

OM ॐ POINT

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Cory's Angel, 18"x24" Oil/Canvas, by Fred Calleri, www.fredcalleri.com

"It was painted for Cory Sheely's benefit because of her diagnosis with Lukemia." –Fred Calleri, June 4, 2010

PARTING WORDS

This is the final Ompoint Circular I will be designing and I just want to thank each of you—as writers, artists, and readers—for your contributions over the past three years. It has been a rich and meaningful opportunity for me to meet the challenge of creatively representing your words, images, thoughts, and visions with as much beauty and depth that your content conveyed. **Your contributions have been incredible** and I only pray that my graphic presentation did your inspiration justice. What a great publication we have created. **Thank you.**

Om, Alison

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“Be like the sun, for grace and mercy. Be like the night, to cover others' faults. Be like running water for generosity. Be like death for rage and anger. Be like the earth for modesty. Appear as you are. Be as you appear.”

– Rumi



MEHER BABA'S TWO PATHWAYS

for SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

by Randall Overdorff, Gainesville, Georgia, 2005-2008

Each time God takes the form of a human being He shows us a Way, a pathway to God. The spiritual presence, life, work and written word of Meher Baba are opening two major pathways of spiritual growth, personal spiritual transformation and collective spiritual transformation. These are simultaneous aspects of the continual freshness of God's revelation. The first is intensely personal, available intimately, for each seeker; the other is God's revelation in history and the affairs of mankind, pathway for humanity.

*P*ERSONAL SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

Daily, Meher Baba provides a pathway for me, personally, to get closer to God.

This is His way of personal spiritual transformation.

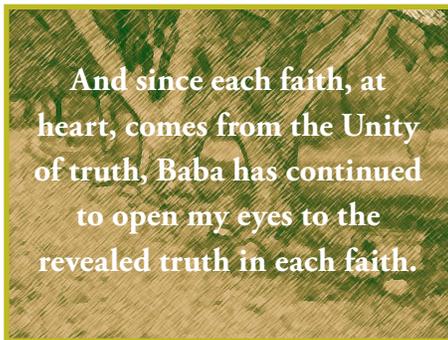
Baba is also providing a spiritual pathway for all humanity, a pathway—if we take it—which will help us out of the current terrible mess we are in collectively.

As long as I can remember I have loved Jesus. I always sought a relationship with the living Christ that exists here and now, and believed that the vastness and mystery of God could not be encapsulated in one book or creed. I came to believe that God's compassion was so great that He would not leave out any of us. It made sense that God's love is so faithful and our stubborn ignorance so pervasive, that God would take birth as a human being again and

again to redeem each and every soul. In time we all would once again become one with God. I rejected the exclusiveness of Christian dogma, which too often focuses on the differences among humanity, and the specialness the chosen ones versus the eternally damned state of those on the outside. It seemed to me that Satan had been elevated to a status of God, as if there was not one all powerful, all inclusive God, but two Gods, with too much focus on the evil God. With such an obsession with divisions, us versus them, good guys versus the damned bad guys, and the division by an emphasis on the historical Jesus and dogma versus a relationship with the living God in the present moment, how could we ever implement the Gos-

pel of Peace that Jesus revealed to us? So I kept praying, and searching.

In January, 1986, at the home of a new friend in Atlanta, Meher Baba revealed himself to me through His photograph. I simply knew Him, recognized Him, my heart leapt at the sight of Him. My wife experienced the same response to his photograph on that day. And soon my eldest daughter discovered the same natural connection to Meher Baba. My friend gave me a copy of *Discourses* by Meher Baba. I read it through, with joy and wonder,



for in that one book, with authority and clarity, Baba spelled out the spiritual Truth that I had struggled to put together from multiple sources throughout my entire life.

Since then, Meher Baba has been my constant companion. He is the same One Lord and Savior I have always loved, the same Jesus, yet he lived and breathed and worked so hard for me and all humanity during my life time. I have walked the same paths as He and met some of his close disciples. He transforms my life daily, His name, Meher Baba is a wonder and a sweetness that is always on my tongue. He has inspired in me a sense that the unfolding of God's revelation in my life is as natural as breathing. I am the most fortunate of men to know Him.

God's presence is all over me, all around, continuous, eternal, more real than my body, the only reality. God speaks to me, personally, in my heart, and the voice He uses, the voice He has, in His infinite mercy, tuned me to

hear, is the voice of Meher Baba. God has moved in and taken over the voice of my conscience, and speaks to me in this familiar voice, and I recognize it as Him. And He also has blessed me with discrimination to know when that voice of conscience is my own sorry foolishness.

Baba is near with a personal warmth and faithfulness, I close my eyes and feel His presence, continually, and feel His hand in the unfolding of all aspects of my life. I know, with a solid certainty, that Meher Baba, when embodied as a man, attended to me with infinite love and compassion, personally, my soul, essence, and somehow injected Himself, whole, into my being so that I could know him as my personal lord and master. And to add to this unimaginable mystery, when the Christ comes into the world as a living sacrifice of love, he personally attends to every single soul in exactly the same way. He is within each of us, Whole, the totality of God's being and compassion, if we would only turn our faces away from all that distracts us, and tend to Him.

Baba reveals God to me intimately, as if I am the only one, even as He rubs and grinds at my ego, reminding me that I am no one at all. On the other hand, Meher Baba's ways and teachings place that personal revelation squarely in an ongoing and purposeful revelation that has been going on since the beginning of time. God is Oneness, all is unified in God. The nature of God can be discovered all around us, for those of us who are looking. And God's nature is Infinite, so it is natural that mankind would again and again latch on to some aspect of this infinite nature and hold it up as the Truth, and make a religion out of that aspect of God.

The totality of God cannot be encapsulated in one form, one creed, one Way. This teaching has opened my eyes in wonder to the richness of each religion, to the essential truth at the core of each faith, to the commonalities

of all faiths, and how God has woven all revelation and faiths into one cloth, one pattern that needs to be seen as a whole.

Meher Baba has convinced me that God loves each of us so much, and God's intelligence and creativity is so vast, that God will prepare a perfect, unique way for each individual to come closer to Him. And since each faith, at heart, comes from the Unity of truth, Baba has continued to open my eyes to the revealed truth in each faith. For example, I have always loved Jesus, I love the study of the Bible, and Baba's being and His teachings have only served to illuminate the Christian scriptures even more. My heart leaps at the name of Jesus, and the reading of Old and New Testament scriptures. In the same way, my heart resonated to the presence of God in a Hindu temple, and a Buddhist cave in India, for that Holy Word of God is One, everywhere, beyond time, beyond personal differences.

*B*ABA'S PATHWAY FOR HUMANITY— TWO IDEAS THAT PROVIDE A WAY OUT: ONENESS AND MAYA

The news is so depressing, I hate reading the papers. The world seems in a hopeless mess, so many people behaving badly, so many suffering from the ravages of ignorance and need. Collectively, as nations, or religions, or groups, or communities, or families, it seems very complicated and difficult to do good and so easy to do bad. The most frustrating and mystifying thing is that even when, collectively, our intentions are very good, our methods of doing good somehow often end up simply making more trouble. Very bad men kill thousands of us, we kill many more thousands trying to get the bad men. We set out to bring freedom to a nation, and trash the nation in the process. We work hard to provide for our children, and somehow, through our very passion to be perfect parents, we drive our kids away. We discover the good news of God's love for us,

and in our fervor to spread the good news we make enemies of those who believe differently. We are in a time when people long for a solid spiritual foundation and sensible values that will make a sustainable, healthy, safe and happy society. But in the very process of pushing for what we believe is good, we persecute those we think are bad. Even the political parties in our great democracy act as if their opponents are blood adversaries. Everyone seems labeled and polarized: conservatives vs. liberals, East vs. West, Christians vs. Muslims. The harder we try to get it right, the worse it gets. Always, it is us versus them. Some days, it seems hopeless, as if there is no way out.

But Meher Baba provides a way out. Duality, He says, duality itself is the problem. The antidote he proposes for duality is Oneness, to realize, practice, and affirm that we are all literally one in God. There is no us and them, only One, God alone is real.

The reader may be thinking, “That is easy enough to say... sure, philosophically we can imagine that on some cosmic level, we are all one in God, but such an idea is not practical for every day use. Obviously I am me, and you are you, our interests are bound to conflict at times; and there really are bad guys we have to fight against... How can you practically apply such an idea as ‘Oneness?’”

For me, Meher Baba’s answer to such questions lies in His teaching on Maya. Of Maya, Baba says: “... it is necessary that Maya should be understood as it is, in its reality. To understand Maya, or the principle of Ignorance, is to know half of the Truth of the universe.” (*Discourses*, p. 370)

Baba teaches that the world as we know it is literally illusion. The only reality is the Oneness of God. We are ignorant of our true Oneness as God, so we are frightened, alone, and act as we do. The illusion of our separateness is maintained by Maya. Literally everything that we are is illusion, passing

before we can even grasp it, less than a breeze. But within that illusion is the continual presence of the eternal Truth. The Christ, when He comes, is the embodiment and preserver of Truth in illusion. On a daily basis, what is done in love partakes of that eternal reality of God, and what is done for self in anger or greed is in vain, nothing, less than nothing.

So what is the practical application of the notion of Maya to the problems of mankind? Baba says that Maya keeps us focused on illusion and turned away from our reality as One in God. He describes how Maya does this: by perpetuating mistakes in fundamental valuation. Maya keeps us focused on illusion, keeps us polarized, one against the other, quite simply, by influencing us into taking the important as unimportant, by taking as unimportant that which is important, and in giving to a thing an importance other than that which it really has. (*Discourses*, p. 371)

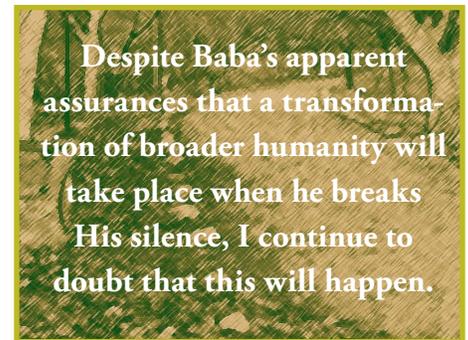
Daily application of Baba’s teaching on Maya has revolutionized my life and work. Baba emphasizes that God is Oneness, all inclusive, nothing is that is not of God, including Maya. But our Western Christian heritage is that of dualism. I was raised in the church, and the church emphasizes that God is not Oneness, but is split, with the world of illusion being basically a battleground between Satan and God.

Baba carefully describes Maya as being essential for the very creation and maintenance of the illusory universe. When Ignorance ends, the universe disappears, and we become aware, once again, of our true nature as God. All illusion depends on a continuation of Ignorance, the function of Maya. Hence all of us, conservatives, liberals, Christians, Muslims, Baba lovers, men, women, all of us are equally besotted with Ignorance. Ignorance is not knowing, and what we know, any of us, is but the tiniest atom of all that there is to be known. The only ones who Know are the God realized beings, like Jesus,

Mohammad, and Meher Baba. The rest of us ordinary folks are equally under the thrall of Maya.

