

April 1982

This month had seen from day one an increase in my anger towards virtually everything. I sought a number of remedies, such as music, meditation, alcohol, trips to the mountain and others, but nothing I tried had the ability to bring it under control. On the home front, things were fairly normal; my marriage to Paula was just as empty and without future as ever. So, I was unaccountably angry and unsatisfyingly wed. For me, that was status quo. The only fly in the Vaseline was that within my life was another life, a different existence, struggling to break free and come to the surface. Precisely what it was and how it should be expressed were details unknown but my hunger for change was deep and gnawing. Hopeful that this change, whatever it might be, could possibly be lingering on the verge of coming forth, I planned another trip to Stony Point in an attempt to nudge things along.

The morning was chilly and windy, not unusual for April, but I'd hoped for an afternoon Santa Ana wind, the gusts that blow into the San Fernando Valley from the upper desert areas and can swiftly change a cold morning into a seasonable afternoon. With that kind of clarity in the air, a certain magic ensues, which is enhanced by the special quality of my mountain.

I pointed the car up Topanga Canyon to the place I have already described numerous times. Charon had originally led me there for the special purpose of gradually preparing me for whatever the ultimate conclusion of my evolutionary journey in this life would be. My spirit guide had made it a cherished habit to provide me special opportunities and this day would be no exception.

I nosed the car into the curb near the northern boundary of Topanga Canyon at 9:30 and took the trail I had trodden so many times before, dirt paths covered with reddish leaves, black rocks, a place that had come into being many centuries before but deeply infused with energy of the Chumash Indians. I have never been able to locate a single power source for this energy in terms of a definite place or even decide if it came from my own unconscious. Perhaps both or neither. The one thing of which I was certain is that my having found this place was not an accident, the reason for my having been brought there today to be revealed in very short order.

On the surface there seemed nothing atypical about the day, except for the fact that there had been very few "typical" days there; I never knew what fantastic adventure I would be propelled into from that innocuous looking platform into other worlds. Fortunately, my only responsibility was to be open and receptive to whatever did come.

I pulled myself further up the path, the rocky surface becoming a little tough on my sneakers. While walking down the side of one hill I reached up and grasped a branch that had lost some of its protective bark, whether due to contact with an animal, human, or the elements I was unable to tell. Some of the loose bark came away in my hand as it closed around it, causing me to slip and fall through a crack in the rocks. I tumbled down the side of the hill.

Regaining my balance, I examined the extreme vertical design of the sandstone looming over me. It was strikingly unusual, porous and with deep crevices that looked as though they penetrated into infinity, and probably do when the mind is allowed to walk their paths. It is not impossible to take mental trips through those stone formations, treks without end. There is something about those rocks, their features and the atmosphere of the mountain that is entrancingly seductive to the imagination.

These surroundings permitted me access to sections of my unconscious not normally available. The energy arrives and does its work without any coercion or special invitation (other than my being there), arranging unforgettable contacts between my outer and inner halves. The unconscious is gentle and kind, freely giving forth its pure and perfect love.

On previous excursions to Stony Point I had given appellations to some of the trees: the tree of magic, the tree of death, the tree of healing, the tree of transfiguration, and so forth. Which tree I ended up at depended on the voice of my own intuition or guidance from without. When I felt something within straining to express itself, I would attempt to discern which tree would be the most appropriate for the act. I was always open to the voices of the various trees and prompt to obey the whisperings of whichever one had been chosen to speak to me on any given visit.

This morning, my teacher was to be the tree of knowledge. I made my way through the thick, dense brush leading up to this particular tree. This area had not been thinned out by man or nature for many a year and it could be treacherous going. Often I would bring a knife to cut away especially pesky roots and limbs, the thickness of which would frequently scratch the arms and faces of those who walked these ways. As I approached, I felt the tree itself might be interposing special obstacles that day, as though testing my resolve to reach it and, so, my worthiness to receive the wisdom it had prepared for my edification.

While I continued to fight my way to the tree, my mind drifted back to my study the night before. I had lit one of my candles, watching the flame do its rumba in the air currents. I concentrated on the flame, hoping to use it as a fiery portal to the inner reaches of my consciousness. The hypnotic rhythm of the flame had me almost convinced it was a living thing. I was in the habit of lighting candles and incense to watch the merrily skipping flames and intense little points of light create their own works of art in the darkness. The leaping shadows of the flames produced a sort of epileptic charm showing forth a blend of whites and grays. I would reach through these pathways of light out into the night, drifting along the waves of various states of consciousness. At such times I would see images, of things, beings, places, nouns of my own imagining, mostly marching out of the deepest recesses of my own mind and which needed special preparations in order to express themselves to me in a way I could understand. They required escape, freedom from the ordinarily securely locked corners of my awareness.

