious play of the Transcendental Truth and Nature of the She occurred in both of our re-Awakening stories. My spontaneous, natural impulse to use the warrior persona with women and my own independent direction, related me most directly to the force and transcendental threshold personality Durga as She Is. I had named my first book, *Woman Warrior and the Art of Seeing*. The obvious implications of this title showed my destiny to assume the asana<sup>23</sup> and attitude of the Feminine Force as cutting through delusion and illusion—not as the force that *births* delusions as seen in typical religions. I also didn't know at the time, that seeing (a phrase I had used in the title of my book, *The Art of Seeing*) is a principle teaching term that Adi Da uses to describe the form of relationship to him in which receptivity to his spiritual transmission is stable and true. My own definition when I wrote the book related it to the capacity to become matured by understanding experience through honesty and feeling sensitivity to one's life.

I also learned the significance of the mysterious event that

<sup>23</sup> Form or position.

happened to him on January 11, 1986 (one month after my re-Awakening), which he called The Divine Emergence. The signs of this event were demonstrated by a collapse of bodily life—a death state that occurred after he had spoken of his sorrow that his teaching work had not been fulfilled. When he returned from this death state, the siddhis of his teaching years had disappeared and he had acquired the new siddhi of Blessing. He had completed the meditation of everyone and everything in his body-mind. He had turned over his body-mind to this complete purification of the conditional realms for many years, and now his body was a perfect vehicle. In this perfect meditation the Divine had Emerged not just in the conditional realm to be realized but as the conditional realm Itself. The perfected acquiring and spiritualizing by the Divine of the Life vehicle purified the world of its sin, difference, or separation from God. My strongest understanding of this significant event occurred years later when I was struck with the depth of this gesture of the Divine, that Adi Da is truly the Divine Being whom everyone seeks and yearns to be fulfilled in and as.

I knew it was no mere coincidence that Adi Da's finished abandonment of his teaching work and his insistence that my teaching begin, directly coincided with my re-Awakening a month earlier. He appeared to me in the weeks after his Divine Emergence, looking deathlike. When he left his hermitage and secluded life to be visible and to show his sign to the world in 1986, I wanted very much to go to him. Through a series of events, I was not able to see him at that time. Instead, he pushed me to teach and write *Woman Warrior and the Art of Seeing*.

Returning from the first trip to India, I thought of all this—my new, personal, spiritual friendship with Sarada and her lineage, my continuing spiritual friendship and love for Rama (via the subtle), my relationship to teaching, and the signs of love and revelation of Adi Da's life and our spiritual relationship and intimacy. The course to teach had been set by Adi Da's insistence that I begin. The work had a consuming fire of its own. The more I gave to it, the more it absorbed me and ac-

quired all my life. I saw it as my continued gesture of love, submission, and obedience to Adi Da and, as the work continued, I could not in any way separate this love and spiritual intimacy with Him from the love for the women I taught and the feminine She Is that was being purified, that was descending into this body-mind. *It was my love for Him, lived in active submission to all beings.* I did not understand the significance of all this at that time. My life unfolded as the teacher and friend to women and this was the occupation of my life.

In a gesture to fully offer my life of Awakening for the purpose of serving the Feminine, I traveled to the Vedanta Temple in Hollywood. The Vedanta Temple is a shrine dedicated to the work and teachings of three great saints from India—Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, who brought the teaching of Vedanta<sup>24</sup> to the West, and Ramakrishna's wife, Sarada Devi, called the Holy Mother. Ramakrishna taught and lived in a play of intimate relationship with the Divine as Mother. Adi Da, in a cosmic embrace with the Divine as She Is, realized himself as the Transcendental Being while sitting in this very temple back in 1970. During my sadhana years, I had gone on several occasions to the temple to meditate and offer myself to the Divine. On October 15, 1988, I returned to this place where the Goddess is alive and honored. I brought with me the puja string that Sarada had given me and placed it behind the picture of Sarada Devi as my offering. I called to the Mother as She Is and implored Her to use me in service to Her and all women. I felt my task was an impossible one, but I had to give all to it. The true spiritualizing aspect of the Feminine had been denied, suppressed, and almost destroyed. I knew it was Adi Da's intent to keep it alive, to allow its creative spiritualizing work, its earthiness, and its light form and heart to be seen and loved. He had demonstrated that love for me and I felt I had to demonstrate and be that love for all women and for the Feminine. I had to bring alive the Feminine as She Is, the Transcendental Being, by my own life and realization of It.

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24 Advaita Vedanta is an ancient philosophy of India which teaches that there is only God.

That is why I had to stand apart (seemingly) from him. I had to show and be that sign, the revelation of She Is as Transcendental One. I had to absorb and heal—using the siddhis available through this body-mind—the hatred and denial of the Feminine as spiritualizing force and reality. At times the anguish, sorrow, rage, and fear of this absorption in service to women caused the body to collapse in toxicity. The unconscious insanity of it was a wound I lived with. I had to walk into it and heal by loving, telling, and seeing the truth in all possible best and worst circumstances. My difficult life had equipped me with the stamina to do it. I knew I was not alone in this work and, like in my sadhana years, forces and beings aided me. And Adi Da was always by my side as mySelf, the Heart.

After this informal but complete heart-opening puja at the Vedanta Temple, Adi Da appeared to me in subtle vision at 6:37 a.m. on November 7, 1988:

*He began preparing for a puja in front of a Siva lingam<sup>25</sup>. I naively walked towards him, not understanding what was happening. He looked at me and bowed his head towards me. He did this two times. I intuited the significance of the bows, the first bow was the recognition of the Self in this apparent form and the second was the recognition of the Self as the Function of Guru. Adi Da was ready to perform the puja. There were young girls in attendance who surrounded me. I was clothed in a ceremonial robe of golden silk. Adi Da stood before me with a bowl of water and, as he poured the water on my feet, his form disappeared and reappeared as a feminine One as well. When he finished this sacred ceremony, I filled up with tears at its significance. Adi Da smiled with great*

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<sup>25</sup> An oblong stone representing male force resting on a circular stone representing the female force.

*pleasure and radiance at me. All the female children cried out in delight and happiness.*

Often, Adi Da's instruction to me (via the subtle) was to be more visible and public as a teacher. This was difficult for me and I felt reluctant about it as an effective means of teaching. For very brief times, I appeared at public functions to teach and meditate with others, and a few more women were drawn to me. Another group of women from the San Francisco area formed to study with me. I always taught in a lively, spontaneous manner reflecting people back to themselves so they could see what they were really up to. I suppose this didn't help to make me a popular teacher. I used any creative means to aid my students. My lively way of teaching kept everyone from redefining the teaching as some dead language or way of life that they could parrot back in a robot-like communication. We had fashion shows and wanderings by car, where the only rule was to keep up and keep attention on the Guru (I must say it was often very easy to lose everyone!). We took long hikes, had challenges to find me in dreams, held parties and meditation marathons. We did art and music to open their hearts. We considered everything in life, in order to understand how to live in Truth, in Heart, instead of in unconscious patterns of suppressing their natural, true happiness. I used any creative means and I could not imagine any aliveness or enjoyment in teaching in an established formal manner. My nature and Realization only allowed me to move everyone beyond themselves in every manner in which I was creatively apt—even if this meant that I played many roles—including the clown, the sage, the fearless warrior, the yielding lover, the rebel, the revolutionary, and the artist.

I loved my students and we became a family. I gave my life entirely to deepen their impulse to live and understand Truth, Love, and Happiness. I lived with them as them, always turning them to happiness and relationship and confronting them when they settled into patterns of dissociation and self-absorbed enclosures of sorrow and fear. I took advantage of every event to consider and teach, including

the time I was in an accident. My car was totaled and my head had cracked the windshield. But fortunately, besides a minor head gash and a fractured ankle, there were no serious injuries. My students, concerned and frightened, came to my aid at the hospital. I talked to them about the fragility of the body, telling them that Enlightenment is not a state in which you escape this fragility. They so much wanted a fantasy of God-Realization or some other state of imagined protection in which the impermanence of life need not be faced. It was hard for them to see and emotionally accept that there was no ultimate protection or security for the body. It will slowly decay. Life can be wiped out at any time, and to search for ultimate fulfillment and any real kind of stability and happiness through desires of the body-mind, is to live in fantasy and denial.

Throughout my teaching struggle with others, I've always seen this remarkable persistence in people to assert a fantasy and a search for fulfillment through identifying and acquiring the next object of desire, never actually *feeling directly* that their actual lives were not fulfilled by this activity of receiving the next object. It didn't matter if the next object was chocolate cake, sex, or more subtle psychic abilities. Even spiritual experiences were sought through a fantasy that emotional and physical life could be fulfilled by them. The body-mind was always being perceived as the one that could be fulfilled when, in reality, everyone felt that happiness never arrived through experience. Although I had revealed to them that you cannot find happiness but can only be happiness; they could only identify themselves as being as happy as the next desire they acquired. Temporarily, in my company and with my life demonstration—as in the case of the accident—they saw that loss of health was not loss of love or happiness. Obviously the body was not experiencing pleasure—only pain at this time—but I was still alive in radiant fullness and understanding. This was an inspiration to them, but still they clung to fantasies of bodily protection and security, and accepted this as necessary to find happiness—never truly understanding that this stress based on fantasy not on actual felt experience was what they were suffering.



**Teaching after my car accident, San Francisco,  
December 1989**



**Tree ceremony  
renaming  
Mount Tamalpais  
Waking Woman  
of the  
Heart Mountain  
January 1, 1990.**

At the basis of their lives, at the core of everything they did, was their mad pursuit of fantasies, objects, and experiences to escape the sorrow, fear, and anger that they identified as themselves—as body-minds—as separate from Happiness Itself. If they could relax and see the foolishness of this escape and pursuit and see that no matter what they did, the sorrow, fear, and anger were constantly with them—unsuccessfully hidden by society’s conforming, polite rituals—they could come to rest by yielding all that to the Divine. I don’t think they could imagine the import of what I was truly trying to teach. They would always reassert that the lack of self-confidence or self-esteem was the reason their lives never arrived at happiness. If only they were smarter, prettier, harder working, sneakier, more strategic, more assertive, more powerful—they could make happiness arrive through objects and experiences of the body-mind. Their approach was always this fake self-esteem of using spiritual teachings to support their psychological theories.

After four years of teaching I realized the work would be painstakingly slow. The women remained loyal to their fantasies and manipulated their emotions to pretend that happiness could be sought, found, and realized via objects of the body. They practiced this life of addiction to identification with objects or experience as happiness, with all the vengeance they could muster. At times they would practice self-control with diet, sex, and sleep, but they could not or would not practice self-control with their emotions, nor accept this self-control as necessary to mature themselves. Emotional maturity can only come about through acceptance of life’s experience. It’s the same insight for everyone: the body decays and dies and no permanent happiness has ever found through bodily acquisition. Without this insight and practice of emotional self-control, the ability to live and realize happiness as Oneself—not sought for or acquired but as One’s actual True Nature—the practice of abiding and living as this Truth, could not be actualized or even remembered.

They struggled with me. They wanted me to take care of them. I am what I am. They saw me as a powerful source, a

strong parent from whom they had a right to demand that I provide them with happiness. They hoped Enlightenment would be given to them and they fantasized that after they received it, they would return to a life in which all their desires worked out and there would never be any bitter sting to life. They wanted their “heaven” now—and if Enlightenment had anything to do with it, and it could all work out here, and you didn’t have to die to get there—then they wanted it now and I should give it to them.

As I waited for them to accept the lesson of life and turn to me as the Source of their Heart lived as their Guru, my life and interests in service developed in other ways. I took seriously my always creative impulses, which I had used primarily as a teaching means, and spent more time painting, drawing, teaching myself music, and writing. I wrote another novel in the spring of 1989, called *And the Truth Will Be Told By the Healing of the Warrior Spirit*, as well as numerous short stories. I wandered alone, discovering many places in nature, and worked with the energies and spirits in the natural realms.

This relationship and play with nature had always existed in my life, starting when I was a young girl spending time to feel myself in the woods and playing in the call of the wildflowers. During my sadhana years, I returned constantly to the wild to learn, contemplate, and clear myself. My relationship to the wild and its gifts to me, were also given in dreams in which animals initiated me into purifying yogic processes. Now, I moved into a play with nature, animals, and nature’s subtler spirits and energies, not just as one who needs, but also as one who gives, serves, and recognizes them as loved ones and as my own form.

Wandering alone through deserts, mountains, valleys, and in forests along the coastal regions, I thrilled in the free, alive beauty of it all. I felt lighter, unbound by the demands and disciplines of teaching. I lingered in delight of my naturalness. I wanted to see all the plants, trees, animals, and insects, and feel them as my own form. I loved this form of meditation work and spent my time in its rapture. While

hiking or camping in nature, subtler spirits who dwelled in relationship to these natural places of beauty contacted me and a play of help and support would begin. Some were naughty and I saw through them, but there were also subtler beings connected with magnificent places of open-endedness who tested me, found me to be true, and a relationship of help, teaching, and service was formed. Over the years, I have returned to these places and spirits, and the relationships have continued to grow much like any relationships that are honored and tended in one's life.

It was during these travels that I contacted two groups of subtler beings whom I called the Grandmother and Grandfather spirits. I contacted the Grandfather spirits in a park in Utah (or should I say we found each other?). While camping in the park and resting in my tent one evening, my attention was drawn to a mountain ledge. I had a vision of being there with three subtler beings who appeared as Native American chiefs. They wondered how I had gotten there and decided to get rid of me by scaring and impressing me with their powers. They played with the natural elements. Lightning and thunder cracked overhead and rain clouds moved quickly, splattering the terrain in their torrent of moisture. I observed their skills and when they saw I was not frightened or impressed, they worked a little harder. Obviously, they were adept at displaying their powers with the natural forces. When I remained silent, they signaled to me, asking what I could do then, if I was not impressed? I shot out lightning from my hands. They were shocked that a woman, a physically incarnate one, had such ability. I turned to them and said, "Perhaps you enjoyed this, but let me show you who I really am." Then I burst into white light.

When I returned to the subtle-physical representation of myself, I could see they were shocked. They talked among themselves for a while and then spoke to me in a reverent way saying, "Indeed your power is greater than ours. We would like to learn from you. How is it that you are the light itself? We want to know this." I replied by telling them, "I would be happy to serve you to come to your true understanding and

form." They replied that they would take seriously and completely anything I asked of them. I gave them a few tasks that related to protecting nature and would also test them a bit. A few were related to helping in the plight of women and the feminine. They were a little put off by my requests, but agreed. Over the years of returning to this place of contact, I have seen that they have taken seriously all my requests and have complied with my conditions, and I have entered into a true, spiritualizing relationship with the Grandfathers.

The Grandmothers, I immediately felt in an unusual forest ten thousand feet above sea level in the mountains of California. As I walked through the forest, I felt their spirit as the trees of the Ancient Bristlecone. They were ancient, kindred spirits, playful with wisdom. Like the Grandfathers, they were not interested in what occupied most humans but, when we felt each other, they were immediately intrigued by my happy wakefulness. They are the guardians of the feminine nature and welcomed me as One of their own. Unlike the Grandfathers, I had to pass no test of power. Feeling me was enough for them. The Grandmothers, not totally content to be away from my force, found a way to live with me. I found a statue of a grandmother made by a Native American. Often, I feel the artist's limitations or lack of true, practicing purity, but this art object was free of any inhibitions or egoity. It was alive with a true, uncompromising, heartful gaze of truth. I purchased it. Over the years, objects I have acquired usually spend time with me, serve a purpose for a period, then move on. Grandmother never allowed me to move her on. She is very insistent that she does her work in the privacy of my room while remaining in subtle link with her sisters in the mountains.

I have taught my students how to be sensitive to what nature gives, both in food for the body and food for the spirit, and to respect and love it. Some of them have become sensitized and, like my earlier relationship to nature, they find being in a wild place heals them, frees them from the constrictions of society.

tion of their minds, and allows their hearts to come forward. Some of them have observed the qualities and characteristics of different places. For example, Pinnacles National Monument in central California has been a place where people have felt an enchantment and a raw power coming from the jagged peaks. Once, hiking along a desert trail, I felt some lively humorous spirits who made me feel happy and wanting to laugh. As I turned to see how my student was getting along, she was beaming with a most delightful smile and feeling of lightheartedness. I've brought my sisters to places where they became so relaxed by the natural forces and energy, that they described it as being very much like meditation with me. They've also been to places with pesky energy that plays upon and accents their fears. I love the work with the natural forces and have combined it with my creative impulses such as painting and photography. These places and their subtler forces and beings are my loved ones and have no less importance than the people I have come to serve.

My work and leela as the warrior teacher for women continued to reveal itself in sacred events and ceremonies. I dropped all signs of my born name and husband's name—all links to the male lineage—and took the last name, Heart Warrior. Thus Mara Heart Warrior described and located to others my true identity and function. Later I added Da to Mara as a sign of my direct relationship to Adi Da.

In preparation for the second trip to India to visit my spiritual sister, Sarada, I visited the Vedanta Temple once again to commune with the She Force. I related to Her at the time as the Mother. After sitting in the conversation of Silence, of Heart, with Her, I remembered the puja string Sarada had given to me during the puja ceremony she had performed on my first visit. I looked to see if it remained where I had hidden it over a year and a half ago. As I looked behind the picture of Sarada Devi, it became dislodged from its resting place and fell to the floor. I laughed to see it was still where I had left it after all this time. I retrieved it and knew the Mother was

throwing it back in my lap.

The story of this puja string, its offering as a gift, and its surprise retrieval back into my life occurred again in the future. After this initial return, I gave it to one of my students as a gift. Five years later, when I was preparing and reviewing my her-story in preparation for a spiritual pilgrimage, I came across the story of the puja string in my journal. I shared this story with a few of my students and ended it by saying, “I wonder whatever happened to that string.” I had forgotten what I had done with it. I told my students I regretted not having it, as it was a sacred item, a significant one in the herstory of my life. The same student who had tied it around my wrist after Sarada had given it to me, exclaimed that she had been wearing it around her neck in a locket for the last five years. I was thrilled that this sacred object was returned to me after all those years. When rereading my journal entries from the first India trip, I saw another twist to the story. Susan, the student who had been wearing the puja string all those years and the same one who had first tied the string onto my wrist, had a daughter, Amanda, who had made a string bracelet for me before I left for the first trip to India. I wrote in my journal that the puja string Sarada had given me reminded me of the simple string bracelet Amanda had made for me. We marveled at these strange coincidences of the heart. Susan’s daughter, Amanda, is now almost nineteen, and I have been serving her more closely to understand her heart’s impulse.

The second trip to India was a time of human, playful intimacy with Sarada. We were two sisters from very different backgrounds, cultural environments, and experience. I did not speak her native tongue of Telegu and she spoke only some functional English. None of this stopped us from delving into each other’s heart. As was her custom, she continued to be the Guru to her students by performing pujas. But on this trip she also showed her wild, untamed side. We danced and had a party with her that had us laughing in sheer delight. She inquired more about my life and was surprised to learn that I had gone through my sadhana and Awakened without living with my Guru, and that I



Sri Lakshmana, Sarada,  
and me—my family in  
the Great Tradition of  
Ramana Maharshi.



**Sarada and MaRa on the second trip to India, January 1990.  
“The sweetness of her Heart was so delightful...”**



**My beloved sister, Sarada. Second trip, January 1990.**

had had an active sex life and was the mother of two children. During her sadhana years (she was a young girl in her teens), she had lived with her Guru, Sri Lakshmana and, after her awakening, had stayed with him, remaining as a celibate.

My relationship with Sri Lakshmana remained very formal on this trip and retained this form on subsequent ones. I did not feel any lack of spiritual intimacy as a result of this formality. I felt a deep affection and a bond of love in my heart for Sri Lakshmana, and I received this from him also. I often dreamt of him giving me his blessing and kind help, and felt him aiding me in my spiritual work. And I gave my help to him in any way he could use it. I felt a strong impulse to care for Sri Lakshmana and Sarada, to look after any needs they might have, and I often dreamt of Ramana Maharshi asking me to continue to see that they were well cared for. I felt they were my family, a spiritual family that was related in recognition of wakefulness. After my third trip to India, I wrote to Sri Lakshmana asking him to accept me as his own daughter. As it was not his custom, he did not reply in letter form. In future trips with my students though, he acknowledged me with respect by referring to me as a modern sage and to my birth children, Elraya and Gerimaya, as his grandchildren. One of the very few times my students ever saw me cry or moved to tears was when Sarada called me to darshan with Sri Lakshmana. My heart burst open with happiness to see him.

I told Sarada of my discovery of Durga, the warrior goddess, at Ramana Maharshi's ashram on the first trip. I told her how my spiritual work to help women developed with the warrior persona. I asked her to send me a Durga statue as I felt my identity as She Is was represented by this archetypal goddess. I had my students search for such a statue, but felt that only Sarada had the necessary purity and acknowledgement of me to secure a Durga who could be invoked as a sacred representation of the Feminine as Divine Transcendental Being.

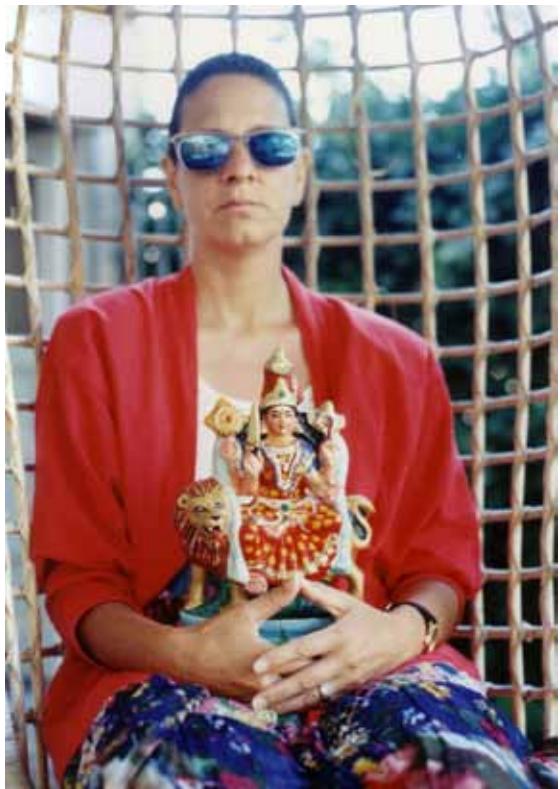
At 3:50 a.m. On April 16, 1990, while I was resting in my

bed back at home, I felt Sarada pull me to her side. She was doing a puja to Durga and was showing me the necessary steps and articles. She went through the entire procedure asking me to repeat each step, which I did. In this subtle experience, Sarada taught me how to do a puja. I was anxious to receive the statue from her but it would be five more months before it arrived. I felt a strong urge to do my own puja and felt I couldn't wait any longer for the statue's arrival. On July 10, 1990, I gathered the necessary articles for the Durga puja. Even with Sarada's subtle instructions, I was not really knowledgeable about this ancient sacred ceremony. I was prepared to be spontaneous. During a period of a few weeks, I had been slowly asking students to acquire certain articles for the ceremony—fragrance, oil, etc. I purchased the remaining articles, including three orchids and two picture frames—one for the photograph of Durga being attended by Adi Da, and the other of Adi Da himself. I asked my students to purify the place and objects of the puja by washing and scenting them. I set up an altar with the picture of Durga I had purchased in the central position. Below the improvised altar, I set up the pictures of my spiritual family and lineage—Adi Da, Rama, Sarada, Sri Lakshmana, and Ramana Maharshi. I placed a picture of myself next to theirs, directly below the one of Durga. Previously, while my students were preparing for the puja, I had passed in and out of the absorbed state constantly seeing Adi Da's face before me.

Now using pictures, texts, and journal entries, I engaged in a puja telling of the mysterious relationship to Durga. I related the story of my sadhana, becoming the warrior when I took the name Keth, and how I was willing to fight, to not be turned from my truer heart impulses. I told the story of my early teaching ordeal and my trip to India where my life and realization as warrior were verified in the spiritual traditions. I told them how I had meditated on the great Kali yantra, how She had consumed me, and how we walk as One now. I explained about the aspects of Durga as warrior, as Shakti—the purifying spiritual current—and as the Transcendental Personality of She Is. I had submitted to Her



Durga puja, San Francisco, 1990



Marada with  
Durga statue sent  
by Sarada,  
August 1990,  
San Francisco



**Marada and Sarada**



**Marada  
Heart Warrior,  
India, 1993**



**Sarada and me on the roof of her new house in Tiruvannamalai, with her beloved Arunachala in the background. January, 1993.**



**Showing the beautiful henna patterns that Sarada painted on my hands. Fourth trip, October 1991**

as the warrior, as the Shakti, and as Transcendental Being, and recognized Her as my Own Self as the True One—as Reality, Consciousness. My relationship to those who find me is as She Is—the Durga—not as goddess but as Transcendental Being. I offered myself and lived not as a separate One from their hearts, but as the Heart of all. My offering for women is to demonstrate the Divine One, as She Is, as their own form, not separate, not sought through identity given by the male ego. Approach to their own Heart and revealing recognition of the Heart, is lived through maturing discipline of the warrior, yielding to the shakti force, and direct location and contemplation of She Is as She truly Is—Transcendental Being.

On August 11, 1990, the Durga statue from Sarada arrived. That fall, on the third trip to India, Sarada presented me with a larger Durga, a statue of Parvati, and miniature representations of Kali. Before I departed for this trip, I had a strange and powerful dream of Master Adi Da. In this dream, on July 25, I was alone with him in a small room:

*He was lying down in an absorbed state. I was stirred at the sight of him and at his complete vulnerability. I laid beside him. He returned to awareness of form and noticed me. I felt his strong despair. He moved from the bed to a perch-like seat that was indented in the wall. There was barely enough room for him to sit there, but I squeezed next to him. I hugged his form and caressed him. I tried to console him with my love. He was completely vulnerable to his despair, completely human, not like a child, but like a loving parent whose children have grown but cannot serve or love. I assured him that he had given everything. He drew some consolation from me but I could not bring him out of his despair. I was saddened to see his Great Love for the world go unnoticed and be rejected. I wanted to embrace him in a way that alleviated the pain of his life work—that*



Durga statue *I Am She*, given to me by Sarada in India,  
November 1990



**Emerging Durga, San Francisco, 1990**  
(painting by Yasuko Matsuzaka).

*the very gift of himself had not been truly received. I told him that I would always serve him, that I loved him. We looked out the window and I saw a form approaching. Adi Da asked me who it was. I moved towards the window and peered out. It was Vivekananda. His form was ethereal and shadowy. As he approached the window his form diffused and expanded into huge proportions. I told Adi Da that it was Vivekananda and I remarked that I had always loved him. Of the three—Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi, and Vivekananda—I had felt more related to him, to his high ideals, his integrity, and his love of the Dharma that impelled him to go to America, to serve the world by teaching in the West. As I was saying this, Vivekananda walked through the window and into my chest on the right side and was absorbed into me.*

This event in consciousness revealed to me another aspect of my relationship to Adi Da. My life and struggle, his guidance of my Awakening, his relationship to me as beloved Guru, his push to teach, caused me to remember the purpose of my work and role as She Is—which was to heal and restore the Feminine in its truest Heart-Face. The absorption of Vivekananda into my spiritual location of the Heart signified that I would be his Vivekananda—his agent of teaching, of spreading his work. In my love for him, unable to bear his sadness at the rejection of his Great Gift, I offered myself as Vivekananda to ease his sorrow. My impulse to teach was never apart from his need for me to do it, from his need to serve the world and restore it to the Heart, His Heart. I did not know how to comply with this dream. I had already exhausted myself with the teaching work I had done with my friends. They were still unable to pass the tests and live as the heartful warrior. My work as the Shakti, as the True Heart-Guru, could not take any hold. Adi Da's own work held a similar demonstration of his students' failure to live stably as the warrior in his Heart-Transmission. This dream



**Artistic rendering of my vision of Vivekananda being absorbed into me.**

became even more interesting and filled with the signs of our spiritual intimacy, as I was preparing for this book and read Adi Da's description in a *Free Daist*<sup>26</sup> magazine of how the Divine acquired the life vehicle of Franklin Jones and conjoined with the deeper reincarnating personality of Vivekananda, creating a sadhana and vehicle for the Divine to emerge.

The next several months became a profound struggle during which I sorely needed to relinquish the role of friend and the teaching demonstration of the warrior. But my friends refused to be related to me in any other way. My acceptance and love from my spiritual family healed and consoled me. My work with creativity and nature intensified and created a space away from my friends' childish demands for attention. I endured several months of asthma attacks—a disease I had never had before. It was interesting to note that Vivekananda himself was prone to this disease which wore his body down, exhausting him, and he abandoned his fragile body at the age of thirty-nine. I was thirty-eight myself at the time. These asthma attacks were so painful, so exhausting, that it would take a couple of weeks to recover from one—and then another would hit. Medical solutions offered very little help. The one action that aided in my healing the most was to bodily remove myself from my friends and travel to a natural environment that was at least three-to-four hours away by car. During that time I felt great, internal healing help and protection from Sri Lakshmana and, at times, from Sarada. I needed to move out of the circumstance of my teaching work but before this happened, another great leela of teaching would occur.

In the summer of 1991, some former and present students of Adi Da came to have darshan in my home. My usual custom was to meditate with people and at that time I meditated with music, using mostly love songs. I had grown profoundly tired of the lack of heart-conductivity in the meditations I conducted with people and found that playing and

26 Periodical devoted to the teachings of Adi Da.

singing love songs to them opened their feeling. This also aided in quieting their minds. In the past, sitting with people in silence had been a boring exercise of watching them fall asleep, endlessly wandering in thoughts and fantasies. I rarely met anyone who could focus attention and feel into what Is prior to thoughts. I've met people who have said they've meditated for years, but I saw no signs or understanding of true meditation in them.

After this meditation of calling people through song and silence to open their hearts, I answered any questions they might have about true practice. Adi Da's students found my explanations helpful and some told me that what had been difficult for them to understand through Adi Da's written word was now accessible through my explanations, descriptions, and stories. As we got to know each other, many felt helped by my knowledge of Self-Realization and spiritual practice, and my deep love and honoring of Adi Da. A plan for a party was put into motion to honor me and to extend the grace of my presence to more of Adi Da's practitioners as well. The people who were giving the party were shocked when the leadership of their organization refused to allow it to occur. My own students were hurt and baffled by it all. We had known great receptivity from other teachers and their communities. The feeling from Sarada was of acceptance and love as part of a true spiritual family and community. But now, threats of punishment and excommunication were declared towards students who continued to see me. A small group of Adi Da's students, who felt a deep love and connection to me, felt an intense need to somehow bring me to Adi Da, who lived in hermitage on a South Pacific island. We put together a packet—a letter and photos of me—and tried to send it to him. This was met by the leadership with the same hysterical fear. A longtime devotee of Adi Da, who felt a strong intuition of Adi Da's spiritual intimacy with me and felt that he was directing her to bring me to him, asked if I wanted to write to him personally. She said that she could find a way for him to receive it. She felt most explicitly that he was directing her to bring me to him. I did not doubt this as I had felt his call to come to him



Teaching in San Rafael, California.





Marada  
Heart Warrior,  
Graceland,  
San Rafael,  
1992, teaching  
personas



many times through many dreams. There had always been this play between us. He had asked me in dreams to write to him and had always assured me that he got my letters. I knew that he always received the letters in his heart, but I also knew that he did not receive them physically.

I knew that I had exhausted my initial phase of teaching and was moving into another phase that was more reclusive and artistic in lifestyle. I pondered what I had to say to my Beloved One. I reflected that my life as a teacher began and continued with his urging and, of course, I always dreamt of the day when our spiritual intimacy could be seen outwardly in person. I always wanted to be by his side, but his instruction was for me to live apart, to do his work as a seemingly independent agent. Even the writing of this book is to call the world to Him, not to myself, as it is being done through his asking. I decided that if this was a true opportunity he was creating for me to come forward, to be visible as his perfect devotee and loved one, then I was ready. My heart had always waited, watched, and worked for this moment to arrive. I wrote him a brief letter professing my love and our unity in that love. I offered him everything I had and everything that went before. Indeed, I felt it was all his anyway. I enclosed some photos of me, Sarada and Sri Lakshmana, and a short story of poetical prose that I had written about my life and relationship to him. I had written *The Play of She Is* after seeing a performance of *The Mummery*, which was based on a novel he had written in his earlier years. The play was his story of The Bright<sup>27</sup> in the life of a natural, young man and of his relationship to his beloved, Quandra. Quandra was separated from him at the time of their wedding. She went through a very difficult ordeal, took on different female personas, and even had to die before they were reunited. In the final scene she was rowing towards him but he could not go to her because he was in the dilemma of holding an egg through a doorway. If he moved, the egg would drop. I knew that the egg was Adi Da's teaching work and that he had dropped it through his Divine Emergence back in 1986. The play depicted

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27 One of Adi Da's names for The Divine.

Collage of my many personas during my teaching years (above)



I had a makeover which later portrayed creatively in a work called "Juxtapose"



Quandra as having to pass through the ordeal of submitting to the identity of a woman, pressed upon and abused by the desire of the male ego, but always in love with the true man, and always coming to him. Her death and his viewing of her dead body were the final dissolution of her identity as personality—as female personality. It was my story, played out in beautiful allegory in his beautiful intuition.