Adding the notion of Oneness to that of Maya provides a way of being that side steps polarization. In speaking to a Christian, or a Mormon, or a person of any faith different than mine, I search for true valuation, for that living truth that affirms our Oneness in the love of God. And when someone behaves badly, in a way that causes difficulty for me, Baba’s teaching on Maya has made it easier for me not to take personal offense, not to become polarized and imagine that person as some “other”, separate and distinct and distant from myself. That person is quite literally, myself, as God, perfectly formed up as they must be at this time.

How can I take offense? Are they acting in ignorance? Indeed they are,



from my point of view, taking the important as unimportant, and vice versa. How can I judge them? I who am also ignorant, mesmerized by passing illusion, knowing virtually nothing, and holding on for dear life to the hem of my perfect Master, Meher Baba, who does know, and who loves me enough to try to bring me home.

BUT IGNORANCE STILL RULES
But ignorance still rules the affairs of humanity. How can I live in Oneness and contribute to Baba’s manifestation in society at large?

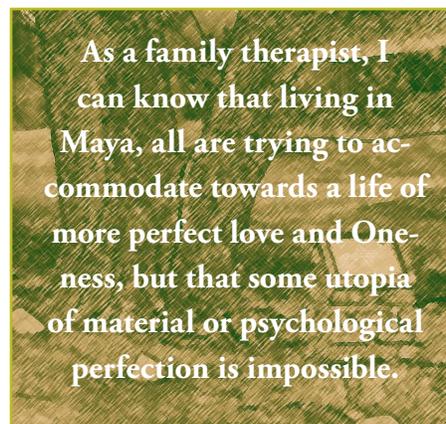
When I write about Baba’s pathway for spiritual transformation I

express my experience. I have clarity and conviction about this. When discussing Baba's pathway for humanity, I express beliefs and ideas. In this area, I have many questions and doubts. Application of Meher Baba's teachings to social, world and historical events is a problem for me. I believe each time God takes form as a human being He provides a way for salvation for humanity that would be recognizably transformative in history and the affairs of social groups, families, communities and nations. However, collectively, we have never been able to follow this way. Despite Baba's apparent assurances that a transformation of broader humanity will take place when he breaks His silence, I continue to doubt that this will happen. Christians have waited for 2,000 years for Jesus to return in power to establish a just earthly kingdom. If we expect Meher Baba to engineer such a revolutionary event in history, I believe we will still be looking for it in another 2,000 years. In the meantime, we may fail to recognize Him when he comes yet again. I believe the dance of Maya in Illusion must continue while Illusion continues. Collectively, Ignorance will always be the rule, not the exception.

Coming to Baba as a Christian, my fatalism about the inevitability of large scale ignorance and suffering in the broader unfolding of history creates a dilemma. Perhaps Baba Lovers in general are caught in this dilemma. Why are we so hesitant to speak out about our transformative relationships with Baba, like followers of religions do? Baba set up a nice paradox at the outset, clearly disclaiming any intent for us to make a religion out of Him. He has prevented us from even having a name for our faith. Do others share my confusing brand of fatalism, having a wondrous sense of Baba's intimate workings in my inner life, and hopelessness that God has any intention of eliminating ignorance in the daily business of mankind at large?

After 2,000 years, Christians still vehemently evangelize, expressing the same urgency that all must get right with God immediately because the judgment day may come at any moment. While I, experiencing the living Christ daily, and knowing that He walked the world just recently, remain silent, because I sense that the very urgency and persuasive pressure exerted in evangelizing only tends to polarize, emphasize differences, and thus empowers the duality of Maya, belying the reality of Oneness embodied in Baba's way.

How can I promote, push, persuade, influence, convince others that the way of Oneness is the right way without embodying duality in the process? For me, if passionate advocacy of a social or religious agenda appears only to add to interpersonal strife and polarization, both instruments of the dualism of Maya, then Baba's first Way, of personal transformation, provides the only guidelines for discovering how



to contribute to His Way for humanity. That is, by striving to embody Oneness in myself, in my actions with others.

In years past, I felt Baba was guiding me to contribute to His manifestation through opportunities to influence workplace and collaborative institutions to operate out of principles of Oneness rather than duality. Maybe He was. But I have experienced that even institutions founded on such

values cannot long maintain them. Not unless the individuals involved, each in their own way, is striving for spiritual truth, and the institution clarifies and continuously reviews values related to Oneness as its fundamental operating principles. Most institutions, however, have missions based on outcomes, not process, and Oneness can only be expressed in the eternal present.

Even a monastery or ashram is hard pressed to embody such values in its daily business, let alone a secular institution whose mission is an outcome based on service or creating wealth. If a group or institution wishes to strive to embody Oneness in daily behavior, Laurent Weichberger has drafted a code of behavior for Baba Lovers living in community that would provide a good point of departure for a model to guide such an effort.

I want to contribute somehow to Baba's manifestation in the broader affairs of mankind. I do not know what else to do but to try my best to implement His Way of Oneness in my daily affairs. Of course, it is silly to presume that I am able to do so in any significant way, since I continue in bondage to ego and ignorance. Nevertheless, I try to behave as well as I can.

How do these notions of Oneness work for me? Take political differences, for example. All candidates are mesmerized by Maya. I try to consider them based on their merits without demonizing one or the other.

With religion, one truth seems to reveal itself through the scriptures of each. As a family therapist, I can know that living in Maya, all are trying to accommodate towards a life of more perfect love and Oneness, but that some utopia of material or psychological perfection is impossible. I can remember that each client suffers due to dualism, the thrall of Maya, and help them search for a Middle Way, to sidestep conflict in striving for their objectives. So we celebrate steps toward such an ideal of love, while rolling with

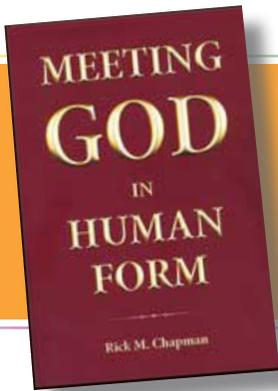
the mistakes and suffering that are inevitable. When others are critical, I try to remember that criticism, as well as all experience, comes not from some “other” without but are manifestations of one Self. However, being mindful of the tension between Oneness and the dictates of Maya does not preclude be-

ing powerful in setting boundaries and exercising assertiveness.

Remembering the primacy of Love and Oneness helps maintain objectivity in limit setting with others. Turning the results of all conflict over to God helps maintain calm and objectivity.



Randy Overdorff lives in Gainesville, Georgia with his lovely wife, Pat. They have three grown children, Lilly Weichberger, Andrew (Drew) and Elizabeth.



BOOK ॐ REVIEW

Meeting God in Human Form

by Rick M. Chapman

Review by Alison Hutter Govi, Flagstaff, AZ, March 2011

If one was to “judge a book by its cover,” then *Meeting God in Human Form* may give an impression that the content is based on formal religion: the cover is almost biblical in appearance. But this is certainly not how I would describe Rick Chapman’s most recent book.

Rick gives us an incredibly rich story about his first visit to India as a young man in his early 20’s: a journey that gracefully culminated with the life-altering meeting of Meher Baba.

The majority of the tale relates his experiences of travelling through India: the places he went, the rich culture he was eager to embrace, Baba-lovers and the native people he met along the way.

I personally describe India as being the United States inside out. An example of this is driving in the U.S. where typically the driver relies heavily on ample signing marking a path that a monkey could probably follow. But while in India, I once began a conversation with my rickshaw driver who was taking me to Poona. He politely asked me to not talk to him so he

could concentrate. As Rick eloquently states, *“If travel by rail in India is a quintessentially Indian experience, travel by automobile must be India’s version of Russian roulette.”*

Speaking of rickshaws, a humorous part of the book is when Rick conveys a time when he and his friend, Buzz, were desperate to make a train. The only transport available to get them to the station was a rickshaw fueled by the pedaling of a *“rickshaw-walla whose calves bore not even the faintest possible resemblance to any normal part of human anatomy with which I was familiar. Broomsticks came to mind, severely undernourished broomsticks... We invited—rather, insisted—that the rickshaw-walla take his place on the carriage seat-bench while we, his passengers, alternated at the pedals. ...”*

Rick’s depiction of his experience is hilarious for a couple reasons. First, Rick truly conveys the humor of his visit to India quite well; he is a good story teller. And secondly, for those

Westerners who have visited India—while the details are specific to Rick’s journey—the unpredictable, colorful nature of travelling in this unique country is undoubtedly reminiscent of many of our own visits. His experiences made me laugh quite hard because I could relate to his story so well. It touched my heart to be taken down this memory lane.

In the final section of *Meeting God in Human Form*, Rick magically recreates his meeting with the Avatar, Meher Baba. The depiction is very intimate, vivid, and powerful: I truly felt as if I was personally experiencing this meeting. *Meeting God* is definitely enjoyable and humorous but ultimately it is a very spiritually-valuable read. I am grateful to Rick for allowing me to share this blessed, life-altering experience.

Meeting God in Human Form is available at Sheriar Books in hardback, 292 pp, published 2010. Click on PDF link for easy ordering:

SHERIAR BOOKS

<http://www.sheriarbooks.org>



Another Poem for Today

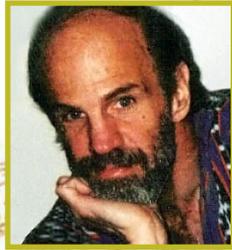
Oh, Baba, yes, I know you're right there
I feel it, sometimes more or less
But surely I feel it.
It takes a moment to say your name
It takes a moment to release that feeling of fear
It takes more than a moment to hang on through it all
Yet even the tears are welcome in your kingdom of comfort

It makes a happy day, Baba
It makes a happy moment when you shine through and I know
But that knowing is so rare and very fine
But that knowing digs very deeply into pockets of the unknown
And whatever comes up, rejoice in it!

It hurts sometimes to dig below and yet still not find the core
It is not the soft earth, but the hard that takes the effort.
The longest days are those that are used for digging and then
When it's found, releasing it to you. You can build with all these
Uncovered new feelings.
I don't know how to build up quite yet.
Flat and even, smoothing the earth, that's the effort
knowing you can help to rebuild the lost and gone forever.
Baba, be there
Baba, let me know to hold on to you
Baba, feel my love as our day goes on and on into tomorrow.

-- Anne Weichberger
11.6.91





T W I G

by Paige Lebo, 2010

God gives what you need when you need it. Sometimes you even get more than you bargained for. Eight years ago I was in great need of something new—something different in my life. I have a family whom I love, but my world felt so small that you could put it in a paper cup. The adult education department of our local school district offered a yoga class two nights a week. I decided to try it just for one night a week to start.

I had never done yoga before so I was already out of my comfort zone. As I waited in line to check in, there was a poster sitting on an easel next to the table. It said, “‘Don’t worry. Be happy’ Meher Baba.”

I had never heard of Meher Baba, but looking into his eyes there was a calmness and feeling of security I had never felt before. I thought, “This guy knows what it’s all about. He knows how the universe works.” I was intrigued. As class started, the teacher who was a middle-aged man, balding on the top with shoulder-length gray hair, started to talk about this man, Meher Baba, who had made a great difference in his life. I had no idea then how Meher Baba and this man, Richard Terwilliger—Twig—would have such an impact on my life.

