

February 18, 1983

It was the early morning following a night that been anything but mellow and relaxing. I had had a nightmare of falling down a wooden staircase and splattering my head against the floor like a pumpkin splitting open.

I awakened with a start to find myself on the bedroom floor, having fallen out of bed. Confused and experiencing disassociation, the painful throb in my head was only slightly less bad than if the dream had been reality. Of course, I had experienced a seizure during sleep but my epilepsy still remained undiagnosed and, as usual, I did not know what had really occurred. Dizziness accompanied my standing aright. I left the bedroom, seeking the comfort of my study. Upon entering, the familiar room greeted me with a strange vibration, a feeling of unreality.

The early morning light coursed through the crystals hanging in front of the window, turning the walls into a montage of rainbows. I lost my footing on the red and white area rug and fell heavily against one of the bookcases lining the walls.

“Damn!” I cried out. I had hurt my foot and suspected I might have pulled a muscle. I still wasn’t fully awake and in control of the situation, my thoughts were disjointed, my head pounded and my eyes were not focused.

I felt anxiety start to rise, but I assured myself I was fine, all would be all right. Groping my way around the room, I finally contacted my red armchair and flopped back into it, hoping to gather my wits and gain some balance, physically and otherwise. Then I had another attack.

My head slammed back against the soft leather of the chair while my torso and limbs danced as a broken marionette. Fear flooded over me and my attempt to cry out for help produced nothing but silence and I remained without aid. Then just as suddenly as the attack flung itself upon me, it retreated into nothingness, leaving me uncertain as to where I was. What I was aware of was the room taking on the by-now familiar look of elongation morphing into an undeterminable shape. All looked unfamiliar, my bearings had been shot to hell.

Trying to cushion the back of my head against the pliant red leather, the floor began to undulate beneath me, as though it were set upon ocean waves. I grabbed a hold of my voice and called out, “Stop! Stop it! Please God, stop it!”

God did not stop it, nor did the room acquiesce to my wishes, continuing to make me feel as though I were seated on a platform of rolling gelatin. I squeezed my eyes together tightly, but the motion would not cease nor would the dizziness settle down. I was trapped in a monstrous fun house with no way out and no way to make the horror stop.

I tried to relax and use some biofeedback techniques I had had success with in the past. It seemed to bear some positive fruit, but I knew it was only a very temporary stopgap measure that had no chance of lasting. But the motion of the room did slow, little comfort as a sharp knife sliced through my frontal lobes and sent me into an astral mindscape.

I saw green mountains some distance removed covered with creeping serpents slithering over, around, and through them. They looked like large reptiles as they ambulated across this vast plane and I knew they were coming for me.

The atmosphere was alive with static electricity and bolts of lightning hitting the surface from every direction, each lightning strike changing the snake things into beautiful green and yellow leaves the same size as the serpents. The leaves were grouping themselves together at several locations and they looked as though they belonged in a primeval forest setting. A massive explosion then occurred and the astral plane was gone, replaced by a deeply shadowed forest of leaves of gigantic proportions.

I was lying on a pathway that twisted and turned up through this forest of unearthly flora swaying in the wind playing through the leaves that still arrested my sight. The remnant of the serpents had begun new incarnations as undulating plant life, performing a colorful ballet on the stage of the jungle floor. All of the foliage was moving in some way and I thought I could feel each one in possession of a life all its own. The entire landscape was pulsating with a message that it was trying to get across to me. The earlier sounds were amplified and more clearly defined from the original windy howl. Now it was lilting music, beautiful and peaceful.

I continued down the path, taking a corner and catching sight of other travelers traversing the rainforest. They were moving slowly, unhurriedly, as though on their way to church on a quiet Sabbath morning. I called to them but there was no response. Either they hadn't heard or were uninterested in dialogue. Although it was unusual for me to share these experiences with others, I did not press the issue but continued on my own way, letting them go and focusing back on myself. The immediate concern was finding out where I was and how I was going to return where I belonged.