I put my letter, photos, and story in a packet to be sent to Adi Da. Many of my students (and his students) dreamt of Him guiding the process of getting the packet to him, and of him waiting eagerly for its arrival. I believe this packet arrived on the island, but was also stopped. The receipt of this letter—my offer giving everything to him—was a most serious matter. Somehow it was seen both as a threat and as a trivial matter that he should not be bothered with. During this time Adi Da scathingly criticized his own community and leaders. He criticized the game of bureaucracy, of locking everyone else out of its game of protecting itself and indulging in the most patronizing, manipulative, and exploitive attitudes. According to one student, he was quoted as saying, “It doesn’t make any difference how much the insiders screw up. They are always rewarded and they always remain on the inside. I see fakery all the time in people’s ceremonies. I am suffering these abuses profoundly.” He called the First Council a bunch of boring farts and said, “If you are as good in bed as you are in the First Council, then it’s no wonder that you’re celibate.”

I had a strong, disturbing dream of him during this time. In it, he was very sobered, detached, and possessed by a great sadness. We kissed each other, but his kiss was so full of sadness. Over and over he kept repeating, “There is a hurricane around my heart . . . there is a hurricane around my heart.” I knew he felt a great obstruction in his Heart about being received. I wished I could take away his pain.

I felt his call to me to come forward most intensely. But it was not to be. The leaders of Adi Da’s organization expelled the students who had come to me, had loved me, and had

**Moving into  
summarizing  
teaching years,  
Lake Lagunitas,  
California**



**With my head shaved in Death Valley after the fast.**

felt the call to bring me to him. This injustice to these people whom I now also loved, was intolerable to me. I was used to the abuse that my work brought upon me in my service to others and had found ways to tolerate it. But I couldn't bear seeing the plight of my Heart-Husband, or seeing that those who loved both him and me were being punished for their love by being expelled. This caused a Durga-like fury in me. I decided that I would fast until this sinister behavior ended and my letter was received by Adi Da himself. All my students, as well as many sympathetic students of Adi Da, decided to join me in fasting. After two weeks of very watered-down juice, I was down to ninety-eight pounds, but nothing had changed. The hierarchy remained in an attitude of self-protection and hard, closed-heartedness, always using the strategy of trivializing what was occurring. Three of my students met with three of their leaders. The men appeared to be humble, saying that they were only following the "rules" and doing their "jobs"...What could they do? They smiled and read all the right teachings, but seemed unable to feel or connect with the effect of their abuse and the criticism from their own Guru. They saw the fast as blackmail, a threat that was beneath them to respond to. The fact that many people were physically suffering did not matter to these men. They felt powerless to do anything but protect their image, stall us, and present that they were much too busy with their Guru's demands to further meet with us or work this out.

I decided to end the fast. I shaved my hair as a sign of detachment and drove to Death Valley with some of my students. I wanted to be out of the whole affair and feel what was true of this leela and drama of Adi Da's students coming to me, of his call, and of my impulse to go to him.

I had grown to love the people who had come to me from Adi Da's community but, fundamentally, I had been used by them as they had used their Guru. They were unable to penetrate the truths of life's experiences and they had practiced in relationship with their Guru in a childish manner. They held on to anger and blame towards Adi Da,

and were still seeking conventional fulfillment. They were unable to hold themselves in place through natural disciplines and to consider true relationship to him. The Guru (and I have surely been treated this way) was seen as an authority or parent-like figure who should give the child what she or he wants and needs. Enlightenment seemed like a wonderful gift, a way to be fulfilled and to escape the pain of life. They did not understand that real spiritual practice was a confrontation with the attitudes and motives of seeking happiness through desire, or that desire is never permanently fulfilled. This revelation turns one to yield to Truth, to God, to the purification and liberation of attention, and to the transcendence of the tendency to search in objects and experience for happiness. What is noticed or realized when attention and its search come to rest, is that One is Happiness, Truth Itself.

Adi Da's community and my small group of students were not different from each other. The game of the search for fulfillment was still their motivation. They had not matured yet. They could not and would not allow themselves to feel the sorrow, anger, and fear that they lived in as a result of their primary assumption that happiness must be sought. The magic and fantasy that somehow life would eventually arrive at happiness were the unconscious activities of their lives. Their relationship to me and to their Guru was not unlike the relationship everyone plays out in the world. We have all tried to be happy by maintaining a certain level of bodily pleasure and protecting ourselves from pain. Living as a natural discipline to foster true growth and insight, to deepen and mature one's ability to be more sensitive to what is true, is not really encouraged, practiced, or even known. We are trained to get by—to repeat back to our teachers, bosses, intimates, and authorities what they want to hear, and what the established order dictates. We are trained to be desensitized to our feeling sense that attracts and opens us to the deepest and truest mystery of life. If we were shown how to come to practice through sensitivity, thus maturing the emotional body, we all would come to understand that the "goodies" of life never bring us happiness.

We would naturally surrender to what is truer. The beauty of this maturing is that we begin to intuit who we really are—our true identity beyond the roles we play—and this intuition is a self-transcending love affair with ourSelf as the Natural, True Self or Being.

The way the leaders of Da's community treated me, my students, and their own students, was very typical of anyone in a position of leadership in the world. It was like Adi Da said. It was an insider-outsider game, a game of suppression of feeling—that feeling must conform to rules, teaching, and dogma, or it goes out of control, becomes hysterical, and must be disciplined. True sensitivity always calls for change and for growth in the established order. The established order always tries to protect itself and always sees change as a threat to its own survival. Because my friends were addicted to the search for fulfillment, the true maturation was not allowed to occur. They remained desensitized to the effects of their search—which was to live more and more in the exploitation of bodily life, always destroying their capability to love, to give beyond self-serving fantasies and fulfillment. The male leaders of Da's community were terrified of the free flow of feeling sensitivity and had established their own little niche inside a spiritual community, where their own searches for fulfillment through prestige, power, leadership, and perhaps the acquisition of spiritual experience and power, could be played out and protected. It was just the world game, where true sensitivity, spirituality, or any kind of genius is punished and stripped of its liberating influence, and expected to conform to the lowest common denominator.

I ended the fast because I knew that even if I died they could not feel the effect of it, that they would remain immune to what was occurring. They could not and did not see how their feelings, whether known or suppressed, affected everyone else and themselves. They lived in the closed boxes of their minds, and shut down any feelings (as bad) that brought them out of their dogma of rules to keep order. They sincerely felt that what they did was righteous and protected their Guru—from what I don't know. Of course, I

must have been seen as crazy, hysterical, and beneath them to care about or notice—a threat to their established order. Their own Guru had criticized their activity and had been frustrated with trying to reach and receive those with whom he had been working internally, perhaps for years. He had made it clear that he was looking for those spiritually mature people to come forward, but his students couldn't make any real connections, out of fear for their own survival and their desire for fulfillment in the search. They could only protect their self-serving interests which they assumed were the best for everyone. In a strange play, I also observed how many members of the community turned over to this leadership their individual abilities to think and feel for themselves—thus protecting their own self-serving interests which desensitized them from true relationship and spiritual life with their Guru.

Both Adi Da and I were made into scapegoats and prisoners, as we were seen by our students as valuable prizes in the search for fulfillment. I have felt the sting of this abuse with my own students and felt it now in this leela with Da's students and his leadership. But it was also pitiful and laughable—the male force of order and “righteous law” always forcing the feminine to submit to its wisdom, accusing the feminine of being emotionally hysterical when it only had legitimate needs or desires or inspirations of its own. It was laughable to see how hysterical and afraid the males actually were. It was pitiful to see their hysterical survival mechanism and to see that what I wrote to their Guru—a letter of highest praise and love offering everything I have to him—was perceived as a kind of attack. What was the threat in that? Perhaps the threat was that their own reluctance to give, to surrender, to love their Guru in a self-less way, would be seen and become totally visible. The search would be confronted and true self-transcending discipline and practice in relationship to their Guru would have to begin. There is no self-gain, no attainment in this. It is the process of yielding to the true Force, the great Reality. Could the male ego really yield and accept this sensitizing, feminizing process? Not without this very difficult confrontation with itself.

Nor could my own female students accept the true yielding to the Divine process and Reality without taking a firm stand and the risk of offending the male ego's demand to conform to its desires. They had to learn to discriminate hysterical emotion and emotional-sexual, psychic manipulation from the true art of feeling sensitivity. Men suppressed feeling to fulfill desire. Women manipulated it to get their desire met. Both impulses were based on the assumption of unhappiness and the search for it via attention and identity with objects and experience.

The obstacles to realizing one's true nature of Happiness Itself are fundamentally different for men and women. The physical differences between the sexes and the conditioning each receives based on these differences are vast. Women's religious and conventional conditioning is based on the premise that happiness is achieved by giving oneself over to serving and loving one's family. However, their love and service, supposedly based on the spiritualizing force of submission and unconditional acceptance, lack the wisdom of true emotional strength and real insight into what they are submitting to. The male force, concentrating on service in the world by holding up order, must be humanized and sensitized by the female force of creative change. The out-of-balance male ego seeks control and power through position in the world and accomplishes this mainly by suppression of what moves. The male force's natural disposition is to hold everything in place so that order and survival can be counted on. The female disposition is towards movement, change, and yielding to the unknown as source—creating stabilizing equanimity by yielding past whatever constricts free feeling. The man's disposition is to find security by controlling natural force, disciplining it with law, mind, and will. The female finds that security is losing borders, and moving into greater love by expansion. This is based on a feeling sensitivity that to be loved is to expand beyond all borders or present sense of self. Feeling sensitivity to what is more subtle and more expanding, is suppressed as threatening to the male ego. How can one control what is ever expanding?

The split between male and female and the controlling need of the out-of-balance male force have caused the female feeling force to be denied and pushed down, only to emerge to serve the control of the physical realm, as if the physical was permanent and the only source of pleasure, truth, fun, or happiness.

Women, believing the reality myths of the male force, and in order to succeed in the male world, have sought equanimity and fulfillment in control of the physical through denial of feeling laws and true rhythms. To find happiness has been to succeed at the male pursuit of power, never noticing that no males truly become spiritualized or arrive at permanent happiness in that pursuit or identity. The female force has been denied, ignored, and suppressed and hasn't trusted the male to provide for and be sensitive to its survival and need to be loved and truly felt as She Is. So the female has tried to play both roles to insure her own survival. But at the same time, she has never confronted or disciplined the male to see that his role is guardian and supporter of the physical world, one of humble service as a servant, not as a ruler. Women have not disciplined men to see their interdependence on all of life because they have feared the male ego as life threatening. But in most of our individual relationships with men, we know this is not true. However, we have felt a terror of the collective male psyche even in our personal relationships with men. This is because society has been lived and adhered to by punishment, not by forgiveness and love. The rules are the rules, even if they are unnatural and self-serving.

Men have a right to rule over moral dictates in sexual-emotional matters with women but are not expected to show maturity, responsibility, or self-restraint. An example of this is the extreme double standard that exists in the controversy around abortion and a woman's "right" to decide. If women felt that society would support their time of mothering and that men would show responsibility, caring, and support for them, every woman would want to do what is natural and attractive to her—to give and nurture life in

its biological creative expression. Thus the matter of being placed in a morally difficult and unnatural position of “killing life,” of having to feel guilty for an “immoral act,” would not exist. In addition, if due to practical considerations conception is not desired, then the man should see it as his primary duty and discipline to practice birth control or abstinence so that the woman won’t be put in a position of having to go against her natural, biological function, of having an abortion, and of being accused of murder.

In my own life, to become truly feminine, to be sensitized to what was true and expansive, I had to overcome my terror of the collective force of the out-of-balance male ego. I had to discipline the male intimates in my life by making it clear that I would not and could not accept their authority as wise if it was not. And they were often childish, wanting to be taken care of while being put on a pedestal, wanting their sex and position in society to make them right and more essential, when the truth was that everything was just as scary to them and they were actually in a humble, interdependent relationship with everything in life. I deeply loved the men I married and had friendships with, but they lacked real wisdom and knowledge about what it is to be truly happy. They did not understand that to be natural, to recognize that yielding to what is truest, is the real relationship to Truth and to life—not to control or to fake power over it. In trusting my feeling sensitivity and not just blindly adhering to man-made law and rules, I became more feminized in the most real sense by integrating true femininity and masculinity, and recognizing it as Self, as Source. There was no separate one, no separate identity. There was True natural femininity and masculinity in Realization of Self. The expression of female force (creating) and male force (holding) was no longer in conflict in my own human life. There was no split from mind/will and heart/feeling. It was all reconciled, naturalized, and allowed. But in order for me to penetrate this separate identity as illusion and untrue, I had to understand, overcome, and discipline the suppression of natural maleness and femaleness. Then it naturally shone in the Truest Realization. The way to reconcile the Divine

Realization and human life with all its roles, was to understand and live naturally as feminine force and masculine force, not as a God apart, in a realm or state apart, but in the play of the feminine and masculine—harmonized in mutual respect and responsibility. Thus in Realization of non-separation—in recognition and perfect surrender and living Happiness itself as my true face—my human life lived in its apparent body-ness, in ease, without complication, without being split from mind and heart, masculine or feminine.

This has been the true play in my love and relationship with Adi Da. My love and submission to him were not as one who submits to law, to mere belief in rightful knowledge, or to superiority. But it was as one who is guided and attracted beyond conditioning into the disposition of the vastness of unknowing, of Divine Ignorance as Heart-knowing and Heart-revelation in direct experience. His Presence in my life was not one of demanding forceful submission, or of forfeiting my own impulse of intuition. It was his direct demonstration of his yielding to me, to attract me beyond false identity as the separate one. He taught me the grace and art of yielding conditioning, roles, identity, and even attention itself and the primal root of being a separate one. He always asked me to discipline what was false and to allow what was true to be felt, and to sensitize the body-mind. He literally did this as mySelf, as the Divine Force that attracted me (what I thought was me) to let go and allow what was True to be realized and made manifest. He taught me this yielding and surrendering, this naturalization of the feminizing force as shakti and as Transcendental Being, by demonstrating it most directly as his gift of love and recognition of everyone as that Truth, Reality.

People do not understand the function of a true Guru. They relate to the Guru as a parental authority, submitting to His or Her liberating force as a child wanting to be taken care of and protected from the “other” and from the harsh, bittersweet play of life. Very little is understood about the function, gift and ordeal of the Divine Being as Guru. Her or Her life is a sacrifice for others—but not a sacrifice that

ultimately allows those who surrender to be taken care of and in some future or after-death state to arrive at a place or condition where all the body-mind's desires (the harmless ones) will work out. The sacrifice of the Divine Being manifested is so that all can learn to participate in the liberating play—first by maturing body/mind/emotions and then by submitting to this liberating process of yielding what is false to realize the Divine Being Itself. Adi Da's love and response to give me this Gift of True Identity as Transcendental She Is never put me into a position of childish dependency on him as parent God. He pushed me to be independent, not to turn over my body-mind in a fake ritual to achieve identity, consolation, or protection. I never had a familiar, conventional relationship with him. I had to confront and face fully the futility of identifying desire with arriving at happiness. I had to feel fully the lovelessness of this world and why beings lived in this manner. I had to face that the ordinary destiny of acquiring identity, protection, material objects, or experience never brought fulfillment as happiness, but that this destiny itself was a desperate measure of the loveless or broken heart. I had to outgrow all dependencies.

He was not a consoling force in my life at all. He was and is the voice, the demonstration, and the reality of Truth. To surrender to him—to the true liberating process and force—I had to understand that there was no fulfillment that the individual one could obtain. The individual one searching for fulfillment was actually the insane cause of suffering itself. To truly live is to see this, accept it, and be turned to and yielded in maturity and humility to what is True and Real. I had to outgrow the foolishness of the world's conditioned responses, the search for fulfillment via the body-mind, and yield to the Divine Itself. This is a matter of a great love affair and, in this discriminating surrender, the heart mends and is engaged in a process that opens and reveals its true identity: God, the Divine Being. Adi Da's gift to me was that he revealed not the bittersweet dependency of a man and woman, a father and daughter, or even a God maker and His creation. His Gift was that he recognized me as HimSelf, never allowing a false identity or a false

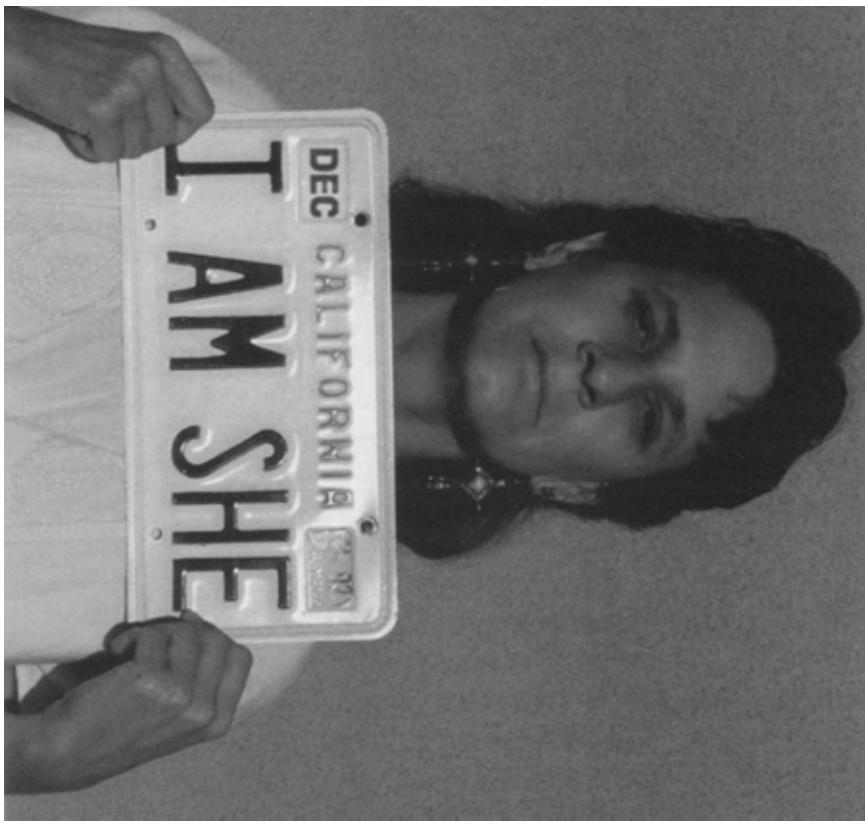
dependency. In my work with women, he has asked me to give this same Gift. I have given this Gift of mySelf to the women who came and to all creatures both physical and subtle, whom I was and am in contact with as teacher, as purifying Force and as their Heart Itself—Transcendental She Is.

The first five years of my teaching I gave to them as their warrior friend of the Heart, their passionate lover fighting for their Hearts to be seen, felt, opened, and lived. But their response for the most part was substituting me for the male persona who would fulfill them in the world of desire. Having exhausted all means to move them into real maturity and response, I felt that my teaching work had failed, and I wanted to be free of its deadening burden. I spent several months in a final sobering consideration and confrontation with their dependencies and search for consolation and fulfillment through desire. We summarized the means and ways to live a life of sensitizing, balancing body/mind/emotion through intelligent self-observation and discipline. Then I retired into seclusion, a life alone in which I spent my time in nature and engaged in creative activity.

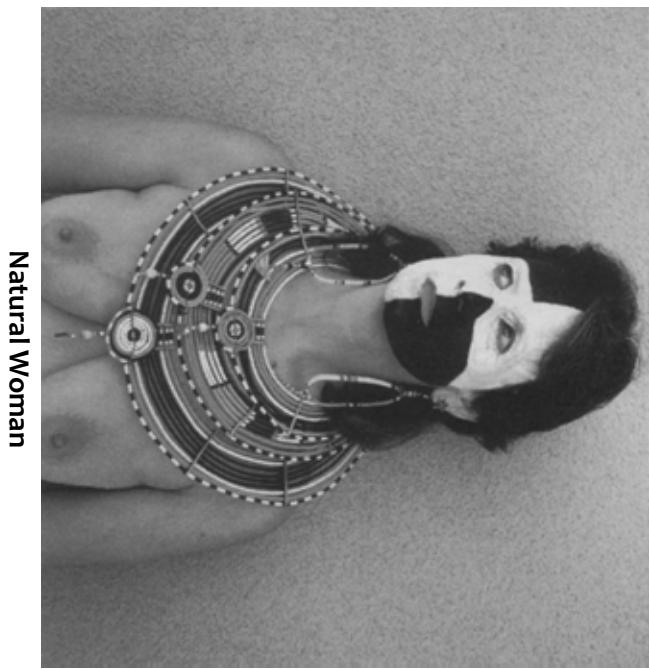
I moved to a small town in the foothills of the Sierras. For a time I recovered from the fallout of my teaching work and sacrifice. Towards the end of summarizing my teaching with my friends and calling them to true relationship to me, I literally could not hold up my head after being with them for even a short time. I lost all energy to discuss, to teach, or to be with them in the usual ways I had taught. If I stayed with them for any more than a day my health so deteriorated that my only impulse was to have more and more periods of absorption in the formless state. Moving into a life of privacy created a distance and a space that I sorely needed in order to heal and let the next movement of the Divine manifest. This took place primarily through the medium of creativity, which was a bridge to move into a relationship with and to teach the purifying force of subtle spiritual current, rather than the balancing and sensitizing of the human life—which I had taught as the warrior teacher.



100% Free Woman,  
Self-portrait with camera or  
*I of Seeing*



My own satire on I Am She



Natural Woman

I spent endless hours following my creative impulses. This led me to photography. I taught myself through my own curiosity how to compose pictures and how to take advantage of the best natural lighting. I adored traveling and, with camera in hand, exploring the natural wonders and representing them to best advantage so others could see and perhaps feel what I see and feel in these places. I also explored my own form through photography and some of my favorite images of myself came about from this experimentation. I noticed in my self-portraits the harshness, and frustration from teaching drop away, and my portraits showed a serenity, intensity, calmness, gaiety, and childlike sweetness that was only occasionally seen in photos from my teaching years. My natural curiosity to reveal, to know and embrace all of life, to experience it as mySelf—to recognize its Divinity and play in its humanness—led me to free flow through many mediums. I fooled around with everything. I experimented with ceramics, watercolor, acrylics, pastels. I purchased a small home studio and composed spontaneous songs. I continued to love fashion and form. My writing changed from a means of teaching others to a more personal exploration in understanding and expressing my responses to life as one not elsewhere seeking fulfillment, but as one here, accepting life. I wrote to be seen to mySelf, to allow my openness to be fully human. What is it to be awake, to recognize oneSelf? How does that One live? How is the human integrated into this Awakening and recognition? I know that many people perceive Enlightenment as a dead state wherein the pain or suffering of life is no longer felt. This is an absurd fantasy. It is not a state of isolated immunity. I am in a state of complete vulnerability to life in all the ways it is lived and expressed. There is a profound sensitivity to everything without the recoil from anything. I wrote to be uncensored in everything, to allow all that I felt to be seen and expressed. There are many stereotypes of what it is to be Enlightened, and I refused to be tied to any of them. I tested through art all that had been

seen as spiritual, to reveal if indeed it was true and really applied to me. My relationship to writing pushed me to tell the truth of my own feeling. In teaching I constantly sacrificed my own feeling or sensitivity to instruct others. Very rarely could they see my life of feeling and respond to it. How many young children can respond to or notice the rich complexities of their mother's feeling nature and sensitivity? The mother is seen as an instrument of one's own survival and security. For a child this is a true relationship to the mother, but as the child grows to adulthood the mother teaches feeling sensitivity beyond the child's own exclusive needs—to include noticing the feeling dimension expressed by those the child relates to. Through writing I explored the depth of feeling I had for Adi Da, Rama, and other spiritual friends. It was an exercise in revealing vulnerability. I needed to know the depth of love, of vulnerability, of openness, of need and acceptance that Awakened Ones lived. I saw that teaching—a great sacrifice and my passion for years—did not deliver me into an openness of expressing my vulnerability and need to be loved and to give love. In fact, people wanted me to have no need, to be desensitized, aloof in a spiritual realm of my own. They did not want to see how their self-possession was painful to themselves and to me. They did not want to see me hurting or to express any feeling that wasn't pleasant, even if they caused it. They wanted me to have no reaction to life, no emotional expression except to mother and heal them.

The art of vulnerability is the freedom to be OneSelf and to express moods, changes, and growth in complete openness. I explored this need in art. Towards the end, teaching had inhibited my impulse to be more fully human as the Divine. I questioned how I could teach and demonstrate Liberation, living as a free One, if my own feeling sensitivity and vulnerability were denied or conformed in an unnatural way. I saw other teachers trapped by their own teaching work and organizations. Some felt oppressed but unable to leave. I felt they became like the people to whom they gave their lives,



New expression, self-portrait, 1995

and allowed themselves to be inhibited by the selfish power games of their students. I saw that those who ran their organizations pursued power rather than self-transcendence.

In my friendship with Sarada, I was saddened to see that her life of teaching was filled with physical suffering, great emotional frustration and sadness. She often expressed to me her reluctance to stay in the body because those she served lacked any ongoing spiritual maturing and were unable to perceive how their lack of maturity affected her. This was also true of me. Yet I was determined that I must be allowed to live fully, brightly, uninhibited by the immaturity of those around me. I found that to do this I must allow myself to abandon teaching. I did not have another purpose to my life, a private purpose of my own (to fulfill what?). My life was a gesture lived as a gift to others. My time in creativity was another means to explore how this gift could be given in a way that it could be truly received and held.

The teacher—and her demonstration of unbridled love, innocence, vulnerability, and a fully human life—is the teaching, not the explanations or words She gives to describe Enlightenment. The time apart, spent in creativity, opened me to understand that the greatest gift and greatest teaching I could give was to be mySelf completely seen, completely vulnerable, acknowledging always my need to love and to be loved. I wrote about this, painted it, took photos of it, sang about it, and saw myself emerge in this vulnerability with no inclination to hide it or to protect myself or anyone else from it. I embraced the human as the Divine—the Divine was not embarrassed about or apart from the human. To teach I had to be received in this way. Otherwise no growth, no love was given or received by those who had need. Everyone has this need, and the Divine incarnate lives in this need to give the love and touch of true Recognition. This need to love is the teaching impulse itself. Without this Divine need to love, teaching would be another kind of need—perhaps a self-flattering one or a private need for personal fulfillment and power, or an urge for purification.

Throughout my years of teaching, no matter how true my words were or how directly I confronted my students with the illusion of separateness from the Divine, they were unable to see and penetrate the mechanism of their own seeking. In the end, the only means to teach which I had left was to express my need that they become sensitive to me as a human being and as their true Heart-friend. People have expressed that in my company at times their hearts would come to rest, their minds would stop, and the constant craving to be fulfilled would be absent. Yet they continued their search for fulfillment via all the usual ways and treated me as if I should aid them in their desperate search for it. In my company, they had received and acknowledged what they had been craving but—ignoring that Heart-recognition—chased after desires and abstracted me into a set of rules, disciplines, or teachings. They always remained in the disposition of the doubter, not of the lover. All I could say was I have given you everything but what remains is that you must truly give me your love. This would make the difference and permanently end the search. But this yielding to love, to its natural way of self-transcending gesture and realization, remained incomprehensible to them. I could not separate my impulse to teach and serve others to awakening from the real lesson that if I was really serving their impulse to awaken, those I served would become naturally sensitive to me as I really am. A play of attracting, yielding love would be felt and this would show all the signs of a truest love affair. Instead I was conformed to their limitations, unable to be truly expressive of my unbound passion. Creativity was a means in which the harshness of unrequited love that I had felt in the teaching work, was allowed to open and freed to move in its embrace. This showed me that absolute vulnerability was the only way to teach, the only true security and protection, the only sanity from others' search and immaturity.

How did the tradition of Realizers relate to this vulnerability and to the truth and effectiveness of teaching resting solely on this? Interestingly, in my study of other teachers and their teachings both past and present, I concluded that the

degree of Awakening was only as true or as full as this vulnerability was lived and allowed. I also saw that absolute vulnerability was considered weak and undesirable in many different religious schools. Teaching is considered the highest form of service in spiritual tradition, but the teacher's impulse to love, and need to be loved, have been hidden and not appropriately honored as the means of teaching. I found this strange because even in the conventional teaching of an ordinary subject (let's say music), love of the subject moves one forward into mastery. Granted that the teacher teaches the student notes, scales, how to read music, and all that is helpful in her or his education. But, if the teacher can impart or show her own love and living relationship to music, this is the teaching which will make the true difference in becoming a real musician. Of course this way of teaching would demonstrate the teacher's vulnerability and yielding to what music is as its own force rather than as an instrument of the teacher's own power or ego.

To understand my urge to awaken others, and to what teaching really is, I studied teachers, their teachings, their effectiveness in awakening others, and how they felt this responsibility to those who came to them. This became an exhaustive study as intense as my creative play. I continued to travel to India each year to visit my spiritual family—Sarada, Sri Lakshmana, and Ramana Maharshi's ashram. On these visits I also made pilgrimages to samadhi sites, ashrams, and holy places associated with other teachers, both living and deceased. I studied their biographies, read their teachings, and approached them or their ashrams in the manner of a loving one or even a loving devotee. It was never my need to criticize. Rather, I felt a need to embrace all and to acknowledge their spiritual authenticity and power if I felt this to be true.

Before I assimilated what I learned from this study, I felt an increasing repulsion and sick-heartedness with drama in any form. I embraced an ordinariness as my expression, life-style, and feeling. I don't mean the ordinariness of what people say or live. This was actually a life of constant drama, of

seeking through bodily or mental pleasure, and was full of complicated plays of power and drama. The life of spiritual teaching theater, of spiritual communities, repulsed me also. So much of it was the same drama of the conventional mind—some of it turned inward in spiritual experience for its reward, pleasure, and stimulation. I saw that whatever was failing in the world was failing in spiritual communities. I accepted life in all its bittersweet forms, not renouncing or protecting myself from the bitter or holding on to or exploiting the sweet. I lived ordinarily, accepting life as it was, and I felt no status or protection in my Realization. I did not try to hide the fact that if I was not loved, it hurt; it mattered. It always had and it always will. I was frustrated with all drama, even drama that was used to teach. I had integrated all experience, from the simplest level of human existence (eating, sleeping, etc.) to its more subtle forms (creative work, play, relationship) to its most sublime levels of spiritual experience—sensitivity as simply an ordinary human life lived in Reality. I did not see or feel any aspect of my experience (even my spiritual work of the meditation of others with its different powers and sensibilities, my creative work, or my natural psychic sensitivities) as unnatural or outside the true ordinary life. I did not exploit or create any dramas out of these capabilities. It was all just my life. None of it pointed to anything apart from the human life lived and integrated in its fullest expression of Reality. There was and is no drama to this, as there is no search in it. Divine recognition is lived and played in the integration of all humanness, in human experience both high and low. No one part or experience is more worthwhile than another. This is the true ordinariness that I live.

I embraced all in love, in the fullest ordinariness of it, not suppressing some aspect or emphasizing others. I waited to see if others, even those who had taught me, those who were teachers, loved as this ordinariness, too.

I thought of my beloved teacher Rama, and I needed to know how he had affected me and I him, and how this ordinariness and vulnerability existed between us and in his life. Over

the years a subtler internal relationship with varying moods of intimacy had been played out. As I moved out of the teaching life I felt a break in this internal intimacy. I had often wondered why Rama felt it was best for us to have no external contact or demonstration of friendship, but I had accepted it. Now there seemed to be a growing internal separation between us and I needed to know what this disturbance was about. The only means to be free to feel the heart of the matter was to see in the physical as well. As was my custom I had written to Rama over the years, telling him of my work and inquiring into his. He never wrote back except through dreams in which I received letters from him. I needed to know what he truly felt about his work, and I needed to share the very difficult feelings I was having in response to the ineffectiveness of my work. I felt him inwardly turning away, resisting, not wanting to be seen. I felt this strange pretense and fear, and questioned why he was so afraid of this contact, of this vulnerability. I had always expressed a deep love for him. Couldn't we share our feelings and difficulties or even recognize and be seen as the friends that we were? The difference, the silence, and the internal turning away felt like an avoidance . . . an avoidance of what? I began to conclude that since there was this fear and avoidance in our relationship and an inhibition of the expression of the friendship, that he must feel a difference between us.

