

Saturday, May 2003

I found myself spending the first hour or so of what I had planned to be a Saturday of errands at the car wash. The sights and sounds were less than engaging to either heart or brain. Someone pulling and pushing a rag over an automobile, the mechanical cacophony of the equipment duking it out with some sort of nauseating music coming from an indefinite background source. The only pleasing sensation was that of the morning sun.

The day had been planned to be uneventful. On the itinerary were grocery shopping, picking up a lampshade, a trip to the bookstore for browsing and possible purchases, lunch, and so on until evening. Ordinary Saturday U.S.A., hardly the stuff of memorable art for anyone except Normal Rockwell.

But I didn't want aesthetic stimulation, just a common, run-of-the-mill day for a change, one of reassuring ordinariness. I leaned back on the bench hoping this would be a day without detours into uncharted vistas of consciousness. What began as an idle thought turned out to be more along the lines of famous last words.

I saw a hand waving in my direction, fortunately for me one of flesh and blood and eminently visible to all and sundry. My car was ready and it was time for me to get out into the warm day and take of business. With list of errands handy and plan to walk to the mountain after dinner firmly in place, I plunged into the pinball madness of traffic and headed for my first destination, little suspecting that within minutes I would be enfolded within someone else's plan for the day, a prisoner of its power.

The Bach I was playing was a balm of Gilead to my nerves and thoughts, healing and supportive and adding a pleasant dimension to my drive through the valley. I was already enjoying the commonness of the day and looking forward to more hours of everyday activities without angels and harpies and armchair visits to distant worlds.

For some reason I found myself musing on the evermore rapid pace with which the years were rolling by. Nearly sixty years had elapsed in the saga of Myron Dyal whose past, I thought, was securely locked away in the deepest corners of memory, leaving me free from the power of their influence.

Passing a familiar restaurant that I often patronized elicited pangs of hunger, but I resisted the impulse to stop and eat, feeling I must continue on. To where and what I was heading I had no idea at that moment.

I felt a field of anxiety begin to form on the outermost fringes of awareness. I sloughed it off and pushed on to the bookstore. An oil slick on the parking lot made me slip slightly on my way to the entrance of the building whose pink color never failed to nauseate me slightly. My excursion through the store was not diverting nor lessening the strange feeling that was increasing within me.

I wandered into the art section and thumbed through various volumes of Munch, Picasso, Chagall, and others, catching out of the corner of my eye the motion of something that appeared to hover near one of the book-laden shelves. I ignored it initially, but when it started to glow and produce an aura of purest colors, it quite naturally captured my attention. The swirl of color affected my increasing level of anxiety in a less than constructive way.

The scintillating patch of color was now expanding to encompass the entire interior of the bookstore. I lost myself in its dazzling radiance, which without warning exited my field of vision. As it did so, I was overcome with dizziness and pain that began in my legs then made itself felt along my shoulders. I reached out to the bookshelves for stability and managed to remain upright long enough to leave the store, shaky but under my own power.

The light of the day hit me full force as I got into the car, slumping back into yielding gray leather, eyes closed to regain equilibrium and to map the pain and discomfort that had spread over me. My head was still in a tailspin. I decided to remain there and relax as long as necessary for my system to right itself, for whatever was going on to play itself out and order to be restored. It was 10:30 AM.

As I allowed the store of tension to spend itself as it would, I returned in memory to an incident that occurred in the Fall of 2001, when I was led to visit the Wee Kirk of the Heather Church in Forest Lawn Cemetery which, as you now know, is one of my personal power spots.

Even while pulling up to the curb I sensed a special presence, a vibration in the air. I passed through the gates leading into the sumptuous garden, the gentle sounds of water in the fountain accompanying my passage into the wonderful world of serenity surrounding the Wee Kirk..

Morning sunlight glinted off the statue of Jesus placed at the rear of the garden, the statue's base surrounded by a bed of fallen leaves. I ran my hand over the surface of one of the trees, the bark rough and quite sharp of texture. Seating myself on one of the benches provided for the comfort of the many who seek out the restful, regenerative atmosphere of this lovely place, I settled down for meditation and simple enjoyment of the healing peace of the garden. My attempts to still the mind were unsuccessful; I could actually feel the nerves of my arms leaping beneath the flesh, their staccato pulsations matching the hither-and-yon scooting of my thoughts dashing just about everywhere except into the tranquil garden space.

