

Castaway

A man floated on the back of a giant sea turtle. The sea turtle paddled towards the shore. The sea turtle breathed in with a big gasp and breathed out a big swoosh sound. He was determined to bring the man towards the shore where he could land him safely onto the shore. He tipped to his left and the man fell off and landed on his back. The man gasped for air and the sea turtle knew he had accomplished his mission—the man would be okay. He pushed himself through a wave and headed out to the deep sea. As he reached the deep seas his form disappeared and what was left of it was a trail of bubbles that were illuminated by the sunshine.

The man dragged himself to the dry shore. He wondered where he was and how he got there. He searched his memory for any clues but couldn't recall any. He couldn't even remember his name. He didn't even recall the term for this—amnesia. He did know one thing, "I am very thirsty," he said out loud. When he tried to stand, his knees buckled and he fell. The absolute need for water compelled him to get up and try again. He still felt very woozy and weak and slowly dragged his body to the shade of the palm trees. He fell asleep and woke up as the sun was setting. Immediately, his desire for water returned and he knew his life depended on getting some water in him soon. It started to rain and the rain began to fill up a coconut husk. He drank the water and fell asleep again. He didn't dream. He felt that his body was being restructured. Was he becoming someone else? But who am I, anyways? he wondered.

In the morning, he woke up to a cacophony of birds singing. He studied his hands and thought, are these my hands? His body did not seem familiar to him, but he had all the instincts in place to know how to use it. He wondered why he felt disassociated from his body, surely this must be my body, he asserted. He drank some more water that he found in the coconut husks. His body was already warming from the morning heat that was rising. He thought that it would be a hot day.

He wasn't sure of what to do next. He was sure that he was not alone. He was also sure that he had never been here before. And he had another thought, another idea that he was sure of—that he had been sent there for some purpose. What purpose? He scanned his mind for any clues. None were evident.

He heard laughter in the distance and got up and followed the voices. As the laughter became louder, it sounded like children chanting a childhood rhyme. It was in a language that he didn't speak, a language he didn't know. He understood it anyways. They were singing about the Great Mother of all and how the mother of all of them cared for them. She cared for their happiness. He smiled to himself, he knew that the mother they were singing about was his mother as well. He laughed out loud, feeling her, feeling her as his happiness too. He thought, I am here because of her. The mother sent me here.

The children stopped their singing when they saw the strange man walking towards them. They saw his beautiful smile and were delightedly attracted to him. He opened his arms to welcome them and they ran towards him. He scooped them up into a big hug and the children laughed with delight. They all tumbled over and the man tickled them till they were all worn out.

One of the mothers of the one of the boys was watching the scene unfold before her. Who is this man? she wondered. How did he get here? No one can get here without an invitation and a welcome from the great chief. Since he died twelve years ago no invitation has ever gone out, not

even from the wives of the chief, who now lived as sequestered nuns on the heart of the island. Only the supply boat came once a month. She, herself, has grown up on the island and had never left it, even after the hurricane that decimated her village seven years ago. The tribe slowly rebuilt the village and everything was as it should be. The crops grew, it rained dutifully to sustain them and the people continued to thrive and grow their children up. She knew very little about the goings on of the outside world, but she was contented with her life and what the island had given to her. Who was this man playing with the children? How did he get here? she wondered. She noticed that he was smiling at her and he waved to her in a gesture of welcome. She was nervous, there was something about him that attracted her, attracted her too much. She felt that her heart was beating with his. She felt she must turn away, that his magic was too strong for her.

He called out to her, "I am a castaway. I washed up on your shore. I am very hungry and thirsty. Could you help?" She looked puzzled, she guessed that he might need some water or food and shyly, without looking into his eyes, she brought to him a water gourd and some bananas. He drank and ate with great gusto and appreciation. The children gathered around him and the woman gave them instructions to let him be and give him some space. The man looked like a white man, like the great chief, and she wondered if he was a spiritual man, a shaman. She knew a little of the white man's language as her family had served the great white chief. He had been a chief of love, of God. They had called him the God-Man chief. She stumbled with her English words asking him how he got there. He threw up his hands in a gesture of I don't know how I got here.

He pointed to himself and shrugged his shoulders, "I can't remember how I got here or even who I am."

She looked into his eyes—again his magic was so strong and she turned away. "Come, my husband can help," and she pointed to the road that led to her village.

He got up and followed her with all the children following them from behind with great laughter and merriment. The men stopped their work and watched the strange foreign man come towards them. They noticed he was tall and he walked with confidence. They too felt that his magic was strong—strong as the God-Man chief, but different, like he was not from around here, perhaps not even from this world, maybe from one of the spiritual worlds or realms that they had heard the Great God-Man chief talk about. What did his appearance here mean?

Sittu spoke to her husband and informed him that the white man didn't remember how he got there or who he was. This surprised Naja, he was unsure of what to do or say to the man. He gestured for him to sit down and offered him the local drink, a light relaxing alcoholic drink. They drank together and the white man lifted his cup for more and smiled and nodded at him. Naja couldn't help but laugh and both men laughed a hearty laugh like two men who had not a care in the world. The other men sat down and drank and soon enough all were laughing as well.

Sittu shook her head in disbelief and thought again, "His magic is very strong." Surely, the reality that no visitors (or in his case castaways) were allowed to come or stay on the island would be the business of the day. The men would soon realize this and find a way to be relieved of him. Perhaps the supply boat could take him to the mainland. The boat had departed a few days ago, so it would be almost another month before its return. He seems to have the same effect on the men as he had on the children, thought Sittu.