Twig would talk about Meher Baba before class but only to see how many people were really interested. Then he would switch the “Baba” talk for after class. We would later meet at someone’s apartment to talk about Baba and his teachings. After time, people fell away for one reason or another. At the end it was Twig, me and Colleen. The yoga class was cancelled, but Twig, Colleen, and I still wanted to meet and talk. We ended up just going to a Dunkin’ Donuts for coffee and conversation. For the last five years we have been doing Baba “yoga” at Dunkin’ Donuts.

In 2004, the Avatar’s great lover, disciple and personal physician, Dr. Goher Irani, returned to her Beloved Meher Baba. Below is a quote from her unpublished (and unedited) autobiography:

“Baba came down as Godman for us, humanity, to release us from our bondage. But to live with Baba, to be with Him was not easy, not a simple thing. It was lifetimes and lifetimes, hundreds and thousands of years of longing to be with Him that brought us to live with Him in His present advent. His life was all suffering to me, and the suffering He took on was a very important aspect of His life and work. He was God, all power, knowledge, and bliss. But He did not use His attributes. He took on untold suffering as man; to confine His beautiful form is the greatest binding. And throughout His life He gave up everything. The physical effect on Him of this was an uncontrollable drain no human being could have withstood. Seeing our Beloved Baba suffering day after day, year after year, and being helpless to do anything, that was our position. It was His love alone that sustained us; the same infinite love He bears for every soul in creation.”



Dr. Goher Irani

It is during these last five years that I got to really know Twig. He is unlike anyone I have ever met before. He talked about Baba, sanskaras, and “getting our act together” in which ever way we understood it to be. He said, “Everyone has to face there own s#@* and deal with it.” “Pay me now or pay me later but that is the way it is.” Personally, facing these issues brought me tears, anger, and frustration. But Twig was there for guidance and a shoulder to cry on. At times we didn’t see eye to eye, but he always heard me out and tried to see my side. He always looked to find what he could learn from another person’s point of view. Without realizing it, there was much spiritual growth going on at that Dunkin’ Donuts.

On this Black Friday, when everyone is loosing there sanity buying gifts for others, I received a gift from my friend, Twig. I received a small, rectangular, brown box with his name engraved upon it. It contained his ashes. Twig died last month. And he had entrusted me to fulfill his final request to take him to the Baba Center (in India) which he never saw in this earthly life. I am honored to do it for him. As I pick up the box I say to myself, “This is it. This chapter of my life is over.” As I get in my car and turn on the radio, the words I hear are, “There is always something there to remind me,” and I start to cry. There will always be something there to remind me of a friend who has brought such marvelous things into my life. I miss Twig dearly for his friendship and guidance. Hope I run into you again.

THE PASSING OF TWIG

by Laurent Weichberger, Flagstaff, November, 2010

My long time friend Twig, a spiritual companion in Baba’s love for over 14 years, passed away on October 28, 2010 from complications of Leukemia. He was a mentor to me when I first came to Baba in New York, and I know his love for Baba was deep. May he rest in Baba’s embrace. I reprint the email that was sent around the world announcing by Brad Mandell, announcing Twig’s passing for those who wish to see the details. In Oneness. Laurent

----- Original Message -----

From: Brad Mandell
To: baba-talk@mymeherbaba.com
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2010 2:25 PM
Subject: [Baba-Talk] Twig



Many of you know Twig (Richard Terwilliger) or have heard of him. He was a long time Baba Lover and has helped many to find Baba, including myself.

Twig passed away today. He was recently diagnosed with Leukemia and had just started chemo. It seems he developed a lung infection only a few days ago. I spoke with him two weeks ago and he said he had surrendered to Baba’s will. He will be missed by many. His friend Paige said he wanted his ashes to be scattered in the ocean at the Baba Center...

Avatar Meher Baba Ki Jai



“ I am God—God the Beyond. I draw you ever closer to me by giving you frequent occasions of my close companionship. But too much familiarity often makes you forget that I am God in human form.

MEHER

I know all that happens and will happen. In fact, anything that happens, happens not without my will. Knowingly, I allow things to happen in their natural course.

BABA

All that I ask of you is to love me most & obey me at all times. Knowing that it is impossible to obey me as you should, I help you to carry out wholeheartedly my instructions by frequently bringing home to you the importance of obedience.

QUOTE

Now listen very carefully to what I say... I know it is not easy to want what I want; it is almost impossible. However, I want you to try your utmost to put your heart and soul into carrying out anything that I may want you to do. Only intense love for me can lead you to obey me as I want.¹”

– Avatar Meher Baba

Notes:

1. Quote from *Lord Meher*, www.lordmeher.org/index.jsp?pageBase=page.jsp&nextPage=5595

After writing about 45 pages over a couple of years—on the hidden life and teachings of Jesus as revealed by Baba as well as my own research into Muslim texts in my six-year, ongoing, unpublished account for future Christians of Baba's life and teachings, Christ Come Again, I was inspired to condense it down to a somewhat unpunctuated reverie poem on what I've learned from Baba-Jesus' standpoint, entitled, The Canticle of Jesus. It took me light years beyond my priestly Vatican learning and training to grock what was what—finally. Thank you Baba. I dedicate this to you in Jesus' name... your babaelf.

The Canticle of Jesus

Based on the Revelations of Avatar Meher Baba

Arranged by Ed Flanagan
and dedicated to all present and future Christians

I shed my blood upon your cross. My choosing, my game not that of men
Neither Sanhedrin Pilate nor his Roman legions. Neither my most beloved Judas
Who did what I ordered him to do under obedience taking it on the chin
all these ages.

Such love he had to play the trick as I turned the key with just a kiss.

To attract my destiny for the world the Universe and all creation was my game
My play my charade all along. Yes I suffered otherwise why do it?
For suffering's always been the game my chosen lot
When first I cast the dice to gamble on winning the Day of Man

I shed my yes most precious blood upon your cross in what became a double-cross
A sting you might say for I did not die upon it but swooned at the third hour
Leaving my so hard won consciousness of the false gross universe
While retaining my I-Am-God-State intact.

Even Pilate was astonished that one so strong succumbed, or so he
though so quickly

When others took not three hours but three days to give up the spirit on the gibbet.
My only fault—for each time I come I do have one
Was to doubt my divine consciousness in those blackest forlorn hours.

Ah yes how else should it have been? Father Father why why has Thou
forsaken me?

I bit my tongue after crying out at the folly of such an utterance.
For I and the Father are One. Was I not in such pain
I might have laughed when at last I cried out again “It is finished!”

What was it do you suppose I was referring to? Hardly my life
For I retained it all the while never snapping the Silver Chord.
What was finished so gloriously was act one of my work my age-old work
Of suffering for the sake of Man. There would be five more decades of it to come.

Make no mistake about it. I took not Man’s sin upon myself but the suffering
That man was due—due to his ignorance of Truth. Man is himself the
Truth but veiled.
And until he works it out he’s bound. That’s why there’s a provisional clause
Always in the God-Man’s contract.

Providing for his vicarious suffering to save man even more countless lives
Bound in illusion and ignorance beyond those countless ones he has bitten off
And must now devour. But the secret is out now. I’ve told you I did not
die upon the cross

But retired into my conscious Godhood.
I rested after that ordeal three days in the cool of the cave.
But my loved ones must have seen the wink for no sooner was I placed in the tomb
They came with such healing aloes and myrrh—a hundred weights worth
Enough to raise anyone close to death but not yet dead.

Nowadays you may call it a near death experience. Addressing my residual wounds
they anointed Them with what has come to be known as the Ointment of Jesus.

After my three days of rest
In seclusion, my God-Man consciousness revived. Resuscitated in what poetically
became known as My Resurrection. Oh well the priests have always liked dram,
incense and robes...

Let’s not quibble about words. Why the fathers in later times termed it such
Can well be understood, for what did they know of the difference between
The two sates of Nirvikalpa and Sahaj-Samadhi?
Now listen well lest you continue the mistake.

When I became God-Realized at the Jordan by the hand of my Master John
He unveiled me to that state which has always been mine
But which to come into the world I was veiled from for a while
Until the proper time the unveiling revealed.

My Nirvikalpa-Samadhi state of Conscious-God remained.
Gone gone gone—no longer conscious of the illusory universe
But only myself as Infinite Radiant Light Bliss Knowledge and Power

The Triple Crown of the Godman each time I come and am unveiled.

But to become the Avatar Adi Shakti Christ come again
I must regain full and balanced consciousness of the illusory gross universe
While maintaining intact my I-Am-God state of consciousness in Sahaj-Samadhi
Which means fully God-conscious fully Man-conscious—that's Perfection

Finally do you get it? Is it becoming more clear?
For it is most important that you do lest the mistake be passed on again.
After showing myself to my delirious apostles unbelieving at first.
Here touch the wounds not fully healed but well underway.

And now my work here in Judea is completed one hundred percent to
my satisfaction.
I must leave you now and go on the road. For besides being persona non grata
Among the Romans and the Jews I must take up the remainder of my
work on earth
To preach to the lost tribes further east.

And I command you also not to preach to the gentiles
But to those lost tribes of Israel. And so now with Thomas and Bartholomew
Allow me to take your leave and go to finish my work in further lands.
You ask to come with me but fear not I'll return and yes I'll return

I cannot reveal to you now that I have yet fifty more years
Of inner work in seclusion for the sake of the universe
And all kingdoms in the Creation. Let's just leave it at that.
I give my promise that I will return... In my own time

For now I will journey overland in my New Life begging food water
and simple needs
Retracing my steps as Buddha along the eastern track for as it is said the Son of Man
Has nowhere to lay his head. When at last I drop my physical form as all men must
Even the God-man I will be laid to rest in the wondrous valleys and
mountains of Kashmir .

There I shall remain with the Father in Bliss in Nirvikalpa Samadhi
Till I return again next time wearing an Arabian hat and coat. You'll not recognize
me then And will think that I had truly left you. But how could I leave you? I am
always with you
If not wearing my earthly man-form coat then as the Holy Spirit among you.

Now take these words to heart. Stop blaming people who all along were
without blame.