I carefully navigated the clogged corridors of brush and weeds to reach the higher strata of trails where the lovely rocks gleamed in the morning sunlight. One trail led through the rocks in such a way as to make possible a climb over the sandstone formations then up to a ridge. Reaching the summit that is itself the base of a natural monolith, there is a tree placed in solitary serenity. My tree of knowledge.

Drawing nearer to the tree, I had – or was given – the strong feeling that this would be one of those very meaningful days on the mountain. Whatever was in store for me, it would not be an easy transition between worlds. The day had had problems from the start, what with fighting my way through the tangled clumps of wild growth and the burrs in my shoes making me decidedly uncomfortable. So far, it had been far from an ethereally transcendent experience. The climb to the top of the ridge had been tough but now that I had arrived my anxiety level jumped dramatically as I again returned in memory to the previous evening.

I gazed upon my candle as figures came out of the corners of the study, climbing out of the shadows in the deep corners of the room, then blinking out as puffs of smoke. At night when I have candles burning all about the room the smoke from the incense wafts through the erratically lit room. The combination of the two is quite consciousness affecting. My study was one of those rooms that, even under normal circumstances, did strange things to the thoughts but now shadowy entities were being born out of the night.

I do not place judgment on the night or its special powers. I actually feel that the night gives life to its own brand of creatures, angels, spirits, that are endemic to the nocturnal hours and just as viable as those associated with the day. After all, the night has its own special light, from the stars and moon of that type which is ordinarily visible. Of course, there is no such thing as absolute darkness or total light, each has at least a trace of the other, as the symbol of the Tao so beautifully illustrates.

Peering through the candlelight into the pool of darkness in the corner of the room, I saw one of these living shadows standing in the corner, then detach itself from the blackness and make its way towards me. Only its motion and overall configuration were visible, no features nor even a distinct outline. It was black yet not black, red but not quite so, the features of its appearance were a moving target. Then the room began to elongate and recede, elongate and recede, as though it were breathing.

I reached out to the entity, which receded with the room. The closer I tried to get, the further away it got. It was a game of cat and mouse. Unable to reach the thing, I sat down on my rug of power, a Zapotec Indian rug with an image of the sun woven into the middle. My intent was to rest and center all my energy in myself until the entity decided to make itself available to my view or to do whatever it was going to.

Back in the present, I was still on the way to the tree of knowledge, scraping myself on the sandstone rocks to the left of it. I made it to a small indentation that permits one to sit and there I had the luxury of a much needed respite. The anticipated Santa Ana had begun to blow, the nearby trees swinging back and forth with their own peculiar grace.

The atmosphere was not comfortable but I was well aware I had been directed here so there was no question but that I would stay. While awaiting whatever it was I was to encounter, I surveyed the immediate area. There is near the tree a small rocky area, somewhat resembling a womb, that allows an investigator to climb down into it. The Indians had used this to build protected

fires and a residue of charcoal remained on the surface of the rock, giving the stone a grayish brown finish. From this point the tree of knowledge lay just out of arm's reach, but I was seated closely enough to make out the details of the trunk.

The interior of the tree had been burned through in such a way that the coal-like interior was visible. It was partly brown, partly umber, overlaid with a yellowish tinge from the mixture with the moss that grew along the right side of the hoary old tree. On the left side the bark had largely peeled away, what remained was cracked, and the union of the two sides created a face, silhouetted on one side, flowing like wax down the other. The burn had gone all the way to the base of the tree, opening up a concave depression, almost a doorway into the interior of the earth.

I waited for something, someone, to emerge from that portal and guide me into another visionary episode. The wind was pummeling the tree, which gave way before the warm breath from the north.

The overall impression, visual, aural, and tactile, was of the pain of life. The tree creaked and moaned, bending low beneath the force of the warm wind. As I watched, the tree of knowledge disappeared, replaced with a scene from the surface of Mars. Or somewhere. And endless rock strewn surface that stretched further than the eye could see. Before I could ask the classic, "Where am I?" or even wonder what had happened, the tree reappeared, then the two backdrops switched back and forth.

I then noticed that when the tree was visible a man was standing beside it. He would leave his position, walk toward me, then seem to snap back again. What the hell? Why was this fellow jumping around like this? It was actually more than a little comical. Although the wind was streaming across the grass, I was well protected by the cave so I was able to concentrate on this man-thing without too much interference and as I did so, my thoughts were once again drawn back to my study the night before.

Seated in the middle of my Indian rug I was relaxed and simply waited. If I could pray and fast, I could certainly rustle up the patience just to wait. One thing my participation in these visionary events had taught me long ago was the need to be able to wait. Events might take all day or all night or both before they got moving of their accord. I could do as little to hasten them as to prevent them, and the attitude of waiting became second nature. If I were not disciplined and patient, nothing would happen. We must all learn the art of patience when it comes to achieving our goals. In my case, I waited at the pleasure of the communicating agent and now my lack of hurry was paying off.