A ray of sunlight reflected back from the shimmering water of the fountain struck my eyes, making me jump. I felt I was going to lose consciousness just as the statue of the Christ started to move towards me. The passage of the air over his form swayed his robes easily back and forth

in a motion that equaled the gracefulness of his movement, although strangely the statue retained the form and texture of a piece of sculpture; the appearance did not become human in terms of flesh tones and the like.

The overall color was gray and white and I noted that one of the figure's fingers was missing. The statue was floating towards me without leaving any sort of indentation on the grass. He touched down some three to four feet from where I sat, the gray marble face breaking into a smile of benevolence, the eyes taking on an all-too-familiar red glow that reached out and filled the entire garden with its light.

He bade me welcome, informing me that this was the time of the rose, the red rose of the sepulcher, he elucidated further. I saw a rose in his hands, the flower seeming to be in an attitude of prayer, opening its petals to pay obeisance to its Creator, then closing up. The fragrant flower, pulsating with life, seemed to give up its life with the heavenward benediction. The death of the rose caused the statue of Jesus to return to its place, retreating in silence, the life that had animated it departing as it resettled in its accustomed place at the back of the garden.

It was noon when I emerged from what felt, from its lingering physical and psychological effects, like a deep sleep. I felt good on the drive to my mountain. I had completely forgotten about my list of errands, none of which were as important as my need to get to Stony Point as quickly as possible. I arrived just before one o'clock. Half the day was gone and I had accomplished nothing of a practical nature but having my car washed.

I got out and walked through the gentle East-West breeze into the canyons. A large flock of crows (technical ornithological term, a *murder* of crows) lazily flew overhead, hundreds of pairs of black wings occasionally blocking out the light, so thick was the clutch of birds. I began the long climb to the top of Stony Point, surrounded by the whisperings of an invisible voice.

The climb this day was not easy, chunks of brittle rock breaking away in my hands, separating from their main structures and making the ascent somewhat treacherous. I felt my lungs filling with dust and what with the difficulty of the climb, the mesmerizing circling and monotonous caws of the crows, and the events of the morning, my head entered into another swooning whirl. Fear contributed its own weight to physical tiredness as I doggedly pulled myself up from level to level, inching higher and nearing my destination. After what seemed like hours, I had battled my way to the summit, and none too soon as I was now utterly exhausted.

The world was spinning madly when I laid myself down atop the great rock formation at the edge of the hundred foot cliff. I rolled on to my knees, a small rock poking deeply into my kneecap, drawing from me an indecorous cry of, "Shit!" I got up and walked to the edge of the precipice. The flow of traffic both ways on Topanga Canyon lent an air of casual normality to the scene. My view was unobstructed, the day warm and clear, and I could not help but raise heart and arms in a show of praise.

I sat back down on the uneven rocky surface and gave exultation to the west. Despite the spiritual looking ministrations, I did not know what I was doing up here nor why the urgency to get here.

I was thinking it over when I heard a branch slapping against the side of the rocks to my left. The wind had obviously picked up some steam. When the Santa Ana winds howl through these canyons their force can literally knock you to the ground. I set myself for the increased force and went into meditation.

A crawling sensation over my arm made me start, but careful examination proved nothing was there. By now it was 2:15 in the afternoon and, to be honest, not a whole lot was happening. I decided to stay a little longer, not wanting to squander the enthusiasm, hopefully not misplaced, that had pulled me away from my errands.

The mountain suddenly began to shake and I thought it was one of the minor temblors that strike Southern California, but the fact I was slipping in and out of consciousness along with the rumbling shaking negated that theory. The mountain reared itself up away from the Earth's surface, crumbling apart as in *The Search For Spock*. Then out of the center of this shower of rock appeared a path. By now the mountain was floating freely in the air, rocky formations girdled by white clouds, black sky and twinkling stars.