Yahoot was worried. She hadn't received a transmission from her husband in over a week. Whenever he went off world—travelled through to other dimension worlds—he always thought-transmitted to her that he had arrived and was steady on his mission. He hadn't informed her of the details of his mission. He usually sent internal detailed images of the places he went to and the people he met and that's how they shared their lives while he was away. She had searched for him in dreams with her ability to dream lucidly. She was unable to find him but she did visit Yakaboobis (his teacher) even though he was no longer physically alive, but that is another story. She tried to deduce: was the connection severed, was he hurt? Or worse, something went wrong with the reconfiguration on the other world and he didn't survive? She couldn't accept that a failed reconfiguration was the case, that he was no longer alive. He was the best at off-world to other-world travels and he had assured her often that what he did to appear in another time, place or world was the safest form of travel if you were taught the method correctly—and his teacher Yakaboobis was the master of it. Why then couldn't she feel his thought transmission pulse?

Naja reflected on the white man's inability to remember how he got there and who he was with the men of the tribe. Should we inform the nuns and the men caretakers of the nuns? they asked each other. Should we turn over this problem to them? His brother, Tatum, thought perhaps the man was related to the chief, the God-Man's family. They thought that was a possibility.

He was not out of the woods yet. At times the white man was animated, other times he stumbled and fell and they laid him down on a mat where he would stay in a deep sleep state for hours. They were at a loss as to what to do with him. They nicknamed him Ta-ta-boof. The children were absolutely attracted to him and they also felt the same way.

"Big manpran this man, this fellow has," said Naja.

Tatum agreed, "Big attracting force like how the God-Man chief was."

Everyone shook their heads in agreement. Sittu was still worried about Ta-ta-boof. Why was he here? She felt his appearance here on her island signaled a great change was to occur. She liked the rhythms of her life on the island and her point of view was very fixed. She had no longings for adventure. Having the Great White God-Man come to her island when she was a very young child was enough change to last her lifetime and her children's lifetimes. They were still trying to understand his ways and how he worked to save the world from unhappiness. Her people respected his followers, his tribe. They were devoted to their great chief. Their lives had served the survival of the God chief's life and his followers and that gave them a certain security.

The men were at a standstill as to what to do. Sittu thought the caretakers of the nuns should be informed right away. She expressed her opinion to her husband and the men. Naja looked at the other women faces that gathered around. Yes, I can see, this man is already affecting us, he thought. But why, he wondered. Surely Sittu was being most logical and practical. Why not give the white man to the followers of the God-Man chief. He might in all probability be a follower of the God-Man's religion. Naja thought on this but in his bones he knew that the castaway was not a follower of anyone. He didn't know how he washed up on the island, no boat had drifted near—the fishermen would have seen a boat drifting in their waters. He wanted to be able to understand, to solve the mystery of how Ta-ta-boof got here. He could see that his wife was anxious but when he looked at the faces of the men and the children who had also gathered around, he felt that

everyone wanted to know the castaway's story—how he got there, why he was there—and no answers would be forthcoming if they turned him over to the nun's caretakers. They did not have that kind of relationship with them. He needs to get stronger, he needs to rest. We must allow him that, Naja thought. Sittu's anxiety was not relieved when everyone agreed with Naja, to let the castaway rest and get stronger. She knew her people were a curious people, but she feared that if the castaway healed, got stronger, his already attracting force and the bond that his force would create with her people, would grow stronger and deeper. She was nervous and wary and yes, she knew already—too damn attracted to him.

The man the natives called Ta-ta-boof felt himself to be in a curious position. He knew he was not like these people who were kindly tending to him. How did I get here? he wondered. Did I intend to come here? he asked himself. The natives gave him a curious name as he didn't remember his own. When he asked what "Ta-ta-boof" means, Naja told him that it meant, "One who freely travels." The name resonated with him but he didn't know why. He searched his mind to see if he could recall any memories that revealed where he could be from and who he could be related to. None appeared. Rather than grow frustrated by his lack of identity and origin, he decided he would "be as here": grow accustomed to the people he was with and their ways. He lent a hand in any way he could, doing what they considered woman's work—cooking, cleaning, etc. as well as the men's role of fishing and building. He didn't feel the need to be in a gender-defined role or work and the men noticed that right away. The women did too and they whispered about it among themselves. How well he could cook, how well he played with the children. They were hoping that the men took notice.

His fluctuations grew less and less in duration. After two weeks, he was able to function continually with only minor drains on his energy that lasted for only five minutes. He felt it was important to gain his memory back. When Naja saw his strength had returned, he recommended to him that the shaman—their healer—could provide assistance to him through a ceremony that could call up ancient memory or vision. It was how they knew that the Great God-Man was coming to their island. If this didn't work, it was getting closer to the time that they would have to reveal his arrival to the nun's caretakers. This would prove awkward with his employers. Everyone in his village liked Ta-ta-boof and some even (secretly) felt that he was part of their lives and their village and didn't want to reveal him to their employers. They weren't eager to see his departure.

There was one native girl, about nine years old, who had adopted him as her dad. She had never known her biological father, as he had passed from life when she was quite small. Her mother's brothers, her uncles protected her, helped her along, but no one played with her like Ta-ta-boof did. He danced with her and made up silly songs. His dancing was so weird, unlike the dancing her people do. She thought he looked so funny doing it and when he encouraged her to mimic him and try it, she felt too shy to do it. Eventually, he broke down her reserve and she followed his dance moves. She felt so free and happy when she danced with Ta-ta-boof. She followed him around as much as her mother let her and taught him their names for the sand, the sea, the trees, their food. He was learning the language of her people, quickly and easily. Her name was Mittu and Ta-ta-boof nicknamed her my u friend. Mittu reminded him of someone but he couldn't recall who—or why a young nine-year-old girl would call up such a thread to his memory. His mind offered no clues but his heart felt a tugging, a yearning when he was around Mittu and he guessed that he must have a daughter in the life he did not remember or know how to return to.