The beautiful appearance of the trail itself was comforting as though something that looked so nice could not possibly lead anywhere evil or dangerous. In fact, the entire tropical forest was a riot of color. The plants along the outer rim were cobalt blue with dark purple centers and edged around with crimson. The matting of the ground was dark green surrounding a pink interior and bordered by something resembling eyes.

Then the eyes were everywhere, swarming through the jungle like locusts, lids open and taking in everything, especially me, as they followed every movement I made walking through the jungle. Although being the object of their attention made me nervous, I felt no fear and was largely unconcerned at their being in the vicinity.

The other sojourners through the jungle had been left behind; whether they were also being scrutinized by the flying eyes I did not know nor was I particularly interested. I was more interested in the music being produced by the leaves all around me.

Although the eyes were still looking me over I felt it best not to look directly at or into them. I fastened my gaze on the trail that led ever deeper into my own consciousness, the surroundings becoming darker then more deeply I penetrated into the jungle. Some areas were now absolutely dark and the thought that I might never find my way out and return home forced itself into the equation.

As I considered this I found myself coming up on the others again. This time they noticed me; in fact, they all turned and started walking towards me. I waved at them and they returned the gesture.

“Where am I?” I enquired, noticing they were all dressed in hooded garments. Stopping all around me, they pulled the hoods back and showed me their faces.

“You are walking the interior landscape of your mind,” came the reply.

I wasn't entirely satisfied with their answer. I was now feeling a little afraid and a tad uneasy. I wasn't anxious to converse with them anymore, but one question did demand an answer so I broached it. Were they able to direct me home?

“Are you not pleased with the beautiful garden of paradise that you find yourself in?”

I didn't even consider my answer before I found it escaping my lips.

“I want to go home now.”

They shook their heads in the negative and turned to continue their march up the trail. I called after them but they ignored me. The sound of the music increased in volume and the wind grew stronger, hurting my ears. What had been a gently pleasing musical backdrop to my journey was now a painful banshee's wail. The entire forest seemed to have lapsed into insanity.

I covered my ears to drown out the cacophony but it seemed to pour right through my flesh to continue assaulting my eardrums. The sharp increase in the sound suggested to me that I had angered whatever being or beings exercised authority over this place. What had been comforting beauty had changed its mood to tension and fear. Now my only aim was to return to my study and put this jungle behind me forever.

Night enclosed the jungle, driving out the last holdouts of light. Only the floating eyes were still visible, the blinking of their lids giving them the appearance of terrible fireflies.

But the sights were the last of my problems. The unbelievably loud sound was now threatening to rob me of my hearing if not my reason. Then the jumble of head-splitting noises seemed to sort itself into something recognizable, something known.

I found myself organizing the sounds, picking and choosing what I wanted and discarding the rest, creating from them my own compositions of hope, liberation, and love. It was as I was thus engaged that the darkness began to fade into the background as the familiar outlines of my home study took shape all around me.

I was back in my familiar reality, thank God.

Allowing myself to return to normal awareness gradually, I saw I was seated in the red leather armchair and music was coming from the speakers of my old stereo. My hands and arms were soaked in perspiration, as was my entire body.

The prehistoric forest was safely tucked away in the backwoods of my unconscious. With a feeling of freedom, I leaned my head back into the cushioning softness of leather and let the soft music sink into me. What had a few moments ago been a wall of sound capable of splitting my skull was now a refreshing bath of well-constructed notes and chords working their healing ways upon me.

A few minutes passed and I was feeling better, though I had not the slightest recollection of having turned on the stereo or even getting up out of the chair, but the music playing was evidence that either I had or someone had entered and done it for me.

Far too tired to pursue the question to any conclusive answer, I sank back into the chair's leathery caress and drifted off to sleep.

God was well aware that I needed some hours in blessed oblivion, as it would be the last good rest I would experience for weeks.