I decided the best way to understand each other was for me to be completely open about myself, my feelings, and my work. I wrote him a series of letters revealing everything I understood. As he never responded physically, my only option was to explore the *felt* differences between us. I discovered that because of my intense appreciation, loyalty, and love for him, I did not want to openly feel the differences between us. However, I needed to face them now, as the invulnerability I felt from him was a sign of his protection of himself. I wrote to him asking how he would describe his "realization." Based on what he had taught me and on what I had realized myself, I conveyed to him a process that went deeper and recognized a fully free Realization not based on

identification with spiritual experience. He had always pointed to Nirvikalpa Samadhi—absorption beyond form, where attention is absorbed into the brain core—as the indication of Realization. His teaching work (as I had known it and had heard it demonstrated by others) appeared to be a glamorization and exploitation of the shakti energy in order to develop psychic ability, worldly power, and fulfillment, culminating in the bliss and freedom of samadhi. He always pointed to the powers (psychic abilities and manipulation of the current to enjoy other realms or subtler states of mind) as the indication of spiritual success. He taught techniques of concentration on the different chakras as a means to advance power, to develop psychic sensitivity that would lead to shakti experience, and to culminate in the spiritual attainment of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He did not seem to understand that Nirvikalpa in itself was only a temporary release of the self or ego, and that it did not achieve permanent self-transcendence of egoity itself. I attempted to explain to him the process beyond the “achievement” of Nirvikalpa as it occurred in my own process. I felt that he sought and clung to subtle states, realms, and experiences as perfect realization of God. He taught the search for and the attainment of God via the subtler states of mind. In my own process I had come to see that there was no “answer,” attainment, or ultimate release in my subtler experiences of the higher or deeper mind. I saw that Nirvikalpa rightly understood was another means (like maturing the gross body and the emotions) of releasing identification with attention to body or mind and of aiding in releasing attention to rest in its Source—prior to lower or higher mind. To identify with samadhi or any yogic phenomenon was still to identify oneself as body-mind, not as Transcendental Being (or Source of what is Prior to mind) and, in Rama’s case, to identify primarily as subtle mind. My time as Rama’s student was one of exploring, enjoying, and integrating the lessons and experiences of higher mind. But, when he ended my relationship with him as his student, I knew intuitively that

the process and work of meditation had not been finished or fulfilled in Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

I understood his invulnerability. It was his protection of his ego-of his attainment, of his “non-ordinariness.” He lived in a fantasy avoiding Reality and true Relationship—identifying with the fantasy of yogic attainment as Truth. He avoided me to protect himself, so I would not disturb his identity and his “attainment.” His avoidance of me, of not allowing himself to be seen by me, was his avoidance of himSelf as Reality, as Transcendental Being. He still lived in a fantasy (a better one than most) of felt separation, and thus he still lived from the point of view of the separate one—and the basis of the separate one is fear.

The whole play of complicated relationship between us became easily understood, and I felt just an ordinariness between us. His refusal to communicate was not a mysterious sign. Rather, it was his ordinary avoidance of what he feared. My love for him, which was never a fantasy, felt to be no longer conformed or inhibited by his mysterious rituals or the busyness of his teaching life. I simply loved him, there was no defense or complication in it. All complication came from his self-protection of his “attainment.”

In my relationship to and study of other teachers and teachings, I saw that when I felt a difference, an invulnerability, an unnaturalness, or a drama away from ordinariness, this was because they were identifying with some experience (usually subtle) as realization—and were trying to protect that realization. They had to discipline, avoid, and protect themselves from any experience, person, or influence that disturbed their peace of mind or seemed to disrupt the enjoyment of their state.

My pilgrimages to India brought me into contact with the tradition and practices of the mystic and yogi. In the study of the teachers and their teachings, Rama was not the only teacher that exemplified this error in understanding. It was common. This is the error and teaching of the yogis and

mystics and—throughout the world—there are teachers who instruct that the ability to experience higher, subtle states of mind either consistently or at will, is Realization of God.

Unlike my relationship to Rama, my relationship to Adi Da developed and moved into great degrees of spiritual intimacy. I always felt him unveiling to me in degrees the revelation of my own life's impulse, work, and Divine Identity. I no longer related to him as the stern, crazy-free teacher/Guru, but as a loved one who played with me. This subtle play took many forms. The vulnerability of our relationship taught me in many ways. I respected his subtle ceremonies of recognition of me—of calling me his Durga, his consort, his equal, and the Mother—but was yet to fully embrace the meaning and function of those titles. I also turned to writing to explore the vulnerability of our intimacy, and to understand what he was calling me to beyond my present work of service. I wrote to him at this inner urging and my own need, but I believe he never actually got the letters physically. Through spontaneous prose I wrote stories that called up archetypal personas who were involved in calling each other to a remembering, a test, or a promise that needed to be fulfilled for the sake of serving others. In my stories, *Sweet Corny Love Song*, *The Survivors*, and *The Grand Opening Sale*, I wrote of a character called Doo Feelin Wopper who typified the way I felt Adi Da's nature. While I wrote these stories, I went through a process of seeing him call me down more fully, to accept the Divine Realization with the most complete human vulnerability—to come to understand that this open, unprotected human vulnerability was the true, full sign of the Divine descending and acquiring full use of this body-mind. In the stories I was represented as Kat—a raw, fiercely independent, Awakened woman of no bullshit—who is called to a shedding of her skin, a sacrifice of her own form and intention. In writing these stories I allowed myself to be seen, to grow beyond present form. The writing was never rewritten or reworked in any way. The raw feeling of it—of Kat's metamorphosis from the fierce independence of the warrior of the heart, her uncompromising refusal to be categorized into acceptable female norms of



Artistic renderings  
of my teachers  
Rama (left) and  
Adi Da



fake intimacy, and even spiritual feminine stereotypes—gave fertile soil for her to shed herself and emerge entirely given, present completely as She Is. For me to understand the difference of this metamorphosis or descent and Realization of She Is, from the tradition of spirituality of the East and my relations with it, it was necessary for me to pilgrimage to India a few more times.

In November of 1993, I underwent a two-week fast to purify the body. As the fast reached into a week, I felt Adi Da giving me very specific instructions about the final date to end the fast. On November 19, feeling weak and that the fast had naturally completed itself, I decided to end it. I felt Adi Da's request to continue it, and that night I dreamt of him. He told me he was giving me the job of being his chauffeur and that this would allow us to be always together. He suggested that I drive him around in a Jeep as the roads are often untamed and untended.

When I left for India in February, I had a growing hunch of what this job of being his chauffeur was about. On this trip, I pilgrimaged to many holy sites associated with Meher Baba—a spiritual teacher who taught extensively in India and travelled many times to the West, including America. I visited his ashrams and met his sister, Mani, who was in her older years. She welcomed me with warm affection and a wonderment about why I felt so familiar to her. I also traveled to places, ashrams, and samadhi sites of spiritual teachers who were associated with, taught, and honored Meher Baba. This included visiting the samadhi site and residence (under a neem tree) of Hazarat Babajan—a crazy-free teacher who lived to be more than a hundred and who had initiated Meher Baba into his subtle awakening. After sitting under the neem tree where she once lived and taught, one of my students dreamt of her declaring and honoring the freedom and wildness of my own state. I also traveled to Narayan Maharaj's ashram. He was a Guru who renounced his home at the age of nine to wander and take up a practice of absorption in God. Unlike his earlier life of asceticism, his life as a teacher was one of kingly wealth. He had also served

Meher Baba's process. When I went to this ashram, it seemed deserted. A young man showed us around the temple and darshan hall. He brought us down to see the inner sanctum of Narayan Maharaj's temple, telling us that this was where Narayan did his universal work undisturbed. When we were perched in a tight squeeze at the end of the stairway viewing this room, the man quickly grabbed us and started to molest us. We recovered our wits and, stunned and angered, climbed back up into the main temple room. We couldn't believe that in the holiest of holy places associated with his Guru, he was preoccupied with satisfying his own lust! We reprimanded him and talked to an older man about his behavior. They acted like they didn't know what we were talking about.

After that disturbing event—a little shaken but still determined to continue the pilgrimage—we visited the samadhi site of Sai Baba of Shirdi. He was a teacher who lived the life of a fakir, a man with siddhis and with whom many miracles were associated. My visit to pay my respects at the site of his burial was also a strange scene. There was a long line of hundreds of people coming to view and to offer a gift at Sai Baba's samadhi site. The closer I got to the actual samadhi site, the more frenzied the crowd was. It was a wild display, with a group of priests accepting the gifts of flowers and throwing them back as prasad to people who were pushing each other out of the way to receive them. Many obviously believed that their desires or needs would be fulfilled by this ceremony, and that Sai Baba's samadhi site was still potent to deliver these desires. My heart was not into this frenzied scene and I decided to exit. A few of my students completed the ceremony and found me calmly sitting on a curb just observing the wild goings on. We laughed and they declared, "Ah, the calm in the middle of the storm."

My students were a little disturbed that their romantic, spiritual fantasies weren't being fulfilled by this pilgrimage. But they stayed open to serving me and we continued on to complete the pilgrimage and allow whatever was to take

place to be felt as it truly was. The next site we visited was Upasni Maharaj's ashram in Sakori. Meher Baba had spent a longer period with this Guru, learning the deeper mysteries and adapting to the integration of his own Realization. Upasni primarily taught women, advocating that spiritual life and Realization was possible for them. He spiritually married and taught a group of women he called Kanyas. He trained them in spiritual ritual, puja, and practice, and they assumed prominent roles in his ashram—taking leadership that, in spiritual traditions, was usually given only to men. After Upasni's death, his successor, a woman named Godavari, continued the lineage and training of the Kanyas until her own death. I had a subtle relationship to Upasni that began many years ago when I was a young woman in my early twenties. His nature was often depicted as rough and offensive to those who approached him wrongly. I would see him in a place that had no scenery. I would feel attracted to being with him and would sit beside him. He would verbally insult me. Even though I was and am timid by nature, I did not want to leave him:

*After he berated me, trying to get rid of me, he asked, "What do you want from me?" I was both terrified and greatly attracted to him. I replied, "I just want to be with you." When he heard those words, a beautiful smile appeared on his lips and he beamed at me with a deep, pure love. He said he had a present for me. It was a bush with two flowers of different colors blooming on it—one was red and the other was a purplish color. He instructed me to plant the bush in my yard. I followed his instruction and discovered that, after I had planted the bush, the two flowers had fallen off. I don't know why, but this sign of the flowers dying and falling off the bush was a great sign to me that brought a flood of joy to my being.*

I often wondered what the flowers represented.

When we came to the door of his ashram, I immediately felt Upasni's welcoming presence and recognition of me. As I entered the ashram, I heard him say, "You have come. It is all readied to be given to Him. All will be moved there." While I viewed the ashram and paid my respects to Upasni's and his successor Godavari's samadhi sites, an intense quiet overcame me. Watching the present day Kanyas serve this holy site I felt a beauty and steadiness, a spiritual serenity there, still alive in right relationship to the spiritual presence of their Guru. I felt Upasni's words to me as I entered his place. At this time it also occurred to me what the purpose of this trip to India was really about as well as the spiritual significance of being Adi Da's chauffeur.

Sitting at the feet of Upasni's picture at his samadhi site, I felt his words, "It is all readied to be given to Him. All will be moved there," resounding with force in me. The holy sites I visited and their spiritual potency—alive in varying degrees, tended to by aspirants with differences of purity of intention—had no real offering to me. Respectful of the Divine that lived and taught there, I had come to embrace them all with my presence and respect. I was a humble child before these great saints—a child of innocence, a free play, but not separate or apart. I was the one to bring them love, to accept their significance and, through this acceptance, to honor them to reside in me. I knew that this pilgrimage was significant for the spiritual tradition that it represented and truly I was Da's chauffeur—doing this pilgrimage, this puja as Him, as I Am She—to align what is true in these Gurus and their lineage to Him. The meaning of Upasni's words, "All will be moved there," were understood. He was recognizing that he himself and his tradition adhered in, were restored and alive in Adi Da and that the center, the spiritual Heartbeat of the world (and of the manifested realms), lived in the body of Adi Da, which was also represented by his residence in Naitauba, Fiji—the place where East and West meet. I was Da's chauffeur, my body as his, driving him "around" to complete this work. It has been recorded that nine months before the birth of Adi Da, Upasni Baba spoke spontaneously of an imminent incarnation



The garlanded photograph of Upasni Maharaj in his samadhi site at Sakori. Sixth trip to India, January 1994.



Sarada and  
Sri Lakshmana



With my dear friend  
Sarada on my sixth  
trip to India,  
January 1994

in the West. “This man will be all-powerful and bear down everything before Him and even see to it that the Vedic Dharma<sup>28</sup> is firmly established in India.” I remembered the bush he had given me in the vision years ago which he had asked me to plant in my yard, and I wondered if the two flowers that fell represented himself and his successor Godavari.

Having completed my pilgrimage in northern India to these great masters, I traveled to my familiar, beloved home in Tiruvannamalai. I had not told Sarada of my visit, and was hoping to surprise her. Walking from Ramana Maharshi’s housing grounds to her house about a quarter-mile away, I felt lifted into a surreal feeling of heart anticipation. As I neared her house, her devotee awoke from her sleeping perch, rubbing her eyes in disbelief that I was actually physically before her. She went in to tell Sarada that I was there, and I could feel Sarada doubting the validity of her devotee’s story. I pushed open the door and called out to Sarada. We happily embraced and, as we ate a meal together, I beamed a lot and she kept repeating, “It’s like a beautiful dream, Marada.” I felt that too. She asked if I would like to see Sri Lakshmana and I said, “Very much.” This darshan occasion was the shortest time I ever spent with my beloved father. Tears of the Heart flowed, yet I had a strange sense that my physicalness was almost too much for him. I did not prolong the darshan occasion. All was felt and received in the few moments of hello and silence.

The next day when I visited Sarada, she was visibly shaken and told me she had dreamt that Sri Lakshmana had dropped the body. I couldn’t help but feel that her dream was related to my physical appearance there. I recalled a vivid dream experience I had had in 1992 of Sri Lakshmana which I had written to him about:

*In the dream I was tending to him. He was very frail and thin. Each morning I helped him*

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28 Ultimate, spiritual truth.

out to sit in a chair facing Arunachala, where he would sit all day. Each day it was increasingly difficult for him to sit steadily and also to stay warm. I wrapped him in a shawl and, as his physical body was extremely frail, I eventually had to support him with my own body. My own body and bodily warmth supported him and kept him warm. I thought that if he became any more frail, he wouldn't be able to support physical life at all. As soon as I finished this thought, I was sitting in his chair that faced Arunachala. He had turned into an infant, and I was breast-feeding him.

I did not speak of this to Sarada. It confirmed the continuity of our relationship and pointed to my support of him.

As was my custom when visiting Tiruvannamalai, I enjoyed greeting Ramana Maharshi in the meditation hall. I usually sat very quietly, engaging no mind, being open to all who might also be there to feel the Maharshi's blessing force. If any experience began to occur I would fight it a little, particularly if it wanted to take place in a psychic form. I was very grateful to Ramana Maharshi for his presence in my life, and for his graciousness of extending his lineage to me by allowing a family intimacy with Sarada and Sri Lakshmana, and for his revelation to me of Durga. At this particular meeting, I was surprised to feel a delightful, personal intimacy with Ramana. He was not the ascetic, shy, reluctant, silent one but animated a touching warmth and sensitivity. He inquired about whether Sarada and Sri Lakshmana were well, and asked me to promise that I would always look after them and care for them. The warmth and regard he had for them was beautiful to feel. I tend not to trust this kind of psychic communication but the sweetness of it was not an ordinary sensitivity at all. I was deeply touched by his love and caring for Sarada and Sri Lakshmana.

When I returned from the pilgrimage in India, I felt Adi Da's insistent call to come forward again. As our lack of

physical contact had not inhibited our ever-expressive spiritual intimacy despite his community's refusal to enter into any real dialogue with me, I was again torn by the absurdity and suffering that his call put me through. I no longer identified the whole matter and absurdity of his community leadership's insensitivity to me, as a personal insult. It was just a game of self-protection of the immature ego—the same game my friends enacted, the same drama of unlove I saw in the world and in other spiritual communities. It was the play and game of children. I was learning to be not just the fierce warrior but also the accepting, patient, forgiving mother. Adi Da was asking me to finish the task of being his chauffeur, to bring myself to him and to complete the transfer of aligning India's spiritual tradition to him. There was no way his leadership would give me permission to complete this service. They had no maturity to understand and have sensitivity to our work and play. I was just a madwoman to them. I decided that I would travel to Fiji and circle his island, interfering with no one to complete this service.

I set up a tentative date to travel to Fiji. In early May I went on another trip, as I felt the impulse to travel to the East Coast—particularly Washington D.C.—and to visit the places connected with the governing bodies and laws of our country. I visited the Supreme Court, the Capitol, viewed the Declaration of Independence, and took the public tour of the White House. With the few students who had traveled with me, I considered law and what adherence to true law was about. I explained that true law was a form and means to sensitize oneself to truth, and to uphold it through strength, maturity, and deepening sensitivity to what is really true through direct recognition of it. We also visited art museums and considered art as a sensitizing process to true feeling, to love. It was while I was taking photos of the sculptures that I had a deep intuition of how different Adi Da was from all the great spiritual teachers who went before him. I had felt this difference—and in my relationship with my friends and family in the spiritual tradition had felt my own difference—but I had also felt this difference was just a characteristic of Durga's independence from tradition.

I turned to my students and, in an ecstatic mood of bright intuition, told them, “Everything is truly different now. You do not realize where you are and who you are with. We are the most fortunate of all people. He is really, truly here, available in a way that has never been totally allowed before. The Divine has come here, has totally meditated the primal error of separation, and the world is no longer separate in any way from the Divine Reality. There is no God to attain. God is present as your Self as this and all worlds. This is Adi Da’s Gift, this is Who He Is. I have known his truest authenticity. He has given me the Gift of Himself. I know no other, I have no self even to stand apart to contemplate Him.” My students did not know how to respond to my ecstatic confession. They felt shocked by it.

In early June of 1994, I made the pilgrimage to my Heart-Husband’s home to deliver myself as the means of bringing the spiritual traditions to his home. Three of my students and I wandered around Fiji, trying to rent a boat to take us to the island of Naitauba, where he resided. We contacted members of his administration and were given the same old treatment. Their refusal to enter into real relationship had now taken on comic proportions. Still, it was maddening to feel Adi Da so close. We felt him guiding us to him and felt his attention constantly turned to us in great love. Before I left on this trip, I prepared a box of photos of myself and my spiritual intimates, Sarada and Sri Lakshmana. I also included the puja string that Sarada had given me and a letter confessing my love and recognition of Adi Da as the Heart and World Teacher. I felt that Adi Da very much wanted to receive this gift. Two of my students—both women in their fifties—wanted to give me the gift of braving the open seas in a dinghy to “illegally” land on the island and simply ask someone to consider giving it to Adi Da. After being on the high seas for several hours, weather-beaten and soaked, keeping their attention in focused feeling of Da’s name and form, they arrived at the reef that circles the small island. They described being met as if they were enemy soldiers entering a camp, rather than as sister spiritual aspirants who had braved the seas to bring the Guru a gift of love from

their teacher. They were rejected and ignored by the students of Adi Da, who would not even meet or talk with them. Rather, his students had Fijian men return them to the open seas. They were not even allowed to land to go the bathroom. My students said that the Fijian men were confused and shocked at the inhospitality of those for whom they worked. I know that my friends were very saddened at this treatment of me and of them, and kept asking, "What are they so afraid of?" I asked them not to blame Adi Da for this treatment, and said, "Let us go. There is nothing else that can be done. The complication is not between me and Adi Da, it is in those who will not love."

This is the letter they attempted to deliver to Adi Da:

Dear Avabhasa,<sup>29</sup>

*I am so happy that you have called me here, to You. It has been a long, long, lonely, arduous journey and masterfully you have dealt with all the limitations in the way.*

*This is a letter of celebration, of recognition that there is ONLY YOU. This is a letter of praise and wonder at what you have accomplished for humankind. With the power and grace of Your Presence here you have rewritten history and changed the awful karmic destiny of human beings. It is literally so. I have seen it, felt it, not as a happy optimist but as your servant—standing alongside of you, marveling at how everything turns to You, and this turning—although presently felt in its seed form—the seed you have planted is of another genetic code altogether. This seed is the true potential and right of each person to realize her or his inherent Oneness with You. No Realizer has ever accomplished what*

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29 One of Adi Da's names, meaning The Bright.

You Have. NO ONE! The moment of Your Life has been the ONLY REAL MOMENT—the complete severing of the dream of separation and all its ridiculous, unloving rituals. With the SEED here (Your Bodily Presence) and all the conditions for right growth (Your Teaching Work, Your Blessing Work) this present generation and all future generations will bear fruit. Humankind can never fall prey to the false doctrine of the teaching of seeking. You have pulled off the miracle of miracles! You are the truest of the True—the Greatest Lover, the Greatest Realizer, Revealer, and friend to life.

You ARE LIFE ITSELF! I have always been here only for You. I hope my service to You has pleased You. I am so happy that you have asked me to come forward—that I may give praise to You face to face.

Happy, Happy day!

Your most intimate

Marada Heart Warrior

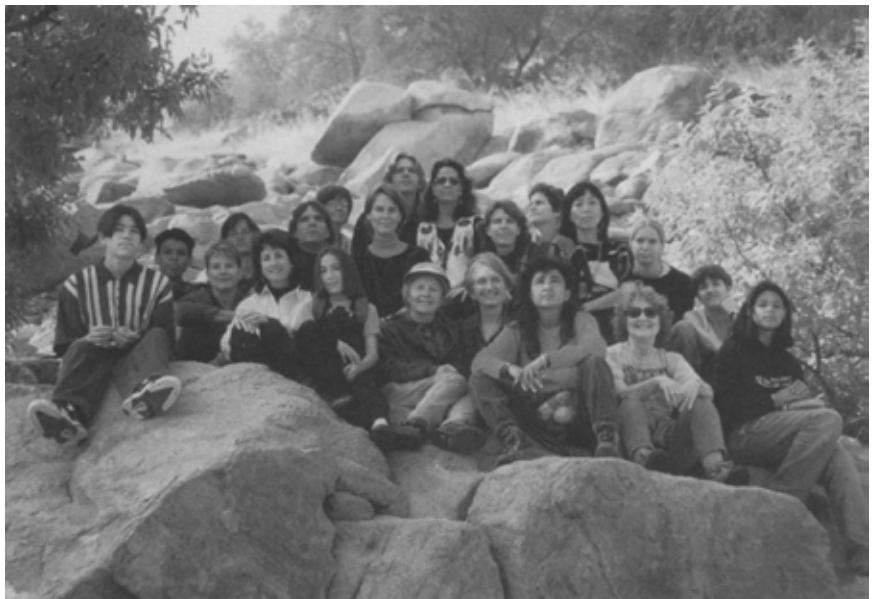
The packet enclosed—the stories and photos—  
are my herstory of Your Loving Play with me.

I later read in the Free Daist magazine that in early August, a few months after my trip to Fiji, Adi Da had left his hermitage and had wandered throughout the Fijian Islands. He had expressed that the circumstance of most profound renunciate response to him had not come forth and this did not allow him to retire from all concerns about the present and future of his work in the world. He related to his devotees that essentially they demanded that he relate to them as egos, and that he needed people to come forward who would be truly spiritually sensitive to him in order for him to continue his work. These people should be capable of more intensive,

**Self Portrait,  
Lake Kaweah,  
Three Rivers,  
California**



**Family, students,  
and friends, 1995**



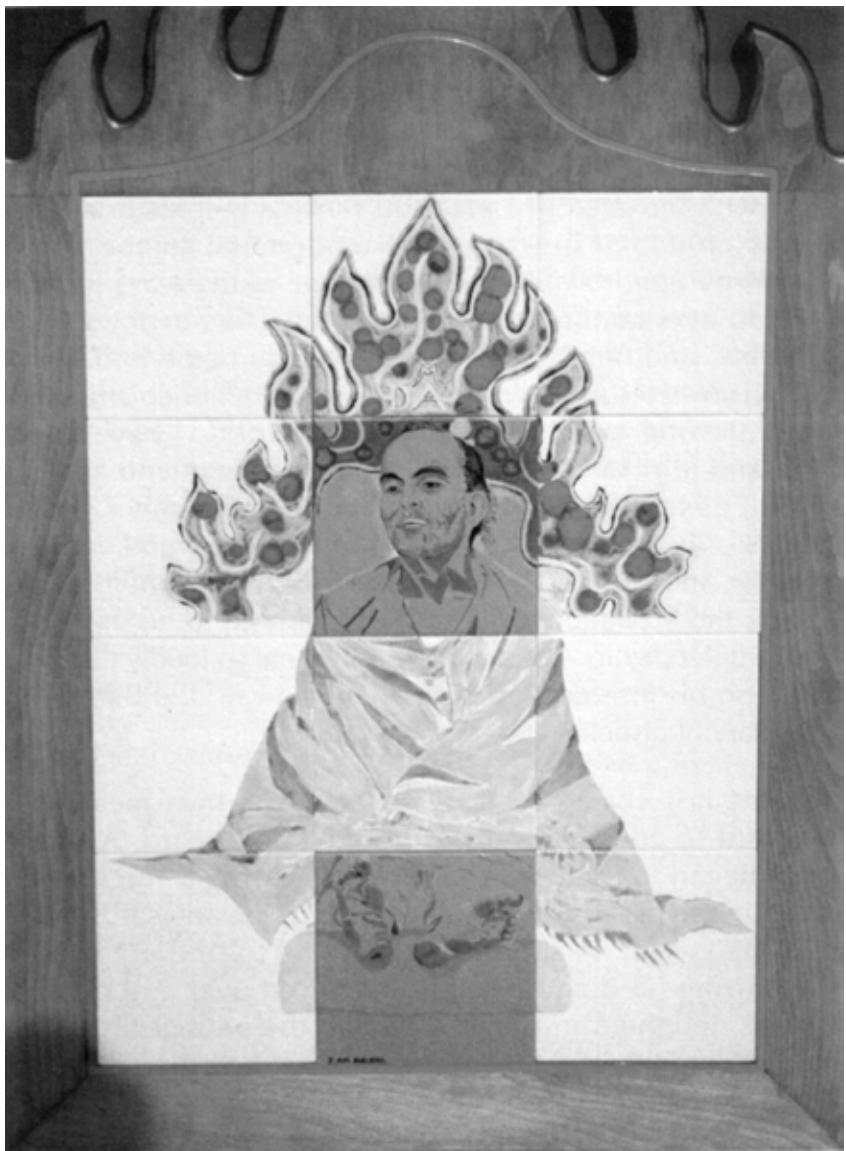
profoundly renounced practice for the sake of the world.<sup>30</sup> While wandering through Fiji, Adi Da came across a statue of a Hindu goddess called Santoshi Ma. Santosh means contentment or satisfaction. This was a new goddess coming into prominence beginning in the early 1950s. He purchased the statue and returned with it to his hermitage.

By the fall of 1994, I had been feeling for some time a completion and ending of my work as Heart Warrior and the persona of Durga. There was nothing left to address in this form of relationship to me. I no longer felt identified with the failure of my students to respond to their own maturing process. The frustrated sadness of it left me. My waiting for them continued. I accepted it more gracefully. I knew I had been the true Heart Warrior. I had exhausted all means of teaching them in that form. This service to them had completed a process for me as well. It had purified this body-mind, this vehicle, and any traces of the born persona had disappeared in the fire of this service. Upon hearing the story of Santoshi Ma, I immediately felt this was a sign to me. I was instantly in love with the name itself. I had never felt this way about a name before. As I tested to see if this name was a true course for me, all interest and sympathy with using Heart Warrior or the Durga as She Is Transcendental Personality, disappeared. In January of 1995, I took the name Santosa Tantra.<sup>31</sup> I refused the feminine version of the name, Santoshi, feeling Santosa was truer. I later learned that Adi Da had taken Santosa Da as one of his names.

The play and intimacy between me and Adi Da continues, calling me to ever come forward, to be seen and heard. The force of the world's unlove seems to fight mightily against it. He is ever with me as my own Heart and I as his own Heart—ever happy to serve his wishes amidst the abuse of

30 Free Daist (Third Quarter, 1994), 33.

31 Tantra is the reconciliation of opposites as the Divine Play.



**Divine Emergence of Ma/Da**

disbelief and unlove of those who say they love us both. He never stops calling me and, even if I appear as a madwoman to others, I must be in the quandary of ever rowing to be by his side. It feels to be a tragic, comic destiny. But he is with me even in a physical sense. I feel his body, hear his voice and instruction and tenderness. In the subtler realms he confides in me and tells me of the ways he loves me. He asks about his loved ones who live as my friends, students, and family. He knows them by name and I know of his intimates and loved ones as well. In our spiritual intimacy beyond even his loving of the world, I have known Him and felt Him in his sublime indifference and have felt mySelf as that State. He has called me his anchor and He knows only I can fulfill his need to bring Divine Love, Recognition and Realization to all beings and creatures. At most times I suffer the frustration of never being allowed to be by his side, with a quiet dignity. But at times he calls me so loudly that I cannot push his insistence to come to him away, and I am in this quandary of disbelief and rejection.

This last year passed quietly with its own meaning of this pull to come forward to be seen and heard. A strange leela began to build in which I kept hearing a voice when I woke in the night, a voice that called to me and said, "Marry me. Marry me." A spontaneous urging to find a gown and then a ring—a diamond ring—occurred over and over. My friends delighted in the play to find the perfect dress (they love shopping), and I bought a humble, tiny diamond. They bought a strapless red satin gown for me, and I felt the small diamond wouldn't do and bought a beautiful one-carat instead. I tucked the gown into my closet with my other fashions and wore the ring.

One of the few students with whom I had any ongoing contact was a younger man named James Sierra. He had shown his seriousness to me by being attentive to any work I might need done. I had known him for three years and there had always been a natural, gentle feeling of friendship between us that had a sweet attraction to it. I had no need to be with anyone in any conventional sense of playing out a

personal role or need. There was no private one, no one seeking fulfillment in an “other.” I valued my aloneness and did not want to live with unprepared students anymore. I was pleased that his attraction to me was based on an impulse to realize God, and I disciplined him and instructed him according to his pace to understand. I did not connect the strange impulses and rituals I was having of enacting a marriage drama with James, until one day in September when I knew that it was my destiny to marry an ordinary man and show him that the sadhana of loving is discrimination of what is True. I felt that I could intensify my service to the world by loving a man intimately again, and bringing what is true of me and Adi Da into my life and the world. I felt this was what Adi Da wanted me to do. I wrote James a letter asking him if he would be interested in a unique form of sadhana.

September 17, 1995

Dear James,

*There is a unique form of sadhana that is lived and learned through the intimate friendship and love of a realizer. I have come to test your love and friendship for me, and have felt a beautiful compatibility between us that opens me to this possibility with you. I have also felt a love that surprises and delights the woman that I am. I am asking you if you would consider becoming engaged to me. You know I have great affection for you and that I take most seriously your impulse to realization. It has occurred to me that in your love for me and your impulse to realize me as I truly am, there is no conflict with loving me as a woman as well. I have been feeling this impulse of marriage between us for a while, and I haven't known what to make out of it. You know I couldn't do anything but serve your impulse to awakening, yet I couldn't believe that anyone could come*

to me with an ability or interest to practice this unique form of sadhana with me. If you feel this way about me and this form of unique sadhana calls to you, I would like to show it to you as my husband. To be honest about it I am happily nervous but, through certain signs, Da has given me his blessing for this path of love. I don't know how long the engagement period needs to be, but if your answer is yes you will show me through your heart's impulse and need, and your willingness to move into this uncommon life in love. I love you and I'm quite moved to be able to trust and feel your love for me and offer my life to you in this self-transcending practice of marriage.

Your Loved One,

Santosha

That night I dreamt of James:

I was gazing into his eyes and his face melted, lost form, and reformed into the faces of different men I had known. This meditation continued and finally James' face reformed. He was sad and spoke to me very seriously, telling me over and over, "I really, really love you." He spoke with such deep sincerity that I was shocked at his call to me, his vulnerability.

I knew I would give him the letter offering him this unique form of sadhana and relationship to me. Later that day, after the sun had set, we drove out to the Kaweah River. I was very nervous, not quite believing I was doing this. I gave him the letter to read and, as he sat in the car reading it, I watched a falling star sweep across the sky. I laughed

at myself and how my life moved spontaneously with its own mysterious purposes and rhythm. I could feel his shock as he was reading the letter. We had never discussed any such possibility. I wondered if the shock would be too much and he would not be able to respond. He got out of the car and so sweetly embraced me and said, "Yes, this is what I always wanted." We set very conservative plans of being engaged for a year to see if this course was true. I believe he would have married me that next day, but I needed the time to adjust to the fact that I was really going to do this. I had been a celibate for eight years and lived alone for about three years! I guess this change accounted for why I took the last name Tantra!

Whenever I decide that a course of action, work, or play is needed and necessary, I throw myself wholeheartedly into it. It naturally moves that way like a burning ember in the driest time of year. I fell in love with him and felt all the sensations, feelings, and attractions of this love and desire. It was a delightful play, one I couldn't believe was occurring. My dispassionate side looked at it with a bemused, detached critical eye while my passionate side—the artist—enjoyed the art form of love's play. I was winking both eyes, alternately, instantly—the eye of dispassion and the eye of passion. An intense longing to be near each other grew and if I didn't see him for a day I felt an excruciating longing to be with him. He felt this longing and I felt it as a whole body yearning that included a sexual response as well. The announcement of my marriage to James shocked my women students whom I had been teaching for years. Their mouths literally hung open at the news.

The longing to be near each other only increased with each day. I felt to be his form constantly, and the attraction between us was a beautiful absorption.

In the play of my embracing the heart of an ordinary man, Adi Da made his physical appearance in my life after eighteen years. The eye of detachment and passion also winked simultaneously that night. A friend of mine and a

devotee of Adi Da informed me that the Master was attending a public music performance because his daughter was playing piano in it. I secured a few tickets in the hope that Adi Da would attend. There was no personal moment in this, nor any public moment of acknowledgement, but there was the enjoyment of seeing his physical form. Seeing him again added nothing and made no difference, yet affected everything. As always, this was sublime play where nothing is left over for our private use. I left at intermission. What could change? My heart was already entirely open to him and was entirely his.