The shaman passed the herbal concoction to him and he tried not to gag as he drank it. It tasted like everything you shouldn't eat—of mud and mold, earthy and rooty. The shaman began an incantation and asked him to repeat it and chant with him. He did. His stomach was in knots and he was handed a bowl that he vomited into. The shaman was studying his face to see if he should proceed with the dance. The shaman chanted and danced. Ta-ta-boof tried to stand up but couldn't. He felt like his face was falling off and tried to touch his face, it didn't feel solid. He had the same sensation in trying to touch his body, it didn't appear solid and he was not at all sure of where he was actually located. This struck him as very funny and he laughed and laughed. The shaman heard his laughter and knew he was on his way.

Not knowing where his body was located, he wondered where his awareness arose from. This made him laugh even more. He was not afraid, rather this feeling of not being located in or as a body-mind rang true to him. He understood his awareness to be a conscious process and he remembered that he was there to remember something. He felt that this too was very funny. As he laughed at the so-called dilemma of trying to remember to be a specific somebody, an image arose in a field of brightness. A man approached him and his heart skipped a beat when he saw him. This made him laugh even more as he recognized his best friend and heart master, Yakaboobis.

"So you have come, this must be really important," he laughed. Yakaboobis nodded.

"You came to this island to do some important work." He touched his friend's forehead and this helped his friend to locate himself to his body-mind again. "Remember," he commanded.

The man who couldn't remember, did! He laughed again and Yakaboobis called out his name, "Yakataboof," he said it three times and Yakataboof's memories returned. Yakaboobis further explained, "You had trouble with your reconfiguration on your approach to the island as the island vibrates differently than the rest of the world, having absorbed the God-Man's brightness. You will adapt, your memories are returning."

"Yes, I can see that," answered Yakataboof. "And you, my dear friend, who are without a body-mind apparatus, how do you abide?"

Yakaboobis laughed and said, "Quite well, dear friend, quite well. All the best with your mission and your wife Yahoot is quite worried."

Yes, I will send her a mind transmission, he thought, and remembered his daughters as well.

After the shaman left, Naja and the villagers went off to sleep. Yakataboof wandered the shoreline. He chuckled at his thoughts. Now I know my name and the why and how of being here on this island. Do I know what I am doing and why I am doing it? Hardly, he thought, but that was the nature of his life and how he lived it. He was here to churn these waters, these lives here, he knew that much. He knew that he always served a great purpose, he didn't doubt that. How to go about it was left to his creative impulses, his intuitive knowing. There was no strategic plan to follow. His work was to bring about a deeper unification, a stronger heart that could be heard and felt and lived. He thought of the natives, good people and the name they called me, Ta-ta-boof, which was not too far off from my actual name, Yakataboof. They would be expecting answers from him tomorrow morning. What could he tell them?

He thought of Yahoot and thought-transmitted to her. She was one happy and relieved heart wife friend. He assured her he was well and reminded her to send his love to their daughters.

“You can do that yourself. Our daughters have been dreaming of you every night and told me that you have remembered how to be yourself again.”

“Ah, little mystics, naturals,” he conferred.

“Get back to us soon,” Yahoot encouraged.

Yakataboof watched the sunrise and saw the fishermen push out their boats to catch the daily fish. He was ready to begin his work in earnest. He already had a plan, well not an actual plan, more like a hunch of what to do. He wanted to meet the Goddess of the island. He had felt her presence since he got there. No one had spoken openly about her yet. He felt little Mittu might help him with that.

Naja brought him a bowl of fish and rice that Sittu had prepared. Yakataboof was very hungry and enjoyed the food immensely. Naja smiled at him and he could see that Naja wanted to know what he had learned from last night’s excursion.

He handed Naja the bowl, “Tell Sittu very good, very good.” Naja bobbed his head yes and waited for Yakataboof to tell his story. Yakataboof knew he had to explain to his host (now his friend) who he is. “I remembered,” he explained, “My name is Yakataboof. Like you, I am also married and I have three daughters.”

Naja smiled broadly and shook his head yes.

How to proceed now, Yakataboof wondered. “I still don’t remember how I got here, except to say I fell into the ocean and a great sea turtle scooped me onto his back and landed me here.” That much he could reveal.

Naja was amazed at Yakataboof’s rescue, he had seen large sea turtles swimming in the waters around the island. That one of them carried Yakataboof to safety, to the island, reminded him of the Goddess that the God-Man had privately worshipped. The God-Man rarely spoke of the Goddess except to say the Goddess was the source of the miracle of his life and work. Yakataboof could see that Naja was studying the matter, he waited for Naja to be ready to speak.

“This must be the work of the Goddess,” volunteered Naja.

Yakataboof agreed and added, “Perhaps she wanted me to come here.”

Naja thought on this, “Her ways are mysterious. You are here now. Aren’t you eager to return to your family?” he enquired.

Yakataboof answered, “Yes, yes. I am but I don’t want to offend the Goddess as she went to great pains to bring me here.”

Naja shook his head, “You must speak your heart to her and ask her what she wants of you here.”

Yakataboof answered, “Yes, do your people worship the Goddess here? Is there a way to hear her speak and see her signs?”

Naja grew uncomfortable, “We have lost touch with the ways of receiving the Goddess. We know that the God-Man had a private shrine for her and visited it often. He spoke with her and

acknowledged her but he never revealed to us the nature of his life and work with her. Maybe the nuns, his nuns, know.”

“His nuns?” asked Yakataboof. “Do they still serve him on this island—this God-Man?”

“The God-Man, the great chief, is no longer embodied. His nuns serve his work and sanctuary. We serve in their survival on this island.”

Yakataboof revealed, “I have heard of the Great God-Man that resided here.”

“Yes, people from all around the world have come here for his darshan. Since his death his place has become more a place of retreat. Very few people come now.”

“Would I be allowed to go to the Goddess temple?” he asked Naja. “Would you show it to me?”

“No one is allowed in that temple. The nuns only go in to clean it, I’ve heard. We respect the privacy and sanctity of their lives.”