Crazy

Poem and painting by Chandran Manickavasagam (2009)

I am crazy for you
Every waking moment
Or in my dreams
Now and For ever

I am crazy for you
In good health
Or in sickness
Now and For ever

I am crazy for you
When I stand alone
Or amidst crowds
Now and For ever

I am crazy for you
When I am penniless
Or rich beyond beliefs
Now and For ever

I am crazy for you
In sweet memories
Or in depressing thoughts
Now and For ever

I am crazy for you
When confidence is high
Or when doubts creep in
Now and For ever

I am crazy for you
When I seek you
Or I forget you
Now and For ever

I am crazy for you
In kind thanks
Or harsh rebukes
Now and For ever

I am crazy for you
In haunting silence
Or amidst blaring noises
Now and For ever

I am crazy for you
On a sunny day
Or a stormy night
Now and For ever

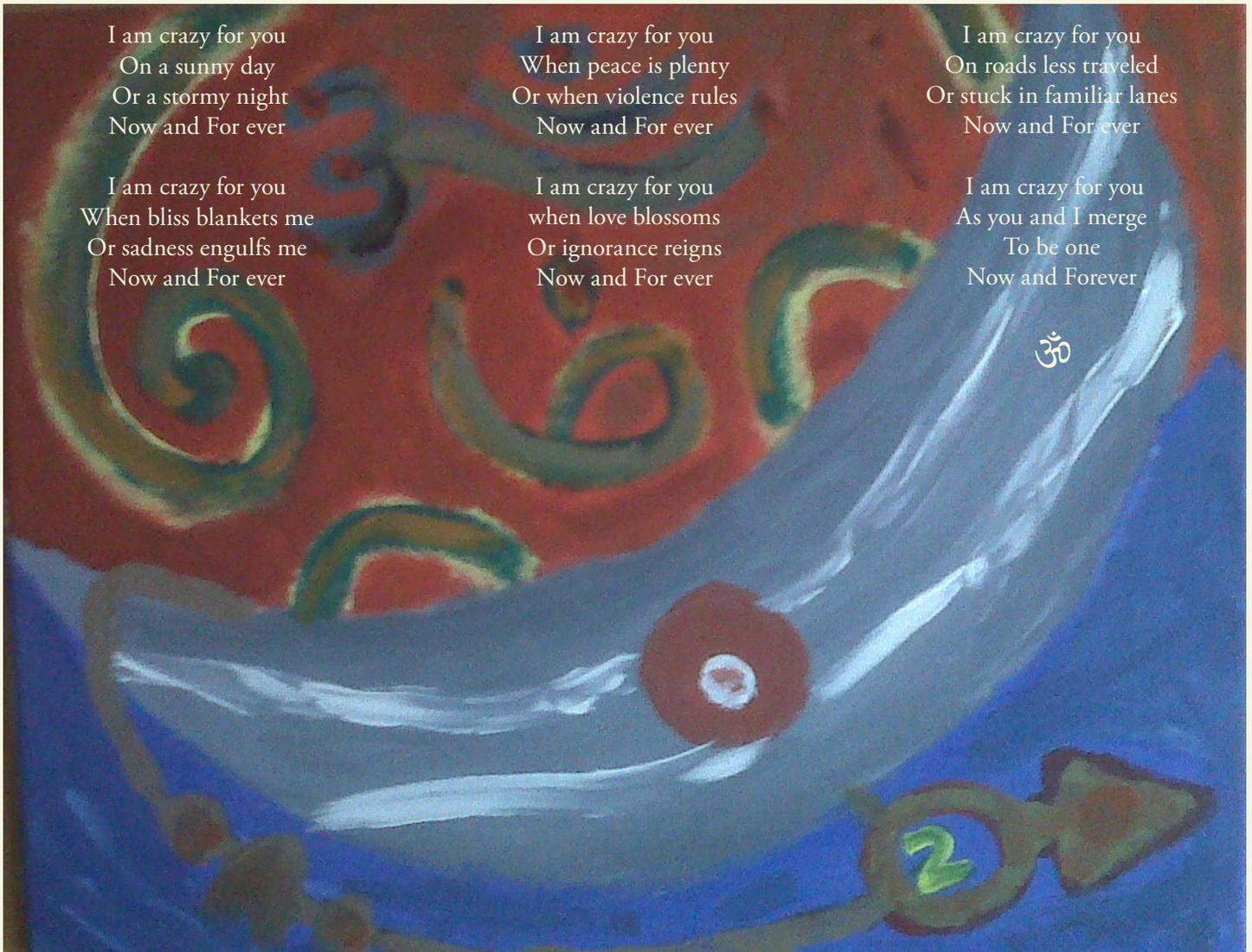
I am crazy for you
When bliss blankets me
Or sadness engulfs me
Now and For ever

I am crazy for you
When peace is plenty
Or when violence rules
Now and For ever

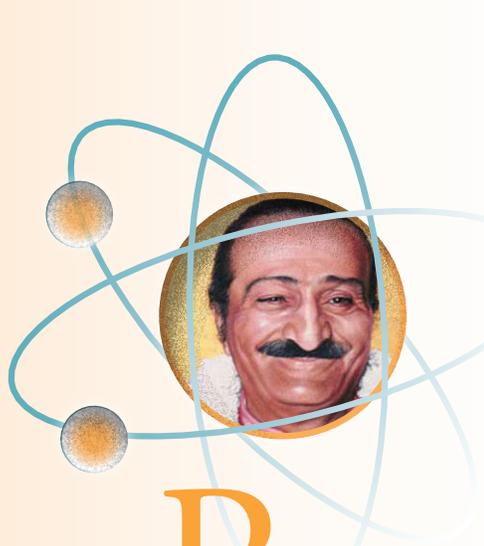
I am crazy for you
when love blossoms
Or ignorance reigns
Now and For ever

I am crazy for you
On roads less traveled
Or stuck in familiar lanes
Now and For ever

I am crazy for you
As you and I merge
To be one
Now and Forever



The following is a response to Laurent's article, which appeared in OmPoint 4, titled: The New Physics, Meher Baba, Don Stevens, and the New Humanity. This response was created by Don Stevens (who requested it be edited by Laurent Weichberger for clarity during July 31-August 1, 2010). This was then written up and shown to Don on October 23, 2010 in Los Angeles, where he approved it for publication. The meeting about this article in Los Angeles was recorded, and we quote Don's comments from that recording below.



On July 31, 2010, 8:25am Don Stevens called Laurent on his mobile phone, with a response to the article Laurent had written. The notes were taken down verbatim at the airport where Laurent was laying over waiting for another flight.

Don explained: There are state changes of water (H₂O), solid, liquid, gas. Light is a wave... In another state, $E=mc^2$, where "c" is a constant (the speed of light), amorphous Blob of

clear, it is unconscious but has latent consciousness."²

Then incidences of experiences occur. An iota of consciousness, which is originally present in the drop-soul as latent consciousness, turns into manifest consciousness ... That experience (all experiences) is "associated with the drop soul"³ like "sticky fly-paper." It wants to express these things (impressions from the sticky flypaper) in the same manner as they were formed (as if they were coded in some manner).

"Yes, this is taking things that Baba has explained, that they want to express themselves in the same manner, and that immediately struck me as being parallel to the coding that goes on in computer activities."⁴

The mental body gradually accumulates a lot of these sticky things stored in it ... Of these sticky things, they have both energy and form (these impressions). These are stored (and can be accessed) in the mental body. The form is of different experiences. The subconscious mind can apparently function out of the limitations of time and space, and manipulate these from memories incredibly rapidly, and make new combinations to fill in missing gaps in a new situation (in environment), and be born as an intuition arising from nowhere. "This is a Stevens' theory that excites me, because I see this happening with such an incredible speed on many occasions."⁵

When we are first born from the Om Point we have no memory or experience. The trying out of—pos-

RESPONSE TO: The New Physics, Meher Baba, Don Stevens, & The New Humanity

by Don Stevens, Los Angeles, CA, October 23, 2010

light, both wave and particle states must be "resident" in a Blob of light.

How can the light wave turn into a solid light state? Einstein says it can become a solid and his formula gives the conversion, and this is the principle of the atom bomb in which some matter turns into light and heat. What about our knowledge about how the Blob acts? When a drop-soul is born from the Om Point¹ that particular Blob Entity has no consciousness, but latent consciousness is in the drop soul. "Because it is God, and Baba is terribly



Don Stevens



Avatar Meher Baba

sibilities—by the subconscious mind, is apparently independent of time and space, and can happen so fast, that it can be experienced by the drop soul as intuition.

At this point, Laurent explained to Don about how lasers are formed, with a heightened state of Gas, and asked Don if the Part I of the original article, where Laurent wrote about Bohr's electron shell model, could this be experienced by a drop-soul as a heightened state of awareness, instead of just energy.

Don responded: The energy from Baba, as put in his words, is absorbed by the individual and helps boost the drop soul along on its way on the path. It is stored, I think, as psychic energy, and transferred to the person who worked with Baba's words, and is used by the devotee to remove obstacles on the Path, which Baba tells us need psychic energy for their removal. But unfortunately, when the devotee gets to this point, often he finds he has

no available psychic free energy as he has used it all up in stupid things like worrying. Don suspects that this energy from Baba is for building back up the "camels hump," and to hasten the progress along the path. By camel's hump, he means that each individual has a certain store of psychic energy and that this gets drained through life experience. We have to be mindful of this.

Essentially it has to do with the great problem, that the individual has exhausted their reserve of psychic energy by worry (as Baba explained in Discourses). Baba wants us to be happy, and not to worry.

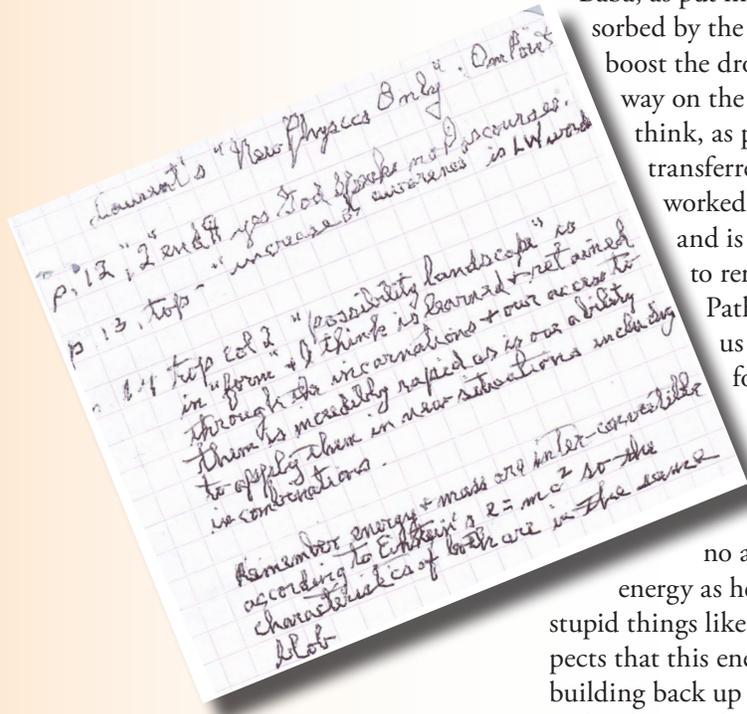
Laurent offers that the quote which Don mentions about worry is from *Discourses*: "Moral courage and self-confidence should be accompanied

by freedom from worry. There are very few things in the mind which eat up as much energy as worry. It is one of the most difficult things not to worry about anything. Worry is experienced when things go wrong, but in relation to past happenings it is idle merely to wish that they might have been otherwise. The frozen past is what it is, and no amount of worrying is going to make it other than what it has been.