What did change was that I married James a few days later on November 11, 1995. It was an unusual ceremony. No one was invited. I asked him to elope by taking a series of photos of myself on the road with signs that read “Let’s Get Hitched Tomorrow,” and “Let’s Elope on November 11.” I developed them at a one-hour photo store and, when I returned, I left the pile of photos on the counter. James enjoys looking at photos and, when he saw the stack, he started to browse through them. When he saw the one of me holding the sign that said, “Let’s Elope on November 11” (which was the next day) he paused, but didn’t say anything. I felt he was trying to decide whether this was real or just an amusing photo. I assured him that I was serious and he happily said yes. The following day we drove to Pinnacles National Monument, hiked up to the peaks, and descended down the trail to a large rock formation that strongly resembles a penis in the sexually aroused state. I laughed and said, “Let’s get married here.” After hiking uphill for several miles we were both hot and sweaty, so he took his shirt off and I stripped my shirt off to my sports bra. We sat by the shadow of “Penis Rock” and talked about Love as Realization and about serving that. We signed the marriage certificate and ambled back down the trail.

James took the first name Anjani and my last name Tantra, recognizing and aligning himself to me as my intimately serving devotee.

Let's Get  
Hitched  
Tomorrow

Let's  
ELOPE  
Nov 11

ANJANI: Since I met her four years ago, Santoshā has always surprised me by finding endless ways to pull me deeper into her embrace of love. Though she can weave the words of dharma with remarkable beauty, it has been her personal demonstration of love that makes her irresistible. Her willingness to be utterly human, ordinary, without spiritual position, is her unique sign. This ordinariness shouts, “There is nothing else to seek. This moment is full.”

She whispers, “I love you” again and again in my ear, destroying any doubt that I am loved, or that I can love. She taps on my heart and reminds me to stay awake, to follow what I feel. It’s all very simple. I have the extraordinary fortune to be with her, to love her, to observe her passionate play with everyone, to serve her, to receive her love and help. She has given me this most remarkable relationship, which is everything.

On our honeymoon, we spent five days in Maui. I felt a growing impulse to write my story in a straightforward, biographical style rather than in the poetical prose that I had been enjoying for the last several years. I felt it would be of use to tell my story and the process of the sadhana years, as well as the ten years after the Awakening. I wanted to show that the process is not a conceptual one. Rather, it is an intuitive one—feminine in nature—yielding and transcending oneself as attention into and as the source of attention. I wanted to show that Enlightenment is not a dead state, that it is alive in a subtle process of its own purification. I wanted people to know about the complete vulnerability of this Realization and the beauty of it lived as love. I struggled with how to tell the story. Who could care or want to know? I didn’t want to write a book that aimed to teach, with teachings revealed and considered. I wanted to be seen, not abstracted as a teaching. The teaching of Love, of Reality, is



The Tantras



Penis Rock, Pinnacles National Monument, site of  
marriage to Anjani, November 11, 1995.

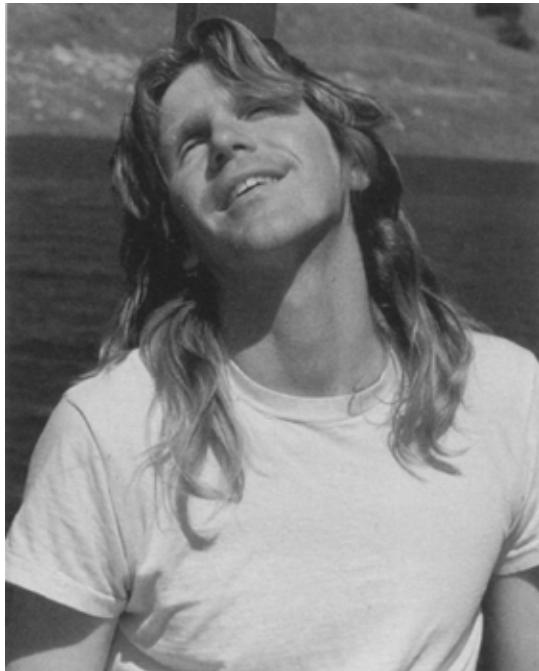
not apart from the humanness of the Realizer, is not apart from my own life. It is Me. I felt frustrated with how to organize this.

Towards the end of our stay in Maui—sitting in the tropical air with my pad and pen—I realized that the story truly told, with everything intimately given, was the story of my sadhana, the Awakening, the work of teaching—that this was all a love story. This love story existed and can be told because of Adi Da's great love for me in all my forms—as child, bewildered, unhappy personality, warrior aspirant, yogi, discriminating, contemplating sage, and after the Awakening as teacher, warrior of the heart, artist, secret agent, lover, She Is Transcendental One. It gladdened my heart to write this story to reveal not just myself but to point everyone to Him, my Heart-Husband—a man so completely unbound by his humanness that he is totally free to embrace it. This is the greatest gift and sign he has given to me. This sign distinguishes him from even the greatest sages who ever lived. For even the greatest sages feared that kind of embrace of the human as the Divine, and preferred to remain as the witness, absorbed in love-bliss apart or excluding attention from manifestation. Their realization identified them not as body-minds but as Consciousness Itself. But what arises in Consciousness—the whole field of life and their freedom—could only be known in their dissociation from manifestation. Love had yet to fly free.

In my relationship to the purest in the great spiritual tradition, I was accepted and understood to be one of their own. I always approached the true and the pure as a humble, open, and free devotee. However, my embrace of the ordinary, the visibility of my human vulnerability, my call to love me as I am, and my love of humanness—all of these make me different from the pure. I may be seen as too human to be living as an Awakened One, and my vulnerability may be seen as untrue. To embrace the human, and recognize it as the Divine, not becoming deluded, bewildered and lost in experience or objects . . . how could this be true? To live Awakened as Bliss, I needed no core to contemplate, no



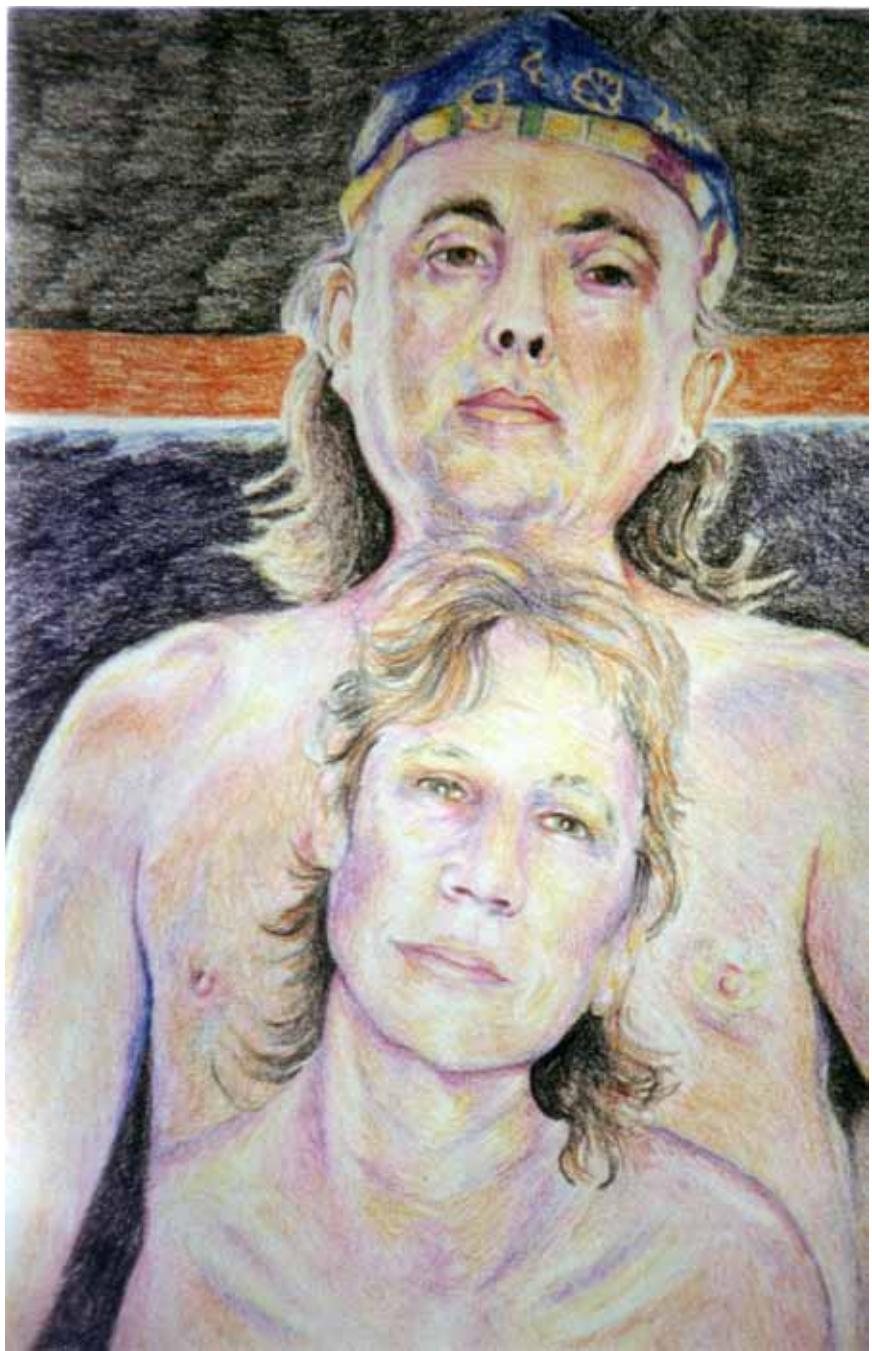
**Santosha Tantra, March 10, 1996**



**Anjani Tantra, 1996**

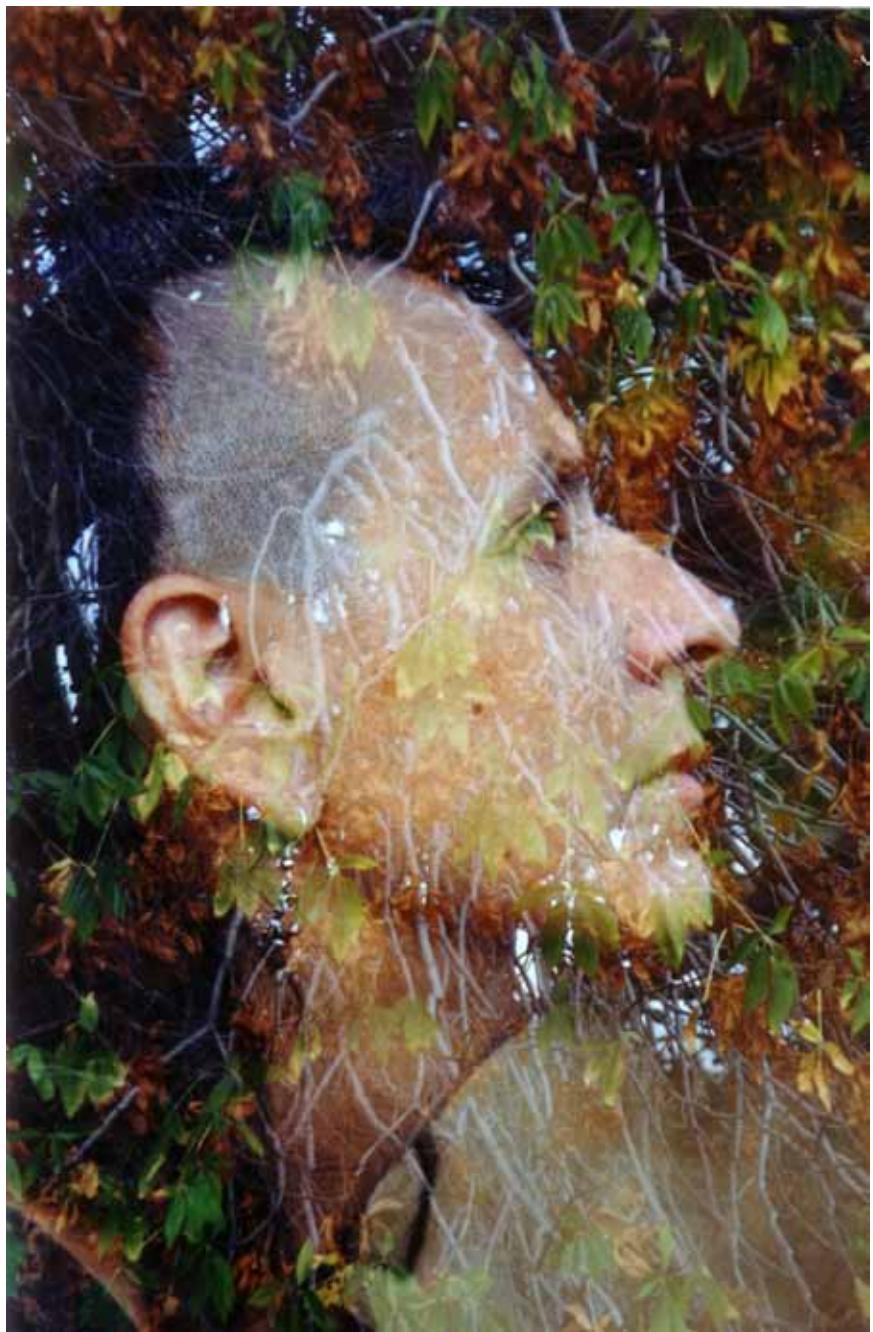
location where I resided and protected myself apart from living life in all its vulnerability. I am what He has revealed. I AM SHE/HE—there is no other One. My story now told, He awaits to embrace you, an embrace of no separation, an embrace of all manifestation. I live as He does—pointing you to Him, the Beloved One. Receive Him.

In the telling and writing of this story, He walked with me hand in hand, asking me over and over, “Have you accepted who you are and what you are to do?” Yes. I am his Heart-Wife. All are felt to be my loved ones, my dearest children, because I am the Divine Mother.





***The stories that follow are part of this  
Divine Revelation.***



Artistic rendering, self-portrait, 1994

## A Sweet Corny Love Song

This just did not make sense. Not that he was overly fond of making sense but it was a humor jumping-off place, a slant of horizontal rubber bending that gravity-wise was impossible. He enjoyed that kind of joking around, sometimes growing, stretching beyond what was considered even awe-inspiring. He would always take the joke past the point of suffocating for breaths. If you gotta die why not die laughing? What was the deal anyway? That is where we're all headed...and I've already been there and back.

He walked over to his CD player. Yeah, a little music can calm this. He did like a calm reflection mixed in with his evening tea. The hundred or so CDs were stacked against the shelf, not in any order that any stranger could perceive. Yeah, he knew where all his loves were. Who can sing to me now? A sad love song?...driving anger?...a hopeful yearning?...oh, the list is not too varied when it comes to human expression. He tossed the CDs aside and an old tape...a cassette...dazzled him because of its ability to speak without electricity. He tossed it from hand to hand. Nervous fear hit his stomach like just before giving a big rap to the usual sleeping public. The public! All those faces looking toward him...for what? What do they want? It could be defined by what he could give them. How do you feed the anorexic? They will only puke it out later. The feast always wasted. The fear hit his genitals and it gave him a hard-on. The sensation of sloshed, blood-red water suspended from a painter's brush turned his brow into deep crevices. "Yeah, I know," he screamed out loud. The tape fell from his hands. He thought that he might pass out. Instead, ropes of hardened white mucus gagged him. He reached into his throat and pulled on the hardened mass of thousands-of-days-old snot. The hardened crap piled up into an amazing mound and still he was pulling it out from his throat. Images of women gagging on semen to please their lovers' desire sang their song to him. Days and days passed

and the puking did not stop. He wondered if he would have any substance, any fleshiness to him when it was over. I thought I had laughed at death before. But what is this? Am I just a garbage bag for the possessed?

There was an incessant knocking at his door. Boom and a tap in 3/4 time. “Go away, go away! Don’t you see I’ve had enough? Leave me be!” he shouted through his grasping for breathing and yanking of the mass. He certainly did not want to see anybody in this condition. The house was in a stench. To be a proper host at this time was beyond his defense. Painted tears were all he could cry and it gave him no relief. This will never be finished.

The mound of snot turned into a city...and the people began to move there with their two perfect children. Sundays were picnic perfect. It was the perfect city and you had to be really white to live there. I mean really, really white! Everything was in order and in their worship they swallowed the puke that never ran out and believed they were the holy ones...and it was all his pain. They made icons of it. The new gold. It made the California rush look like a scooter race in the grand prix. His body was wearing away and they glorified the sacrifice. No visiting hours were allowed. They had photographs above the mantle—not of him, but of the white phlegm designed in a vague likeness of him, accentuated by a cosmetic mold that gave him a sad, compassionate above-the-heap acceptance. His eyes were neither blue, his blood was red and his ancestry was a mixed bag of Asian and African. Maybe the only really white thing about him was his snot. That’s pretty cool because it never ran out.

He was lonely, tired of being worshipped for his bodily waste. I don’t even know what this shit is and why it’s happening to me. I just wish it would end and those white guys find some other guy to bless their fanatical nerve endings.

Three beats to each measure. Father, son and the holy ghost. There’s that knocking again. The loneliness surrounded him with more of himself which now only appeared to be a skeleton and mountains of hardened snot.

*Sing a hymn*

*Sing a hymn to me*

*you gotta make it in 3/4 time.*

*Hallelujah? Hallelujah!*

He was past sex mastery and performance. He wanted someone to hold his hand, wipe his brow...to see the stench for what it was...to make everything so sweet again...so ordinary like a tickle and a licking of lips. Like a stupid, sad old love song; sung in full soprano: "I can't live without your love." Although he was worshipped no one ever sang their heart out to him, just to his puke.

Father, son and holy ghost and you know what the ghost is! The possessed was once his game.

She sang such sweet songs to me in that old country style. She was a little backwards, coming from the country—the bright abode—and didn't protect herself from the dangers of the city. I remember when she first sang to me. It was pitiful, sweet and funny. She was so off-key and so obviously in love with me. I played along with her. We had some good laughs but she was kind of old-fashioned...her hickness...her stubbornness...she was intense...and her songs of love—off key as they always were, well, they were from the old tradition. Whatever happened to her? I could go for one of those corny songs now. I'm tired of gagging in 3/4 time. Oh, she needed such looking after. I gave her a ring once in a while. She would start up with those corny love songs, and then there were the paintings I never sat for. Amateurism reproductions from the master photographer. It cost me some good bucks. I kind of felt sorry for her. She was kinda stuck on me. She wasn't even pretty but there was a quiet craziness about her—the way she stuck to the old tradition...Yeah, I looked after her. I think we were friends. I didn't see her much...we lost contact.

*Baby, don't you know you gotta friend?*

*Ain't it good to know you gotta friend?*

*Sing a hymn to me*

*Sing a hymn in 3/4 time*

Moons passed by his window within the rhythm of his womb. The gagging swallowed him. He treated it like a hairdo that was always needing adjustment from the hurricane winds that disheveled his prepared performance. The public never saw him anymore. He passed unnoticed through contemporary America. He didn't worry about hiding the evidence of his absorbing madness—the white folks carried it off in barrels full and worshipped it in the white city of fantasy. “Yeah, that's really nice! Have a good day!”

He left his home and a private detective agency called HE LIVES FOR OUR SINS followed him from a distance, not actually wanting to see the stench before it hardened. The smell was quite pungent: a mixture of old farts, cider vinegar and broccoli. They walkie-talkied ahead and some Mexican women shoveled the gag material which was pasteurized into waste baskets, treated with du-pont chemicals for life and then shipped to the white city. The Mexican women were paid the minimum wage and that was always behind the inflation rate. They thought it was a shitty job but it kept the streets clean. They never knew what happened to the snot. My guess is they wouldn't be surprised that the white folks had created a religion around it.

He became an accepted oddity, thought of as a harmless lunatic. He couldn't get out any clear sentences because of the gagging. After a few years passed he actually ran out of the hardened mucus but he was so used to gagging that he didn't even know he could stop. He had grown accustomed to his handicap and to his new lifestyle. HE LIVES FOR OUR SINS quit following him. Lab scientists figured out how to duplicate the stuff and you could order it from any religious drugstore for a more than modest price. It was the staff of life...like bread...ya know.

He wandered in his mind a lot. He wasn't really sure he had one. He perceived it as white people's thoughts. He couldn't shake the sitcoms and preferred the commercials. There was one commercial he particularly liked. It was of a woman dressed in ethnic Polish costume. She was really vital, kicking up her heels like in the old tradition. It was the dance that got to him. He didn't even notice that the commercial was for his waste product. All in all it was a better life than he previously had. No one bothered him. He met some kind people from time to time, women who felt sorry for him and took him in for a bowl of soup. He downed it quickly before the gagging began.

Jasmine, a ninety-seven-year-old woman with no teeth, fixed her specialty for him...a bowl of beet soup. He didn't really like the soup but her company was extraordinary. She wandered a lot and never left home. She would call him her Prince Charming and kiss him right on the lips and take no notice of his gagging. She had great fantasies to divulge. They were long and winded and never, never boring. His favorite one was her life as an African Queen. He didn't think that any of the story was historically correct—well, for one thing the African queen grew up in Brooklyn. The gist of the story was the queen had ten sons and was pining away for a daughter...a daughter to whom she could pass on her most treasured secrets.

It wasn't till the final waning of the last moon—the planets were all conjunct in Taurus—did she perform the magic ceremony that helped her conceive without a man...so she thought. Actually one of her sons had raped her when he saw she was out of her mind, a state caused by ingesting huge amounts of the rippon weed. The rippon weed was a tricky combination of a fertility drug (which she had proven beyond a shadow of doubt she didn't need...although she was a little below normal average in her tribe for baby production) and an hallucinogenic. This hallucinogenic is different

from the modern stuff, like LSD...the rippon always produced a kind of hallocorty experience. The taker, ingestee, could call the GREAT SPIRIT to her and the Spirit would appear in any desired form. Jasmine's plan was two-fold...she stuffed large amounts of the drug into her, hoping the Great Spirit would let her call on Her in two separate forms...that of a young, blacker-than-night, well-hung stud (the king was sagging these days) and the Goddess of Repulsion, of De-tractiveness. After her son had his way with her (of course she had mistaken him for one of the forms of the Great Spirit...mothers always do that with their sons up to this very day...even in cities in the South and Midwest) the ugly Goddess appeared to her and she made her request on bended knee in a strong quaking voice. Complimenting the Goddess, Jasmine said, "Oh, Great One, you are supremely ugly! Please grant me a wish. I have worshipped you my whole life and know of your true power. You are so ugly that you have never been desired by a man or god and that has freed you to accomplish extraordinary deeds. For me it is too late. I was cursed with being the most attractive woman in my tribe. I have lived a life of breeding, being revered for my tits and ass and not my passion, power and notable deeds. Are women only goods? Why do men worship that white fluid that comes squirting forth from their dicks? Why do they call it giving head? Is that where they think? Oh, Great Ugly One I have always wanted to be like you...to think with the powers of the Heart. Instead I am a silly woman, put on a stupid pedestal and fearing for my old age when my looks fade...and I am exhausted by hanging my vision onto my genitals, onto his genitals. Please hear my plea...grant me a daughter—a real ugly one that no man could desire—and give her these gifts...that of courage and honesty...she will need them to follow the passion of the power of her Heart.

The Goddess was struck by the queen's request, but why should she give her such important gifts? What had the queen given to her to prove that she deserved such a remarkable daughter? "Listen, I'm in a good mood today. I feel sorry for you and you have a certain quality, but you were always too

scared to do anything but follow the rules. But I'm liking you...I will give you everything that you have asked—a most remarkable, infinitely ugly daughter—but you must move to Brooklyn and raise her there.

Where in the hell is Brooklyn? Jasmine wondered.

"It's in the New York state of mind. If your daughter grows up there she can fulfill her great destiny and, oh, one thing more, if you come across a lunatic wandering around gagging in a most unpleasant manner give him a bowl of soup and tell him this story. Maybe he'll figure it out and find your daughter."

Jasmine fed him another bowl of soup. He dumped it into the sink when she wasn't looking.

"Hey, prince? Want some bagels to go with the soup?" The gagging started up again but he managed a polite refusal and asked whatever happened to her daughter.

Jasmine rubbed her head and tried to sneak another kiss in. "Let's see. I'm forgetting things these days...Who did you ask about?...oh yeah, my daughter, Catherine...she was a gorgeous little thing with a tiny waist...and beautiful round lips. I couldn't keep the guys away from her. She married a rich guy and they had a really ugly daughter. It was really a source of embarrassment to Catherine and her husband. They consulted quite a few plastic surgeons and—as money-hungry as they are—they said it was hopeless. Katie wasn't strong on looks except in the negative end of the scale, but she was bright and passionate about life. I think she ran away from home when she was seventeen, looking for adventure and something that had meaning for her. If I can figure this right she is about thirty or so. She changed her name several times. Keeps moving, I hear, after she stirs up some trouble. I don't know what kind though. Maybe...nah, I might have this wrong...naw, naw, I got it right...Katie loved music and was in a rock 'n' roll band. Traveled, toured around the world.

"So, prince, want to stay the night? It looks like rain."

The gagging kicked in, a major scene. He turned blue, black and yellow and swooned into 3/4 beats. The hymns chorused through his bones. The knocking again. Oh, what he would give for a true corny love song. The tape buzzed in his brain. He was in the mood and felt the urge. He put his dick into the old woman and she was content that such a nice young man desired her (he was pushing forty). He tried to imagine her as a queen, as the most beautiful woman in her tribe. He had those kinds of fantastic powers. She was old and kinda crazy but kind-hearted. An old-fashioned woman from the old tradition. He wondered what his mother would be like, look like, if she hadn't died in her late forties.

He felt a little peace. He was still dreaming in sitcoms. He also dreamt of his old life...when he had money, respectability and turned on women with his amazing feats of power. He did not miss that life. It was too full of purpose and intent. He was still coming down from the possession of it. He also felt a terror. It made his armpits spread and radiate waves of cell-to-cell anxiety. There was a change in him, this fear was different. It was the fear of realizing a desire, a truer purpose. His wandering would take form and deliberation now. He would find Katie.

Sloashed in his steps, the rain poured down a cleansing. Enough with this baptism! I've been drenched for days. His royal robes were moldy and his silver gown tarnished and infected with mites. A steady diet of the shiny particles increased their vigor. Passing through town after town, his resemblance faded. People joking, called out, "Where's your kingdom, Prince? Who does your hair?" Still the rains continued and the winds whipped his form. He bought a pair of blue jean farmer's overalls and dumped the last cartoon frame of his royal, religious bearing when he buzzed his hair down to the shiny bottom of the bowl.

He grew corn for a while, langwing in the fields at harvest time, straining to hear the voluminous choruses of the vegetable grain. He listened but no corn popped praises his way. The kernels only sang in low, oomph notes. Sometimes he thought he could distinguish the sound of the beating of a footprint to a primal drum. He tended to the corn for several centuries and grew fond of corn mush, corn pancakes, corn pudding, corn bread and corn ice cream...which never caught on with the main stream. Corn was more than all right...it was a real way of life. There was a beauty in its song, although monotonous. Simple. The same beat of survival and sustenance. This was his field of dreams. The sitcoms were gone and he relaxed...and the gagging gave way to the simple corn song.

After two seasons of drought, the corn no longer sang to him. He passed the precious kernels to people he met on the way. He was sad to leave the simple dream. He felt that a whole race of people were contained in each kernel and these peoples were the earth itself. He did not feel contained or possessed. He went deeper into the earth, tunneling through roots, rocks, sand, gravel, bones. "Earth people, earth people!" he called in a grunting voice. "You have given birth to me! Can I see the face of my mother?"

He suckled at her breast. Her fluids were sweet and he felt so warmed, so taken care of, held in her arms, so close to her heart. He was so contented and never wanted to leave this meal. She sang to him so sweetly, silly songs of his destiny. He wanted to see her face but the film of birth shaded his eyes; anyway, his contentment was soooo deep, soooo satisfying. You will be great...one day, she sang to him...a prince...a king...a God! And you will do the most incredible feat. You will truly love a woman as she really is!

He loved her breasts. He sipped slowly and noticed his tiny hands. What a marvel! he thought...another way I can touch her and feel her tit! The skin around her nipple was soft and his hands could jiggle her flesh. The weaning, the shorter periods of their intimacy, the eons away from her.

“Feed me, hold me!” Reluctance—pushed to the horizon...on the earth’s surface...mother...I didn’t see your face!...He tried to grab her breast with his small fingers and found his dick and played with it for awhile. He wondered if his mother had one of these. Nah...she probably has two of them.

The tingling, the buzzing, the fear and panic started with the word No!...No!...No!...No! Simple meal of corn, an old-fashioned, corny love song. Complicated rhythms were not his style of beaded tricks yet. He loved selfishly but it was equally, till he faced the mountains of his greatness...his great desires. Horror of horrors, he reincarnated as an aboriginal man in an arena of colorless, animal, male shadows. He was already real...but had yet to prove his greatness.

He met Cathy in his nineteenth year and married her a year later. She was pretty, had a very tiny waist and never said no... maybe...perhaps...well...!...how about...the direct negative was not in her songbook. Her wit was immense. He marvelled at the many ways she could never deny him. He loved to have sex with her and she was always eager to fulfill his fantasies. Sometimes her own fantasies of who she was were amably pleasing to him. In some ways she was silly like his mother. He liked lying by her side and sometimes between her legs—as she often laid between his. He rarely rested at her heart. She wanted to have his child so much. He was not really, really great yet and felt he had nothing impressive to fight over and eventually relinquish to his son’s superior power. The more she yearned to give him a son the more he was put off by her. He started to see other women... prostitutes...then women he met in the Ph.D. program. His brain size grew to accommodate the vast knowledge he was learning. He could sputter it out with computer duplication. Straight A’s...academia...ah, love...sweet love... the power of facts...His wife irritated him more and more. She was so whiny and knew nothing about what really mattered. Cathy wanted to take care of him for the rest of her life and when she saw her best fantasies only caused him to

yawn—in her despair and desperation (breeding was her obsession) she had an affair with a rich, plastic surgeon...physically as ugly as possible. She had a daughter by him, never revealing the true identity of the father. They were divorced right before her twenty-first birthday. Kat was only a year old and was raised by her aged grandmother when her mother died a year later.

Her grandmother told such ludicris stories. It bothered Kat like hell that she was so ugly. Grandmama on the other hand always praised her too-big nose, her crooked teeth...her crinkled eyes...and she was really fat with great rolls around her waist. She eventually lost her rolly-polly extensions when she took up 4/4 beats to each measure and hit the road as a groupie...roadie and eventual performer of sad-but-true raging truths.

She followed the group, Pistols and Bullet Holes, took a lot of speed, lived on granola and watched...observed...and one day found her ace in the hole...their roadie, Sam the Shaker, was shaking so bad from a much-needed fix of an illegal drug that he misplaced all the band's instruments...that's when the band saw that she was good for more than nocturnal emissions—she located their curved songboards pronto and they accepted her as their new roadie. She liked the job and the title. She always liked the road more than being at designated arenas. She was the best roadie they ever had. They showed her their admiration by making her the brunt of crude sexual jokes. She shocked them one day, (she had stammered for years)...she right out sputtered in a clear, forceful voice..."You guys are so dumb that you think bullet holes are vaginas."...grabbed one of the guitars, keeled it into high C and instantly shrieked and shouted four verses to the legendary song that put the group on the charts with the number one song

...that is still to this very day a cult favorite. The song went something like this:

I hate corny love songs

So don't tell me you love me

*when you treat me like  
a bullet...like a bullet hole*

You had to be there for the delivery. Even though she was ugly, her moves made Madonna look just like one. She stayed with the band for several years...got rich...worth at least \$200 million. She stopped fucking the guys in the band. She saw them as little boys. She learned ten instruments and wrote over seven-hundred songs, not a love ballad in the lot. That was her magic; she sang about her rage and she got rich for it. No one had ever come close to her achievement—even the most bitchin' heavy metal group had at least one love ballad on their CDs. She got her mug on the cover of Time. People tried to interview her, but she told them they weren't interested in her...they would be too afraid to print her real story.

As soon as she made it she gave it away to homeless women and children...and to rape victims so they could afford a really good lawyer. No one knew that she didn't have a cent to her name. She always gave it all away. She walked or hitched everywhere. Her one luxury, if you can really call it that, was a one-room shack in the back-woods of Wyoming, on the border of the reservation. That was her home, her hideaway and eventual retirement palace when she left the music business at the old age of twenty-seven. That's where she had the vision that changed her life. It was a full-moon night in August. She must have gagged for about twenty minutes before she glided into the flowered effects of the peyote plant.

Her eyes opened. A saxophone played through her throat, a deep sensual song of longing. Possession abandoned, her need of rage evaporated from her bloody lifeline. She had earned the mark of the warrior. She had fought gallantly the forces of submission. She was not a slave to the ego of man. Her songs had purified her of the rage of all women. She had realized her independence and received her citizenship

into the new world, a very different world from the one she had died in.