“Yes, of course,” Yakataboof answered solemnly. He actually wanted to laugh instead but he knew how to play his part. He knew his best bet to get a word through to the Goddess lay with Mittu. He could see the Goddess in her smile and playful ways.

Naja spoke up, “We can prepare for your departure. A boat comes in two weeks.”

“Can I see the abode of the Great God-Man and meet his nuns?” asked Yakataboof.

Naja grew uncomfortable, “They would not be happy that you appeared here and that we didn’t tell them that we had a castaway.”

“Why?” asked Yakataboof.

“The men who protect the nuns would feel that your arrival here was a break in the sanctity of the island. They are very strict in such matters. They would want you gone right away. I, we—my people felt it best to make sure you were well and ...”

Mittu appeared and hugged her uncle, “Tell him uncle, tell him that we like him—he is my friend.”

Naja laughed, “That too.”

Yakataboof knew he had to lay low, he had two weeks to complete his mission. He assured Naja that he would respect the sanctity of the island and the nuns. He affirmed to Naja that he didn’t want to be the cause of any problems between him and the protector of the nuns and the nuns. Naja was relieved, they would continue to keep the secret of their castaway. The boat would come and return him home. No one would be the wiser. Dear Naja didn’t know that the appearance of Yakataboof anywhere always resulted in all becoming wiser. Weird are his ways. Like the play of children, he was spontaneous, clever, broke all the rules, believed in nothing. His ways—the children delighted in and one little girl was on to him already. She was hugging his neck and said, “Ta-ta play with me, dance with me!” Let the dance begin, let the play begin.

Yakataboof got up and Mittu yelled, “Catch me! Catch me!” and ran through the meadow. Yakataboof laughed and yelled after her, “Run faster, I will catch you!” Naja laughed too and he felt affirmed that all was settled.

Yakataboof allowed Mittu to get ahead and then bounded after her. She was delighted when he caught up with her and picked her up and threw her up in the air like he had done so many times with his daughters. Mittu laughed again and again.

Yakataboof tickled her some more and said, “Let’s play another game.”

Mittu looked excited and asked, “Ta-ta, what do you want to play now?”

Yakataboof said, “Let’s play hide and seek for the Goddess.”

Mittu stopped and stared at him.

“The Goddess is hiding and we can see who will be the first one to find her. I bet I’ll win,” Yakataboof teased Mittu.

“No, no I will,” and Mittu began to run into the coconut grove.

Yakataboof followed her, stopping along the way to look behind and around some of the trees. He heard Mittu call out from a distance, “I found her! I found her!”

Yakataboof called out, “You win, I’m coming!”

As he approached Mittu he saw her sitting on a tree stump. She was having an animated conversation with someone, someone who only existed in her imagination, or someone who he could not see—only she could.

“You have found her!” he exclaimed again. He bowed to the empty stump he had seen her talking to and said, “It is good to see you again, Goddess.”

Mittu whispered to the stump, “I told you he would see you. He is different.”

Yakataboof continued to keep up the pretense. “Goddess, what a beautiful island you live on. It is very special here.”

Mittu shook her head and smiled, “Tell him, Goddess, tell him what you told me.”

“What did the Goddess tell you?” asked Yakataboof.

Mittu smiled, “She said it was a secret, a secret that you have.”

“I have a secret?” asked Yakataboof. “I have many secrets. Which secret is the Goddess referring to?”

“That you are from another world.”

Yakataboof was stunned. How did she know that? “Did the goddess tell you anything else about me?”

“Yes, she told me that you would reveal and awaken the heart of love.”

Yakataboof bowed and charmingly spoke to the Goddess that he did not see but did believe was not only living in the imagination of a little girl, but in his as well, “Goddess, only you can reveal and awaken the heart of love in anyone.” When he spoke these words, the form of the Goddess became apparent to him. He bowed again and tried not to laugh because the Goddess appeared to him in such a silly, sublime form that he knew all so well—she appeared as his wife, Yahoot. This experience is getting stranger and stranger—oh how the heart can play!

“Yes, it is true that only I have the power to awaken and reveal the heart of love, but you have attracted me with your charm and playful ways. You remind me of my dear heart man, the God-Man who lived here alive and now lives here in the winds, water, land—the abode of always here. You have come here to stir me, to have me use my power once again. To whom should I help you to reveal and awaken the heart of love?”

Yakataboof grinned, “Who needs it the most? Who wants it the most?” he asked.

The Goddess winked at Mittu and patted her hands. “All need their heart of love to awaken, but who can receive it?” she asked.

The Goddess’s form rearranged. She did not look like his wife Yahoot any longer. Her appearance took on the form of an older woman, a woman who was tending, a woman who was waiting, a woman who had given her life to grieving. This was the woman whom the Goddess was empowering Yakataboof to give her gift to. He would have to find this woman.

Mittu jumped up and said, “Catch me, Ta-ta, catch me,” and off she ran. Yakataboof got up and yelled after her, “One, two, three, I’m coming!”

The woman who was tending bowed to the image of her beloved God-Man whom she had served her entire adult life. She performed all the formal ceremonies of worship that she had been taught and had done every day for many years. She also performed informal ceremonies in all the ordinary duties of her life. She talked to Him and shared with Him the details of her life, a life that was fully engaged with him even though he was not bodily present anymore. She attended his burial shrine, cleaning it and presenting new flowers every day. She no longer meditated there. Instead, she was happier to sit there with her beloved and sometimes she sang songs to him, chanted his name. She remembered how he loved, how big his love was for all and how he loved her as his true nun. Had any woman given her heart and soul to her beloved as fully and completely as she did? As she does? She remembered not his harsh criticisms of her (which were many) anymore. She only remembered his hand holding hers, how he touched his cheek to hers when he was ready to retire. How he sang little ditties or nonsense songs when he was happy doing his art. She had been his model and he had taken many nude photographs of her and used them as a basis to create his art. She liked to believe that she had played the role of his muse, though he never confided in her about his process of making art.