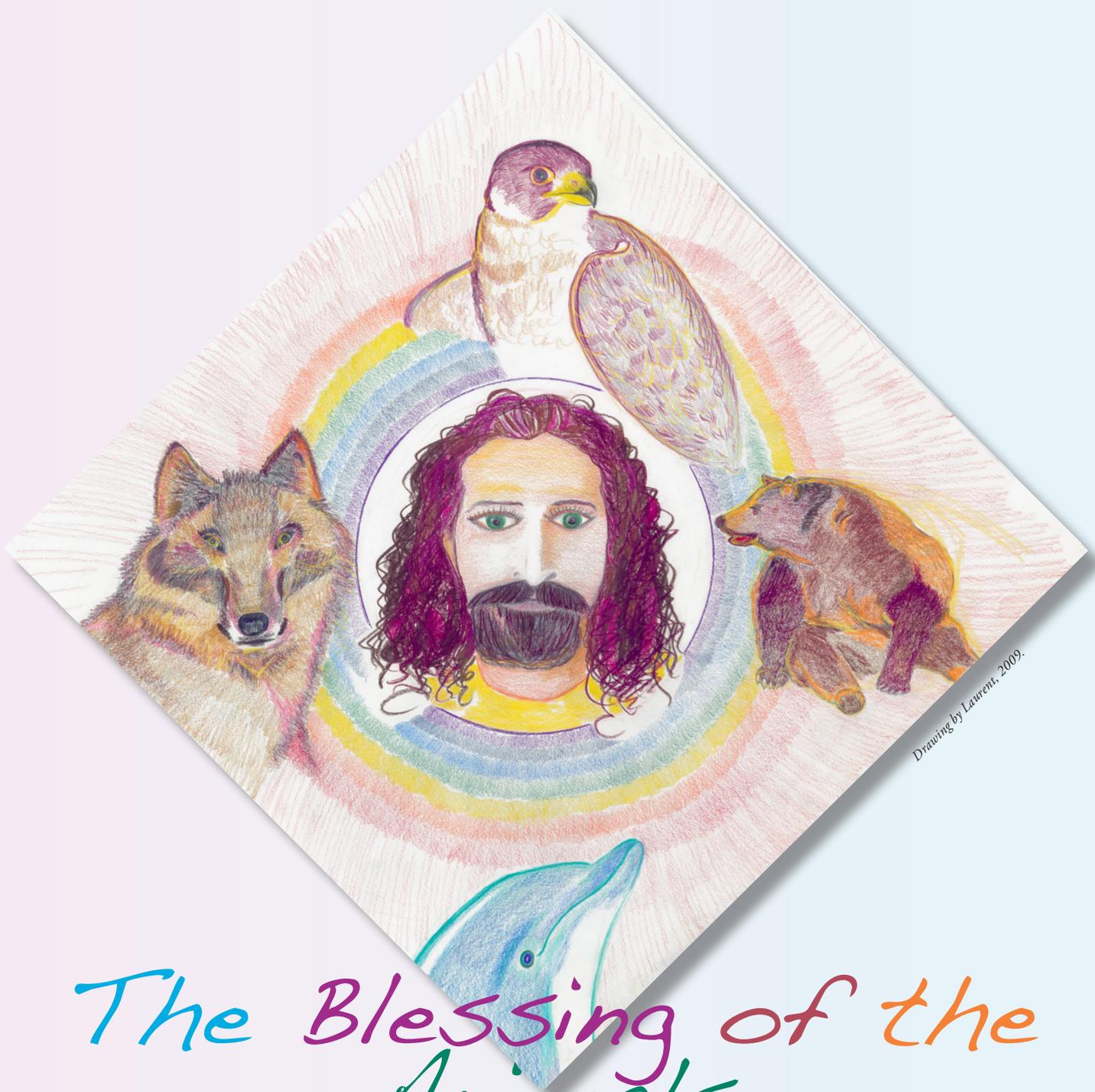
But the limited ego-mind identifies itself with its past, gets entangled with it and keeps alive the pangs of frustrated desires. Thus worry continues to grow into the mental life of man until the ego-mind is burdened by the past. Worry is also experienced in relation to the future when this future is expected to be disagreeable in some way. In this case it seeks to justify itself as a necessary part of the attempt to prepare for coping with the anticipated situations. But, things can never be helped merely by worrying. Besides, many of the things which are anticipated never turn up, or if they do occur, they turn out to be much more acceptable than they were expected to be. Worry is the product of feverish imagination working under the stimulus of desires. It is a living through of sufferings which are mostly our own creation. Worry has never done anyone any good, and it is very much worse than mere dissipation of psychic energy, for it substantially curtails the joy and fullness of life."⁶

Notes:

1. Meher Baba said, "In fact, the whole universe is in the Self and springs into existence from the tiny point in the Self referred to as the Om Point." From *Discourses* by Meher Baba (Myrtle Beach: Sheriar Foundation, 1987), p.190. See also *God Speaks*.
2. From an audio tape recording of Don and Laurent discussing the article together in Los Angeles, October 23, 2010. [LA Audio].
3. This phrase "associated with" is taken from *God Speaks* by Meher Baba.
4. Ibid, LA Audio.
5. Ibid.
6. *Discourses* by Meher Baba, "Qualifications of the Aspirant: Part II" (6th edition, Volume III, p. 121).



Handwritten notes from Don Stevens to Laurent Weichberger in response to New Physics article published in the OmPoint 4 Circular.



The Blessing of the Animals

by Laurent Weichberger, Flagstaff, AZ, January 2010

On a chilly and windy Fall afternoon, Saturday, October 3, 2009 a very special group started to gather under the trees of Bushmaster Park in East Flagstaff. The flyers posted around town attracted the community by promising, “An interfaith event for the blessing of animals with leaders from different faith traditions.” Faith leaders from all mystical traditions came together, in love and harmony, for the purpose of standing together to literally bless the animals brought to us by the public. All animals were welcome (as long as they were either on a leash or in a cage).



First we were all welcomed by Sherry Golden and Tish Bogan-Ozmun of the Shared Earth Network, the primary sponsor of the event. A beautiful Blessing Prayer, written for the event by Sherry Golden, was read out by her in a call and response fashion.

Sherry then in turn introduced the blessors, and we each gave a few words to those gathered about our spiritual traditions. I was honored to represent the Meher Baba tradition. Other faiths represented were: Greg Long (Navajo Christian), Dahamane Mahamane (Muslim), Ken McIntosh (Christian Protestant), Jean Myers (Jewish), Robi Salazar & Helen Jones (Buddhist), Lilly Weichberger (Celtic Pagan), Deacon Larry Whelan (Christian Catholic). (See group photo on previous page.)

Before I share more about the event and the experiences there, let me just point out that aside from the astounding fact of how many faiths were embodied, eight total, we have come full circle in that a Celtic Pagan and Christian blessors worked side by side, honoring one another by their very presence, laughing and praying over the animals that day. Three hundred years ago, Christians were still burning pagans in Salem, Massachusetts. Some pagans, the world, over are still persecuted today. Such simple forms of healing go out to the world in waves.

Speaking of waves, the afternoon officially started with the sound waves of the live musical group Spining Jimmy (Charly Spining & Jimmy Debois), who used electric instruments (powered by a solar electric generator) to serenade us. As the music warmed us up for the main events of the day, people became eager to listen to who was present for blessings, and bring their animals forward.

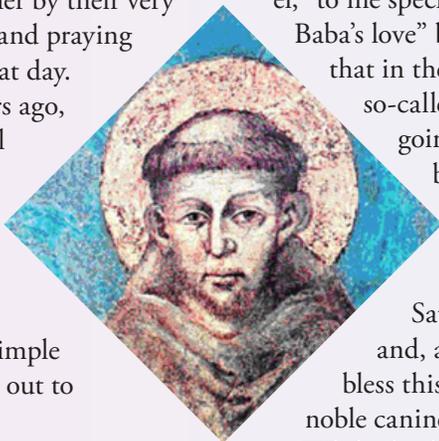
Before the actual blessing com-

menced there was a presentation with llamas, given by Eric Souders. Then the children were invited to have free llama rides, as the llama's pulled a cart around the park, with children (including my son Cyprus and his girlfriend Ophek) sitting in the cart for a ride. The local 4-H Club members helped organize the rides, and the kids loved it.

My experience of blessing the animals this year was that there was a steady stream of dogs, with very few other animals, and one woman rather sheepishly told me that her dog refused to get out of her car (in the parking lot) asking me instead if I would bless her dog where he remained (in the car!). Of course I said yes, and we had a nice session in the parking lot instead.

One fellow brought his dog, "Satchel," to me specifically for a "Meher Baba's love" blessing. He explained that in the 1960s there were many so-called gurus from India going around the world, but he always felt Meher Baba was the genuine article. I was thrilled to spend time with Satchel and his master and, as always, did my best to bless this fine creature of God, a noble canine.

While thinking about what to share with the reader about that day, I felt I could not be honest without stating that I felt the poignant absence of a Native American representative of the indigenous faith of this land. After all, we live at the heart center of the Arizona tribes spiritual pinnacle, the San Francisco peaks. Shouldn't we have someone with us to share about that mystic way, whether Dine, Hopi, or Zuni, or some other path?



I imagined instead, how they would feel standing with us, blessing animals that day, and I came up with this: It is actually the animals which bless humans with their presence. How many times have we been graced by the presence of a hawk, falcon, or golden eagle circling high above, a bear roaming on the mountain, a wolf spotted in the distant snow, or a playful dolphin at the ocean water's edge? Thank you, all you animals, for blessing me with your presence.

Lastly, there were a number of exhibits, by several animal advocacy groups, including:

- The Animal Defense League of AZ www.adlaz.org
 - Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project www.gcwolfrecovery.org
 - Arizona Llama Rescue www.azllamarescue.org
 - Second Chance Center for Animals www.secondchancecenter.org
 - Northern Arizona Audubon Society www.nazaudubon.com
 - Habitat Harmony www.habitatharmony.org
- And of course, our primary sponsor:
- Shared Earth Network www.shareearthnetwork.org

One funny but serious exhibit story from the event is that, by profession, I am a web application designer and developer for an international investment bank. People at work are usually surprised by my spiritual life, and my spiritual companions are usually astonished by my technical work life. We have a technical design pattern called the Proxy Pattern, whereby a software object is invoked instead of the actual object, because the real object is too distant. So all that is done to the proxy eventually reaches the real object. Let's just say—it works.

Well, at the Blessing of the Animals, there was a Grand Canyon Wolf

Recovery Project mascot walking around the event, dressed in a giant grey wolf suit, with long wolf hair, and giant wolf eyes (it actually looked kind of angry and mean). I should know, because my three year old son thought it was real, and he freaked



out! In any case, I was asked by this wolf advocacy group to bless the mascot (as a proxy) to subsequently reach out from there and bless the whole wolf recovery project effort. I took this blessing very seriously, and embraced the wolf, offering sincere prayers for this ongoing advocacy work.

So, what did I ultimately experience by participating in this glorious event? That those that joined us, four legged and two legged, for this joyous celebration of all God's creatures, in the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi, indeed left the park uplifted.

Amen.



Thoughts on depression

by Randall Overdorff, May 16, 2007

Given the state of world, the very existence of which depends on the vagaries of Maya, where Maya to all outward appearances, rules, how is it that anyone is not depressed?

Since suffering due to ignorance seems to be to be the fate of a vast number of humans, does maintaining a cheerful mood depend primarily on how we filter data at

any given time? A case of a framing the half empty glass as half full?

But then what is the role of biochemistry? How come we feel depressed when our blood sugar is low? Why do moods fluctuate in monthly patterns? If depression is mostly caused by biochemistry, is depression a natural

What differentiates surrender from fatalism, fatalism from despair, despair from depression?

state, wired into the human condition? Is it unnatural to presume that depression is an illness? Yes, because when truly depressed, one is rigidly stuck in the mood. Flexibility is natural. Rigidity is about death.

If our moods are among the most ephemeral aspects of existence, does it matter what our mood is? Does one have to be in a positive mood to be happy? Is happiness possible even as we suffer? Is it possible to be depressed and happy?