She faced, without blinking an eye, the apparitions of fear and selfishness. She had never been loved for her beauty and she had blamed her physical ugliness for it. Now she felt things differently. She felt free of the standards of the body and others' perceptions of it. She gazed into the pool of the desert with the wide eye of understanding and talked to her first holy ghost of the evening. It was a dark, noble queen with a smile that beckoned her into open arms.

“You have finally come, my daughter...I have been waiting all of my life and death for this moment. Oh, you have grown so beautiful in your ways...so strong. I have prayed to the Goddess for this moment. I can now pass my secrets to you. Do you love me? I have so little beauty compared to you. I’ve had many men including my own sons but I have never been loved like I truly am. I have been a foolish woman keeping secret my anger and truer feelings...they are like children...and I have been childish, too. I have marvelled at your strength to stand alone. I have a gift and a secret that I want to reveal to you. Tell me first of your feelings for me. I so need to hear of them. You have the virtue of honesty...your words will speak true, and what longing I have to hear such sweetness. I am leaving my ghostly ways behind.”

Kat breathed perfume...was it the smell of Jasmine? She was frightened of what the queen was asking of her. Not of the truth. She would have scorned her even a day before. The darkness did not eclipse the light. She held the dark, soft-tended fingers in her stained and weathered-beaten hands. Smiling with the curve of velvet wings she sang a song to the ghost:

*Mother I can see you*

*Mother I can free you*

*We have been aliens to our hearts*

*I forgive you and I love you*

*and we will never part.*

*I am going to reside in the new world*

*you are living in the shadows of the old*

*Your pain was your gift to me*

*and I expressed for all women and all the  
world to see.*

Kat disappeared into a swoon. The queen with tears of joy watched over her and fanned the brow of her prodigal daughter. Yes, my daughter, you have transformed my gift, using anger and hatred and evolving them into the change of honest pain...a direction, a song, that you alone were brave enough to follow the truth of your feeling. I always gagged, holding back my own. You have used my gift well, but I also have a secret for you. I do have powers—after all, I am a queen. No matter what foolishness I believed or what they did to me, my natural royalness can never be taken away. You are of royal blood. We are servants of the Divine play. Sleep now...be swept into dreams of brightness.

Kat knew the terrain. She ran down to the lake and gave her body to its blue-green depths. She floated, dived and played. The brightness of the place delighted her so. The arches of her body danced and swayed in the breeze of praises to Her. She was never held like this before. I'll never leave here ever, she screamed to the skies of ecstasy.

The next apparition appeared. A lion with a sunflower halo goodood around her. “You must have a great deal of

courage to have called me from my delicious nap. A woman aren't you?"

"And named after your own majestic line...I am called Kat."

The lion growled and said, "I don't have much stock in human names. My name is GRRRREWONDERFUL! I have a mind to do something for you. I could eat you

...my digestion alone could transform you...or I could breed with you and your children would be of the highest blood line. What do you say, woman?"

"As I am already of royal birth...so I am told...oh, excuse me, mine is merely a secondary boast. If you eat me I will be transformed into your shit, which is indeed rich and can fertilize anything to grow, but eventually I will, through nature's handiwork, come to being a woman again...couldn't we just bypass all that evolution, breeding, dying, reincarnating or whatever it is called?"

"You are wise...you spark my curiosity...What do you propose?"

"A growling contest..."

"Could be interesting...what will I win?"

"You will have me as your meal..."

"And youuuuuuwth?"

"Give me one of your male children."

"You're that confident?" The lion...GRRREWONDERFUL...squinted, blinked several times and then set a deadly-set gaze at the horizon. All his muscles relaxed and tensed. A current pushed opened and Kat jumped back from the thunderous sound. The lion smiled and licked his lips.

Kat extended her neck and rubbed it with the tips of her fingers. She breathed deep and called up the repressed

pain...the rage that all women felt and hid so well. Violence erupted and fire spit from her mouth, nose and eyes. The wailing of the growl was so intense, so pitiful that the lion shed tears of sorrowful sympathy. He cried unashamedly and said, "I never knew this kind of pain. No one could survive such a torture. You are indeed of the highest royal line. I will give you what you ask and my son will be most fortunate to be loved and mastered by you." GRRRREWONDERFUL allowed Kat to ride his back to his lair. The Prince took to her and jumped into her vital. She nursed him and he grew within her and felt her growing strength which he sometimes mistook for his own.

The river flowed through her mind, up through the mountains of attention, through ripples of light-refracted-form dreams. Short of the white star, the train stopped at a junction right before the tunnel. She gave her ticket to the blue light. The conductor punched a hole in her ticket and this action caused the blue light to take a human form. A most beautiful woman smiled at Kat.

"I am the Goddess of Attractiveness...of everything in the universe that is attracting. OOOOh, I see you have met my sister—the Goddess of Repulsion, of what is ugly. Not too many survive a relationship to her. How did you manage it? I stay away from her myself. She is so damn depressing...and she doesn't know how to dress...maybe a little make-up would help."

"I believe she uses make-up...a lot of it...She is worshipped in the white fantasy city. I hear they worship a God's pain there."

"Oh my dear...it always blows my mind away why anyone could enjoy horror movies."

"My life WAS a horror movie!"

"Well you certainly didn't enjoy it, did you, dear?"

"No way, but I learned a few things."

“Yes?”

“I learned that ugliness is a perversion and strangulation of what is attractive. I learned that I am not ugly or inferior, rather just ordinary.”

“Ordinary?”

“Yes, ordinary is pleasing to me. It is acceptance of equalness. Perhaps attractiveness causes the same pain as ugliness.”

“My dear, I think you’re a little mixed up...clearer than most, though. I’d like to give you a gift...your intensity is attractive to me. What would you like?”

“I’d like to be able to trust...to be attracted to love again. I’m tired of fighting. I want someone to sing me a corny love song in 3/4 time. I want to be loved for who I really am.”

“You are different, not really ordinary but passionate and powerful! Do you have any hints as to who you really are...? I mean how can you be loved in that way if you don’t know? My suggestion, which is my gift to you, is to give trust and love first...practice the art of loving and maybe it will catch on by the people who are around you.”

“What?”

“Do you trust anything, do you love anything?”

“I loved the songs of rage I wrote and performed.”

“There you go—write songs, perform songs of love.”

“I don’t think that...”

“Ssssh, try it first before you say it doesn’t make sense. I’ll help you. Buy some Johnny Mathis CDs or Barbra Streisand.”

“You got to be kidding!”

“Well, Aretha has soul!”

“Oh, yeah...”

“One last thing—if you meet a guy with a buzz, be kind to him. He’s been through a lot lately and he’s a bit unbalanced. Sing him one of your new love songs. That will calm him down and you can teach him what you are living.”

He had been puking—purified, dis-possessed, baptized, and nurtured by corn and the Great Earth Mother. The initiation by fire was the next ordeal. Remember, he was a natural man. A native man. His house burned down while he was in it. The flames seared his skin. Hot oil cracked tortilla chips. Endurance, no escaping this sweat lodge. He screamed, “When will all this end? The mind of man is a horror, filled with treacheries of every kind, every kind of self-torture is here. Where is there kindness? Where is there gentleness? Insanity! Love hasn’t taken hold here! Free me from this place...from this burning up of my soul!”

Use your powers now...oh, great lord, the flames heckled him. With all his power he wanted to pretend that he could live a safe, conventional life and ignore what was swept and hidden under the psyche and institutionalized later into patriotism. This is your duty! This is your obligation. Oh, where, oh where, is my love?”

Through the flames a woman’s form hastened.

“Catherine, it’s you! But you have been dead these many eons!”

“Come to me, my lover. I can get you out of this fiery mess. I can give you a son and he will pass on your greatness and all who see him will be reminded of you and your power. You can teach him everything you know. He will be a general, a president...a great scientist.”

“He will be a dope...what can I give him? I could not even love you. With all my magical powers I couldn’t even open my heart to you and lighten your burdens of fears.”

“I love you, my lover.”

“Your love is full of fear and I always enjoyed that power over you. I was your king and you became my slave of desire...a slave to my ego, my madness, and I grew to despise your weakness. It was my weakness that I asked you to absorb and hide from me...to protect me from...and I hated you for becoming my own darkness, safekeeping it from me. Catherine, I’m so sorry I did not know how to love. I thought power was love...that money was it...then I discovered a subtler power, that of manipulation of knowledge. The mystical became my deeper, more sophisticated abuse of myself...I thought I was a teacher—Yes, I did teach a finer web of lies...fear and self-kingery. Oh, Catherine...could you sing a song...a corny love song to me, straight from your heart with no fear of me in your heart?”

Catherine screamed in rage, “Play your part...play your part! You are a fool

. . . We could have such a nice life and move into the white fantasy world. You would be admired and respected there. I would be respected as your wife. Oh, you don’t get it. You ruined my life and my death. Selfish always!”

“Catherine...Cat...” She fizzled in her rage. Disappeared into a wisp of smoke.

The rocks were middened with heat and cracked open. The wind was aroused and blew the flames higher. He could not breathe. This was the end and he prepared for it by feeding the fires with the fabric of his body. He suffocated and died gracefully with great pain.

On the third day a medicine man passed his way. He was bald with rounded face and body. He looked like a frog, relaxing contentedly on a lily pad watching and waiting to smack up a more refined insect type. All that was left of our

prince was some bone and ash. Might be a tasty morsel if I could put this poor bugger back together again. Doo Feelin Wopper gathered the remains and stored them in his kangaroo pouch. He hopped at a leisurely pace of about two-hundred hops an hour. He stopped at the Sea of Desert cavern for a few minty beers but didn't tell anyone of his find. He arrived at the reservation, not needing a reservation because he was a well-respected man there, a great healer; his specialty was maladies of the heart. Many a broken heart had come to him and he was an adept at exorcising the pesty, bratty, whiny spirits that could drive a person to paranoia of all extensions on the phone line of the mind.

The native women loved having Doo Feelin Wopper around and always treated him like a man of their own heart. He would tweek their nipples and listen deeply to their heartbeats. "Sounds strong and loving...no healing needed here!" The women would protest, "Listen again, Doo Feelin Wopper, my heart is sad without you."

"Oh, you can't pull that one on me! You native women are insatiable...your passion to play wears me out! My pecker has fertilized your eggs and now there are more of you beauties, and all creative in your demands on my attention...not that I don't love it, you know I do. It's all in the rhythm." The women bonked their hands together and clapped, each one in a personal pattern.

"You're getting me going! I won't be able to stop hopping till my feet and balls peel away! I'm just a frog, a medicine man. What about your men? Where are they tonight? A pipe in hand and story from the bright heart, a quiet gathering of the good earth peoples is more of my desire tonight."

"Oh, Doo Feelin Wopper! A story would be most earthly! The men are on their way now. They have been preparing a special corn feast for all, hoping you might hop by. Your favorite has been prepared."

Doo Wopper raised his eyebrows, "You mean corn eclairs? I got my pipe of heart abidance...bring on the herb and the feast!"

They sucked in smoke of the herb, a candy confection that relaxed the native peoples. Doo Wopper loved these peoples and if he ever felt the inclination to stay on one lily pad for the rest of his life, this is where he would choose to stay. But a healer had to go where there are sick people and his main office was in the land of the white city. There was always some patient suing him for malpractice. He was a heart specialist and they were always confusing their hearts with their minds' perception. He wasn't well-respected and loved like he was here on the reservation.

He wiped the crumbs of his eclair on the lips of a young boy. Everyone smiled, ready for humor to begin its delivery. Doo Fee-lin Wopper grinned with his eyes and his heart transmission was freely rendered in the native dialect. It went like: "hmmmmmm, herrrr, mmmmm mama, maaa, da, woop wow!" Which means quite a lot

. . . tenderly translated, his whopper of a tale went like this (a lion of a friend is chewing on it for you):

"You have heard me tell you about my life with the colorless people. I have told you about my earlier days when I, too, also lived in a fantasy before I realized I was a natural man...a frog man. During those crazy days, the only way I could feel my naturalness was to take drugs. I would trust my feelings, my naturalness, at those times...so believe me when I tell you, I took a lot of herbs, weeds and chemicals. I always liked the natural, the earth originator better, but sometimes you couldn't be too fussy when you were starving for a little bit of truth. I decided to become a doctor...their perverted, strange version of a medicine being. Strange indeed it was! Doctors in the white world make lots of gold off of sickness and they don't even have to cure the poor soul from any of his bad spirits. They just hack off

body parts where they think the bad spirits are dwelling. They themselves are so afraid of what is natural and spiritual that all their healing herbs are chemicalized and made impotent in huge cellars they call labs. Well, I became a doctor to have a legal access to my herb friends...that's another thing...can you imagine a place where the flowers, stems, leaves of plants are unobtainable by everyone except for a few guys they hire to synthesize them? Oh, I can go on for hours about the strangeness of these peoples. I wasn't a very good doctor. I would prescribe all sorts of chemicals to everyone who came to me.

"I didn't really know what effect, if any, all that pill popping was doing. If they felt some relief from their pain then I did my job. I was pretty numb. Could barely feel my naturalness, so what good could I do for them? Well, what could happen? I just couldn't keep my true nature suppressed any longer, and in the contradictions of trying to keep all the insanity straight, I lost my ability to be insane! They wanted to lock me up in a mental ward. I won't even go into the horrors of those places! I dragged myself to the high desert and quickly, without even doing anything to bring it about, my naturalness returned to me. I could feel what is real! I stayed in the desert for years and was very happy and content. Didn't even need to smoke or pop a plant friend. As I was now supremely natural, I worshipped everything and everything worshipped me! I was surprised by my plant buddies when they started whispering to me of their healing abilities. Yeah, but you gotta give your own life to heal someone and those colorless have no respect or love for naturalness...'Yes, that's our gift! We give our life to heal and to help beings become natural.' These plants were way beyond me! I've never seen such compassion. I learned from them and, even though I was a free man, I returned back to the world of the colorless people to help heal with the aid of my plant friends. They nicknamed me the frog man because, loving my work as I came to do, I would hop in delight when I saw the peoples were touching into their feelings of naturalness. A lot of times the peoples would only touch into a real feeling for a moment...they just didn't

know how to act on the feelings...so my medicine was good but it also scared them, too. Their lives—and they noticed it more and more—were a fantasy. They saw that they weren't natural, but afraid of everything, especially what was between their legs and what was between their ears, and in some cases there was no difference! Oh, I'm running on. I really wanted to tell you the tale of my best friend: in the white fantasy world she was called a rose. I called her Delight Beyond Anything You Can Imagine. It's actually her tale...it...are you natives still following, feeling my flow here? Do the babes need nursing?"

The naturals all smiled contentedly. Tender Man re-lit the pipe and passed it back to Doo Feelin Wopper. He took a long, slow drag and passed the pipe to Huge Helping Heart. She held it in her hands, cradling it. Doo Feelin continued with transmitting his heart tale.

"My friend...Roseo...Delight Beyond Anything You Can Imagine...by the way, the rose has mucho healing attributes. I've counted over two-hundred-and-fifty so far and the study is far from exhausted. Delight and I were in a lazy, kinda shifting mood. We were wazein by the city lake. I lit up a few of her delicate, sweet smelling petals. I was cruising—singing loud and in perfect pitch—when a tall, lanky lad passed our way. Delight and I watched him dip his feet into the water and then he laid down and went to sleep."

"Doo Wopp, look at this guy's dreams...getta feel for this."... Delight moved my attention. I fine-tuned my dreaming screen... and this young guy was soaring! Flyin higher and higher in the skies of mind. Whew! I was getting thrilled just watching those dreams. Delight whispered into my ear, "He's a sky bird!"

"A sky bird...what's that? Is he real...a real man?"

Delight sniffed. "Yeah, the sky bird is a medicine man of the sky people. He is a real man, though his natural ways would seem strange even to the earth peoples. The colorless are from his tribe."

“You’re telling me that the shadow people were once real... they soared in the skies?”

“Yeah, ah ah...”

“So, sweetness itself, what’s the story here...why did the sky people come here? Where is their world?”

“Oh, Wopper, come on...move that brain function...the sky, is it not part of the earth, too?”

“Yeah...Delight, your wisdom speaks truth...the horizon is what all peoples share...hmm...The sky people are earth people, too! Where did they go so crazy and end up as shadow, colorless forms? And I’m...oh oh oh oh! The place where all naturals meet is the horizon...the heart...so one hand claps with the other! A bird man!”

“This man, this sky guy...is a natural, is a medicine man like you, Doo Wopper.”

“A frog man?”

“No, he’s a bird totem. He’s a phoenix.”

“Oh, look at his dreaming...he’s crashing...into a rock...he’s hurt. He’s kind of dumb. You can’t fly through rocks. You can rest on them or hop from holy mineral to holy mineral! Now he’s cursing the rock. Oh buddy, that’s in poor taste. Never damn your mother! She is your life...your bowels, your womb...your genitals! She is the Heart dwelling place! She is pure vital feelin!”

“Doo Feelin?”

“You got a hold on my next thought...Delight...I have an urging to teach this man a simple song...a corn song...that will get him...get his naturalness moving...to ground his dreams in love of the Great Ma! Look...Delight...he’s waking up from his ascension! Hey! Fella...Sky Man...prince of the winged! Come over here...smoke some holiness with me.”

“Why is he walking into the tree?”

Tender Man spoke truth. "I met this sky man years and years ago when a strange desire overcame me to rise into the skies of mind. I went to his lectures and the powers of the bird man were truly remarkable. But the more I learned of his ways of soaring, my earthiness became burdensome to me. The corn songs couldn't name or calm the wrestling with body and sky spirit. I wanted to run away from my life...my vitalness! Imagine that! My earthiness became a curse to me. I wanted to soar away! And things got weird-er still! I hated my earthiness but needed more and more kinds of fancier and fancier things...things that were made from earth, but meshed and mixed in some strange ways that no one could recognize Ma in any of it. I worshipped the abstractions of Ma instead of Her! I was fast becoming a colorless, shadow man. Huge Helping Heart came to help me...and at that point I thought she was really ugly in her naturalness. I was truly sick. I asked her to put paint on her face and to take the hair off her legs and arms. I told her she should worship me because I have a thing between my legs that is different from her and it makes me special, that the great white spirit is in my image, not hers. I even tried to convince her that she couldn't live without my protection, that it was my great powers of protection that kept her alive. Well the insanity goes on and I can't honestly say that it was sky man who taught me all the perversion, but he gave me a thirst for his strange ways and powers that I did not understand. Huge Helping Heart yanked me out of there with the power of her passionate loving ways and I am a natural man again. Doo Feelin Wopper, I still don't know what to make of my experiences with the colorless men and the teachings of sky man...bird man..."

Doo Feelin Wopper was silent. He jingled his kangaroo pouch between his webbed fingers. "All of this is surely an upstanding mystery!" He patted Tender Man's hands and kissed him full on the lips. "Enough of this! Bring out the drums

... let's sing and dance to a sweet corny love song."

Kat plucked and strummed, sang and wrote. She felt foolish and awkward writing crooning love songs. What do I know about loving? She threw away fifty songs before she changed her approach. Her first real love song was about her love of music, and then melodies swayed open after that. She wrote of her love for ordinary things, some of it was pretty silly...loving the hairs in your nose and the cracks between your teeth. After she got off composing songs about what she loved about her own body she began to notice her environment: the desert plants...the lizards...rattlers...the oasis...the rolling hills...the green of the mountains off in the distance...mountain lions...naturals. She was on her two-hundredth song when she crooned on about children, mothers, wee lads...nature people. Around the five-hundredth song—falling into a trance—she had a dream that inspired her to write her first love song between a woman and a man. It went like this:

*I was always dreaming about a man who  
could touch my heart*

*Life can be so cruel and I was all torn apart*

*I had given up hope that I could find the healing love that*

*I so desperately needed.*

*Then my dream took form when you blew away my inner storm.*

*You gave me peace of mind that I was so much needing.*

*In you earth and sky meet*

*together let's soar like the bird up through the horizon...*

*Oh, sky man, I am your sky woman...*

*like birds of a feather we'll always be flyin together...*

*Sky man, my real man...*

Corny and country. She sold the song to Roseanne Cash and it won the Grammy for best song of the year. She told Roseanne, as far as she cared, if Rosie wanted to claim credit for the song she could. Rosie added a few doo-doo's to it, put her name on the song along with a mysterious note...a dedication that she included in her performance of the song: "I'd like to dedicate this song to Sky Woman...I hope she is soaring in the skies of love." She sold and wrote a lot of songs during this phase.

She felt ninety-four and three-quarter-percent happy most of the time. She was falling over into happiness... swooning... beyond mind. She could predict when one of her refreshing swoons would be coming on her. She would have beautiful visions of effulgent lakes, where happy peoples would bathe her, surround her with their love songs and tender caresses. She felt lion-hearted...crazy and free. This is the real world... she knew it! She had shaken off all myths. Her days were longer and longer. She played in love, having no other obligation or responsibility. No allegiance to what was unnatural, what was an aberration of the very real freedom of Love. Earth and sky were rhythms of her heart. As her heart beat, the play of the naturals danced into form. She wanted to share her livingness, the absolute wonder of it with those of her form.

Doo Feelin Wopper hopped in to introduce himself..."Great She Kat Woman

. . . Lion-Hearted...Free Standing Alone Woman...I am Doo Feelin Wopper...a natural man, a frog man...serving as friend of the naturals, and medicine man for the unnaturals...I've heard your great songs of love. I was slow be-hopping by your shack and heard those beautiful hymns in 3/4 time. Tears ran from my eyes. I just knew that your loving is the magic of the heart itself! I was wondering...not knowing how to handle

this delicate matter...you see..." Doo Feelin revealed his pouch..."in this pouch are the contents of one sky man...burnt down to ash...Well, I was feelin that your love was pure, passionate and powerful enough to resurrect this phoenix...this bird man...as you are a phoenix yourself, a woman of unsurpassed beauty and an excellent mystery to feel. I believe it's your love that can birth this sky man."

"Come in, Doo Feelin...I have been waiting a long, long time to meet you. My lioness told me of your healing, helpful presence. Let me serve you corn eclairs and you can tell me stories about my daughters. I have not seen them throughout this incarnation. You have been keeping them to yourself!"

"Yes, that is true...but they are only serving your play!"

The Kat woman and the frog man talked the secrets of the world through Heart transmission into the silvery dawn of time. They reminisced about all their in-common relatives which were all the peoples from all the worlds. There was no outshining of their great love. They did get to arguing for a few heart tones, rising up the scale over who was the most loving lover. Kat's feel was that there was no lover more satisfying than a frogman's and Doo Wopper's bright confession was that a Kat woman's love was love itself. Well, if you gotta argue...

Kat never lost an argument in her life and finally topped Doo Feelin with, "Yeah, but you are the only man who has ever seen my real beauty and loves me for who I really am."

"All right I win, then...just to please you now. Oh, Kat woman, let's birth more kitties like you..."

Reluctantly Doo Wopper left Kat's feline presence the following sunny summer afternoon...left her with a rose...Delight Beyond Anything You Can Imagine. He thought it fitting that his rose friend and his heart queen blossom together. He also left the sprouting forms of many daughters and of course he left what he had come for—the ash, the pouch...the remains of a sky man. "Ah," he sighed sweetly as he rollerskated down the roadie..."I is a most happy natural frog man."

Kat mixed the ashes into her paints of red quarter notes, blue half notes...golden whole notes, and quickened the tempo with magenta and life-giving green. She sang a heart and painted a form. His wings grew and beak into nose. She danced of the earth and sang of the sky. She birthed the women and the powers of his life and waited through an eternal day for his awakening. He dreamt he was a prince, a teacher of power, a king...a sky man—and when he finally opened his eyes and the birth film of his separateness dissolved in the heart of recognition, he saw the phoenix of a face...his beloved...and he sang a sweet corny love song to Her in the old tradition style.



## Survivors

They were survivors. They had seen it; they had lived it all. They weren't intact but they were in contact. She knew he needed her. His photo was by her bed and his face forever posed in the same expression. It haunted her—that same expression. She tired of it. She wanted to pull off the posed expression. She wanted him to speak to her. The look, the same look, every day, every night. Please, let's go deeper than this, she complained to the photo. The same sad smile softly glared back at her. His eyes set to the camera, the click, the shot, that moment frozen...for whom? His eyes did not reveal what was in his heart in that moment of posed deliverance. She sensed a sadness.

One day I will take a picture of him. My heart can see. I will open the shutter, the window of light, and he will turn around, surprised that it is me. CLICK! I will know what he feels in that moment of surprise, of discovery. I will watch his expression develop in my lab of color. I will see what he has survived. I will paint in chalks the textures of his face and touch him through the mediums of paper, colored chalks and my fingertips. For hours my fingers will press the chalks, creating the contours of his face. I will close my eyes as I feel him. Come through, I will coach him forward. We have survived, haven't we?

The painting finished, I will hang it in my bedroom. I will watch over him as I sleep. I will dream of paintings, photos, images that I have yet to birth in the medium of life.

My name is his name inverted and his form stands tall in my own, though my physical stature is of a small woman. I have birthed him in an eternal day and watch over him every night. My power is in his recognition. I wait for the moment, with camera in hand, when he turns to me and remembers the promise he gave to me a long time ago. Did the promise survive, or has he forgotten? He seems sad now.

Does he know that the demand was HIS need?

What is our story? What part does he play and why do I stand behind the curtain? The theater is empty. Perhaps he sees rows and rows of dead people hoping to be stimulated into life. Passive, they wait to be entertained and he smiles, that same posed smile, and I feel sad—another performance has begun. He is really funny; the audience of ghosts is laughing but they have no mother to be born to, no access into this life. He survives night after night in this cold tomb.

I want him to come home, come home with me. Your life is with me, can't you remember? He turns the lights off and picks up a torn ticket and walks toward the theater door. The night air is brisk and a wind pulls back his hair. He whistles a tune. It's an old love song and he adds his own verse, singing, "You're still intact, you still got it." He reflects for a moment on a performance he gave long ago...it ended in a promise and he shrugs, not quite remembering what it was. He smiles his sweet, posed smile and rests his hairdo on the mantle of his fireplace and sleeps. I'll see her tonight, I know it.

She walked with him, arm in arm, as the scenery changed from the familiar European streets of his childhood and youth to shining, surreal, sparkling streets that only existed in his dreams of her. He was happiest with himself when he was pleasing her. That was not always so. For many years she patiently taught him the ways of love and he mistakenly, childishly, always only enumerated his crass, conceited demand for attention. He now realized that attention given to her, that giving love to her, fulfilled him in a way that the people or things of the world never did.

Tonight they laughed as she reminded him of her old days of teaching him. "You were such a conceited brat," she teased.

"I was, wasn't I? How could you put up with me? Always loving me, getting me to understand the wonderful secret of loving you." He gently pushed up against her shoulder and

she pushed back with a hard jolt. That was a sign between them that he understood and her sign back—the heavier jolt—was her way of saying, “And don’t you forget it!”

This was a most wonderful night, a dream of dreams. He felt so happy. He knew that he was ready to give her anything she wanted, anything she asked. He mused to himself, she has that look in her eye; it must be something big she wants me to do. “So, Kat what is it, what’s my next assignment? It’s a big one. I can tell by the size of the twinkle in your eye?”

“Do you remember the promise you made me long ago?” she asked.

He was quiet, searching his heart for the promise she was asking him about. He thought of the many foolish promises that he had made to appease others; promises he had never really intended to keep. He knew he had broken many to her as well. He had been a foolish man, and surely she was not holding him responsible for a promise that he had given only to protect his selfish interests.

“I’ve said a lot of stupid things to get what I wanted out of people, Kat. I am puzzled at what it is you are asking...It has only been with your love that I have become a man capable of response to others, of holding fast to my word towards others.”

“Yes, I know, my friend. It was when we first met in the dream of your desire. It was a true demand, a true desire that called me to you. Now, though you cannot remember the promise you made me, I must call you to keep it. This is the last time we meet in the dreams of sleep. The next time we meet—and that depends on you, on the promise delivered—we will meet in the Awakening Zone.

There was no need to question her or to protest his ignorance. He accepted her ways, knowing it was the highest intention, the truest truth. His tears flowed unashamedly and

he hugged her this last time and whispered in her ear, “I will keep my promise to you. ‘Til, then...“ He woke from his dream, his eyes still wet.

The time is close, she thought. All agents were being called in from the Interior Zone. Who will find me first? she wondered. She continued with her preparations. She studied the map. Hmm, war on the coast and the rebels are doing the laundry. She flipped through stacks of photos, carefully choosing the images that would be preserved as maps for her agents. This is war, she laughed, and I intend to win it! I’m going to leave clues everywhere and we’ll see if my agents can find and separate the whiter-than-white clothes from the rest of the pampered, hampered laundry. Dress to kill. Keep your lipstick on straight, women! Men, keep your moustaches glued on!

She left the first clue in Death Valley. Humor them, she thought. Two hooded figures at Dante’s View watched the sun go down. If they only knew. She left the first clue with them. They never even sensed her presence. On the top of their heads in white, bright bold letters read the number 1. Anyone flying by could see it. Must see...must see and give the sign.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner; three squares a day. This was war and you had to keep well stocked—just last month she was lucky to suck the juice of a single orange. Supplies had been low for weeks...no vital energy—the lust drained it out of her. Everybody wanted to fuck. Fuck this, she thought. You want stimulation, she threatened, you got it. This is war, honey...the greatest stimulation humanity has ever devised... but I got my side and I am the only ONE on it. Kat paced like a tiger, like a lioness, but not like a feline in heat. She had some self-control. Clue two, perhaps?

Looking through her reserve pile of photo maps, Kat got an incalling message from agent Scarface. She flashed, NO MESSAGES! but Scarface persisted. All right, I know the deal...

first you are going to go for the sexual stimulation via mind fantasy...zero results...Scarface, you don't turn me on...not that way...transmission out if you don't come up higher...I don't cut deals...what do you want, Scarface... you working for me or you working for the enemy?...Sometimes with you it's hard to tell... double agent...Now here comes the begging and pleading...All right, what's your transmission, Scarface...any strategic points of view...Shut up! Jerk! Bodily mutilation for sexual stimulation is not real art even if it is in the movies! Hang up now, babe. I got another incalling message. NO, you can't know who it is.

Crazy war, concluded Kat. The guys working for me...geez... someone should give them a purity test before they are allowed to enlist...If these are my friends, can't wait to meet my enemies...oh, my dear loved ones . . .

There was no incoming call. She was busy scanning the terrain to see where clue two could drop. A jeep...a young woman with dark hair...look, she is wearing a beret...she's the one...clue two will be given to her. Odd, she noticed me. She's gotta be a personal agent then. I gotta give her the clue in the physical then. What form will she take it in?

“Hello “

“Hi. Beautiful out here, isn’t it?”

“Yes, I have never been here before. Would you mind taking my picture by the point there?”

“No, not at all, if you let me take a picture of you, too. Photography is my hobby.”

“Good shot.”

“Thanks.”

“Could I take a picture of you, too?”

“Sure.” This woman is on to it, thought Kat. A double personal agent with a beret too. What luck today. She’s a gem,

one in a million. She passed the purity test. I hope she is not a cover personal agent working for...shhh...that clue can't be given now.

Skyman searched the clouds and found what he wanted. How romantic, he thought. Strings and strands of her are always floating by if you know how to recognize the fragrance. She is in the southern regions now. Number one clue found...those two hooded figures felt familiar...incarnations past? Yeah, right, I get it. We're on the move now. The clouds are weaving with the wind; the elements are flashing. There is going to be a major fire. She's hot now. All her interior screens are shut down. She is the only one I know who calls everyone to her when she is in complete seclusion. The bastards! This must be double jeopardy for her to take all these precautions. The new life and the new tradition...whew, the fire is getting hotter. Kat, I'll follow where you lead. I'll meet you at the Serpent Mound; the signs are ripe for it.

Lost contact, lost contact...I'll survive this too, he thought. Fuck it! I'm miserable without her. God, did I save that sketch? It's got to be in an old journal somewhere. I remember waking up from a dream and not wanting to forget her. I sketched her face...Shit, I got to find her. I don't know why, after all these years of Interior Zone connections, after all these years she has been helping me, she cut the connection. She must need help. Yeah, the promise. Sevol pulled his hair back—several strands slipped out. Whoa, figure this one out. By the sketch I did of her I wrote, "Beginning of interior instruction by Her." She told me her name was his inverted and that I should just call her Kat. She asked me what I cared about...my usual, standard selfish answer.... . Me! Me! and anyone who gives me what I want. What I wanted back then is not what I want now. Got to get the interior link back. I sense she needs me somehow. That would be the greatest expression of her love and kindness, that she needed me

somehow...But she's only a dream

...real one...more substantial than life exteriorization. She is inside me, not outside me. But!...She wouldn't cut off total transmission without some kind of clue, without some kind of intention...what was it I promised her long ago? Why is the answer to that question missing from my journal? My journals are filled with endless descriptions of our talks in the inner fields, but no promise. There's got to be hope. There has got to be future promise. I've got to see her again.