He counted on her to be present for all his needs and she loved her life of serving him privately and intimately. On a rare occasion he thanked her and teasingly said, “What would I do without you?” She liked that he counted on her in so many ways. She had always felt that they would always be together—as long as she was alive, he would be alive, she serving him, loving him in this way till they both died. His sudden death was the most terrible tragedy of her life. She had felt abandoned by him and her grief held no bounds. Many thought that she would not be able to continue to exist. But his demands of her life and energy were still to be met even after his passing.

The other nuns gathered together with her and created a fortress of their grief which was mostly expressed through the continuance of ceremonial worship, recollections of his life and teaching, the everyday demands of keeping the ashram functioning. The demands to keep the ashram functioning were many and the terrible hurricane that came through and destroyed some of the buildings on the sanctuary, including his library and the gardens that grew their food, added to the stress of trying to keep it all going. The nuns prayed for the restoration of the island, money poured in, devotees came and worked and the local hired people (struggling to restore their own village) worked hard to restore the sanctuary. Work was still going on towards all of that when Yakataboof had been set adrift there.

She was an older woman now. Her body hurt more than not, her knees were stiffer when she sat in a meditative posture. She tried to keep her looks up—for him as she had done—the way he liked her hair and makeup when he was alive. She usually wore a simple dress, no longer black, the color of a grieving widow. She wore mostly orange dresses, the color of renunciation. She longed to be reunited with him and prayed that the veil of their separation would be lifted. Her life was lived only for him. The physical separation was still as unbearable to her as the day that he dropped the body so suddenly. The nuns and the other devotees thought she had adjusted to life without his physical presence, taking on the work of keeping the ashram afloat and doing her ceremonial spiritual duties. They did not see what she hid from them. She only longed to be with him and waited for her death, to be reunited with him. She had once asked him when he was alive, “Will we always be together?” He had put down his pad and pen and looked at her very intently and replied, “How can it be otherwise?” Her heart was gladdened by his words. How can it be otherwise? She reminded herself and repeated his words many times, over and over as the years passed. She tried to understand and feel him with her in his physical absence. He had told her that separation due to death is not really any different than a loved one living in another place. The love is still there, being felt and lived. She knew this was true but her longing to see him, touch him, hear his call to her crushed her heart at times. How to reconcile love and separation? This was what her heart wanted to know. How? He was the center of her life still, as always, yet she could not stop the ache that she felt. To be reunited with him was all that she wanted. Would only her death reconcile that?

The Goddess knew of her plight and had experienced her awful anguish. She came to her temple, stayed long enough to clean it and then left. She never sat in the temple, she never confided in the Goddess, but the Goddess knew. The Goddess knew of the God-Man’s love for her. The Goddess knew his love as well. The Goddess also loved and served the God-Man and the God-Man was also her intimate as well. This relationship of love contained none of the dilemma of the nun’s anguish of separation. It was filled with the pleasure, with the joy of their always present union. He was active through her shakti and he always confided in her. She always enjoyed his play, his service of bringing all to enlightenment. That was their dance and they would always be in the embrace of that dance.

The nun, also his intimate (his servant), did not understand his play with the Goddess. The Goddess had watched over her and played and tended to her heart in the dreams of her needs. She did not know that the Goddess had tended to her heart in her many moments of despair. There was also a veil of separation between them, the nun not seeing the intimacy between them. If any feeling between them was evident, it was probably the nun’s jealousy of the Goddess. The God-

Man had often taught about and acknowledged his relationship to the Goddess. She had not understood it, seeing it more as a spiritual ideal than an actuality. The actuality of that relationship, the Goddess and the God-Man, in her mind had no human reality to it. The Goddess was not a living, breathing woman, like she was. Or was she? That possibility could never be true. How could she understand the Goddess and her ways? She cleaned her temple but her heart could not see the appearance and the touch of the Goddess in her own life. That is why the Goddess brought our very special castaway, Yakataboof, to the island—so she would be able to see, to feel what is in front of her every day—to have him lift the veil of separation and the Goddess had needed a link for that. She had two.

Mittu woke up early. The warming rays of the sun were just beginning to reach the shores of her island. No school work today. Instead of reluctantly leaving her covers, she threw them off. Off! Off to being on her adventure. Today she would show Yakataboof her special place, the cove. The cove is the place she went to dream of other places, places that the Goddess had shown her in her dreams—places she knew that someday she would go to.

She called out to Yakataboof. He was already up and he hid behind the door to surprise her when she came to his small hut.

“Ta-ta-boof! You scared me!”

He laughed and said, “What are you up to today, my dear?”

“I’m going to my special place, the cove. Do you want to see it?” she asked.

“Yes, very much,” he answered. “Is it far from here?”

“Yes, very far,” Mittu answered. “Almost on the other side of the island.” She whispered, “We are not supposed to go there, it’s near where the nuns live.”

“Really?” asked Yakataboof. “Then we must go!” he urged her on. “Will we be in any danger? Should I bring a weapon?”

Mittu thought about it. “No, we don’t need a weapon, but we must be very quiet so the nuns’ protectors don’t hear or see us.”

“Quiet as a mouse,” Yakataboof added.

“Okay, let’s go.” Mittu strapped her bag to her back. “I have some rice and fish for later and a flashlight to see in the cave.”

Yakataboof followed Mittu’s lead. It took them twenty minutes to get to the cove where cave entrance was. It wasn’t obvious that there was a cave there. The opening was obscured by the tall grasses and hibiscus bushes.

“Look, Ta-ta-boof, we are here,” Mittu relayed to him as she bent to crawl through the opening. Once inside, she called out, “Ta-ta-boof, come in. I’ll shine the flashlight for you.”

