

## The Dark Journey – The Underworld – November 1977

Although I was very pleased with the progress I was making with Russ, the overshadowing presence of an indefinable darkness remained with me, not as a relentless pursuit but as an additional dimension to my life. I had lived my life up to that point with the nagging certainty that I was, in actuality, a denizen of some underworld of evil, a lost soul wandering through a world I didn't really belong to. But on this November day, I would have this fear put to rest by the very ruler of the underworld. This feeling, implanted in my young consciousness by my parents and nurtured to terrible fruition by the tenets of organized religion, would be uprooted and cast aside in no uncertain terms.

The morning was overcast, rainy and misty, but despite the weather I felt drawn to my mountain, whose mystical ambience is actually enhanced by “adverse” weather conditions. I felt I should be able to make it out to Chatsworth, climb the mountain to my favored spot for meditation and, if necessary, find a cave or other suitable place to sit out any precipitation before the rain started.

The trip to the mountain was imperative, as all morning I had felt disturbing energies marshalling their forces around me. This was more than a psychic impression; I could actually feel their effects viscerally, as well as in my limbs, the back of my head, and my eyes. With the physical pain and mental anxiety, there was also a feeling of alienation from the world-as-it-is, accompanied by dizziness and disorientation. Something was putting on a full court press against me and I needed to immerse myself in the vibration of Stony Point.

I dressed, grabbed my bag, stuffed my hat on my distressed head, then hopped in the truck and made for Topanga Canyon.

When I arrived, the area was dark with the wonderful clouds of Chatsworth, California, some of which travel beneath the level of the mountain tops, creating some truly spectacular tableaux. The early morning chill was upon everything and turned the soft breeze into natural air conditioning.

The aroma and feel of the oncoming rain was very pronounced and I knew I would only have enough time to climb to the top of the mountain and make my way to the rocks before the first drops of rain began to fall.

I threaded my way up the familiar old trail to the base of the rocks then commenced the climb, carefully and firmly placing first hand then foot in one strategic crevice after another, pulling myself up to one plateau after another, traversing the space between the ground and the higher levels of rock in about ten minutes. The rain began immediately upon my arrival, sending me hurrying through stands of old cacti and sagebrush and up some more rocks to the place of the skull, a cave providing rock climbers shelter against inclement weather.

As the rain began to pelt the mountain I settled myself down in the dry confines of the cave and just sat and let my mind clear. It was while thus engaged that a dark figure came out of the moist energy of the late Autumn atmosphere.

There was little cohesion to the form, but enough for me to see that it was cloaked, without face or hands. Although the figure remained silent, I intuited its desire to have me follow it. Where, I hadn't the slightest idea. A bone-like hand appeared, forefinger pointing to a space between two of the larger rock formations. Somehow, I knew he pointed to an entrance to what I termed the underworld.

Then there manifested the aural sensation, tortured cries of countless souls in the distance of the nether regions, the sound merging with the rain, or perhaps coming from it as the vehicle through which their torment was broadcast to the upper world. The closeness of their wailing despair was so strong I myself began to weep, joining the chorus of lamentation.

I began my trip into the bowels of the earth of my own being, following this spirit guide, who cautioned me to control myself as we started our descent into hell.

The darkness was that described in the Book of Exodus as one of the plagues upon Egypt, "even darkness which can be felt." Corpses were strewn everywhere. The ground beneath us was muddy, horrifically woven with streams of blood and borders of entrails. Brimstone and writhing tangles of otherworldly maggots, stygian birds of prey whose beaks and talons pecked and ripped the souls unfortunate enough to be confined in the caverns of the damned, souls whose numbers were beyond human estimation. The stench was overpoweringly vile, demanding a stop to vomit up everything I had ever digested, but the spirit insisted I continue, and this was no setting in which to display disobedience.

We continued on through this chamber of horrors, surrounded by the stench of death, bathed in wave after wave of inexpressible sorrow, hopelessness, and terror magnified to the nth degree by the certainty that it would never end, that there was no deliverance, no possible escape.

As we proceeded deeper, the rocky walls began to pulsate, the undulation revealing the millions of human body parts embedded within it, eyes, hands, feet, torsos, heads, and rivers of blood flowing from each as though they were freshly ripped from their former owners.