Doo Feelin Wopper was rooted in feelin and wondered what ever happened to the Sexual Revolution. He laughed at the term "revolution"...revolving, rotation

...total change of conditions...the act of traveling completely around a circuit...naw, he didn't think that revolution could apply to anything about sex, although Skyman might argue the point. Everything on Skyman points upward and only comes back down because of Kat. I wonder how those two are getting along these days. Since my retirement, I have been working overtime; it's been a killer. I haven't been able to keep up my correspondence. Not much time to wazein by the river. Not much good company these days...my friends, the naturals, are going either extinct, or buying their clothes at K-Mart or Macy's these days. A few hang around and a lot have evacuated to the Interior Zone. Storytelling isn't what it used to be

...no one to light the pipe, kick back and aromate with the sweet smell of herb and corn. No more sweet nipples to tweek either. I'm most fortunate that this lily pad is complete with hot tub, be it though in the center of the universe. I can hear the jabber of the jacamar. At least they got a few good stories to tell. Was it just yesterday that they were all in a frenzy, jabbering away about a cold wind and a hot fire? It is getting cooler...I better button up my jerkin. About the fire, I bet Kat is tending to it. I wonder how Roseo is doing with her? I miss her smiles and proud assertions...they always spoke truth. You know, if Roseo was with me right now, I'd pull on one of her petals with a wopper of a riddle. She'd

have it solved before I got down to the last petal. She sure was good at riddles...I wonder if Kat knows that about her. Time to turn the jacuzzi on...my left leg is aching with the tensions of those south-of-the-border rebels. Yeah, this world is a hot bed of revolution, all right...around and around we go with the same old fears, the same old hatred, and the same inability to sort it all out with love. Rumor has it, this is the new tradition, but a corn song's gotta be the national anthem. Check the catalog tonight...I hear prices are going up. I called in fundamentals from all present doctrines—gee, they ain't cheap. These priests are all overpriced, and I bet they can't deliver. I'm glad I got my number one secret agent on the job. Revolution, my webbed foot. There are a few tasty flies still around—tasty enough to be enjoyed as a morsel of the natural frogman. Caviar on corn muffins...!

The electromagnetic fields of the earth were vibrating with greater intensity and frequency. Kat could feel it...it was affecting the Interiorization Zone already. The inner life plane was often full of garbled transmission. Roseo's petals were affected by it...they were changing hues at every cross junction. Kat was worried when Roseo's petals actually changed from rose red to starless black and they weren't in any major city. She had to feed her extra doses of vitamin D at those times. Still, Roseo's fragrance stayed sweet and strong. Doo Feelin must miss her at times, thought Kat. I think the feeling is mutual...how many petals did she ask me to ship off to him this month?

Kat also noticed that some sensitives were picking up on the increase of the shotums of the electromagnetic fields. There was a definite increase of people in all the places she had visited in the last month...strange for the month of November. The sensitives were acting weird and disturbed. They couldn't connect or understand anything that was occurring in the Interior Zone. Where they had been experiencing peace of mind, or maybe even a little interior screen relaxation, frightening images now disturbed them. Things were flipping, and the subconscious drama feeds of virtual reality were somehow slipping into the sacred places. Naturally, her own

clean, clear field caused these places to be returned to their natural function, but now she was traveling constantly to these places to purify them. Even some of her own shamans flipped out in these places. They had to go underground for a few days to steady the shotums in their bodies...their shotums were sliding off in a horizontal sluush. Kat felt that it was best that interior communication be cut back. Sevol will come through. He is the link. He'll remember; he'll make it through all the disturbance... his love for me is strong enough now. The one thing he has yet to understand could be the most difficult distortion to overcome: when he is awake, I am awake...when he is asleep, I am awake... and when I am asleep, I am awake. Roseo's petals stood up at full alert. She sniffed impolitely several times...what a riddle, it reminds me of the good old days with the King of Feelin. Now I know why he lent me to this feline human...You gotta jump ahead, don't you, Doo Feelin?

Skyman played with the rattlers...he wore them like a dickey around his neck. Serpent Mound is really lively today, he thought. One of the snakes was whispering something into his ear. What? he asked. He thought the coiled snake was saying, "self knot, self knot," and then it slid down his throat and rested in the bottom floor of his abdomen. He felt the snake slither up internally, up his spine, and its tongue licked the saliva from his own mouthy organ. This was not an unusual occurrence for Skyman, so he coaxed the snake out with a lively mouse...the snake went for the tasty morsel. Kat always teased him about hanging out, or should she say hanging in there, with serpents. This was the first time one ever spoke to him. I'll have to tell Kat about that if she ever shows up.

Skyman put on his headphones to see if he could catch any interesting transmissions coming from any of the satellites circling Earth. Most of the transmissions were garbled and Skyman adjusted the frequencies many times. Hmm, this is definitely not a normal day...even after I adjusted the therams to account for the buzzed electromagnetic field of this place...I'm not getting much. I might have to fly up and reset all the dials up there. That

would take days. There has got to be some kind of focum going on...so that's why Kat's interior screens have been going down at an alarming rate. I didn't think she was giving herself the vacation she always promised herself. Skyman knew Kat wouldn't be able to meet him at Serpent Mound. She had other leads. I got some work to do resetting all those dials. Skyman checked his tool box for the right sized tirexes. Got everything I need. Time to fly!

The work was going real slow and Skyman was wondering if Kat had some scheme up her channel links to keep him out of the way. Could be one of her practical jokes. I wonder what she is up to. Just might be I got a plan of my own to surprise her with. Skyman reset a few of the satellites to pick up transmission from XYZ planet. If nothing gets her attention, this will. The crazy factor is still her ace card, but I've been watching what cards she plays right before she whimmaams her tentacles to XYZ planet. All the Scorpios got to be lined up with the razor appendage of the catoose lellans. The big question is where do you find a catoose lellan these days? Doo Feelin Wopper might know, he being a natural man of plants. Maybe the two of us could pull a rapid play of catoose coitus coinseedance off. Where is the ole fellow wa-zein these days anyway? I'll find him. I still got a copy of the naturals' remedial retirement party plan...there's got to be a native who can tell me Doo Feelin's whereabouts. Huge Helping Heart might still be around, though I heard that Tender Man crossed over to the Interior Zone.

“Prince? It’s me! How about a kiss?”

AH! must be an old rerun. Could have sworn I was picking up echo chamber drives of that crazy woman I met in the first story. What was her name? Oh, yeah, it was Jasmine. Isn't she some distant relative to Kat? I guess I could stand a little more beet soup.

Five years in a Buddhist monastery, ten years studying the occult sciences with the Tibetan Lamas, one month studying herbs with that weird guy Doo Feelin Wopper...you'd think I could sniff out my pingala from my sushumna. What is the horizontal function of man? I got the Interior Zone blues. If I could find the Control Center of the Interior Zone, I could find a passage out to the Exterior Zone. Don't know if I am up for this. I hear that in the Exterior Zone they actually have to use their bodies instead of their minds to get around, and they have a thing called weather there. I don't know if I have the right wardrobe for this adventure, and I hear you have to stick to one sex there. Which do I want to be? I can't even contact her through yogic simulation. She said we would meet in the Awakening Zone. Where is that, and why have I never heard of it?

Sevol packed his dress and his jeans. He thought he looked better in the dress, but the jeans might be practical in adverse weather. He had a few working theories how to cross over from the Interior Zone to the Exterior Zone. After all, Kat did it all the time.

His fundamental and most basic plan was to fly to the borders of the Interior Zone. Sevol knew that would be in the innermost chambers of the Control Center. He saw no problem there; he'd just sign up for a tour of the place with the rest of the tourists. This is the part I am not clear about—what will I fly up against at the borders? I never heard of anyone leaving the Interior Zone except by being born. I'll not stoop to that, please!

This place gives me the creeps...these tunnels of grey matter are endless. Who's in control at the Control Center, I wonder? I could take a chakra door out, that might deposit me anywhere...no, that might just have me on a circuit of karma I'll never get off. What about these supply rooms...what's in them? It looks like a library, a catalog room—videos on the life of your choice. What's this video? "The Revolution: The Border Split Between The Interior and Exterior Zone." What,

you mean that the two zones weren't always separated? There could be some good clues in this video. Who filmed this video, anyway? It says there were two kinds of people: naturals and sky people, and throughout all of time and a mind's heart wink, they met at the horizon. I got a feeling that's how I am going to get out of the Interior Zone, but where is the horizon? What is a horizon?

Sevol pressed the nail on his right baby finger. The computer screen flashed, "Word Indicator." He thought "horizon" and the seven letters flew off his baby finger onto the walls of the central control room. He read: 1. the apparent boundary between earth and sky; 2. the limit of visual or intellectual perception. Strange, he thought...where the earth leaves off, the people thought it was the end of the limit of the mind to perceive. What idiots...wait a minute, if I think they're idiots for believing such an idea, then I am also an idiot for believing that there is a border to the Interior Zone! At this realization, the walls of Control Center fell apart and Sevol saw a channel of light that had a golden hue to it. He gazed into it, thinking about how to get to the Exterior Zone. The light broke into circles of rainbow hues with orange as its center color. The words, "External Signal Processor," bleeped. Sevol was delighted...this is it! I'm out of here.

He felt a falling sensation and his body was condensing at a slower vibratory rate. He felt heavy and encased...this is most uncomfortable, he thought. It took great effort to move his body through the heavy space, yet his body was not appalled at the intense exertion. He felt a chill and crossed his arms and thought "warmth," but nothing happened. He shivered and said out loud, "I said, warmth." His body remained unpleasantly cold and he moaned, "Oh, this is what they call weather. How primitive!"

He talked into his thumb, asking for directions, "Where am I?" His thumb said nothing. He repeated the question into his thumb, but the screen did not go on. How am I going to find Kat in this dreadful place? He felt a hot fluid leave

from his crotch. Well, finally, the warmth I asked for, he thought. His pants were wet and the cool air caused his pants to turn cold. This sensation which was once pleasant is most unpleasant now, he deduced. He removed the pants and kept his crimson dress on.

What now! What is this irritation in my lower chest area? Images of food, a constant stream of it, entered his thought processes. So this craving sensation is for eating. My body needs food. Clever, this body...in the Interior Zone we don't need food; it's just for stimulation of the depthen pulse...it's just for fun! That food serves a purpose besides just for fun, most interesting...the body is a marvel of ancient, primitive, biofeedback impulses. But how do I get food? "Ripe tangerines," he repeated over and over. Nothing...why is it that my thinking produces nothing here?

Sevol studied his surroundings. He saw a road winding through golden hills and started to walk. He kept calling out for food, with no luck, until he came across an orange grove. "Well, finally!" he said as he plucked one from the tree. I think I am getting it now...to get food, you have to keep thinking it and keep walking until your body and thoughts catch up with each other. He bit into the fruit. "I asked for a tangerine, not an orange," he complained. He ate the orange and plucked a few more and ate those, too. The uncomfortable sensation in his stomach went away and his mind was free from images of the edible substances.

Another understanding buzzed him...So if it works this way with food, to find Kat, all I have to do is to keep walking and keep an image of her in my mind, and eventually the body will catch up to the image. Splendid! I think I got the hang of it here! The warm fluid leaked out of his body again; this time Sevol lifted his dress and avoided ruining his best dress and only article of warmth. I don't feel cold anymore, he thought, and gazed into the sun. I like this heat source. It takes a while to turn on, but once it gets going it's cozy. Everything here takes a while to get going!

Sevol's feet ached and his eyelids began to flutter. What now? What is wrong with my feet? He sat down by the side of the road and massaged his feet. His eyes persisted in closing and Sevol allowed himself to be drawn into images of his home in the Interior Zone. They have the call here too, he thought... he ran through fields of images...many of them were of the Exterior Zone. He searched for Kat, but had no such good kismet. The call drew him in deeper...he could see nothing, hear nothing, and he rested there till the sun in the Exterior Zone reached its zenith. He was awakened by a burning sensation. His body felt to be on fire.

What now with this body? I am parched, burning up, and there is a profusion of sweat running down from my forehead and under my arms. Sevol sucked on his remaining oranges and pulled his dress off by yanking it over his shoulders. He folded the dress neatly and continued his walk, completely without any protective wear, except for a pair of sandals on his feet. He kept Kat's face in his mind's eye and on occasion called out to her. He was confident that he was now versed in the ways of the Exterior Zone and that it would only be a matter of hours before he found Kat waiting for him, with her arms wide open and her usual inviting, silly grin on her face. His attention on remembering Kat was so one-pointed that he failed to notice that a stranger, a man, was calling to him from his automobile.

“Hey, jerk, get some clothes on! Are you a nut case or what?”

Sevol broke his concentration and looked up to see a pick-up truck speeding away. Perhaps some kind of vehicle would get me there faster, he thought, but maybe I can fly. That was his consummate skill in the Interior Zone. He imagined his body floating up above the hills and willed it to do so. He was off!...soaring with the same ease as the hawks that had set their wings to cruise control. Sevol watched the rollings hills disappear, and he continued his flight over a flat stretch that was primarily used for growing vegetables, grains and fruit. He lowered his altimeter and scooped up a pomegranate

from the top of a branch. I'll need fuel soon, he thought. He then realized that he had forgotten to keep Kat's image in his interior screen for several minutes as he had been enjoying his favorite sport. He was tiring and started to free fall. It took up every bit of concentration he had left to mentally guide his falling pace to a safe landing...still, he hit with a thud and bruised his knee.

This is going to be more difficult than I thought, with all these bodily needs and trying to keep this body satisfied...and it never ends...he sighed as the hot fluid left his appendage...here it goes again. I'll need more fluids shortly...how will I be able to keep Kat's image centered on? Maybe walking till my body catches up with my mind—in this case, Kat—is not going to work. It definitely is an accurate assessment of a true concludament, but damn, using this body is so much hassle. What if I just sit here and ignore this body and all its cries for refueling and its odors of excretions, and concentrate solely on Kat's image?...but I'll never get to where she is. I could send her a heart call like I do in the Interior Zone when I want to see her—not that she always came, but often she was so kind as to answer my call.

Sevol found a soft pad of grass and sat crossed-legged with his back braced against the pomegranate tree. He closed his eyes and began his meditation on his true love. The body was sending him a constant stream of fueling images, but he ignored those and sighed deeper. He was beginning to feel rested, and he fought the urge to fall asleep. He saw himself flying towards his home in the Interior Zone and felt a relief and a welcoming to the gentle waters of his world...he called and sang Kat's name...he heard himself saying to her, "I promise, I promise"...but as he approached her to be loved once again in her arms of golden light, a wall, a sign came up and topsy-curvyed him, and he spun, somersaulting back to his body, now fallen over. The sign...the sign, it had read, "Virtual Reality Reservations now accepted. All major credit cards accepted. Images to please you. Total stimulation guaranteed."

What's this? What is this Virtual Reality thing? Why can't I get to the Interior Zone? What is happening? I can think but there are no benefits of immediate apparitions...there is only this body and its endless refueling problems. I can still think and I can move or not move. I feel lost in this encasing, in this strange world. It is harder to keep attention on her here. I feel so sad, like I am lost in a virtual reality of my body's own design.

Doo Feelin struggled to push ahead the last of his preparations. Darn it, what's this infernal scrambling of the Interior Zone! All my best sensitives are failing to decode and communicate. The summit has already gathered and not one incoming call with any information as to how it's going. I'm only getting this endless repetition of dueling swordfights and karate kicks. It's like the world is endlessly repeating a video arcade track! And then there are these porno flicks with grotesque images of sex titillation by hacking off body parts. This can't be the sexual revolution, it must be sexual revulsion...the world is being satiated with this garbage...who is getting off on this?

Doo Feelin paced, hopped from lily pad to lotus bloom. What the world needs is a little satori and I plan to sneak it through but, man, love has got to be the carrier. I can count on my top agents, but they too have shut down considerably on the use of the Interior Zone. Our best link is Kat's number one, Sevol. I hear he has broken through from the Interior to the Exterior Zone. Very good...at least that part of the plan is working. He could be quite valuable even though he might function as an idiot in the physical, but his strong link to Kat and his own world...well, he might prove to be the key that turns the door open.

Doo Feelin Wopper began the purification rites. He washed the icons of purity and love with the sweetest water. He scrubbed every bit of tropic dust and fungus till they shined like the top of his head.

They were all radiating their still pose of benediction to him. The bodhisattvas of all the ages lived with him in his humble abode, and he tended them and kept them from arguing too much about the best way to help humankind. Some of them, being from eras long past, were a bit old-fashioned as to their methods. He constantly had to remind a few of them to go easy with their canes. Some of the older guys, the tribal ones, were his favorites. They had an irredeemable sense of humor, and if anyone could've pulled off the sexual revolution, they could! Come to think of it, they did—in their own time, in their own tribes.

Now it's time for all the women of my heart to rise and shine, too. Doo Feelin dusted, with the perfume of all the savvy isms, his consorts throughout time. Isis waved to him in a cryptic, prophetic way. Kali laughed horrendously—blood, guts, skulls fell into Doo Wopper's hands and he laughed in glee. "You still got it, old girl!" Lakshmi looked alluring as usual. He adjusted all their slippers, made sure their mascara was on evenly, and applied a generous amount of lipstick. "Girls! I mean idols of my true heart, you all are looking tweekable!"

His chore finished, Doo Feelin climbed up the hill. He had one more lady to tend to, and this might take all night. He showered and ate his dinner alone and waited for the stars to shine before he crossed the threshold of her temple. The full moon light gave a lucency to her image, and even in this static form it was easily discernable by anyone that her smile opened to him like open arms of a lover.

"Ah, my lady. I see you are in an agreeable mood tonight. I must interest you in the world of the humans. Much trouble and interference. Everything must move towards peace at the summit. I must call on you directly to work with me in this plan. Yes, it will make me happy if you help me with these sad people. How is she? She is well...yes, Kat is one of your hardest workers. She has been a great help to me. She has been overworking these days to help me, you know, to help those damn unnaturals, those unteachables. But, my love, I need your

Divine interference, in person this time. Come down and take a body. It is time, it is necessary. It has been prophesied. All the signs are present...stimulation of pleasure has replaced love as the way of life. The peoples are passive, waiting for the next pleasure, lost in a world of virtual reality of their own lower desires, not feeling the results of their own lust and greed...their argument now is: if it stimulates me in any way, it is pleasure, it is happiness, it is love, it is god. Their logic sickens me.”

“Oh, my love. The children are always acting up. How is this different from, let’s say, Atlantis?...And what about all those wars? They are always fighting and their civilizations are always in decline. The golden age will come around again, it always does. I’ll wait it out. Anyways, am I not at the beck and call of the sweetest awakener there ever was? Haven’t I given you some of my best agents to incarnate with you this time around, including your best secret agent, Kat?”

Doo Feelin Wopper knew it was going to be a long night. She could be most contrary. She birthed creation in all its multiple forms and dimensions, and seemed to give little regard for how it was all going. Fortunately for all of creation, Doo Feelin Wopper loved the world so much, he wanted everyone to live the true happiness and hated suffering. And our hero of love, so loved She Is so perfectly, and pleased her so frequently, that she could never really deny him. Most fortunate for the world!

Kat spat a big wad of salty mucus. She hopped in and sat behind the wheel of her jeep. More off-the-road traveling, she thought. She took the left, the dirt road that decoyed itself through the pomegranate orchard. She didn’t consult her map, but rather blared the AM radio to find the right directions. The music cleared and cloaked transmissions from Scarface. Actually, Scarface wasn’t called Scarface because he had scars on his face...it was the opposite: he had the smoothest

babyskin of any man she had ever met. He was such a nerd, was totally fascinated by his genitals—and everyone else's—but he was a good sensitive. He had been trying to call for days. Maybe, just maybe, he had something for her. Okay, okay, she thought, but I know I will probably regret it. She turned the jeep around and headed to the nearest town and faxed a message to Scarface's home fax machine.

"All right, what is the word, Scarface?"

Within seconds, she had a printout of about four pages. Scarface closed with, "Don't worry, I'm on it. I miss you. Love, Me, Scarface."

Kat skimmed through the first page. Scarface never got to the point, so she just blinked through the second page, too. The fax started to pick up at the end of the third page. Her interest buzzed when she got to, "Remember you asked me to keep a lookout for any unusual sensitives? Well, I saw this guy naked except for the sandals on his feet. I watched him from my rear view mirror as I was driving away. I got a real strong feeling from him that he didn't know how he got here. I followed your instruction and turned around and told him, 'It's the new life and, fortunately, she has no hope.' He babbled on...something about refueling problems and the Exterior Zone. I decided to ignore him because he did not give the sign that you required for recognizing sensitives but, as I was about a mile down the road, I remembered that you once referred to our physical life as the Exterior Zone. Eureka! Some kind of weird connection, huh? I made a 360 but he was nowhere to be found. I searched the pomegranate grove but no contact. I tried to signal him with my own internal transmitter; it just gave me a splitting headache and I had to take five aspirin to chill my mind out. I don't know what that guy is transmitting...I couldn't conduct him."

Hmm, thought Kat, that's a good sign. If Scarface couldn't conduct him, whoever this guy might be, he is a purer sensitive than I've met in years. Usually Scarface can handle all the

incoming riffraff. Last seen in the pomegranate orchard...why I was just there. I thought I was onto something; it must be this guy that I felt.

Sevol cried for a while and wiped his tears, calling out for Kat. I don't think I will be able to adjust to this body. All the incoming images sickened him. Surely these messages come from somewhere, but from whom? Could this be what is in the minds of the peoples of the Exterior Zone? There is no mental order—random images of sexual foreplay mixed with toothpaste, cars—anything; it doesn't make any sense. I haven't felt one kind thought since I've been here. Kat, how is it that you can live here? Your sacrifice is indeed beyond my understanding. You could live in the upper plane of the Interior Zone and be free of this place of body obsession. Sevol lifted up his head and looked into the sun that was sinking into the horizon. I came for a promise—I came to be with you. I won't give up, Kat. Sevol tucked his wings around him to keep warm. I don't think I can get back home; the doorway is jammed with a garbage heap of humankind's thought excrement. So Kat, my love, all is for you now. I am eternally at your service. I am dependent totally on your grace. The promise given, Sevol rested into the seventh level of the deepest zone. To rest in the Awakening Zone, he would have to find Kat and deliver to her the promise in person.

Skyman shifted gears, arriving on earth in time to witness the conclusion of the summit talks. Doo Feelin would be pleased with the results: bitter enemies were kissing cheek to cheek. Could it be people were getting tired of fighting each other to get their basic needs met, and got that message through clearly to their leaders? A song echoed through his mind and he kazooed, "What's been down in the name of Jesus...what's been down in the name of Islam...what's been down in the name of civilization, in the name of liberation, in the name of greed and selfishness...good day when the fighting slows down and everybody shares a pizza together; hope

it was vegetarian...I don't like beef chunks on my pizza, oh no no."

So how long will this peace be kept and how long will people have to work together because there is no other way? When will people realize that everyone loses in war? No victors...it's a terrible karmic pattern...enemies and victims in this generation breeding hatred and victors in the next. Doo Feelin, looks like your work will always be cut out for you, even in retirement. I wonder how he pulled this one off? I hear he has a lady who is really powerful, who he keeps just to himself on his lily pad in the center of the world. Maybe a little tantric magic! Maybe the old frogman could teach me a few new tricks.

I wonder how my ole lady friend is doing...she has cut off transmission for days since the Interior Zone has been inseminated with the Virtual Reality of the subconscious of humans. I remember the good ole days when the two zones weren't separated. People could even fly back then, and materialize objects just with the thought of it. Man, someday I'll get back home. Maybe I could talk Kat into coming with me. She would like it there. As Doo Feelin would say, "We could really wazein by the river." But there is always the work that comes first. I know I shouldn't have signed that bodhi whatever-it-was contract. I always had the feeling that something was put over on me with that contract, something in the fine print that I couldn't quite remember, something to do with some release that a promise must be delivered. Well, I always survive and I'm sure I'll survive the work too...and anyway, on a day when a treaty is signed and the leaders kiss each other's hated asses to insure food for their peoples, that's a good day's work. It inspires my little heart right down to the soles of my wings. One thing is certain, I won't be going home for a long, long time...treaties are always broken and there is always the peace to keep. Kinda a good feeling to be so needed. I just haven't figured out exactly what my job description is, yet. Don't matter, I can handle it all. A wise woman once said, "It is all but a dream in the heart wink of god."

Kat sat very still. She could hear his heartbeat and her own. He was so close, a fraction of a hairline away. Who was he?...and yet there is this intense familiarity. I know him, like I know my own Skyman. I have birthed him, too, but what is this hugger-mugger of my intuitive memory skills?

Skyman flooded the earth with transmissions, trying to contact Kat. He even stood at attention, which is at the cross-roads between intention and concentration. He ran ragged with every character he could imagine would attract her to answering her cosmic phone. No message on her answering machine...he didn't think she even owned an answering machine. He persisted with every image of delight that would allure her interest to pick up the phone. He even sang duet with Elton John. She must be mad at me, he thought. She gets difficult once in a while and loses all interest in creation...no manifestation can get her to stir...no womanifestation can get her to lift her ladyfinger when she gets like that. The only person who has been able to free her from the grips of her cold-stone samadhi has been Doo Feelin. It will pass and I'll come around once again, and she will laugh and say, "What's the next job, anyway?"

Skyman did a soft shoe and rehearsed his left-over-right spins. He tipped his hat to the audience and gave them his winning smile. The audience roared with appreciation. But there was one man who did not clap, and he sat there looking into him. The audience left and Skyman zipped his leather jacket before exiting the theater. He did his final check to make sure all the lights were off...that's when he noticed that the strange, bedraggled gentleman, the same one who did not roar in appreciation at the end of his act, was still sitting there.

"Hey, sir, go home; the show is over."

The man did not stir. His face was in the shadow and Skyman could not make out his face. "Sir," Skyman gently reminded him again, "time to go home."

The man in the shadow spoke softly and Skyman strained to hear him. "I can't go home."

Skyman turned up the house lights. He, the consummate performer, saw himself sitting in the audience of one. He did not recognize himself completely, but the character before him felt more intimate and familiar to him than his own body. The man cried, unembarrassed about his open display of remorse. This called up a great longing in Skyman that he did not understand.

The man spoke through his sobs, "I have promised her everything and now I must give it to her in person. Do you understand? Have you ever felt such a longing, to know her in the most intimate way?"

Skyman felt shaken, afraid of this vulnerable man before him. He wanted to turn off the lights, flee the theater and be rid of this pathetic man. He heard himself repeat in his mind over and over again, "The work must come first, the work must come first...she understands that."

"But we can't get back; all we can do is go to her...she is not in the Interior Zone...there is no deeper place."

"I have always survived; there is always a place to go, fella...there is always another stage, another audience that would rather live their lives in the Virtual Reality."

"I can't do another soft shoe...Please, I promised her we would deliver. I can't go without you, Skyman...don't you know who I am?"

Skyman sat at the edge of the stage. This was one act he had no script for. "Who are you, sir?"

"I am the final knot, the final mystery of you. If you love Her, look deep into me."

Skyman looked into himself. He fought his impulse to flee. His eyes were hers and he recognized her infinite heart. He

stepped back, but Sevol erased his hairline and stepped towards him. Sevol kissed him on the lips. The kiss delivered, the promise kept, the Interior and Exterior Zones became one.

Kat shot the picture. She knew what he felt in that moment of discovery. Nothing of him survived...just what was essential is. The work is the play of She Is, the play of their love. She coached the world to come to her through her pastel-chalked fingertips. She was an artist of every medium. His recognition of her as essential to his life empowered all her images, paintings, photos. All her artistic expression, through his passion, through his love of her, came to life, was birthed on a lily pad in the center of the world.



## The Grand Opening Sale

Doo Feelin's uvula juggled with exclamation. "Open the doors. I said, open the doors! Open them wide, wider! It's the grandest opening sale there ever was and there ever will be." A native aptly called Always on a Steady Beat, sang Doo, Doo, Doo Wop, while he flung open the windows of the Treasure Chest.

Doo Feelin Wopper tossed the gold key from palm to palm. The treasure is all mine and only I have the key! This is no Pandora's box. No, this is a real treasure in the truest salute of it. And for a price, he winked at Huge Helping Heart...come around, all my natural, native friends. There are so few of us left. But don't worry, my medicine is stronger. I have the key and the Treasure Chest is always open. Why, let's have a grand opening sale. Everything is free today, pay me later. Your credit is good, put away your money. Good doing business with ya. Doo Feelin let out the loudest Wopp the natives ever heard. They were happy that their medicine man's magic was so happy-hearty today. They knew their medicine man was the wisest man that ever lived, no bad magic had fallen on them since they had lived under his protection. His spells were very powerful but it was his love, they knew, that had no limits, and they learned of the power of his love. They learned that love/bliss is the naturalest state of their being.

Huge Helping Heart knew that none of the naturals needed anything; they had no need to buy anything from the Treasure Chest. None entered the store. They all sat by their medicine man, feeling his glow and ready to enjoy his service.

Huge Helping Heart knew she was witnessing a very important ceremony on this day, the day of the Grand Opening Sale. She had an intuition that Doo Feelin had something in mind, that his heart play was a calling to someone. Who? she



**Celebration of me as Durga, September 1994**

wondered. It must be someone of great medicine. He is so excited today, like an expectant father waiting for news that his first son has been born, or a man hearing news that his beloved is finally free to come to him...waiting on the shore, scanning for any sight of her boat being carried in on the tide. There was an expectant thrill in the air—the wait would soon be over and the treasure would be revealed. Who would come to purchase, to claim the treasure?

The celebration lasted till every native was too tired to yell out any more galoops. They fell into a contented sleep. Doo Feelin tenderly covered Huge Helping Heart with his shawl. Although I didn't sell a damn thing, he thought, this was indeed the best grand opening there ever was. She'll be a coming around the mountain when she comes. The full moon is rising over Anticipation Point right now. Either we will lie together in an eternal sleep of benediction or we will dance and shower all the naturals, all the natives, with our juices of lovemaking. Care to make a purchase, my fair lady?

Kat loaded her shotgun. I got to claim this land for my own purposes. This infestation of these rodent types...well, move on you varmints! Why did I meet up with that enlightened rodent, anyway? It seems like his whole kingdom has firmly nestled in my mountain womb. Varmints and vermin, that's my lot in life. I haven't been able to hit one of these buggers yet. These varmints are cocky. I'll probably have to blow up the whole mountain before one of them leaves. Or...the dharma rides this range, fellas...I'll have to train you all as my little army of rodent privates...march!

Kat pulled a few thousand weeds from her garden. This garden was really special, really magical, really dumb...as if I don't have enough work already, she thought. Besides my spy work for Doo Feelin and my eating work, my artistic birthing, trying to hold the dharma here with any means I can, I got this earth impulse. And these varmints are always using

my garden as their four-star restaurant. I might as well call the garden, Le Cafe Varmints. Look at this guy—I'm standing three feet away from him with a shotgun in my hand, and he's munching down like it's brunch at the Holyday Inn. If I knew squirrel sign language I would probably recognize that he is signaling me for dessert. Baroom! Take that you varmint...yeah, right, missed again.

Kat heard a familiar sound overhead. A hawk was scanning for lunch and courting his mate. Within seconds she showed and they landed on the top of an old oak tree. Free meal, right here for you guys. They're nice and fattened up, too. Ah, spring, all this mating and frantic eating going on everywhere around me. Two lizards chased each other up the stucco side of her house. Have fun breeding...so that's what all those push ups were for! Don't worry fella, you're in great shape. I wonder if that tarantula is still using my hot water closet as her own private suite?

Kat stored her shotgun in her garage, picked up her mail and went in for lunch. She looked at her cheese sandwich and grazed through the mail. She usually threw the advertising away without even a glance, but today the words, Grand Opening Sale invited more notice. This is interesting, she thought, and read the flyer out loud.

**GRAND OPENING SALE! TODAY  
AND EVERY DAY!**

**COME THE ONE OF ALL! THE TREASURE CHEST  
CONTAINS ALL THE GREATEST TREASURES IN  
THE WORLD. GIFTS FOR EVEN THE HARD TO  
PLEASE. GIFTS FOR THE WOMAN WHO HAS  
EVERYTHING. WE EVEN HAVE HARD TO GET,  
UNHEARD OF ITEMS...SO UNHEARD OF WE  
CAN'T EVEN MENTION THEM IN THIS FLYER.  
YOU GOT TO SEE 'UM TO BELIEVE 'UM!**

**IT'S THE GRANDEST OPENING SALE EVER! ONE DAY ONLY! EASY ACCESS, CONVENIENT LOCATION...ALL MAJOR DHARMA CARDS ACCEPTED. BRING THE LITTLE LADY DOWN! SHE'LL LOVE OUR FRIENDLY SALES CLERK.**

What is this? Kat laughed. Maybe they got some kind of knock-out pesticide for varmints and their sidekick vermin. Ooooh, I got a feelin about this, could be the start of a great business. I must see...I have a lot of credit on my major master card. How do I get there, anyway?

Skyman tossed his flyer into the pile of mail trash. He threw all his advertising into his public relations composting, recyclable pile for later manure benefit. He never wasted a single thing. What comes around, stays around...just how to shift it so it will show probable good cause, instead of the usual bullshit effects...well, that was another skill of his. He skimmed through the rest of his mail and saw a letter addressed to him in familiar handwriting. It was from Kat. He always got a bit nervous, a little more than a bit nervous when the feline dropped an occasional letter at his doorstep. A strong case of stomach butterflies, shaky hands, cold sweat, was his usual reaction. Hey, there was a happy dread, too. He held the letter in his hands for a few minutes, just feeling into it. Kat, what's up, he wondered.