I could see the pathway reached beyond the horizon and into infinity. Angelic beings calmly trod the cloudy atmosphere in the distance. I called to them but received no reply. I started up the aerial road towards an unknown destination, the wind now roaring with tremendous ferocity, sending me to the surface, which was smooth, with the consistency of highly polished stone. Riding the wind currents was a crystalline being, flooded with light, gracefully gliding in my direction. This creature radiated unspeakable beauty, light emanating from every part of it, illuminating the canyons between the mountains.

When this being reached me the intensity of the light shining from it was painful and he advised me not to look directly at him. He floated effortlessly, positioned to my right. I was unable to speak, so overwhelming was its appearance, indeed its mere presence.

"I am glad you have come today," he said, "for you have much to learn."

Averting my eyes was not enough to block out the radiance. I lifted my hands to my face, covering my eyes. He continued his discourse.

"Time is closing in on you and you must begin the journey to your final days, the release of the body and its assimilation into the vastness."

His words were frightening to say the least and he was very sensitive to my reaction.

“Do not fear my words; it is your destiny to reach the boundaries of the vastness before you release your soul to the infinite. You can no longer waste precious time in trivial activities; you must focus all of your attention on this final stage of your development. It is the culmination of all of your work to date and will fulfill your life’s journey. Go now and be at peace. We will meet again. Listen for my call.”

These final instructions reverberated throughout my being as I watched him fade from sight. Then he was gone and I was back in the familiar surroundings of Stony Point.

I had felt my inner conflicts had finally ceased, a hard won victory as the crowning achievement of many years of struggle. That I had just been told in no uncertain terms that this was not so was deeply troubling. As I walked back down the trails I knew so well, I wondered what as-yet unsuspected paths I would be traversing in this final phase of life and what sources of energy I would be able to tap for what undoubtedly would prove to be an entirely new set of battles.

The phrase “a culmination of all your work” held me in its grasp. Perhaps it would all be for the best. I reached the car at 4:00 PM, my head spinning in the still-warm afternoon air. I drove down Topanga Canyon, the curves in the road reminding me of the pathway. Upon arriving home I immediately closed myself in my study to contemplate the manifold implications of the day’s events.

The images decorating my study and the very vibration of the room itself compounded the general feeling of wearied languor. I wanted it all to end, tired as I was from the decades of fighting for wholeness. I was not ashamed to admit the years of unending interior conflicts and physical and psychological turmoil had taken their toll. I had paid my dues; it was time for someone else to struggle and hurt and cry. But I could not pass on to another my destiny, my fate, my karma. Call it what I would, it amounted to the same thing, experiences I had to face and pass through.

My pity party was brought to an abrupt end by the unannounced arrival of Charon.

“Please do not despair or be alienated from yourself,” he said. “Have you forgotten the lost ones who support your soul and mind? Remember who you are, where you’ve come from and, hopefully, where you ultimately are going. Don’t you feel the soft winds of Zelcon coming off the desert, that wonderful heat and warmth that soothes your soul? It will ultimately give you peace.”

As he spoke, I was made aware of the fact that I was, indeed, treading the waters of self-pity. What was my problem, or the source of my problem, I wondered. Epilepsy, age, my medications? Some combination of those possibilities, perhaps with the addition of something I hadn’t considered? I did not know and at that moment I didn’t care. I was tired of the fight, weary of waging the spiritual warfare that had stretched over so many years. Charon was very aware of my thoughts and he addressed my concerns.

“I wish I could say that it was all over but, unfortunately, I cannot. You will need to face even more difficult times before it is finally over.”

“I know that you are always with me,” I said, picking up a stone that reposed beside my desk.

“You have all my love and affection forever. I really don’t have any idea what I would do if you did not appear during these difficult times of anger, doubt, and psychic pain. I will always be eternally grateful to my energy for all the help and support it has given me through the years.”

Our conversation concluded, I sank back in my chair and watched Charon nod in agreement. Although I knew he was always right, I still experienced unease over what my future might hold. He melted back into the darkness.

I was extremely tired, physically and in every other way. I laid my head back against the chair, closed my eyes, and drifted off into a very well deserved sleep.