I was now joined in the study by a feminine form stepping out of the shadowed corner. Standing some twelve to fifteen feet high, her head, neck, and shoulders would have penetrated the ceiling if not for the fact the room was rapidly withdrawing into limbo. I saw and heard small chunks of the room breaking away from the vanishing structure and flying off on their own, parts of the window doing the same thing.

The apparition's hair looked like it was streaming in the same hypnotic wind that blew through what had been my study. I sensed she was not being mindlessly destructive but was doing away with my perception of three-dimensional reality in order to create a condition conducive to our communication.

I was in no way afraid; the emotion was more a sad longing causing me to burst into uncontrollable tears. Through the wet haze I could see my female companion had not yet fully materialized. She was not completely there yet, but I was certainly very much aware of and affected by the presence of her energy.

The room now disappeared totally, leaving nothing but the rug beneath me, and even that was beginning to go in a shower of tattered rips. Would I be the next to be hurled out of existence, I wondered.

She now emerged from her wraith-like condition but remained silent.

"If you will not speak, I will have to consider making you up," I thought whimsically.

But I did not have to make her up; she now stood before me, of awesome beauty and awesome figure. She was dressed beautifully in red. The room now disappeared totally. She was humanoid in appearance but with a green face and bluish-green arms. She looked like nothing less than a sentient painting, one that was not static. The colors of her form changed, blue here, then green there, red here then there, somewhat along the lines of the Illustrated Man.

Her eyes were extremely bright, so much so that I could not look directly at her. I bowed my head in prayer and mentally asked what it was she wanted of me. She spoke but I was unable to hear her words. The wind seemed to be blowing between us, a barrier as the chariot between Elijah and Elisha. She smiled as the continuing interplay of hues and shades moved across her face, from nose to brow, back over the head and down her hair. And I still couldn't make out what it was she was trying to say.

I was overcome by emotion, my stomach was churning. I was now supine on the floor, or whatever surface had replaced it. Oddly, the center of the Indian rug remained, the section with the image of the sun, on which I was sitting. Peering over the edge of the remnant, I saw the floor was gone, replaced by a sheer drop into infinity. Frightened of falling, I turned back towards the she-spirit and reached out for her, but my arms could not breach the windy barrier. Desperate to hear what she was saying, I strained to reach her, but she began to disappear.

"Oh, God, don't!" I pleaded. "Don't leave without telling me."

Then she was gone.

The room reappeared section by section, the chair, the windows, the walls, then the shape as the circular effect of the vision gave way in an instant to the familiar right angled walls. Even the rug returned under me

I myself was bathed in perspiration and well nigh exhausted. Tears remained on my face, mute testimony to my feeling of having failed. I had not been able to make contact with her nor understand what she had been sent to reveal. I assumed I did not have the proper energy or was not concentrating enough, surely I was to blame for the incompleteness of the episode. The crushing sense of failure overwhelmed me and again I sobbed inconsolably.

Returning to the morning on the mountain, the clownish figure kept up his eleven lords a-leaping charade. He hopped from one rock to the next, then about faced and came back. He moved in an isosceles triangle pattern, moving more and more rapidly until from the middle of the triangle splashed a flood of starlight.

The tree of knowledge had once again taken a powder and even the desert landscape was no more to be seen. I was alone with the starlight. It seemed to have a noticeable...authority. That might not seem to make much sense, but it really is the most descriptive word for it. I somehow knew this light could do anything it pleased. I had no knowledge of how to relate to this light, much less how to make use of its energy, so I sat and, of all things, sang to it, a melody that appeared in my mind.

This light had a sweetness about it, a kindly aura, if you will. The tumbling acrobat still remained invisible. It was me and the light, no one else. So I spent the afternoon singing to it. It sounds strange, but somehow this type of communication gave me a warm feeling, a feeling of completion. Never had I felt such completeness, such wholeness, as seated there on Stony Point in communion with this star. The difficult trip to the summit, the scratches, the burrs in the tennis shoes, all of it was made more than worthwhile by the ambience surrounding me, infilling me. The entire area seemed aglow with the loving kindness streaming forth in that steady wave of starlight.

Later that evening, back in my study and entering all of this in my journal, I realized that my inability to make contact with the woman of colors was somehow indicative of my entire life. I had always felt disconnected from my source and whenever I was almost in reach of it I was unable to complete the connection.

Why was this?

I did not know, but the one thing certain was that my interior life was continually pushing me to find the way to finalize this mysterious connection in my consciousness.

As always, when the darkness was too close at hand, or my depression was too deep, a vision along the lines of the star would come forth and infuse me with new hope.

Granted, these feelings of hopefulness had no great longevity but they appeared when I was most in need and when they did I received comfort and support.