Yakataboof managed to wiggle his way through the opening but not without his knees getting dirty from the moist soil.

“Come, Ta-ta-boof, follow me.” Mittu shined her flashlight deeper into the cave. He followed her through a tunnel watching out for his head as the height of the cave was only about five feet.

They entered a small room in the cave. “Ta-ta, sit with me here.” Mittu sat down. “This is my special place, Ta-ta. This is the place where I dream and the Goddess tells me all about the places I will travel someday.”

“Oh, Mittu, where will you go?” asked Yakataboof.

“Very far, to different kinds of places, maybe like the far away world you are from. You know, there are other worlds,” Mittu confided in Yakataboof, “You know what I am talking about. Not like my people, they know only this island—a few have been to the main island.”

“Did the Goddess tell you all this?” he asked.

Mittu nodded her head yes. “And she tells me other things. She doesn’t just tell me, she shows me the magic of the island. She says that all places have magic and that all places have goddesses too.”

“What kind of magic does this island have?” he asked her.

“It has the magic of calling the Great Chief, the God-Man, here to make it his home. She told me that he couldn’t resist coming to her, coming to here. Ta-ta-boof, I want to show you something else. Don’t be afraid, I’m going to turn off the flashlight. It will get very dark in here.”

“I’ll try not to,” answered Yakataboof with a smile.

Mittu shut off her flashlight. It was pitch dark and all they could hear was the dripping of water coming down from the ceiling of the cave.

“Ta-ta-boof, you still here?” Mittu asked.

“Yes,” Yakataboof assured her.

“She’ll come soon, but you have to be quiet and not make a sound, okay?”

“Yes,” he whispered.

Yakataboof thought he heard Mittu’s breathing change. It became louder with deep gasps. A light began to emanate from where she sat. It grew in height and took on a woman’s other worldly form. The form looked towards him and held her hand up in a blessing.

Yakataboof, being no ordinary individual himself, acknowledged the presence of the Goddess.

“The girl is one of my own forms. Accept her part and be not worried or cautious about where she must go and what she must do.” The Goddess explained.

Yakataboof nodded.

The Goddess continued, “This island is the entrance, the doorway to the heart of this world. It has a great purpose, a purpose that I drew the God-Man here to live and bring about. His work is not yet completed.”

“How to complete it?” asked Yakataboof.

“The island is not free. It is held bound by the grief of those who love the God-Man, those who have remained to live out their lives serving his sanctuary.”

“How to free the island from this grief?”

“There is a nun who has served him most faithfully and fully. The key lies with her. You must find a way to release her grief.”

Yakataboof knew that this was no simple task that the Goddess was asking him to do. Grief was the worship of love, love that was always yearning for union.

The Goddess’s form dimmed and he could hear Mittu stirring. “Hey, my little Goddess, turn on the flashlight.”

Mittu called out, “Ta-ta,” and she turned on her light. “Did you see her?”

“Yes, yes, I did, my little Goddess.”

“Did she tell you?”

“Yes, she did,” answered Yakataboof. Mittu did not ask him what it was. She only smiled, happily munching on her food of rice and fish.

Yakataboof knew he must find and meet the tending nun whose grief was expression of great love for the God-Man. But how to find her, get past the nun protectors and even Naja and the local villagers, who warned him not to wander to the other side of the island? He even saw Sittu watching him, keeping tabs on his whereabouts and his activities. The only freedom he had from watching eyes was when he played with Mittu and they went wading along the shoreline. He was feeling more like a well-treated prisoner than a castaway. A castaway had more freedom to wander and the right to his own decisions. Again, Mittu was the key and the link to his work, which he had no idea how to accomplish. He was not a man of ideas. He was a man of action, links and transmission. He felt his heart link to Yakaboobis, his best friend and disembodied heart master. That didn’t make any difference, his heart knew no grief for his friend and heart master, though he did miss the physical aspect of their times together. He was still there, right with him whenever he needed to talk things through or just wanted to enjoy his company. It’s hard to explain to those who think that death ends it all. The greatness of love and his love for Yakaboobis and Yakaboobis’s love for him was their link, a link that could never have a break. It was always present, and the presence of their love for each created a marvelous play that moved events and people to unification, to experiencing their own hearts, and to this love that can never die.

“Yes, my dear friend?” asked Yakaboobis.

“Time on this island is running out. I’ll have to make a move, but how?” asked Yakataboof.

“Time to use your magic siddhis?” laughed Yakaboobis.

“Perhaps,” answered Yakataboof, “but as you know, as often as they help, they tend to have side effects and consequences that one has to recuperate from.”

“Yes, that’s what make them so fun,” laughed Yakaboobis. “How about using the invisibility siddhi?” he added.

“That could get me past the nun guardsmen. I’ve heard that they have guns and patrol the island, especially the areas where the God-Man lived and their places of worship.”

“A regular fortress, it seems.” Yakaboobis added.

Yakataboof added to the add, “Yep, I don’t know that part of the island and being invisible might help get me there, but once I’m there, where to?”

“What about the girl?” asked Yakaboobis. “She is an aspect of the Goddess who called you here.”

“Yes, but she doesn’t really go to the other side of the island either. The closest she has been is in the cave she brought me into, where the Goddess appeared through her.”

“I see. Maybe the cave has some clues,” Yakaboobis suggested. “A passageway?”

“I’ll give it a try,” Yakataboof answered. I’ll head out after the evening meal, feign weariness and excuse myself to go lie down, he thought.

Yakaboobis said to Yakataboof, “Just wanted to say, you’re the best!”

“No, **you’re** the best,” laughed Yakataboof.

The transmission faded, the heart connection and revelation never did.

Yakataboof put on his invisibility cloak, which was the darkness of a moonless night. All that could be seen was the light from his flashlight that appeared at times so he could find his way to the cove and the entrance to the cave. He used his flashlight sparingly. He didn’t want to increase his chances of being seen by a patrolling N.P.G (nun protector guardsmen).