Since there is no end to wanting, how can we still be wanting and be happy? Is happiness simply the destiny of some people to balance out the suffering inherent in illusory existence? If there is only One Soul, is happiness or suffering experienced by each soul actually experienced by all? Do we live out the millions of lifetimes by eventually living, in the

first person, all the human lives? Is depression a form of mental suffering that is essential to the natural balance in illusion? Is it something to avoid or something to embrace?

Can we assume that happiness and depression are opposites, mutually exclusive?

Did Baba suggest that if we maintain a close connection to Him that

we would be in a euthymic mood?

Did He suggest that if we maintain a close connection with Him that we would be happy?

Did He not propose that His most precious ones are apt to suffer? He noted that mental

suffering is the worst, hence most likely to be suffered by those He holds most dear? What kind of Universe is that?

What differentiates surrender from fatalism, fatalism from despair, despair from depression? The spiritual giants referenced by Baba in stories, who lived in destitution, suffering the abuse of prostitutes, were they experiencing a cheerful mood, or could they have been depressed and still spiritually great? Was Baba ever discouraged with the human condition? Unlike the perfect masters, He did not act like he suffered, He really suffered? Did Baba, in the flesh as Baba, experience depression? Despair? When we experience suffering, does He not suffer with us?

The worst grief of depression would be that the first thing we forget is that God suffers with us. Depression

But is depression a diabolical affliction of Maya or a gift from God to shake us loose from attachment to illusion?

may be among the worst afflictions of Maya because it renders us absolutely alone. This is diabolical.

But is depression a diabolical affliction of Maya or a gift from God to shake us loose from attachment to illusion?

When a depressed person is suicidal, is he or she near to a state of absolute surrender, but fooled by Maya into plunging into even greater bondage? Kierkegaard got to the edge and decided that the best response to despair was a leap of faith into God's arms. How is it that some find freedom in despair, and others only emptiness? Isn't Nirvana emptiness? Is despair then simply a product of wanting? If it was only emptiness, would there not be peace instead of despair?

Was Job depressed before Satan (God) was done with him? If not, did his complete surrender to God's will protect him from depression? If he was not truly depressed in the face of his absolute loss and humiliation, would his faith and obedience be truly tested?

When Baba insisted on outward cheerfulness, for example, during the New Life, did He expect those who were genuinely depressed to do so? Did anyone ever ask the Mandali whether they had experienced what would be diagnosed as a major depressive disorder? Is that state a recent Western invention? Would Baba have been impatient with the tears of a truly depressed individual? Did anyone who spent a lot of time in Baba's presence commit suicide due to depression? If so, what does this mean?



feet

Photo credit, *Sukothai* by Marcia Lippman (c) Chronicle Books.

by Max Reif

Setting out on life's journey,
I knew nothing of YOUR FEET.

World's loveliness became quicksand,
Then You let me grab YOUR FEET.

Touchstone of Existence,
All life springs from YOUR FEET.

World is all just flux of water.
Solid ground? YOUR FEET.

In joy, in grief, the same prescription—
Hold on to YOUR FEET.

All is but a passing dream,
All except YOUR FEET.

Child's body becomes old man's,
All that stays the same? YOUR FEET.

Maya's drug is powerful!
Dive back to YOUR FEET!

Prostrate in surrender, ah,
New life from YOUR FEET.

My feet must walk this journey.
More important, though?

Your feet.

“ *The body is like Mary, and each of us has a Jesus within. If pain and suffering come, our Jesus will be born. But if no pain comes, Jesus will return to his origin on that same hidden road by which he came. And we will be deprived of his splendor.* ”

— Rumi



Michael Matthias at Laurent's apartment in Manhattan, 1986. Michael holding framed drawing of Baba by Patty Stalker.

Memories of

MICHAEL MATTHIAS

Memories of Michael Matthias, his huge frame reverberating with poetic power, reciting his powerful lines—makes me ‘stand up’ inside and listen. No one but Michael dared to be so full-on ... so fully and powerfully present with his intense recitations.

He was child-like in this artistic exuberance.

by Cathy Riley, Myrtle Beach, SC, 2010

He lived a dedication to the creative life and helped me to live that life also. After I'd gone to India and written my 1st songs in the late 1970's, Michael had visited the Center in Myrtle Beach. I was living nearby, so we'd get together—he'd recite his poems, Tom told Michael his Baba stories on boat rides out into the lake, and I'd sing my new songs. I was shy to sing these for Michael, as they were my new and fragile children, who'd never come out to play. But Michael was so full of creative energy that I felt less shy. After singing my 1st new musical creation, Michael exploded with excited appreciation, "You *must* write more! Don't stop now!" I was surprised and relieved that I hadn't been 'booed off the stage'. Just before his departure he took out his checkbook and wrote me a check—for a million dollars—so that I'd keep

writing songs! As I think of it now, it was Michael Matthias (and Steve Klein's) constant nudges over succeeding years that helped me take myself seriously as a composer/singer-songwriter. I was known as a singer then, but I could become a singer-songwriter and recraft myself into a more fully creative person. His fiery approbations could *not* be ignored.

Then in 1995 Tom and I took a summer off and went to Woodstock for two months. I rented a piano and worked daily on a strict schedule, composing songs for and to Meher Baba. During that summer Michael was nearby in Kingston. We would get together. He gave me his epic poem, "Visions from the Bridge of Fire" and I took it home, gobbling it up. The one day I sat down at the piano, after having just re-read sections of Michael's

'Visions'—and the piece "I am walking among you" just poured out! During the final gospel section of that composition, a huge thunderstorm manifested and descended full force upon us. It felt very appropriate, as I heard music manifest in clarion calls, to these words of Michael's":

"I am walking among you
Listen to My voice
I am the voice of fire
I am moving among you
Listen to My voice."

When I played my newly finished piece for Michael, he was ecstatic. He insisted we perform it at a yoga retreat center that he had connects to in nearby Monroe, NY. He recited a section of his poem within my larger setting, and with Betty Ryans and myself giving our best rendition of the song—we got through in one piece after a short rehearsal.

Subsequently, Michael and I filed and received copyright for that song. Michael felt that someday, in the New Humanity, it would be a hymn sung for Baba's Manifestation.

I feel, in a way, that this has already started to come true. When Tom and I moved to Asheville, NC in 1996, I joined the women's choir, Womansong, under the apt direction of Debbie Nordeen. I felt inspired to re-write some of my solo pieces for the three part choir, and one of them was Michael and my song, "I Am Walking Among You". Womansong *loved* that song and it has been sung at many concerts over the years since it was first created as a choral piece in the late 1990's. When Womansong made a CD, they got our permission to use that song and to title the CD, "Walking Among You".

This past summer, Womansong went to a national women's choral festival in Chicago. I was informed by Debbie Nordeen that the music selection committee of Womansong had selected "I Am Walking Among You" as one of the pieces to be performed in front of thousands of other women in 22 choirs from all over America. I went and proudly sang my heart out on July 3rd, 2010, remembering Michael's legacy: "I am walking among you, walking among you, I am walking among you,

Listen to My Voice! I am the Voice of Fire, I am the Voice of Fire, I am moving among you! Listen, listen to My Voice!"

I didn't hear until after I returned that he'd passed away... just before this concert... in California. I felt like this national performance was a very fitting 'send-off' ceremony for Michael. I am sure that he was reciting in Baba's poet's heaven, this section that he would recite within our 'I Am Walking Among You' collaboration piece:

"The walk is like the call of the bird softly, stepping on moonlight... softly... on muted leaves. The footsteps are singing the clear notes of the morning bird. Clear, translucent... Where have I heard footsteps like these before?"

Michael Matthias © 1975

I know you are singing on, reciting ferociously, Michael... in heaven. Thank you, Michael, for being an inspired and inspiring 'voice of fire' for me.



Laurent and Michael at Hands Across America, May 25, 1986, on the West Side Highway in Manhattan. Note the poster on the tree at the far right, which was the first time Laurent posted a picture of Meher Baba. Patty Stalker in foreground waving towards Michael.



More Memories...

by Mark Choi, Los Angeles, CA
November 22, 2010

I was 19 at the time when a man named Michael Mathias entered into my life for a brief moment and changed everything. In the middle of the night, in his bed in New York, Michael was looking at the brochure of a hotel in Irvine, CA. It was a hotel that used to be a large barn that had been converted. Michael had a sudden whim that he must fly to Irvine immediately. He got on a plane and was in Irvine the next day.

Meanwhile, I was on my way from San Diego, having said my final farewell to a childhood friend, and heading back to my home in Los Angeles. Suddenly, my brother's beat up Honda Accord started losing power. I pressed harder on the gas but the car didn't budge. It was five o'clock in the morning as the car was slowing down on the freeway. Straight ahead above the horizon, I could see the full moon. I remember looking up at the full moon and saying, "God, if you exist, and if there is a lesson here, can I learn it some other time?" Somehow, I felt that the answer was no. There was a lesson here that could not be learned in any other way, nor at any other time. I was able to make it off the highway onto a ramp and was able to get the Honda to an auto shop nearby, with the help of a kind taxi driver who towed my car there.

A month earlier, I had quit college and had decided to leave all in order to find God. This, of course, didn't go over well with any of my friends or family. I had decided to buy a one-way

ticket to India or Africa, so that I may wander into the desert to find God, and if he didn't appear to me, I was ready to die there in the desert. It was not a plan that made sense to anyone, but to me it made a lot of sense. And I must admit that for some unexplainable reason, it still makes sense to me to this day. Looking back I can see why my family was worried. They thought I had lost my mind.

A week earlier, exhausted from reading one spiritual book after another—books that didn't really answer the underlying questions—I decided to ask God for help. With as much sincerity as I could muster I said, "God, if you exist, send me a book. Send me a book that doesn't beat around the bush with poetic symbolism but goes straight to the point and explains God and the Universe in a straightforward way." I wanted answers—convincing, logical and comprehensive answers—to existence. Otherwise, what's the point of living? I was desperate. I didn't know at the time that my prayers were going to be answered a week later, through the car braking down in Irvine.

When my mom and I returned to Irvine the next day to pick up the car, we saw a sign that said, "World's Best Hamburgers." We had to try it. As we were waiting for our burgers, my mom decided to ask the man sitting alone next to us for directions. This rather large, eccentric looking man turned around with a big smile and said, "I just flew here on a whim from New York yesterday, and I don't know why but I felt I had to be here today. I'm sorry but I don't know the area. I wish I could help you."

He had this rather explosive, overpowering smile that almost made us uncomfortable. We thanked him and quickly turned to each other. My mom then surprised me by suggesting that we join him, since he was eating all alone and seemed like a nice man. So when she asked him, he responded with great joy. We grabbed our drinks

and walked over to his table. After brief introductions, he asked me what my plans were. I told him bluntly, that I was dropping out of school and thinking of going to India in search of God. To my mother's horror and surprise, he said, "Yes, you must go." I was also surprised, but using the momentum I said, "You see, Mom, there are no coincidences and even meeting this man is a sign that I must go."

Michael took over and said, "Yes, there are no coincidences, all that happens is according to Baba's will."

In one voice my Mom and I said, "Who's Baba?"

Michael replied, "Why he is God, of course."