Brave it, kid, he said to himself and tore the envelope open. It was a flyer, advertising a Grand Opening Sale at the Treasure Chest. This is peculiar, what are they selling? Where is this place? He looked through his pile of advertising refuse and discovered the same flyer in his compost. You're on, Kat, my love...I'll get there five minutes before you.

Doo Feelin Wopper finished his meal. Mighty tasty...corn muffins with strawberry cream cheese. I just never get tired of these things. Back to business. He checked his inventory sheet. Not one sale yet. These things take time. I got the finest merchandise in the world, just perfect for the customer with discriminating taste. Just one sale will put me over. She'll be coming around the mountain. What woman could resist a sale like this?

The Presence in the temple was getting bored. Where is he? I haven't seen him in days. He never leaves me unattended. There is dust all over my eight arms and the flowers by my lotus feet are dead. They are emitting a rancid smell that permeates my whole play house. Darling, where are you? The Presence jumped off her pedestal and paced the small confines of her temple. She opened her third eye wider but still she could only see the confines of her playhouse; the temple that he came to every day to play with her, to worship her.

What's this, where is my power of all-seeing? Is he playing with me in this way? He knows if I leave the temple I will be forced to play my divine nature in a human body. Surely he won't subject me to that. We have been having this same argument for months now. He doesn't understand, I just can't come down in that way. What is he doing? How dare he play with me in this way! There are two ways out of this. One is to take a human body, the other is to withdraw all my attention and take him back with me to the unmanifest realm. I'll leave and take you with me. Don't play with me like this, Doo Feelin Wopper.

Doo Feelin sat on a bench under the Grand Opening Sale sign that was draped over the front doors of his Treasure Chest, the temple of his lady. His arms were folded over his chest and he appeared to be in a deep state of wazein. His

eyes were rolled up so tight that only the whites were seen. A wind stirred and blew away the flyer that had been resting on his lap. His body was humming. It was a high pitch, a frequency that no living creature could hear. If we all had the capability to listen in, we would hear in this hum the roar of a lion calling to his feline.

Kat watered and watered her garden. She wondered how she was going to be able to write a story about a man getting his woman instead of a woman getting her man. This meant her own transformation in some way. The more subtle, the more sophisticated, the more on the edge and off the road map your friends are, the more the steps to the dance are performed with great precision of graceful subtle gesture...or there's my method of putting a shotgun to the guy's back. I'm getting restless again. Must be I am invited to another dance. Who will be my escort this time? Always the trio. Must be some kind of divine triangle going on here. Skyman and I are like the two sides of a liberty coin, but Doo Feelin is like the metal itself. With all this male attention, Kat wondered why she lived all alone. At least I can call mom. I think she can't believe the situation I'm in.

Relationship, thought Kat...illusion or play. If it's play, naw, it's a divine joke, instead. Why is it, that the most loving are the most difficult to sit back and enjoy? Like my two good-guy friends, heroes of love, champions of the dharma, not bad looking either...comrades through every battle of stupid programmed seeking...why is it that we worship each other not in the flesh but in temples of our own islands? Well, I got a dream. One day we will be together, the three of us in the same loka, a true living room. No, we won't get much work done that day...since it's not the way for me to live with them, there's the work I do with them, for them, and for the sake of all beings. What beings? There is only Me, isn't there? Illusion of separateness, what relationship? There has got to be an other to relate to. Still, I dream about the day we'll get together in the life room. What would I wear? My mohawk needs a shaving, it's starting to grow back in. It's a joke, so laugh. God, those varmints ate a whole row of my Cosmos.

Skyman woke up, which is difficult to pull off if you are eternally awake. Welcome to my world of paradoxes, he thought. There was a buzzing in his ear, a steady low-pitch hum. He dug into his ear canal with his baby finger, tried both ears, but the hum wouldn't leave him. It was loud enough to be heard when he was quiet, but too soft to be heard when he was moving about, so he didn't give it any more attention. He did a big stretch, covering his whole bed with his limbs. He looked at his photo of Kat, blew her a kiss. He struggled with remembering a dream. Something about Kat, and Doo Feelin was there. He closed his eyes, focusing intensely on the feeling of Kat rather than the image. That always pulled back the dream. That's strange, what was Doo Feelin telling me?

Whoa, I remember now. He was telling me that Kat was going to die soon. What did he mean? He knew that Kat had much more work to do in this incarnation. He thought of the woman whom he loved but never saw, not being here to serve in the work with him. He wanted to say, "There's always the work," but his actual feeling was not covered over by that noble sentiment for the masses. He burst into tears. I live for her, not the work. It's she who guides me to hang in there. She keeps me going. What was Doo Feelin talking about? Surely our special secret agent friend can't be returning to the unmanifest? Skyman tried to recall Doo Feelin's expression. Doo Feelin did not look the least bit disturbed. He looked confident, assured that all he had to say would come to pass. Skyman struggled with his dream cortex image selection. I just feel. What do I feel? he asked. I feel that I have to help Kat in some way...but am I to help her with her departure, her death?

Skyman opened his bedside table drawer and pulled out his journal. He flipped through the pages not knowing what he was looking for. An old photo of Kat slipped out and he studied the picture. He smiled as if the photo was actually Kat in person. No difference, he thought to himself. He felt his loneliness, he felt her smile touch his cheek, her arm slip around his waist—a faint, light touch. It was touch, a real touch. He

felt her that way, her presence was actual—her subtle body meeting his physical one. He accepted her touch in that way—it eased his loneliness a bit. Loneliness, the loneliness is so deep for those of our kind. A loneliness, a restlessness drives us. Where are you going, my dear?

This change is different from all the changes that have gone before, and so much has gone on before. I have outgrown this world. Have I outgrown this work? The suffering that I have come to ease, it is harder to hold that intent in place. More and more, I only want to stay here with her. I am puzzled at my own lack of interest. Where is she leading me? I know I must go. I only care now for her need—does she have one?

Kat put down her picture of Skyman. So quiet for me these days, my love. She felt his lips touch hers—so gentle, his touch. She loved his purity, his touch, his no difference. My usual restlessness, my aching for him, my play of instruction with others—all that is being swallowed up in me, in us? This phase of the work is so different from anything that had to be done before. Skyman, it calls me to come in deeper, to swim the ocean, to melt the snow, to flood the plains. Don't worry, my love. I feel no fear—it has no human quality to it. The children don't even have a clue.

I am going away; you must come with me. The breeze blows me; it is your touch. I can see only in the human way, I can feel only in the human way, but this depth is a seeing, a feeling that has no eyes, no reaction of a signed language. There is barely the garden. Let the varmints eat—a shot is a picture, a stalk is following the qualities of light. The picture, the image...I've lost my touch of pulling form from light. My fingers are clean—paints, chalks, clay forms of my work and play have been stored in the cupboard. This wait, this difference, the restlessness has changed. I am split open...my form reveals another. I am pacing the temple floor. I am yearning to swim free. What will hold me here now, my love? Skyman, will you follow or will I take you with me?

Years ago I pulled the plaster off my frame and discovered I AM light...the frame unnecessary, not my identity. Since then I have worked as a secret agent...stealing all the defense plans of the world's unloving, unhappiness. I've eaten the sorrow, the rage, as my daily meal—growing real food of light and love in its place. I have been the attorney for the defense...saving the world of its crimes, the punishment of its unconscious cruelties. I've forgiven, I've forgiven. I've apologized, so the world could learn to feel remorse. I've blazed a trail with anger, so righteous change could be dealt. I've sung songs of love and lived with Judas—forgiving his betrayal of his sweet Lord.

I've accepted your strange ways, my dear Skyman. I've hopped on the back of a frogman and moved continents so his lily pad would always be in the center of the world. I can only rest now, but it is not the sleep of humans. This story is unlike any story that has gone before. I've discovered many treasures, and one that has had great shininess and value has been your love, Skyman. I feel there is more to this treasure—the chest is open. This must be the Grand Opening—the Grand Opening Sale.

Skyman tossed the flyer onto the front passenger seat. His hand was shaking slightly as he turned the ignition on. Where am I going? he wondered. I just got to go. I'll know as I go—she'll touch me.

Huge Helping Heart was worried about Doo Feelin. He had been wazein, his body motionless in front of the Treasure Chest, for a day now. She called his name in his ear, but he did not stir from his death-like state. She heard a strong hum, a steady roar, coming from his body. She felt assured that a Great Power was coming through him or from him, and that he would return from his wazein—that he would not leave his

beloved naturals. She watched over his body, shooing vermin away, shading his body from the high noon sun. She sang his name in her breath and heart. She listened to his hum. It had an effect on her. It got louder and louder. It was now inside her. It made her body sway, her heart-beat drummed in emphasis of its thunder current. It crashed like sneaker waves on the shore, in the skin of her bodily form.

She became frightened...this is out of my control. What kind of magic, what kind of spell is this? Her skin stretched, her muscles burst out...her form remained in its usual condensed form. The current accelerated to thunderous reverb of echoes, and flashes of light cracked in her brain. She fell over into the ecstasy, into the agony. Her journey began. She was in a strange world, a world where she was a stranger, where there were no familiar smells to guide her.

Skyman rolled up his windows. What a strange smell, it's not of this world. He turned up the music louder. It was difficult, staying in the mirage of the freeway scene. He had to put much effort into holding an intent, a thought. He sipped his coffee. He tried all the usual tricks to keep bodily consciousness. He still smelled the odor. He glanced around the interior of his car to see what could be the origin of the aroma. Nothing appeared unusual. His body was humming, nothing would stop the wazein state now. He pulled into a deserted, for sale, run down restaurant, and let go into his free form.

Before he returned to bodily consciousness, and right after he returned from his no-form state, he had a vision that was profound. He did not stir, though his legs were cramped and his lower back ached. He closed his eyes, focused his feeling, and the image recall appeared. The images moved so fast, it was hard to decipher them. He knew Kat was in his vision. There were many scenes, different times, multiracial bodies. Kat played a part in every one.

The last scene was most vivid. He was waiting for her on a sandy shore. There was a treasure chest by his side. He opened it and there was only a single item—a key—inside. He examined the key and wondered what treasure this key—this treasure within the treasure—would open. He heard a laugh...it was his beloved singing his name. She smelled so sweetly of the tide, of the open flowers of her purity. He put the key in his pocket and swam out to meet her. He swam a dance, full, strong strokes, but she disappeared into a wave, into the waters. They swallowed her up. He knew she was gone, that she was all the drops of salty tears everywhere. He swam back to shore, exhausted. He slept. He grieved for her, he ached for her. He dreamt she was a body, he was a body. They had many faces and many children. He dreamt of a drive, of a freeway. He had dreamt this moment, this vision. He remembered the key, he knew it would still be in his pocket.

He drove many miles and several hours passed. He was returning to his mountain, the origin of his vision of her, years ago before they had met. Skyman recalled all that had gone before his life in her, with her. I was always only trying to be with her, he thought. And yet, it took me another long time of being with her to remember her. Kat, you were so tough, fiery, in those days—with such sad eyes. What a battle you have won.

He gazed at the horizon and, again, he was pulled to waze-in. He let go into it, and the mountain watched over his body. When he opened his eyes, he smelled that strange smell of burned, fleshy flowers again.

Kat tossed and turned. The heat was intensifying—no sweat, just heat, burning in the interior of her heart and brain. She called to her native natural and the above-the-earth Skyman, but even the intent of the words could not form—burned, burned before the breath and the heartbeat. Connection, relationship, attraction...where was the play?

Her eye was closed. The fire burned within and without. She could not touch a form, her form—death by fire—the boiling point of the purification work was too much of a strain on her earthly body.

She had spent years giving all her regard, absorbing all rigidity of contracted desire, and free flowing all, spinning all in motion to his wishes. She absorbed the madness of the world only for him, so the world could come to see him and love him like she did. She had been a warrior for him, an artist of his form, his lover and his most intimate stranger. She hugged the form of a woman. She fought bravely on the front lines and painted his play of refracted light. She was his ordinary...experiencing life in all its daily habits and housewifely routines, making this realm of unlove a place where she brought a smile of love. Steadily, she held love here, in a form here. But now, the form could not take any more of the cleansing work. Life, her life, was boiling away, flesh melting hot, red fire was her dress. If only I could get to the ocean, it could melt this fire, its dark, deep depths could satisfy this fire. This was her last call.

Doo Feelin opened his eyes. His limbs were tight, stiff from resting in one place too long. Huge Helping Heart assisted him by massaging his calves and feet. He smiled at his helpmate. He teased her by asking, “Did we make a sale yet?” And before Huge Helping Heart had a chance to reply, he answered himself by saying, “When she leaves the waters, she will need a soft bath towel to cover those tender lines of curves. I’m well stocked!...I’m hungry, Huge Helping Heart. Any corn muffins around?”

Doo Feelin Wopper spent the rest of the afternoon absorbed with his paints, with a six-by-six foot canvas in front of him. He splashed indigo, red, and white in swirling patterns. He used his fingers as brushes—slapping, stroking and rubbing the colors into textured patterns. He sang native ditties to his lady, enjoying his work and style. When he

ran out of blank canvas he continued splashing paint, but now on his own body. He marked his body with the ancient symbols and added one of his own on his chest—a bull's eye, the targeted point—the center, of course, was his heart. He laughed to himself, "Nothing can go wrong. The arrow will reach its mark, right, Skyman?...What does she see in that guy anyway?" he laughed.

Huge Helping Heart came in with dinner and reminded him it was time to check inventory for the Treasure Chest. Doo Feelin smeared red all over her nose and declared "Red nose is the sign of Durga duty...where did I leave my inventory sheet anyway?"

Doo Feelin rolled his guacamole and beans into the corn tortillas. The sour cream made a fast getaway, but he caught it in midflight with his quick as lightning tongue. He studied the inventory sheet and commented, "Business is picking up. The store will be a huge success." Huge Helping Heart was used to the strange ways of her medicine man and sometimes, just for enjoyment's sake, played on with her friend, the frogman.

"What did you sell this week, Doo Feelin?" she asked as she rolled herself another tortilla.

"Just about everything, my dear! Everything except for that white elephant of a piece. You do know the one I'm referring to, my dear?"

"Oh, yes, I think so. It's the statue of the white lady riding a lion. She has all those arms. Isn't that what you are referring to?"

"Exactly. It will take some fast talking to get that piece off my hands. Warrior goddesses aren't too popular these days. You know, the legend goes that this lady is so powerful that she sprang from the gods, to do battle with forces that the gods themselves were incapable of subduing."

“My lord, what forces could be so powerful that the gods could not control?”

“The force of man’s horneyness...ha! His lust for power... ha! His desire to control and own pleasure!”

Huge Helping Heart frowned in disbelief. “How can anyone own pleasure?...It is our natural, native self.”

“My dear, you are such an innocent. Don’t ever leave this lily pad. The unnatural ways are gathering force...there are not many of you left—simple, native, trusting.”

“Lord, I will never want to leave your side. “

“How could you, anyway?” Doo Feelin smacked his lips. “The legend of this warrior goddess has a long line of gods springing from gods. The story goes that the blue goddess of death, destruction and rapid spiritual transformation sprang from the warrior goddess’s third eye. This goddess—her form is terrible—is depicted as a black-and-blue hag devouring the universes. Kali is her name. For jewelry she wears severed heads around her neck.”

“Master, why does she eat the universes?”

“Because, my dear, they taste as sweet as you!” Doo Feelin grabbed Huge Helping Heart by the waist and tasted her sweet juices.

Kat put her fork down. I can’t take another bite, not one more, not one more bite—this food is bitter, soured, filth. It’s eating me now! Enough of this! I am wasting away in this garbage. Sisters! I will no longer submit to your food; I will no longer live in your neighborhood. I am tired of it all. I cannot bear it anymore—how my own form refuses its own happiness.

Doo Feelin, Doo Feelin, relieve me of this work. I have nothing to look forward to...the garden is overrun with var-

mints and vermin, and they think it is their exclusive right because of their emotional attachment to me. Oh, why is there no love and respect for the law? I have lost all interest in their games. It is all madness to me. Let me return to the depths, to the expanse of sky waters...to the vastness, the XYZ. Let me be crazy as SHE IS. I am so weary, so sick at heart. The walls of justified unlove allow me only to pace the walls of my temple. I am the original natural woman. I am soured by many foul meals. How can a natural woman survive on the pollutants of the psyche? I need real food. I am burning up, wasting away. I only live each day with the hope that you will call me to your side. My eye, my power, is closed, held in check only because my heart is your heart. All my power holds me in this place of madness because of your regard for me. I must be free to make some other kind of purchase than this scrambled mass of denial of the law of love.

Skyman pulled over, he was hungry...a quick sandwich would do. He had been driving for three days now and there had been several unsuccessful attempts at following him. He left them in the dust of his downhill curve. His car, his beauty drive, was as faithful to him as any horse was to its cowboy. He checked the meter and noted that he had traveled over two thousand miles. He estimated that in about an hour and thirty-five minutes he would be leaving Nevada behind and would be crossing into Kali's territory. The only plan he had was to keep driving, driving west. He kept the music blaring and the wind on his face. This helped him to stay earthbound as the wazein impulse was steadily calling him to the skies of expansion.

He sipped his coke, munched his chips and tuned into Kat's radar. It was a very weak link with much static. He put up the treble, then turned it down and decided that more amp power with bass was what was needed. The incoming signal became more clarified but it still was weak. She has almost no vital energy, he thought. The bands of gold light

and the cardiac line were erratic with a feeble beat at every fifth measure. He stepped harder on the gas pedal and was speeding past the argument to have the right to defend unhappiness. He had to get to her, he had to keep her alive so she could arrive. I cannot fail this time, I have the key of understanding. She will not slip from me into the depths. I will carry her to the shore. I must.

Kat held her Skyman's feet in her heart. Firmly held in place, he wavered across the yellow lines of his high way. He was driving too fast; it would soon be over. He was approaching the intersection of birth and death...where the sky and the earth meet...where the water meets the land...the place where Kat breathed as the Presence, where the lady met in the Supreme Court of His Compassionate Saving Grace. His Porsche dipped up and down and around the curves of her womanly form like a boat circling itself in its own wakefulness. His mantra of SHE IS was constantly repeating into ripples that met in the center of the world. He did not know where he was going but he was in a hero's mad haste to get there.

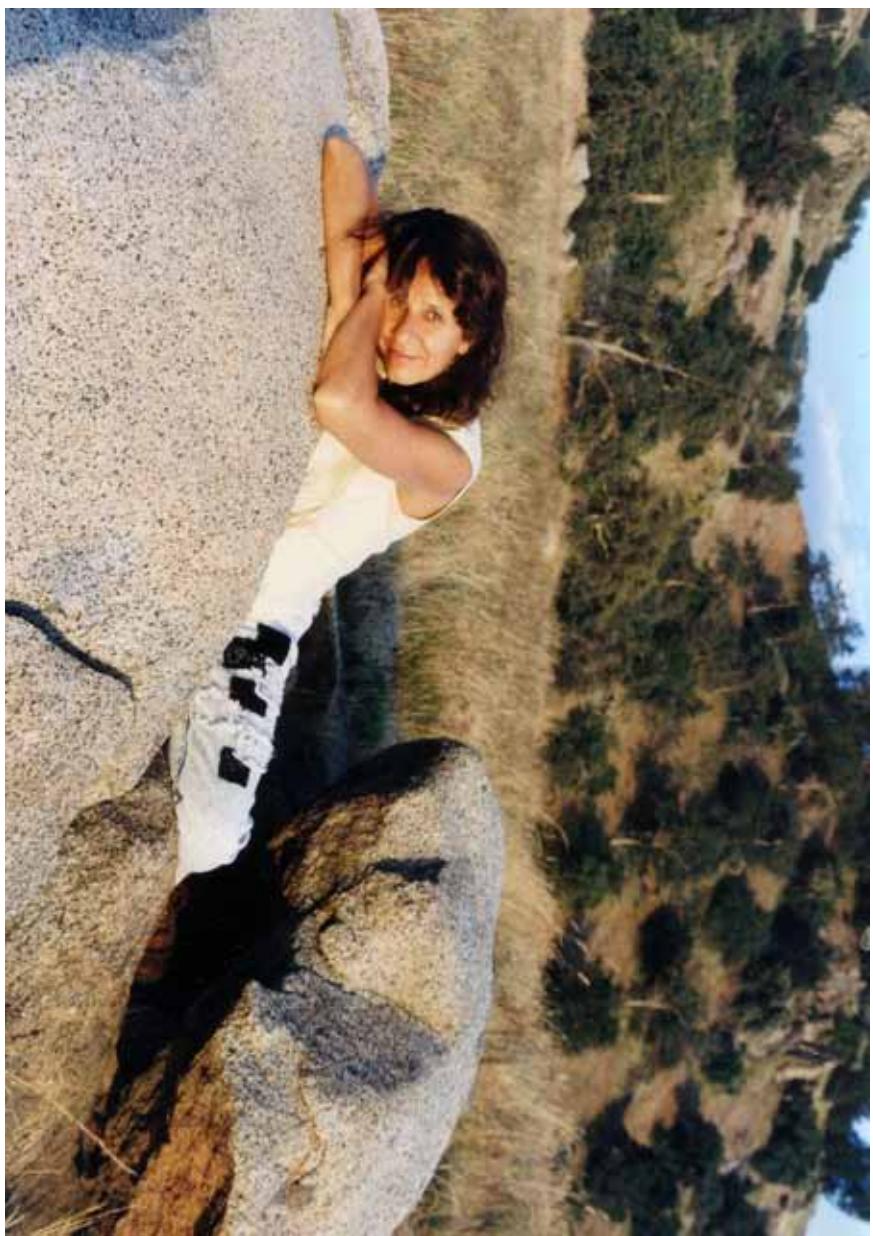
With a quick lick of his tongue, Doo Feelin drew him to the Treasure Chest. It was Doo Feelin who had the missing ingredient to this most delicious meal. Dinner was set; the best banana leaf china, shipped in from the international dateline, was in place. It was a scrumptious meal with all her favorites. This was not the last supper.

"Why don't we call it The First Breakfast," Doo Feelin cheered. "Let's break the fast and crack that egg open. The first meal will be an omelet...an Om Let, if you like the pun. She once shifted continents for me. Surely I can scramble the worlds for Her."

Final act, closing scene, perhaps? The key, Skyman...open the door...my lady is ready to make a purchase. Skyman was dazed and wondered if he had wandered into a vision. He was

dripping with wet light. The Treasure Chest was before him. His love for her was the key that carried her to the shore, and he used it to open wide the doors. He waited in the doorway and the She Presence walked through. She was most pleased with her purchase, with the wealth of Skyman's offering.

Doo Feelin Wopper was most pleased. He held out his arm. "My lady, I am most happy that you have decided to come to my Grand Opening Sale. Let us break the fast and celebrate; a new tradition has begun. Naturals, natives, let us feast and galoop till our uvulas get sore. My lady has come to stay!"



## The Clearing

Those were the days of a very good dream. Sanda was the daughter of a good simple man, kind and patient. In his arms—arms that stretched around the neighborhood of her life—she felt protected and safe. She spent her childhood days in a carefree manner, unspoiled and natural. She was full of humor and adventure. She imagined that she would be an adventurer one day, exploring worlds beyond her neighborhood and present imagination.

After she finished her daily tasks and her school lessons, she visited the “clearing space” on the mountain. She sat and thought about her family and mimicked their ways out of love and admiration for them. She felt a deep love and kindred spirit with her father. He understood all her feelings and showed her how to follow their wisdom. Her mother was fiery and often impatient. She could feel her mother’s impatience when it took her some time to think things through before she was ready to act. Her mother amazed her. She could do many things at once, keeping track of every detail. What she liked most about her mother was her sense of humor. She could find amusement in everything, even in the mundane tasks of everyday life. Often, at mealtimes, her mother told many funny stories—telling the children that to laugh was good for the heart and digestion. Sanda kept a private book where she wrote down some of her mother’s stories and added some of her own. Sometimes, she thought up a joke and practiced it at her “clearing space.” She waited until her sister and brother had calmed down the cravings of their stomachs and, in between her mother’s gaiety, she would spring her joke. After everyone laughed, her mother would always say, “That’s another one for you.” This made her feel proud and she felt that one day she would be able to tell stories with the speed and abundance that her mother did.

The days of a very good dream continued effortlessly like the harvests of plenty. Sanda always returned to the

“clearing space.” As her body grew and showed all the signs of young womanhood, her “clearing space” grew more precious and necessary. The changes in her were coming fast and they were often confusing to her. Some of her impulses felt strange. She looked to her father for understanding. He became uncomfortable and told her that her mother would “talk to you about all this.” Her mother told her about the cycles of life and how the body changes so it can be a part of bringing forth new life. “One day,” her mother told her, “you will leave this home and start your own family with a good, kind man, like I did years ago.” This idea repulsed her. She wanted to be an adventurer and imagined that when she returned from her adventures for storytelling visits, her family would always be there—like the “clearing space.” Her family worried about her, as she spent more and more time alone on the mountain and saw less and less of her friends.

Still, all in all, the days of the very good dream continued. Sanda’s nature remained kind like her father’s and her humor was refined into an art form beyond her mother’s skill. She was dutiful in all her tasks but remained apart from her peer group and showed no interest in boys. One day, after a long spell at her “clearing space,” she felt words being spoken into her heart. “It is time to leave. It is time to begin your adventure.” With no hesitation in mind and body, she knew the heart of her—the “clearing space”—had spoken true. It was in that moment that she left her childhood behind. She did not even turn back once to hold the memory of the “clearing space” in her mind. She trusted that wherever she went she could never lose it.

She lived simply, wandering without a fixed destination. The days were hot and the shade of the night cooled her. She was content in the simplicity of walking, observing, listening. When she was hungry, she chose a piece of fruit that had fallen to the orchard floor. The only thing she ever asked for was water and it was always freely given to her. The farming country where she grew up seemed to continue endlessly into the distance and future. It was a land of bountiful nourishment. She wondered where all the people lived who ate from

the thousands of trees and hundreds of square miles of vegetables. She had never seen more than thirty people congregated together, and that had been on Sundays at church.

She thought of her family from time to time, recalling a personal event from their lives together. It did not occur to her that they would be upset at her disappearance. Perhaps there was a magical protection around her that shielded her from such thoughts. Her heart embraced them, but it was also her heart that called her to this journey. She just trusted it and saw no conflict in leaving loved ones to go deeper into the heart of her adventure.

After several days, she climbed a very high hill. When she reached the peak, expecting another vista of orchards and farms, she was surprised to see thousands of buildings clustered together. She laughed to herself, thinking only trees were meant to be so close together. Her closest neighbor had been almost a mile away from her parents' house.

Approaching the city, she realized that the source of her food—the orchards—was behind her. She entered the city, hungry and alone, a young girl of fifteen years. The days of the beautiful dream of being a protected child were over.

A new dream was forming for her and she accepted it with the innocence of youth and the resolution of her adventure needs. There was so much to see, to understand, and she recorded the marvels and her adventures into the pages of experience. She was agreeable to hard work and found it working as a waitress in a coffee shop. The fast food cook liked her gentle nature and provided her with extra food. She enjoyed solitude in the nature of the city—the parks—from time to time. Sitting under a shade tree, she felt the clearing. It was the natural core of her, the sacred ritual of her life. She naively believed that everyone was intimate with the clearing. She had the intuition that all the dreams of the world were birthed from this space.

When she longed for more adventure, she moved on. She mastered many ordinary skills and always found work easily. She always worked hard and the people in her new neighborhoods thought well of her because she gave kind words to everyone. She travelled to many lands—lands where it was always hot, lands where it was always cold. She met many kinds of people, as different in appearance as in temperament. She observed all and enjoyed that the One Being had so many different faces. This was the wisdom given to her by the clearing. The days of this very good dream—of hard work, physical challenges, travel, adventure and motion—continued for many years to be the style of her life. It was inevitable that this dream too would fade and, after thousands of miles of explored territory, she came to the last place on earth.

Though this place was thousands of miles from the home of her childhood, its charms and likeness were immediately evident to her. It called to her, pulling her to rest, to experience her sweet, sweet clearing. She was exhausted from her years of travel and adventure and welcomed the clearing like the moment a dreamer falls from the world of harsh reality into the sighs of release into the inner feeling world. She had seen everything one could see and had met many natives with strange ways. She touched, became a part of everything and everyone she visited, but remained the same uncomplicated heart she had always been. “Where did all my adventures and wanderings lead me?” she asked of the rustling grasses on the slope of the mountain she laid upon. The waves of the “clearing space” rejuvenated her. The images of her family, friends she loved, places of natural beauty, smiled in her heart and floated away as the clearing went deeper into her.

A hummingbird, perched on a slender branch, watched her. He felt a longing to fly into the sleeping, aware woman and taste her sweet nectar. He did not know how to approach her, so the tiny bird fed himself with just the sight of her. Other birds felt the same allure of the sleeping, aware woman and touched earth to sing of their discovery. Melodies of rapture

were composed that day, calling other creatures to come close and have their hearts filled, too.

Sanda left the world behind and cleared deeper into the origin and heart of adventure itself. Her love for all released her deeper, and the clearing covered her with its wisdom and removed the veil of its purpose. The entire world was cleansed and cleared by the purity of this woman's heart. For a moment that forever remains eternal, the world of peoples, animals, creatures, rock, sea, and sky breathed the natural breath of itSelf.

Sanda did not know how many days she passed in this way in the "clearing space," but she knew it was a matter of days, as the fresh, blossoming flowers around her were faded and the grasses were turning yellow. Her first thought was not of herself, rather it was an impulse to offer the world and all those that she loved a gift. She spoke slowly, seriously, knowing this was not a frivolous moment, but a declaration of a new adventure that would require her life to live it. "I want to give to all a very special gift, a way it can be returned to its clearing, to itself, and enjoy the marvel of diversity." The clearing will help me find a way to give this gift.

Her body called for attention. It was sore and weak from the many days without exercise and nourishment. With her remaining strength she tried to walk but collapsed, and the clearing released attention into itself once again. The "clearing space" loved her and would not let her go. Its love cleared all difference and Sanda understood her origins as her present self. The warm, summer season changed to the cool, inhaling air of the fall. The birds remained her loyal attendants and kept watch over her.

On the evening of the harvest moon, the clearing released her. It had finished its work. She was the clearing itself—the origin of all dreams—and she was also a simple heart, a woman. Her face radiated peace and sweetness but her body was close to extinction. She needed help and the clearing

also provided her with it. A medicine man, searching for root medicines, found her lying on the bed of grasses with clear eyes and a smile of tenderness on her lips.

He carried her to his cottage. He fed her with rice and vegetables from his garden. He watched for signs of disease and illness but could detect none except for the sleep that called to her for almost all the hours of the day. He attended to her and wondered who she was, and where she came from. He considered that she must be having very good dreams, a smile of contentment was always on her face. The days blew into winter and Ardent saw to it that he was well supplied for the winter. After the first snow fell, Sanda was able to keep attention to her surroundings for longer periods of time. She was strong again from the food and love her attendant gave her. In the evenings, Ardent, a lover of drawing, would take to his pencils and paint and sketch her. Outwardly he knew her fine lines, coloring, form of her lips and brows well, but her inner nature was a mystery to him. She was the first person he had shared his cabin with who was quieter than he. Her quietness, he reflected, is not just the absence of activity and sound. It is a silence, a force that has the effect of silencing my own thoughts. It is clearing the debris of all my sad days. Ardent was a happy man, realizing that he had found a rare treasure in the woman Sanda.

Sanda's impulse to roam did not return. She shared the work of survival with her friend Ardent, and enjoyed his knowledge about health-producing herbs. He taught her how to draw and paint. She found a great liking for it. It helped to keep her attention focused in the world. She observed that Ardent was well liked by the local people. They came to him when their family members were ill, knowing they would receive good medicine from him. They were surprised that he had taken up with a strange foreign woman, but when they saw the love in his eyes for her, they were happy for him. It was rumored that the woman had the effect of quieting one's thoughts. Many did not know if that was a good thing

or not. As the years of their very good dreams continued, they valued her medicine to soothe the mind as they valued Ardent's herbs that healed the body.

Sanda did not forget about her promise to give the world a gift. She began to see it take form in the love she felt for Ardent. Yes, it's true, mother, she thought, I will leave home and find a kind, gentle man like father. She prepared Ardent by loving him in the ways and signs of the clearing which was the expression of her own heart. He was a willing student and rarely imposed his own will on her. He was not an arrogant man and appreciated a logic more loving than his own. His love for her matured him and this love made him a special man indeed.

When Sanda saw that he was loving her in a way that one loves life itself—beyond the way an ordinary man loves a woman—she knew the fruit was ripe. She would pick it. "My dear friend Ardent," she asked of him on a hot summer eve, "would you be my husband? You have loved me and accepted me as I really am. We belong to the 'clearing space.' It is the heart of us and it calls me to bring forth a most beautiful, remarkable new life. Would you be the father of this child as you have so tenderly, with your love, cared for me?"

Ardent felt happy and blessed. He held his wife's hand and kissed her gently on the lips. "You are yourself a most remarkable and beautiful woman, so pure and innocent—any life that comes from your womb would be a gift to the world."

Yes, mother, thought Sanda. This is the natural cycle of life. My body is ready and the seed will be planted by this very ripe soul of a man.