Jonathan (called Jo-the-man) was on guard that night. He often fell asleep most of the night. He had a nice hammock spread out between to coconut trees and around one a.m. he usually caught some z’s in it—only for a few minutes, which actually always turned out to be at least 4 hours. He got up before sunrise and continued his patrol. This fateful night, Jo-the-man had drunk up a cup of island express and was more alert than usual. He had walked along the perimeter of the sanctuary, singing his favorite chant. His voice was deep and using the rolling waves as his accompaniment, he sounded lovely—his heart was enjoying the night and his love for his God-Man. He stopped in mid-chant when he saw a light moving along towards the cove. Some night fishing by the natives? He wondered. Normally he wouldn’t have pursued, but tonight he was wide awake and thought he could enjoy some company. It was his job to make sure everyone was where they should be. He liked the power of authority that carrying a gun gave him, and the respect the natives showed him. When he got to the cove he saw no light. It was just dark. Yakataboof hid behind the bush next to the entrance of the cave.

A voice called out, “Anyone there? It’s a dark night for fishing.”

Yakataboof remained quiet, hoping that the dark night and the bush keep his invisibility cloak in place. The guard poked around a bit. He was a bit puzzled at finding no one at the cove, but he wasn't expecting anything out of the ordinary so he relaxed his search and picked up his chanting once again. He decided that he would patrol the sanctuary temple and shrines as an extra precautionary measure before the sun came up.

Yakataboof found the entrance to the cave and crawled in. Once inside he turned on flashlight. He searched the room where he sat with Mittu and met the Goddess. He called out to her inwardly, "Goddess, where to? Is there a deeper passageway?" He searched the cave room high and low but could not find anything that would indicate a deeper passageway. Was his hunch wrong? He felt the Goddess's urging to keep looking. No, he thought, there is no deeper passageway in this cave, he was sure of it. He crawled back out of the cave and sat on the beach covered by the invisibility of darkness. His intuition that there was a passageway seemed to be proved wrong. How can that be? he wondered. He felt sure that the Goddess was also verifying that there was a passageway to the sanctuary temple. Why couldn't I find it? he wondered. Then it occurred to him that perhaps there was another cave, another entrance close by. He would have to risk using his flashlight. He had not heard the guard's footsteps or chanting for a while. He felt safe enough to risk searching for another cave. He found it, a little further up from the first cave entrance on the beach. It too was not obvious, obscured by rock and plant life. Like the first cave opening, the opening was low and deep and he had to crawl on his belly to get into it. Once in, he turned on his flashlight. The cave room he was in was narrow but he could stand up freely in it. Sure enough, there was a passageway and he followed it. In a few places he had to crawl on his hands and knees. After a while he came to the end of the passageway. It ended in a smooth wall of rock. Dead end? He wondered. He felt around and could not find a doorway. He thought of using his siddhi to disappear and reappear but he had no idea where he would reappear into. It could just be more rock. He kicked at the dirt under his feet and that's when he noticed there was a board under his feet. He loosened the board and using his flashlight he could see steps leading down. He followed the steps into another cave room and in that room he saw a rough door made of wood. It even had a doorknob on it which made him laugh and grunt out loud. Someone went to this trouble, he thought, why? He turned the knob and pushed on the door. It was stuck. He pushed all his weight on it and it began to give way. It was creaky and he hoped that wherever this door opened to, there wasn't a Jo-the-man with a gun poised waiting for him, even if he was singing a spiritual chant.

When the door opened enough for Yakataboof to squeeze through, he found himself in a small temple. The sunlight was beginning to light up the room. It was a simple room with a beautiful statue of a goddess riding a lion. Yesterday's withered flowers were strewn at her feet. There was a simple chair where Yakataboof surmised that the God-Man chief sat when he had come into this temple. He wondered if he had ever used the cave and its secret passage into the temple.

Yakataboof spoke inwardly to the Goddess, "I see this is your temple."

She nodded, "I come here, but I don't live here. I am not contained here."

Yakataboof asked the Goddess, "How can I complete the God-Man's work for you?"

"Wait here," she answered. "You will see."

Yakataboof sat in the back corner of the temple. He watched and waited for the woman who tended, the woman who grieved. He knew that his time on the island was running out. He could not be discovered to be here illegally. He must be able to reconfigure easily and privately.

When the door of the temple finally opened, Yakataboof was surprised to see little Mittu dance in like she owned the place. She played with the flowers that were strewn at the feet of the Goddess statue and rearranged them to her own liking and then dispersed them, throwing them into the air. He watched her dancing and when she grew weary from her delightful play, she sat on the Great God-Man Chief's chair and fell asleep. Yakataboof thought of scooping her up and returning her to her home. The door opened to the temple and a woman dressed as a renunciate nun came into the room with a basket of cut flowers in her arms. Yakataboof could see that she was deliberate, cautious in nature. She noticed right away the disarray of the temple. Flowers were strewn about. She was nervous, hesitant and he could see that she was deciding whether to call to the guardsmen or straighten out the disarray herself. She noticed little Mittu asleep in the chair. How did she get in here? She wondered. This violates the Master's inner sanctum. She will have to be punished for that, she thought.

She walked over to the God-Man's chair and poked at Mittu, "Wake up, little girl," she said in a stern voice.

Mittu stirred, sat up and rubbed her eyes and looked up at the nun. To her credit, thought Yakataboof, she was unafraid.

"Little girl, you must leave this temple, this place is not for you."

Mittu looked at the nun, "This place is for me. It is," she insisted.

"No, no, this place is the God-Man's seat, where he sits with the Goddess. You must leave," and she added, "Now."

Mittu stared at her. "I can come here, if I want to," she insisted.

The nun stared at her and thought, defiant little one. She must learn her place, learn how to be humble. She put out her hand and insisted, "Come."