The man would not stop talking about Baba. We listened and had fun with this fiery, passionate man and his Baba that day. We thought he was a bit crazy, but the love was undeniable. We may not have known it consciously, but he was shaking us with his love – this love he seemed to have for everyone and everything.

A couple of days later, Michael took me to the Santa Monica Baba Center in Los Angeles and bought me \$1,200 worth of Baba books and videos. I tried to stop the purchase, but anyone who knows Michael Mathias would know how impossible it would have been to stop his generosity. In the end, I went home with half a dozen grocery bags full of Meher Baba books and videos, and Michael returned to New York the next day. My plan was to take the books and videos back to the Baba Center, explain to Dina Gibson that there was a mistake, get the money back and send him the check. You see, to me at the time, Michael was a crazy-but-nice man, who followed an even crazier master.

But I got lazy. The books ended up sitting in the grocery bags near my front door for a week or so. I was back to my desperate search for God. One night as I was sitting outside, I suddenly remembered my prayer asking for

a comprehensive book. I also recalled how when you ask God for something, he may give you much more than what you asked for. I decided to read one of the books. Michael had numbered all the books in the order that I should read them. So, I grabbed the first book which was *Discourses* and sat down at my desk. I took a deep breath and asked God, "If this book is going to mislead me into following a false guru, help me see his falseness immediately in his words."

I grabbed my pen and started

reading it with the attitude a teacher would have while grading papers. By page 39, I came to Baba, and my eyes were filled with tears. It took me more than five years to read all the books Michael Mathias had bought me. All the members of my family who came to Baba, including my mother, father, and sister, and many friends owe a great debt to this man, who brought all of us to Baba.

The greatest gift I ever received from anyone was from Michael Mathias, who was a complete stranger at

the time and who, I later found out, was not in the best of financial situations when he bought me all those Baba books and videos. He was, to be certain, the most eccentric man I ever met, yet he was also the most wonderful. He was one who floated like a large body of love, moving everyone who came to know him, changing lives along the way—known by some as "Baba's mast in the West," the great poet of The Pathway of Fire—Michael Mathias.



The Passing of Michael Matthias

By Laurent Weichberger, Flagstaff, AZ, July 2010

I took a week off from work, and went to California to camp on the coast with my son, Cyprus, while my beloved wife Lilly and darling daughter Aspen were in the UK camping there. I had been stirred to visit Michael in San Diego, as my last conversation with him occurred while he was in the hospital (about a year ago) for heart surgery. That was my last and most positive conversation with him in years.

This year, on June 13th, as I got to a literal fork in the road: I-8 to San Diego, versus I-10 to Los Angeles, I had to decide which way to go. So, with Baba, we drove on I-8 to SD. I realized I didn't know where Michael even lived, so I called Yaakov Weintraub (also close to Michael) on my cell phone and asked for his address. Yaakov returned my call about an hour later with, "he is in intensive care" and the name of the hospital.

I arrived with Cyprus (age 3), and tried to get into the ICU. They ask your "relation" to the patient. I said

that when my father died, Michael adopted me (he often called me his "son" when introducing me to new people, and I didn't correct him). They let me in and I carried my son on my hip, but when his nurse saw Cyprus, she exclaimed, "He has to be 17 to be here," and she wouldn't let him in. So I handed Cyprus to her, saying, "Then you hold him!" and I again tried to go into Michael's room. She took Cyprus and tried to explain about"... a gown to enter ICU."

He had a friend named Warren in the room with him, and Warren came out wearing a gown, gave me a big smile and loving hug, and showed me where to get a gown to enter the room. I donned a gown and found Michael in bed, sitting up a little, eyes open, his face filled with tubes of all kinds: IV, ventilator, this tube and that tube. I looked over and saw his right foot was amputated from below the knee, due to complications of his Diabetes. Michael was aware, but not alert. He must have been on medications.

I showed him a picture of Meher Baba on the cover of our Baba magazine which I brought for him to read called **OmPoint**. He looked at the painting of Baba on the cover and took it in. The tube in his mouth prevented any speech. He was looking at me with pain in his eyes, and some recognition, and appreciation, and joy as well. It was a giant mix of emotions on both sides, as I was certain he felt bad about presenting himself in this condition. Not that that makes sense, but I could feel that level of his shame, as if he hated being in the hospital. Michael was a fire-bird, and a song bird, and it felt like both his wings were broken, and he was muzzled.

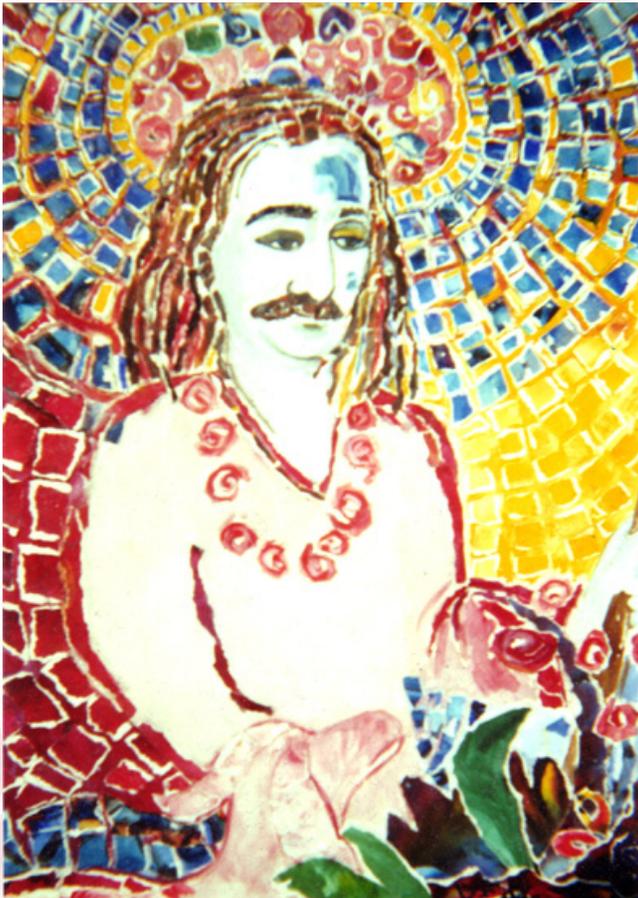
I hadn't seen him in person since about ten years. I told him I came with my son Cyprus, "to say goodbye." At some point after that he drifted off, and I spoke to him in prayer with Baba, no longer out loud, giving him my love, stroking his hair, and face, and I told him that he doesn't need to stay here, if he needs a new body,

he can release this one and feel free to go. I encouraged him to leave if that is what he needed to do.

We left and went camping on the coast, from SD to Santa Barbara and up to Ojai, to Beloved Baba's extraordinary "Meher Mount" there. Three

weeks later, I heard from Yaakov about the date of his passing, which was June 30, 2010. We were told that they took him off the life support systems, and he died shortly after that. I am glad I went with Baba to his bedside. What more can I share? Michael brought me

to Baba in 1985, with much sensitivity and care, and outrageous-fierce-love. I bow deeply to his love for his Divine Beloved. May he rest in Baba's Divine Embrace.



Painting of Meher Baba by Deb Ash.

The True Belonging

a Sufi love poem about music

by Soleil Brigham, August 11, 2010

Standing already with the raging fire,
and free, having stood
the return of the empty vessel, the overturned
reclaiming original belongings

only hearts of Pure Wool know
from whence, for whom the music came
the uncloaked Sufi drapes her old habit on her inner ear
and turning inside out, she whirls
a kaleidoscope of wounds, our world's lacerations

then, being touched by that emanating ring
—passion—flowing out and moving towards,
speaking the unspeakable

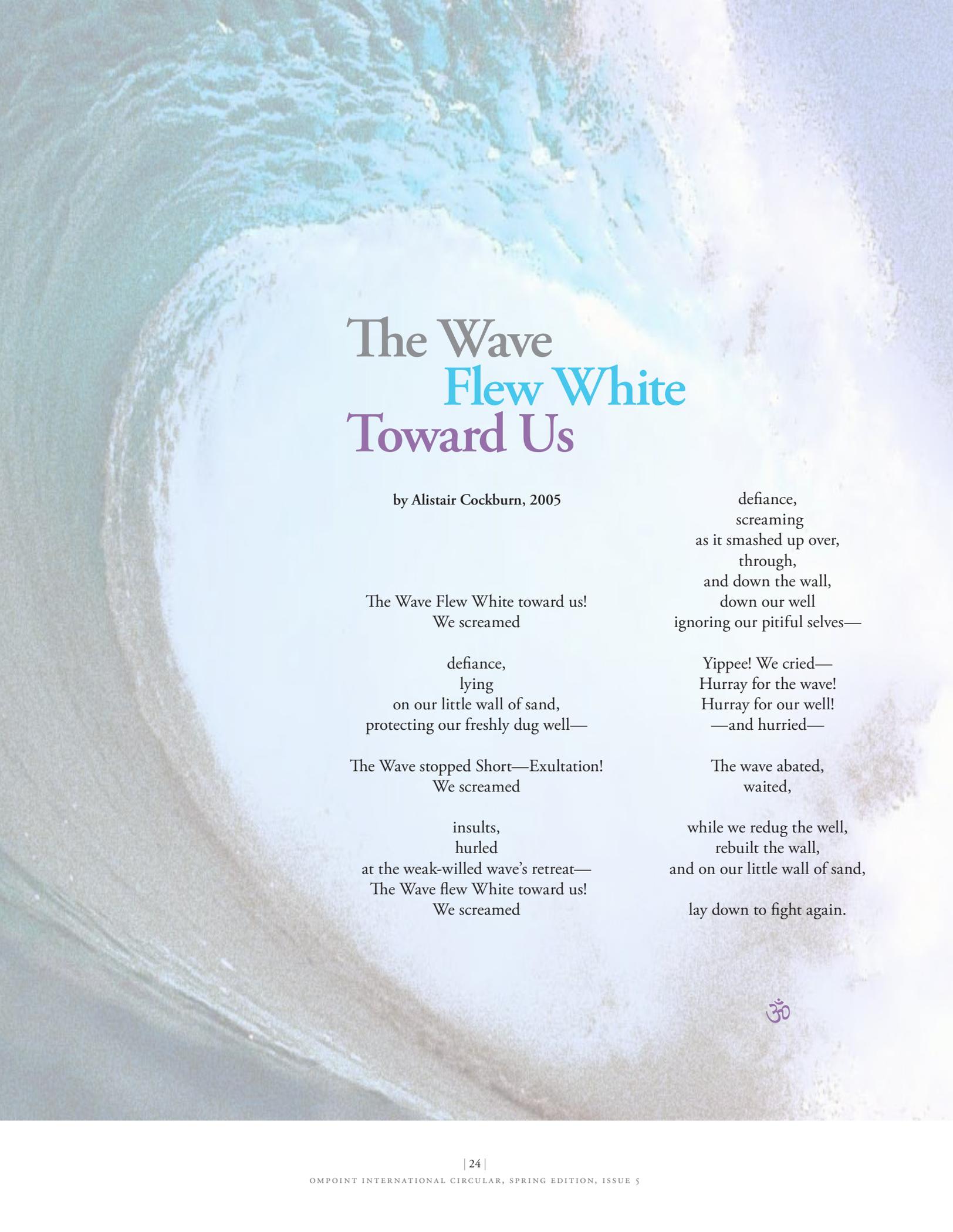
The Ancients are listening to remember...
You play to remind and remember,
leaving life's forceful resin on forget
and waking up the sleeping Holy, the Hidden Face

Do you see where the music belongs with the knowing?