The end of that leg of the journey was the bank of a river of deep red blood where a dark, skeletal abomination stretched forth its hand of bone, requesting payment. I reached into my pocket and grasped the first coin I felt, handing it over to this nightmarish ferryman. I then knew I had to request passage across this river of death.

An immense bird of prey screeched hideously as it arced down towards me. I was just able to twist out of its way and avoid its grip. It flew up and continued on its way.

The ferryman pointed to the boat and we climbed aboard. The boatman took the oar, directing the ship toward a destination I dared not even guess at.

As we journeyed along the crimson current the piteous voices of the condemned gave way to the even more frightening feeling of being the object of fixation of the gaze of the miserable souls who had proceeded me to this place, illimitable eyes boring into me. Then I noticed a gleam of light, a bright smudge against the blackness, its contrast remarkable against the layers of steamy darkness, smoke, the gag-inducing putridity of all-embracing death. It was like being within the rotting folds of a decaying body.

The ferryman knew every inch of the way, as the captain of the barge in that old song about the Erie Canal, and truly eerie this canal was. I still had not been favored with the slightest explanation as to where I was, where I was going, or why I was here. No one spoke, not the ferryman, the spirit guide, and certainly not me.

Another stomach-churning screech split the air, and a winged creature, undeniably female, flew down toward the boat. Its open mouth displayed vampire-like teeth, a perfect match for the bat wings spanning a good fifty feet, and the burning red eyes. This giant harpy approached with claws outstretched, horrendous body smeared with the blood of victims beyond number.

I placed my hands over my heart in an insane attempt to keep it from cutting out on me, so crushing was the blanket of utter fear that this sight had dropped upon me. Fortunately she flew right by us, perhaps deterred by the presence of the ferryman and other spirit, as that was all that could have deflected the palpably real desire of this creature to have ripped me to shreds and devoured me while I still lived, as she had undoubtedly done more times than even she cared to remember.

We plunged further into the stifling darkness, which, unbelievably, grew even blacker, even more menacing, more threatening of terrors beyond the scope of human imagination. The red blood turned black, as in the deepest nooks and crannies of the human body.

Spots of light flickered sporadically here and there in the cave, as fireflies in the normal world. The appearance of darting points of light in this place literally created out of darkness was as incongruous as it was oddly comforting, a remembrance of home, as it were. How long had it been since I had been comfortably ensconced in my cave in Chatsworth, wanting only for the storm to pass so I could meditate in the fresh, rain-cleansed air?

And yet, this experience, wherever it was ultimately leading, had not come upon me out of the blue. Whomever or whatever was in control of this vision, whether my own inner self or an extraneous consciousness, had had the courtesy to spend the entire early morning warning me that something extraordinary and steeped in unpleasantness was coming. I had been permitted to feel it, physically, emotionally, intellectually, and I had been drawn towards it. No one had placed a gun to my head and forced me to Stony Point, nor did they have to. The subtlety of the attraction to the mountain that morning had been too engaging, the negativity of the tantalization

as viable and entrancing as anything of a “beautiful” nature could have been. Like all the others, I was here of my own free will, with the added bonus of having a living body to return to and I knew that, no matter what I might have to face in spirit in this place, when it came to permanently separating my life force from my body, that decision could only be made by God Himself. Or by Myron Dyal, an option that, as you read previously, I had faced and rejected some years before.

These thoughts were comforting, but they didn’t relieve the nausea of exposure to the atmosphere of wherever I was. But, finally, thankfully, the ferryman smoothly guided his craft to a soft landing at the dock on The Other Side. The Other Side of what remained in question.

Again the boatman stretched forth his fleshless arm, pointing to the dock, and wordlessly informing me, “You have arrived. Get out.”

He didn’t have to coax me.

I disembarked, followed by the spirit that had led me this far all the way from the cave above ground. The ferryman turned and guided the boat back the way it had come to collect the next in the never-ending line of doomed passengers.

My companion and I walked through a narrow corridor lined with shadowy winged figures, who may very well have been extensions of the stone walls themselves. The tortured groanings of those who had been judged for their sins were not heard here. Indeed, the only sound was that peculiar ringing in the ears of complete silence, in this case an eternal quiet, which did not alleviate, however, the all-encompassing stench of rotting flesh.