Mittu held back and did not accept her hand. "Let's ask the Goddess if I can be here," she challenged the nun.

"The Goddess serves the God-Man chief. She is not interested in serving little girls," replied the nun.

Yakataboof was enjoying the play. He could see the Goddess was in charge here.

"Yes, she is!" exclaimed Mittu. "The Goddess is my friend!"

"What an active imagination you have. You must leave now," the nun insisted.

Mittu jumped up and stood up on the Master's seat. "Goddess, show her, tell her it's okay!" she exclaimed. After she spoke those words, Mittu's form collapsed and her luminous form began to appear like Yakataboof had seen in the cave.

The nun grew afraid and called out to her God-Man. The Goddess was before her, not as a statue enshrined and privately worshipped by her God-Man. She stood before her in her bright, luminous form. She spoke, "This temple is for all who love, whose hearts are innocent and true and know me there."

The nun was stunned. She could not believe this was happening. "What is your trouble with this little girl coming to my temple?" The Goddess asked.

"This is my master's temple, where he sat with the Goddess—with you," she added.

"Even those with love for me cannot come and receive my shakti blessing here?" asked the Goddess.

The nun did not know what to say. Her master worked in mysterious ways. She had never really understood his love and play with the Goddess. "That is what I know, that was his instruction for us."

"If those who love me cannot openly come to my temple, I must abandon the place and be free to meet—heart to heart—those who need my love. Our mischievous God-Man cannot bind me here or only to him."

The nun was stunned at these words.

The Goddess laughed and added, "There must be trust between us," and she winked at the nun. "We are all free beings here, happily serving love. Our God-Man trusts our love, does he not?"

Again, the nun was stunned and didn't know what to say.

The Goddess spoke in a sweeter tone, "He trusts my love and knows, like him, I must be free to do my work of love, of unification. Tell me sister, of your great love and shakti, are you not free to love?"

"I follow only his instructions," faltered the nun.

"What are his instructions in the matter of your great heart and its free ways?" asked the Goddess.

The nun was flustered. "I can't listen, she thought, and asserted that the being before her was not the Goddess but a deluded being with an insubordinate agenda.

The Goddess laughed, "Surely, your heart knows me. I don't live in this temple, the only temple that truly stands is the temple of each person's heart. That is where I live." The Goddess rose her hand in blessing and the nun was astonished to feel the blessing enter her. Her fear gave way to waves of blessing and she heard her master speak to her, "Accept Her, she is my love, she is with me always. We cannot be separated, we cannot be apart. I live as her love; she lives as my love in the hearts of all. We live as the Eternal One beckoning all to the heart embrace of She/He Is. This is the great union from which no one is ever excluded. Ever!" he added.

The nun gazed into the Goddess's eyes. "Yes, this is their open secret that I never understood, she thought.

“Yes,” the Goddess spoke. “It is your secret as well. You must know this: you are not apart, you are free to love, to love me, to love Him, to love yourself as You Are. All truly stand here.”

The Goddess’s luminous form dissipated and the little girl woke up from her deep state. The nun went to the little girl and hugged her, saying, “It’s alright, it’s alright.”

Mittu jumped up and said, “I want to go home now. I want to go with my friend Yakataboof.”

“Yakataboof?” questioned the nun. Yakataboof emerged from the back of the temple. The nun did not recognize the man and Yakataboof bowed and said, “Yes, I am Yakataboof. I will take Mittu back home.”

How did you get in? she wanted to ask, but her heart dispelled her suspicion. “Yes, please take her home.” As she watched Yakataboof scoop up Mittu and put her on his shoulder, the nun noticed what a good looking man he was, and her heart was charmed by him. “See that she gets home safely. And tell her she can visit the temple any time she wants.”

Yakataboof bowed slightly and then (not how he thought) his reconfiguration began to occur. Obviously his work was over.

“Too many miracles are happening in this temple,” she laughed.

Yakataboof reappeared in his home with Mittu still on his shoulders. “So this is the Goddess’s plan. Welcome, he thought. He called out to his family, “Yahoot, I’m back,” and Yahoot was by his side.

“Who is this darling girl?” she asked.

Their daughters gathered around them, “This, my darling goddesses, is Mittu, your new sister, another darling goddess like yourselves.

Mittu’s smiles were very wide, “I knew it, I knew it. I knew I would go to other worlds. I knew it!” She ran off with her new sisters to play in the forest by their house.

The nun’s grief knew no reality. Her heart was awakened and gladdened by the Goddess’s blessing revelation to her. She no longer grieved separation from her God-Man or longed for union. She felt him with her and their play was not just bound to rituals, ceremonies, or the business of running an ashram. She was not tending anymore. She played in delight with those who came to hear of the God-Man’s love for all, which she showed and played as in her form and ways. Her anxiety of trying to keep the teaching work, the temples, and the ashram viable dissipated into her joyous play of loving all. She never left the island, but many came to become infected and inspired by her love for the God-Man, a love she had come to understand is her own heart being lived. She knew that she was free to express it in any way her heart was inspired to. Her life was a creative flow of her sacred union with her master. She thanked the Goddess every day for showing her how big her own heart is, and how her love for the God-Man is alive in her life every day as his love for her was too. She always left the temple doors open. Everyone was welcome there, she knew that’s what the Goddess wanted. And she wanted that too. She knew that the Goddess was for everyone, when she felt too wild with her love and freedom, she knew the Goddess was with her and how

she loved her wild ways, for she understood and knew the Goddess as her own form. She learned how fierce and deep are the ways of love, are the ways of the Goddess, and it kept her life rich in the ways of living and expressing her sacred union with her dear heart husband. The island was now complete. The Goddess was happy there. The Goddess came and went as she pleased, but she always returned to play and shine on her tiny island with her heart husband in the center of the world, "The Heart," her home address.

Santosha Tantra March 3, 2020