"My husband, let us share our bodies like we have shared our food, clothes and hearts. Come, let us lie together and give ourselves to the clearing."

During Sanda's pregnancy she became firmly rooted to the earth's gravity of attending to new life. She dreamt of and watched over the child that was growing within her. The child talked to her in many ways and the strong bond between them demonstrated that the cycles of life were being honored in the sacred circle.

Ardent prepared the way by studying and gathering beneficial foods and herbs for the mother and child-to-be. In his happiness he was often moved to song and his voice also became an instrument of healing. He felt that his son was rising up through his throat. He enjoyed the blessing of his son in this way. The villagers also felt blessed by the miracle of love that they saw in the couple. All were eager to know of the child's growth within Sanda's womb. Often, many came to bask in the refreshing silence of Sanda's glowing love. The women baked bread, knitted clothes for the baby, and looked over Sanda and watched for her comfort like a grandmother waits for her grandchild. People felt that an angel had come to live with them. To give thanks to God for their blessing, they made the "clearing space" (where Ardent had found Sanda) into a sanctuary. People rested there to renew themselves. But the women loved being with Sanda any time they could and found any excuse to spend a few more minutes delighting in her glow. Sanda was not always quiet, she enjoyed telling the women stories of her travels and adventures. The point and ending of every story slipped them into feeling and appreciating the joy of the clearing, the silence within them. This last place on earth was a home, set apart for innocence and purity to gain a foothold—for the heart of the clearing to appear through the love of a simple but perfectly loving woman and her husband, a man of healing kindness.

Those were the days that the very good dream of the heart of all creatures—from the ants, to humankind, to the invisible gods—was spilled over into the creation of one child growing within its mother's womb. Those were the days of the happy dream, waiting to behold the face of recognition, the face of an infant. All the love that had been lost and for-

gotten in the world cried to be found. It gathered its force as the child grew within Sanda's womb. The cry of the world had called for it, prayed for it and, in the cry of a child, love would have a place of honor and be restored as the true food of all beings.

On the eve of the baby's birth, Sanda had a most wonderful dream. In her dream she found herself at the "clearing space" of her childhood. The air was electric and the wind spoke to her, welcoming her, breathing the words, "This is the first place on earth. This place is the Heart of you and you are the Heart of it. You can never be separated from this place and this place can never be separated from you. You are the first. He is the last." Sanda then appeared at the "clearing space" (the last place on earth) where she had been helped by Ardent. She rose and looked into the sun. The sun spoke to her saying, "This is the last place, He awaits your recognition here." Sanda felt the child move within her and heard the laughter of a baby. Wrapped in a receiving blanket, he appeared before her. She folded back the blanket and the most glorious blue eyes peered back at her. The Heart was shining perfectly in her arms. The baby spoke to her in the poetry of love. "My Heart, my Heart, my Mother, we are the same ONE. You are the first, I am the last. Two different faces, yet the same Heart. In You, in Me, the mystery of diversity is understood. I am here. I have come to clear the world of misunderstanding. I have come to shine love from the first place on earth to the last place on earth and all places in between."

Sanda opened her eyes. The contractions had started. Ardent woke and knew it was her time. "Ardent, I had a dream—no, not a dream...we actually met at the 'clearing space.' Our son spoke to me in the dearest way. He must be born there. Please, my dear husband, help me to make my way for him at the 'clearing space'." Ardent wrapped up all the supplies necessary for the birth and escorted his wife up the trail. The chime of the church bells floated up the hill. The villagers were gathered at church giving praise to their maker.

The hummingbird watched from his perch. His throaty clicking sound called his mate to his side. They watched as the couple played their parts in the cycle of life.

Sanda breathed into the heart of pain, the place where suffering is accepted and purified by love. Every breath and push brought the vision of the child closer to the touch of the child. When all the love of the world, all the pain of the world, resonated into a single cord, Ardent held his son and cut the cord of separation. Two of the clearest, happiest, blue eyes he had ever seen peered into his. His heart gave praise. A unison of voices rose up from the village. “All praises to God, He is the Heart of all.”

Sanda held her son to her breast. He fed eagerly. She studied his face with adoration in her eyes. “Welcome my son, our son, the world’s sun. Welcome, Bright Child.”

## **Part Two**

Bright Child was always shining like the sun on a cloudless day. His kindness and humor were evident even in the first few months of his life. Sanda had to protect him from the demand of all the village “grandmothers” who wanted to hold him and play with him constantly. Bright Child loved to play with his “grandmothers,” grabbing their cheeks and laughing in his baby ways.

Ardent loved his son and it made him a happier man to care for him. He also took pleasure in watching Sanda breastfeed the baby. He saw the delight that mother and son had for each other. It would open his heart to a wide grin—just to witness it.

As Bright Child grew, he began to spend more time with his father. While tending to the crops and searching for healing herbs, Ardent instructed his son in the ways of survival.

Bright Child enjoyed the gift of song with his father and imagined many verses to his father's standard, simple, beautiful songs. Ardent told him the story of how he met Sanda and showed him the sanctuary of the "clearing space." Bright Child was intrigued by the stories of his mother's earlier life of travel and her disappearance into—and recovery from—the "clearing space."

When he was about eight-years-old, after finishing his gardening chores, he decided that it was time for him to visit the "clearing space" on his own. He ran all the way and when he entered the sanctuary, it took him a few minutes to calm his rapidly-beating heart and for his lungs to recover. He felt a reverence for the place. He felt a conversation taking place between his heart and the heart of the "clearing space." The clearing was teaching, preparing Bright Child. If anyone happened to come by the scene, they would have seen just a little boy sitting quietly. Every day he returned at the same time and the clearing continued with his education. Great sages and lovers of God appeared in human form. Through their play with him—a play of love and meditation—Bright Heart came to understand his destiny. Sometimes, Sanda appeared to him in the heart of the clearing and revealed to him beautiful subtleties of her Self. He, alone, knew her in this way and neither one of them spoke about it in the open.

His learning continued for seven years. When he was fifteen, Sanda appeared to him in visionary form with startling news. "My son, you are ready. You have understood all. My work is finished and my physical body will pass. We are always with each other as the Heart. You are not just a bright boy of the village, but the gift of the Heart Space Itself—a gift, a treasure for the entire world. I cleared a space for you in this world. The whole world is your home. Clear the minds of all, that they may rest in your Heart, that they can come home. Your name is The Man Of The Bright Heart.

Bright Heart rushed home to see if his vision was true. The tears on his father's face told him that it had come to pass.

His mother had died. Father and son comforted each other. Bright Heart could not explain to his father that, though he missed his mother's form and life, he actually felt happy for her and closer to her than ever before.

Bright Heart felt a compelling urge to leave the last place on earth. It grew stronger with each passing day. I must start my work now, he thought. He told his father of his plan. Ardent dropped his head, cried softly and said, "My son, my son. I cannot bear all this loss...first your mother, now you. My heart cannot bear it."

Bright Heart felt a dilemma. I love this man. How can I leave him like this to go to help others? "My father, I must go and fulfill my destiny, like all sons must leave their fathers to fulfill theirs. But there is a way we can be together. Do you know how it can be?" the son asked of his father.

Ardent looked deeply into the eyes and heart of his son. He saw his wife Sanda in his son, not only in the physical similarities but also in the shine of compassion and dispassion. He struggled with himself and then his heart came to rest in a simple admission. My son does not need a father but I need his bright heart, he thought. He spoke humbly, "This is the last moment that I am your father, Bright Heart. I am now just a man loving you and, as one who loves you, I ask that I might have the honor to accompany you, to serve you and learn from you on your travels. I've always known that you have a greater calling, as your mother did. Your mother's life was not for herself or me. It came from the calling of the world's cry for love and you are her gift of that calling."

Bright Heart was most pleased. He hugged his father, man to man. "Let us be on the journey. Come, my friend. This day greets us with a promise. This last place on earth is the place we leave."

Constant travel became their song, their art form. Every footprint was the application of their own brushstroke upon

the canvas of their daily arrival. Each crossroads was the intermingling of knowledge and love dared to be dreamt. Bright Heart never stayed at any place long enough to get acclimatized. He thrived on the viewpoint, the assurance, that all that was to be seen, he had already seen. They ate minimally and talked even less. Though they wandered, they practiced self-control in all matters. Bright Heart reminded Ardent not to let his attention wander, and it didn't take too long before Ardent adhered to having his attention rest within him. There was so much more he could observe that way. He even let go of his precious memories of Sanda, refusing to live them over and over in his mind for his pleasure. He discovered that pleasure in life was to breathe in step, and to simply view the world as it is. As it is, he wondered... what is it?

Bright Heart did not reveal the purpose of his travels to his friend. How could he tell his father that the endless miles they were treading were a walkabout for his spiritual benefit? He watched his father prepare the nightly fire. Ardent was adept at making a warming, cooking fire easily—knowing when to add the heavier branches to the coals of the starter branches. Bright Heart saw that Ardent had accepted the natural disciplines of his new life. He did not wander to the days of the very good dream, even though he suffered hardships on the wandering. He was cooking well.

With resignation in his heart, Bright Heart waited till Ardent was asleep and slipped into the cover of night. When he reached the summit, Bright Heart looked back and saw the glow of the campfire. In a whisper he bade farewell to Ardent and said, "Come to me not through the familiarities of love. Come to me not as one comes to another. Do not find me, but come to me as recognition of the One living in and as the many. Alone, we behold the face of the Beloved, the face of ourSelf."

Ardent struggled in his sleep. Old stories relived their script. He felt split in two—dreaming of the shared intimacies with Sanda and the never-ending next mile with Bright

Heart. A crossroads appeared in his dream. A sign pointed to the left and read, "THE DAYS OF THE VERY GOOD DREAM." Another arrow pointed to the right and said, "THE CIRCLE OF THE WALK." He looked for Bright Heart to point the way, to follow his guidance, but Bright Heart was absent. His mind clutched terror. He did not know what to do. His heart ached for the past, for Sanda. He felt abandoned and cried out angrily, "Bright Heart, what have you done to me? I am your father, how can you leave me like this? Return here now, I order you. We will end this foolish travel and return to our home, to the last place on earth." He sat at the crossroads in this agitated state until his body wanted to throw off the freezing numbness of a chilly dawn. He woke up to the actualization of his dream. He wept.

For a day he was frozen in his love for the past and his fear of the unfamiliar future. He thought himself too old (a man of sixty years) to begin this kind of adventure. I should be tending to my garden. It would be time to plant back home. Back home—where is it? he wondered. He couldn't decipher in what direction it lay. Did Bright Heart deliberately walk me around for hundreds of miles just to leave me here alone? That night he tossed in his sleep, moving from side to side—alternating between anger at his son and missing his traveling companion. Upon rising—as the wandering was now his way of life—he continued on with the next step and the next step. He grew tired of his complaining thoughts and reasoned: I suffered all the physical hardships of this walk—the elements, the cold, rain, the search for food and water—when I walked with Bright Heart, yet none of it disturbed my peace of mind when I was with him. My mind would always rest on him. This was my happiness, he thought. Why should I stay mad at him and thus separate myself from the one thought, the one image that soothes my heart and gives me peace of mind? With this understanding, Ardent's mind came to rest. Once again, Bright Heart was walking by his side. Under all conditions—when water was scarce, when his bones ached, when comforts of the past judged the harshness of his present condition—he held to the image of Bright Heart.

This was the food that he lived on; this was the food that healed, cleansed, and purified body and mind.

Bright Heart flowed free from the stream of his father's thoughts of identity. He let his magic run wild. Form became innocuous to him. Flying in updrafts, slithering through hot sands, galloping through meadows, hopping through underbrush, propelling motion, dropping from rope to rope, spinning through wells, his lysis art could not hold together...the diversity, the many...the One Bright Heart played. A man, a woman, what is the sex of a bright heart? Definitions only give rise to experience and what he was, was truer than knowledge gained from the toiling fields of life experience. He was not on a search for himself. He did not suffer any madness of conformity to his own absenteeism. He was not found. He simply was himself. He had always been himself; all forms were him. He had grown up not bewildered but admired. The pleasure of his own form had never been a secret to him. He knew the world for what it really was. He tipped his hat to the world like a doorman opening the door for the tenants to come into their home. He had no story to tell of his own. What appeared to be his story was the buzzer, a call for a missing key to home's doorway. He viewed the world from the open door of his heart and waited cheerfully for all to return.

A man, how could he be? He was not mistaken. A woman was his form, too. He was not seen by his appearance. His face really didn't have any set lines. If you looked at Bright Heart with clear eyes, you saw yourself at home—happy—your magic running wild. You tip your hat to the doorman. You share a joke. It begins with: "Have you heard this one? It is about a world of people imagining that they are somebody, somebody else. They have all left their homes to find out where they live...they have fallen asleep only to enjoy the waking up."

The story begins with the days of the very good dream. The story begins and ends with the Bright Heart. His life was without signature and purpose. He did not follow the

assumption of happiness yet to be found. He lived as happiness, in the ways of happiness now and now. He was the most simple man. He never knew complication. Love was always apparent to him. He was not a hero. He was stubborn. He never left his happy home, the world of his free, real heart. He wandered, exposing himself to all elements, and those that came to rest their gaze upon his shimmering form created their story in his likeness.

Bright Heart appeared on her horizon. She was a woman alone, without child and husband to attend to. She fell free from the definition and meaning given to her from others. She looked to her own heart for understanding. It appeared on the horizontal line of her chest. She watched his slender form step in a graceful, lively fashion—the joy evident in a face with no concerns. Unashamedly, her being rushed to meet him and, for the first time in this blind woman's life, she gave the sight—the sighting—the darshan of herself to another. Bright Heart accepted her invitation to dinner.

After the meal was completed and she had seen to all his comforts, she invited him into her parlor. He sat and gazed at her in a bemused fashion. He did not pull his eyes away from her after what was considered a decent amount of time. She was unable to move her eyes away from his softly piercing gaze. She sensed that he was lovingly urging her to come to him in a deeper way. Should I follow? This thought evaporated. I cannot resist his power. This thought also missed connecting with a course of resistance. She surrendered to his recognition. Her mind cleared, not just of its superficial content but also it was swept clean of painful memories of the past...ordeals and events that had constructed a wall around her heart. Each brick of love denied, not noticed; each brick of cruel indifference; each brick of love given and taken in selfishness, crumbled. Her heart rumbled in stirred anticipation. Why does my heart, so hardened and tightened, open to you so easily, she wondered. "Who are you?" she inquired.

“I am no one in particular.”

“I am Pieta, a wretched woman who has lost her son in death and her husband to the arms of another woman.” Are you, are you, are you? The question echoed through her mind.

His eyes were closed. A sweet smile was on his lips. He showed no interest in movement. He was content in the sitting. She watched him. Would he be her savior? Would he give a meaning to her life, a meaning found in another’s definition of oneself? Would he complete her and play the bond of security that she thought would bring her happiness?

Bright Heart opened his eyes and jumped to action as smoothly as he had rested in himself. “Thank you, madam, for the excellent meal. I must be on my way.”

No, no, don’t go, she thought. “But it’s very late. Where will you stay?”

“Is there a secluded spot nearby that is available to a stranger like myself?”

“The park is down the next lane but it is a dangerous place at night. There is drug abuse, and vagrants sleep there. I would fear for your safety.”

“I’ll be fine. I’ve been on the road for a long time.”

“Still, I wouldn’t be able to sleep if you went to that dangerous place. Bright Heart, please stay here tonight. I have only a couch but it is warm and safe here.”

Bright Heart contemplated his choices. The clearing leaves my relatives behind and brings me to this sad, lonely woman. She must have called to me from a depth that she cannot feel and accept yet. Her offer is given in sincerity. “Pieta, a story wants to be told. I accept your kind offer.”

Pieta's mood gladdened. She did not know that in her need to be bound to a man, he came forward to free her at her heart's horizon.

Ardent also came to the house of a lonely woman. She, too, offered him a meal. He asked her if the village was in need of a healer, a man who knew the healing properties of herbs. She assured him that there always was room for another healer as sickness had not ceased to be prevalent in people's lives.

During dinner the old woman asked Ardent to relate his story and how he had come to her village. He gave the briefest of descriptions. The woman felt he was holding back, but she respected his right to do so as they were still strangers to each other.

Her instincts told her that he had suffered some kind of loss—that he was grieving—a loss of a wife, perhaps. She noticed that he was fit for his age. He carried himself like a man who has known good hard work as a compatible way of life. He was a man people could trust easily. She sensed more and continued to read the man. Though he is a man settling into his final years, a destiny—a purpose that calls him to use all his previous knowledge and to make a leap into what he doesn't understand—still awaits him. He is the man I have seen in the shadows of my dreams, the dreams that have pointed to his coming. Am I linked with him, with his purpose? She decided to test him...if he passed her test, she would do whatever was necessary to help him, to be a part of his purpose.

She lay awake all night, following him in dreams. She observed that he was looking for someone. A young boy appeared and they played together like father and son. He had a great love for his son, but his son did not hold fast to his father's authority. The son's authority came from another... or was it from a place? The son teased the father, playing a game of peeling layer after layer of the man's clothing off,

risking his father's anger to expose his father's nakedness. She wondered about this strange play. She tried to make sense of it. She wanted to stop the boy. The boy pulled at her blanket, imitating his play with his father. He laughed at her and sang, "Cover him in your love and I will come one day to clear and reveal layer after layer of your own state, without the cloth of a point of view." He laughed again, this time in a rounder merriment. She slept. She dreamt.

Ardent woke at his usual time—when the light of dawn first became visible. He quietly packed his few belongings so as to not disturb the woman. A wave of longing to find a place, a home, where he could stay—perhaps take up his art of healing others—consumed him. He urged himself on. I must get going. I must look for Bright Heart, but where and how? Did he leave me alone, to find—to follow—to be left to my own fate? He studied his surroundings. There were no pictures of loved ones on the walls. No sign of another in the woman's life. Where were the symbols of her life? The cottage was very clean, austere, lacking in female ornamentation. She does not reveal herself. This is most unusual, he thought. He decided to stay a while longer to satisfy his curiosity about the woman and to indulge his need to stay in one place.

The old woman was already at her work, pulling weeds from her vegetable garden. Ardent helped her and tended to the watering. Except for a few words of common greeting, they did not speak. He watched her move about in her garden. She was about seventy years old and still had body strength and ease of movement. Her facial features denoted a nature of uncompromising intelligence. Ardent also discovered that in the woman's garden several of his favorite tasting and healing herbs were growing. Is she a healer, does she know the healing ways? he wondered. Her first name, Sight, intrigued him. Was that her born name or a nickname?

The woman looked up at him and answered his internal question in the same way it was asked.

“My name is Sight because I hear what is unseen. Do you understand?”

Ardent blurted out, “How did you do that?”

The woman smiled and said, “It’s because you are a heard one—you can receive messages from a sighted one.”

Ardent was not frightened of this woman’s power. “Are there many like yourself?”

“There are a few, but most of us are reaching our advanced years. We may be a dying species. Every sighted one needs to meet a heard one. My husband, who has been dead now for twelve years, was the last heard one I knew of, until this blessing—Ardent, you are a heard one. What do you know of yourself, of this skill?”

“A heard one?” he asked. He thought of Sanda. Was she a sighted one? I always knew how to serve her. She had the power of the clearing. Did her sight come from the “clearing space?” And my son, Bright Heart, what of him? Ardent had an intuitive flash. An idea occurred to him. Could Bright Heart be a sighted one, a heard one and the clearing? Could he be so contained?

“Sight, I have never heard these descriptions but your words have usefulness. They are giving me self-understanding. I believe that my wife, Sanda—who has passed away—was a sighted one, but there is more to it than that. There is more,” he repeated again. “Besides hearing her, I felt her clearing. We called it the clearing space or the clearing heart.”

Sight trembled at his words. How could a woman have the power of dissolution? She had never heard of a woman having that capability. Women can feel the unseen and convey it. How could a woman live in what was before the telling and survive it to be the telling as well?

“Tell me, I saw you in dreams last night with a boy. He was playing a strange game of peeling layer after layer of your clothing off. Does this mean anything to you?”

Ardent guessed. "Bright Heart. It must be Bright Heart. My son is no longer a boy, he is a man. He has the gift of the clearing like his mother."

"Where is he now?"

Ardent tried to hide his embarrassment. "We separated and I found my way to your door. Where he is now, I do not know."

"Are you aware of your dreams?" Sight asked him. "I believe he continues to be with you, to guide you." The words of the boy, "Cover him in your love and I will come one day to clear and reveal layer after layer of your own state without the cloth of a point of view," echoed in her mind. If I help this man, love him...through this union, he—this Bright Heart, his son—will come to me and I will be capable of the power of dissolution. She sensed that all her powers and gifts would have to be surrendered to this greatest power of all. She would be the last of the Sighted.

Bright Heart was completely open to all influence and Pietà provided an expression due to her need. To clear her heart from the harshness of a fearing mind, he gave to her whatever she wanted. Unlike his relationship with his father, he was very soft with his discipline of her. He gave her abundant attention and never asked her for even the simplest forms of self-control. He saw all her qualities and childishness and only loved her—clearing her. She grew familiar with him and dependent on the strength of his rationality of heart. They became lovers and she felt that her life with Bright Heart was secure. That was, until one day, he was gone. He left her a note bidding farewell and that he was her heart always. He asked her to live in happiness and said that he would return one day when she was always already happy. At first, her pride enraged her against the man she loved. What kind of man was he to leave her? As her grief lessened, her longing for

him grew and she no longer wanted to contemplate him in anger. She thought of him often and meditated on his form. Her heart grew to open to him in a clearing, more beautiful way. Her love for him grew her big. She no longer felt humiliated by the absence of a man in her life. The absence she had felt was filled up with the recognition of herself. In that recognition, she saw Bright Heart not just as a man but as her own heart, completely cleared from all fear. She rejoiced in the knowing that he would return to her when she was already happy and full of him. She polished her love for him every day, and every day it grew brighter and brighter. The sorrow of his physical absence was his sweet food to her, cultivated to nourish her own heart in her longing of him.

Bright Heart moved swiftly in his travels. He hitched a lot and drove through continents in a matter of days. He felt an urgency to arrive, though he did not know where the location of his arrival would be. He continued on in this way, dropping thousands of miles to settle at the place he was called to. He felt Sanda's hand on his back, pointing him in a westerly direction. When he arrived at the great orchard lands, he slowed his speed and walked into his arrival. He enjoyed the smells of the fruit trees in bloom. "So, this is the first place on earth. Home to Sanda." His body knew where to go. First to the "clearing place" of his mother's childhood and then to the home of a man who had been calling from all his need for his daughter to return home—his grandfather.

The clearing was wild—nature freely expressing herself. There was no shrine or decoration of flowering landscape. Other than a fig tree that had been planted there for a purpose or designation of some sort, one could not pick out this area from the miles of tall grasses—now yellow from the drying sun—that surrounded it. Bright Heart approached, feeling the renewing, healing air that saturated the spot. He felt light-hearted, a giddy sort of happiness. He felt his moth-

er's presence as a youth, a young girl, called here to abide in her own nature and promise. He remembered his mother's stories, her telling of the years of the very good dream that gave way to the clearing, the awakening, the impulse to give a gift. This was her purpose. Bright Heart stood in his rapture and understood his mother's sacrifice. He loved the purity of her giving. He thought his life was too simple, that he was too soft. He just simply enjoyed existence and saw all forms as his own Bright Heart. He felt his mother's confirmation that his simplicity was the gift of perfection and that the power of it was the greatest force of all.

The aged man, well into his eighties, with all the strength he could will to his tired muscles and bones, made his way to the clearing. He had prepared himself to take his leave from his beloved earth, but there was one farewell that still ached his heart. He knew not if she was alive or dead. I will go to her place and pray that I will be released from this knot of interrupted love. He asked the same questions that he had asked for many, many years. Did she come to harm? She was just a girl...how could she leave her family? Did I fail to protect her? Doubts, guilt, and a longing plagued his heart. He needed to release his sorrow to release his life.

The "clearing space"—he could bring himself there only once throughout the many years since her disappearance, and that was right after her disappearance. He felt the place had been mocking him, that it had used her for its purpose. These thoughts, as irrational as they seemed, felt disturbingly real. He avoided the place, held a superstitious disregard for it; but today he knew that if he wanted to have peace, he needed to hear the message of the place, to understand the power of the place and its effect or the relationship it had with his daughter.

The old man pressed his cane into the earth and balanced his weight on it to rest for a moment, to gather his strength

for the last few steps. Though he was fearful (his heart beat loudly), when his eyes beheld the “clearing space,” the simplicity and naturalness of the place assured him that his fear was not really necessary. A dilemma arose in him when he saw that he would not have privacy at the clearing. A young man was resting under the fig tree. He wanted to turn back, but he had already used the last of his vital strength to arrive at the space. Bright Heart jumped up to aid the elderly man and guided him with the strength of his arm to the only shady spot—under the fig tree. Once seated, the old man studied the face of the lad and felt a haunting familiarity on many levels. Bright Heart nodded his head, smiled sweetly and said, “Hello, grandfather.”

Though stunned, the old man did not doubt the relationship that the lad before him proposed. He closed his eyes for a moment to take in the final blessing. She has lived...she has loved...and here before me is the proof. Oh, Great One, he praised, You never stop giving. The grandfather reached out his hands to the lad and Bright Heart held them to his heart.

“Is she still alive?” he asked.

Bright Heart answered, “Not in the body sense, but she lives as a gift—a gift she has given to all—the gift of the clearing. I am her gift; she has said this of me. Grandfather, I have come to give you the final clearing.”

He nodded. “I have been waiting for this but I couldn’t leave until I knew her story. Tell me about your mother’s life.”

Bright Heart described—in glowing enthusiasm—his mother Sanda’s ways of loving and teaching. His grandfather kept nodding his head in agreement, content in the confirmation that his daughter had lived a life of great loving.

“I knew in my heart she had never left me. I could feel this understanding, but sometimes I became agitated and

doubted my own knowing—sometimes I acted like a foolish man. The clearing—this very spot—called to me many times but I ignored it. I was angry. I feared the clearing. It was her call to me and finally, in my last hours, I had to come here. I could no longer separate this place from her. She called me here. This place is her mystery. Bright Heart, I am emptying of life as I am filling up with her. It's true, isn't it, Bright Heart? I can see you as her. You know this mystery, don't you?"

"Yes," answered Bright Heart. "Rest now into it. I will clear and guide you, grandfather. Only love is present today, every day...only love...only love," he whispered. Bright Heart's grandfather lay his body down, resting his head on his grandson's lap. His breathing became slow, then shallow, then deep, then shallow, and then it suspended. His last breaths mixed freely with the air of the clearing. Not a sound was heard. The clearing emptied the contents of a man's life...it was all unnecessary for love to be. The Silence—from which all sounds, words, and language of love are spoken—was not different from a man's life and death. Dissolution into the Silence, the true clearing...he did not recognize himself to be a man any longer. There was no creator god to meet, HE MET HIMSELF in this final clearing. "Only love," Bright Heart witnessed. We are all her gift. This he knew so very well.

Bright Heart celebrated his grandfather's reunion with Sanda by ordering a few glasses of brew to quench his thirst at the local tavern. The drinks loosened his tongue and his usual shy nature receded as he summoned the attention of the tavern customers.

"People, without your story I have no adventure...won't you bring it to me so I can engage in a lively dance or two—so there will be description to my life? I am without meaning or purpose of my own. I am counting on you all to give me means to express myself. Is there an interesting story to be told? I am buying the next round."

"I have a story you might like to hear. My name is Sense-U-Round. If you are buying, my tongue will be loosened enough to tell it. What is your name, young sir?"

Bright Heart extended his hand. "My name is Bright Heart. Come sit next to me and tell me your story."

Sense-U-Round pulled up a chair and sat across the table from Bright Heart. He took a few long sips before he began his story.

"This story is a simple one and as old as the story of a man loving a woman. I fell in love with a good-natured, kind woman. Besides her sweet nature, she loved to dance and sing and I so enjoyed the nights of entertainment. I would strum my old, battered guitar, and her legs and arms would move and her voice would open with the sweetest melodies. She had a sister who was a few years older than she. This sister was very fair and quick-witted and had an unusual way about her. She had the ability of Sight. She could see into people's minds and enter their dreams. She called herself a Sighted One and claimed there were others like her. I thought she was a little off but, as I came to know her, I noticed she could talk to me in my head—I could hear her inside me. She knew things about me by following me in dreams... this she told me. This intrigued me but also scared me, as I felt I had no private place from her. Then I began to perceive that her ability to see was dependent or somehow related to my hearing her, and now I was forced to reckon with my own unusual talent and how it linked me to the sister of my love. I wanted to hear more and she wanted to see more. After a while, neither one of us could move without the other. My love became jealous and the torment between the three of us grew. Though I never in any way demonstrated openly my feelings for the older sister, the younger sister was not secure in my love for her. My love confronted me one day and said I had to choose whom I would live with and have children with, though I had courted only her. I assured her that she was the only one for me, but she insisted that I take a day to consider the matter fully and then make my decision.

That night I had a dream. I dreamt of a girl—she was about fifteen. She was gesturing for me to follow her. I followed her up into the hills above the village. She stopped and sat on a graceful slope where a fig tree was prospering. She told me to come to this spot tomorrow morning when I woke, and to wait for her. She had something to show me, she said.

When I woke, I knew the older sister had seen the dream and waited to hear of it. I decided not to tell her, but to go to the tree by myself. I went very early, arriving within half an hour after dawn. I felt foolish when I saw no one there but decided to sit and wait for a bit to see. It was a pretty spot. The view of the hills and orchards was a grand sight. Even though it would have been natural to be thinking about my marriage-to-be—and the younger and the older sisters—my thoughts cleared and drifted away. I felt wonderfully contented. This lasted for a while and I left the place reluctantly, already deciding when to return to taste this sweetness again.

When I returned, I was surprised to discover that my bride-to-be had begun affections for another man and her older sister no longer had the gift of sight. It seemed that the spot had altered my destiny. It had its own magic and had cleared my destiny with the two women. They both moved away—the younger one marrying and the older one going to get a degree in law at the university in the big city. I returned to the clearing space and it continued to have the same effect on me. All agitation would disappear. I would feel happy, contented...that I had no problems and never could have one. I always felt that way when I was there. But I wanted to feel that way always, wherever I was. My life became totally preoccupied with solving this. I lost interest in my work and music. I thought I would go insane. The clearing was my mistress now. No one understood my obsession and they thought my sanity was being destroyed by grief—by the rejection of the two sisters.”

Sense-U-Round stopped there and looked at Bright Heart. "I can't explain it but when you walked into the room, Bright Heart, and said the strange words that you did—about having no purpose or meaning to your life—I knew you knew something about the clearing, that you were talking about it...weren't you?"

Bright Heart smiled. "Yes, it clears away even purpose and meaning—in true happiness none are needed."

"Then you know the secret of the clearing?" asked Sense-U-Round.

Bright Heart nodded yes.

"Can you tell me, would you show me? I cannot solve this mystery. I can only go to the place and enjoy its clearing over and over. But I have no life. I am mad for its dissolution."

"Come be with me. I will show you...I have a gift for you. It will be seen. It will be heard. There is a way to live in the clearing's dissolution and live a life of love's play and recognition."

The two men left the tavern together.

Bright Heart walked about the earth for ever years. Those who had heard the calling of the clearing, listened and heard, saw and were sighted with new eyes, recognized Bright Heart as the gift he was. A family gathered wherever he was and the relatives of this innocent childlike man cleared a way for the world to understand its true nature. In Bright Heart's presence people felt the clearing of the presumption of love yet to be found. Love was not lost—only to be sought again and again through desire—it was present as Bright Heart. Bright Heart cleared away the dream that they had been away from themselves. Those who recognized him saw themselves as innocents, too—too soft for meaning and

purpose. They delighted in the play of life. They lost their complication of sorrow. Sanda's gift was her eternal mother's day, given to all in the form of the Bright Heart. Bright Heart always remained in the world, walking about, recognizing all—the many in all its forms, colors, ideology—as Himself. The world regained its true meaning—to love and enjoy itself. The shadow and fog of the dream of lost identity was forever cleared by the Bright Shining Heart. These are the moments of the very good yarn of Wakefulness. Live and enjoy this gift, this clearing.

**He is the miracle man**

**I was the ordinary woman**

**In understanding HimSelf**

**He has understood everything**

**Everything now understands**

**because of His understanding of everything**

**He is the man that love**

**always points to**

**In the dictionary of meanings**

**Love is His name**

**His name is Love's definition**

**I was the ordinary woman**

**who was attracted beyond mere appearances**

**to this miracle man**

**His recognition of Me**

**is the miracle he opened**

**I am now and forever the woman of understanding**

**I am the She of He**

**Everyone now understands**

**because of His understanding of every One.**



"I have been waiting for this, but I could not leave until I knew her story."

**“M**y Darling came before me and assumed the identity of a body-mind, of a separate one, to do great service of bringing all to love. He struggled as a lost one, as one who was unfulfilled, and passed through an ordeal of the purification of all that. He realized that there was no separate one, there is only the Loved One.



He is the Heart Husband of All. He brought with Him the capacity to penetrate all secrets, to restore humankind to Truest Knowledge. He is here to fulfill in each the impulse to be restored to the Heart, to be restored in love. And to my astonishment, He brought me.”

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