I was led to a steel door equipped with barred windows of stained glass composed of sections dark red, black, and the deepest purple. At the touch of the spirit’s hand, the door opened noiselessly and we passed through into a sizeable chamber filled with thousands, perhaps millions of people or things screaming as loudly as they could, perhaps some sort of chant; the din made certainty, or even concentration, impossible. I had a feeling, though, that the dissonant chorus was some sort of shout of praise. I covered my ears trying to block out the deafening wall of shrieks, which instantly ceased.

From the center of this mass of beings emerged a tall, demonic entity, skull-faced and cloaked in red and emanating a truly majestic aura. He stretched his arms out towards me.

Instinctively knowing the protocol, I knelt before him both in fear and reverence. He commanded me to rise and asked me why I had come here.

“Your guide brought me,” was the only sensible answer.

I turned, pointing towards the figure who had led me here all the way from Topanga Canyon, which lay where...upwards, downwards, north, east, west, in another dimension...who knew?

Laughing, he informed me the guide was not in his employ, neither would he ever have sent anyone to fetch me here, as it was not a place for mortals.

“This is a place of forgetting,” he instructed, “a place to forget, never to remember.”

After a terrifying journey I had been sure would end with my being the featured attraction at a horrendously unspeakable ceremony of bloodletting, his kindness was not only absolutely astonishing but very comforting.

He placed his hand on my shoulder and embraced me. When he released me, he lifted his hands towards the chamber’s ceiling and the crowds of worshipers began chanting his name, though for some reason I was unable to hear exactly what they were saying. They were using a language that was outside my ability to register in any meaningful way. But I knew it was not for me to know his name as I had no business to transact with this being nor any place in his shadowy kingdom.

He lowered his arms and placed both hands on my shoulders.

“Leave this place now,” he commanded, kindly but firmly. “Leave and never return.”

I wanted to ask why I had been brought here, and where here was, but before I could translate my thoughts into words, he was escorting me from the chamber and back to the landing.

Upon reaching the dock, I found the ferryman rowing the boat upriver to pick me up. Amazingly, he saluted me. When the boat arrived I climbed aboard, more easily than before, an old hand at it now and filled with relief that I would be making the return trip. The spirit, in whose charge I apparently remained, paid the boatman and we started back towards home.

I awoke from this dream, this vision, this experience, safely inside the cave, the real world, three-dimensional, here-and-now cave at Stony Point, Chatsworth, California, 91311, coming back to the reassuring sound of heavy rainfall.

I sat up and savored the wonderful aroma of water when it connects with the earth and things that grow from it, drawing strength from the aroma of vigorous plant life.

To this day I have no idea why the lesson was presented in that particular format, though I suspect the sheer drama of the spectacle it was necessary to overcome the powerful programming of my past, the constant assurance of my beloved family and holy church that I was demonically possessed and destined for hell unless I was “saved” according to the way they cherished.

As frightening had been the first two acts of the play, the dread of which carried over into the finale before the enlightening final speech, it could not have been any less powerful if it was to accomplish its purpose, the knocking down of the walls that had been built all around me by hands other than mine, confining me to a narrow path of guilt and fear that had finally led me to

the liberation I had just been through.

I had personally seen the abode of the “ungodly” dead, a place to which its overlord had not only *not* summoned me, but who had personally assured me I had no place in. The very liege of the place so many feared, and in which I had reluctantly claimed citizenship told me I was *wrong*, I was not spawned there, I was not living with one foot there and the other on the banana peel, I was not destined for there, I was not even wanted there. Whatever kinship I had felt for...call it hell if you wish...whatever anyone who knew nothing about it had tried to tell me about it and my relationship with it, no matter what I thought I had known about it, fantasized about it, feared about it, I had been wrong, completely, absolutely, irrevocably wrong.

I tell you my readers, my friends, there is no way I can adequately express the feeling of relief, indeed, of release that I felt.

Music, painting, sculpture, drawing, there is no artistic medium in which I work, nor in which anyone else works, that can convey the freedom imparted by this vision, this initiation.

And as to who or what had taken it upon themselves to go against the desires of the lord of the underworld and take me where I was not intended (by him) to go, is a question that remains unanswered and perhaps unanswerable.