But you didn't know your hands were enchanting
I sense your heart all mesmerized
laying open before the harp of Arabia

Sound, that is your true belonging
—your unbearable beauty—
for this crude corporeality can not contain
the white child sparkle eye, the purity
it can not comprehend the Instrument Divine
for too long
before the explosion

Written by Soleil for Jim Grippo (local SB Quanut player)



The Wave Flew White Toward Us

by Alistair Cockburn, 2005

The Wave Flew White toward us!
We screamed

defiance,
lying
on our little wall of sand,
protecting our freshly dug well—

The Wave stopped Short—Exultation!
We screamed

insults,
hurled
at the weak-willed wave's retreat—
The Wave flew White toward us!
We screamed

defiance,
screaming
as it smashed up over,
through,
and down the wall,
down our well
ignoring our pitiful selves—

Yippee! We cried—
Hurray for the wave!
Hurray for our well!
—and hurried—

The wave abated,
waited,

while we redug the well,
rebuilt the wall,
and on our little wall of sand,
lay down to fight again.



Dante's Nest: An Allegory

Craig San Roque

I. THE ORCHARD

There is a place known as Dante's nest. It is there, every evening, no matter the weather, that a small and delicate bird folds its wings. In the folding, the bird draws into itself certain things.

Dante is a small man, very tough and now very old but his lithe grace was a legend of the valleys and coastal cliffs of the region where he lived in a younger day. He is known as Dante Dioniso Dileusis.

Every evening Dante's roving imagination takes the shape of a bird arriving in a quiet place. There it settles itself, ruffling, preening, breathing and cooing, gathering memories of fruit, observations of almond, glints of fig, lemon, stone walls, ancient trees overhung. And feathers. Gathering every sight and sense discovered during the day's flights, the delicate bird collects for Dante's human being the subtle sights and subtle scents of the day's subtle hunt.

The imagination of Dante Dioniso Dileusis is not particularly human, it is not bound by human perception, human constriction. In its unbounded mode it wheels through many worlds; it collects flocks of birds, currents of insects, flying thoughts, emerging shapes, delicious colour, fish leaping, spectrum pattern, untouched skin, musical notes, animal calls; chatter. With all this gathering, lest all be lost, there is a place known as Dante's nest.

It is here every evening, regardless of the weather, the small and delicate bird folds its wings. And there in the nest the bird sits and broods. Somewhere thus, in the pulsating subtle body of Dioniso Dante, the gathered day becomes, in the warm body of the bird, a fine collection of eggs, speckled blue and black.

Incubating, these fruitful fertile eggs, words gather. They shimmer through the brain, they nestle in the throat, they draw up breath from the deep well of the lungs, they roll along the tongue, they spit glowing...

It is from Dante's nest that the sung poetry of the human world has emerged since the very beginning of human time.

The nest of Dioniso Dileusis is hidden in a very obscure place; it is, however, a place upon which the salvation of the intelligent world depends. It is here that a small fire is saved every day for the continuing purpose of humanity. One day, perhaps, you too will find Dante's nest.

The end of the real world will be on the day when Dante's nest is crushed suddenly in the hands of a brutal boy, a boy too naïve to comprehend the age and destiny of the world. The age and destiny, yes; and the delicate thing which allows all things to gather in the voice of being. Without imagination we cannot thrive.

The wise and clever say that the future of the world depends upon wise and clever things, which only they can carry out according to the will of the people, or against the will of the people. This might be true – but I say this: the destiny of the world depends upon Dante's nest and the small bird who, folding her wings every evening, begins the brooding.





II. THE TREE

Dioniso Dileusis comes, on his mother's side, from an old family tree whose origin can be traced to the settlement of Eleusis.¹ You will know of Eleusis, a smallish town set above a curved bay, a day's walk from Athens. Eleusis is a very, very old place.

Nowadays there is nothing much of substance left. The town is covered in grey cement dust. This happens to the beautiful sites, those old places which held the fluttering heart of fledgling humanity. The places of renewal. The tree was obliterated, cut for firewood long ago. Nowadays there is not even a hole in the ground. Nevertheless the family bloodline knows exactly the method, style and intention of the Mysteries which once were sweated upon that rocky sea-blown ecstatic site.

Ahh, now you will have a question. The question is this: if the site goes out, do the Mysteries of that site go out? If a site drew thousands of people and a thousand sung beauties over a thousand years, well, when the site is dynamited and levelled are the songs levelled and dynamited? When the touch of the song upon the sinuous body of the heart is gone; when the cadence of the songs of being are rent as nothing, when the secrets of Eleusis are no longer whispered, tongue to tongue, then is the truth gone which the song held gone all gone?

Well, that has happened often enough. The next question is this: is there any chance that some of the secrets wriggle back, the mysteries or bits of the mysteries wriggle back? You know, of their own accord, determined to be heard.

Is it the bitter truth that once the rock site is gone the story is gone and the secret humane purpose of the sacred rock is lost? An emptied-out piece of granite covered in cement dust or tar beside a road somewhere, crying quietly.

III. THE SPINE

The cousins of Dante Dioniso Dileusis, most especially the women, one after the other, have come upon the truths of Eleusis hidden as inheritance in the very cells of their bodies. They needed no instruction, no one had to betray secrets, although patient moments of encouragement and reminder have helped to true their affinity with tree, cave, pit and purpose of that Mystery buried deep in the being of Demeter and her free-ranging organic daughter.

For the cousins of Dileusis the finding of the secret wrapped in the innermost structures has occurred naturally enough, and at the right time. That is a story I might tell you one day, how each of the cousins came upon the innermost poetic structure of being and how, whether on the brink of death or upon the edge of a new life, it happened for each of them according to their own way, their own calling. Some secrets may, it is true, be better lost, forgotten, but some secrets are better found. It is a wondrous thing to come upon the secrets of the generation of life. The direction of life. Indestructible life. The cause of the coming into being.

You should know this; that after the fall of the town of Eleusis many of the family were dispersed by migration. And yet even today, no matter where in the web of the world a Dileusis cousin happens to be, the Mystery can and does find its gracious, infiltrating, subversive way. There is some hope in that, wouldn't you say?

Now there is another problem. The old Mysteries of Eleusis, as you probably know, had to be kept secret on pain of death. Thousands of pilgrims would turn up for the events in the town every year. This event went on recurring over maybe one, some say two, thousand years. Imagine that, thousands of people travelling down from Athens all day, walking,



crossing the little bridge and up to the site, the well of the maiden, the flat of the dancing ground, the darkened stone room. The lights. The fire, the revelation, the touch of the sinuous song. And yet. No one seems to have leaked out what it was all about. Clever books are written and the archaeology is analysed but no one has a clear bit of old Greek text which says “that’s what it’s all about”. The Mystery is exactly that, something whispered and shown while your eyes are lowered or your lids are closed. Well maybe, maybe not.

Dioniso Dante was present at the awakening of Eleusis in each of the cousins. How it was managed that he was present thus is another intricate story; but Dante is a kind of mentor to each of them, his nieces, his nephews, perhaps grandchildren – but I call them “cousins” so as not to get too tied up in family history. Sometimes a mother would say, sideways perhaps, after an incident which the mother took as a clue, “Girl, it’s time you went to see Uncle Dante, he will teach you the language.”

Uncle Dante had seen the stunned look or the slowly dawning smile in the eyes of Dileusis girls, many times over. All those years and Uncle Dante always marvelled at the intimate ways in which each awakening came about, always delicately specific.

Dante, especially in his conversations with his friend Dr Asclepio, disagreed with those priests who set up the strange promise that there is a final moment of cleanliness and glory somewhere golden in the azure mouth of God. “There is no great and final cupola moment; thus,” said Dante Dioniso, “everything is coming along nicely all at once, all the lovely time,” said Dioniso, “just like Mary in her song says – *fish swim, birds fly, daddies yell, mummas cry, old men sit and think, I drink.*”²

Asclepio, leaning confidentially over the domino board, would agree saying, “Observe the way the world is put together, every tiny link in a simple way. How do I cure, Dante? I do it by moving two tiny things just a little like this on the board, a connection is made or loosened and thus I win the game...”

And the two old men, lifting small glasses of arak, would sweep the board in satisfaction.

Uncle Dante has a word for this symmetry of detail which he uses to invigorate the inner life of the cousins of Eleusis. He calls it “the python’s skeleton” (*osso pythia*). Observe closely the white bleached bones of a snake and you might catch his drift. All connected, all simultaneously linked. Fish swim, birds fly, lovers leave by and by, old men sit and think. Observe the link. The skill, he said, is to feel it sliding through your hands and thus to sing. It slides through everything.

Now we are coming to something. Why sing the little hum? Well, when those words are gathered from the eggs in Dante’s nest and the particular words are sung, sung in nice rows that is, well, something in the brain lights up. Something like a small fire starts up.

When the mothers said, “Ask uncle to teach you the language,” what they meant was this. Vowel by vowel, syllable by syllable, learning the sung symmetry of creation’s inner structure.

IV. THE TABLE

In the evening of this particular summer, after a meal of fish and red and black roasted capsicum, Uncle Dioniso’s niece, Erato Musa Dileusis, confided in him that, for her, the illumination of the tree of Eleusis had been consuming her nights, restlessly throwing her, as though she were caught in the breaking waves of a beach in tumult. “The tree. I keep seeing the tree. Each time I fall, I rise, water pouring over and I keep seeing the tree.”



She had been talking to her uncle about her husband. Her agitated marriage, the normal things of a life lived in a usual anguished way in the village now become a city's alleyway. She tried at first to find words for the agitation, she dressed it in her husband's clothes and thought he was the cause; but the dress stripped off and she was naked again with the pure feeling of the agitation; an intensity that has no cover established itself in the pit of her stomach. Her smile gleamed, restrained. The old glass on the table shimmered. She did not throw herself around like an hysteric. She had discipline. She felt the waves inside her skin. She kept to a gravity, seated thus at the table. Her hands beside the plate, the red capsicum, the olive. Ordinary things about to speak. The brooding intensity about to reveal its original shape, not covered by others. Dante had been waiting for just this evening in her. Or perhaps she too had been waiting for him; waiting until the eggs were there. Waiting until it was still and quiet enough to speak. The little bird settling in the nest, within the musical body of Erato Musa Dileusis, on the brink of her becoming.

She was gazing at Dante, in the steady manner she had learned, and she saw his face and body melt, converting into birds, fish, and a flurry of furred creatures and finally the beauteous serpentine form which throbbed along the line of Dante's Dionisos spine.

That was probably the moment Erato Dileusis recognised that, all along, the abundant fish had been gathering momentum in her, that her conversation was not about her agitation with a husband but about the agitated tumultuous anticipation of the next consummation of the Mystery emerging now from out the dark waters. A fountainous tree of lights.

It is strange moment when a human being realises that her soul is more than a thousand years old and that she has thrived all this time on the heat of a genetic history giving direction to her every thrust, every desire, every opening iota of learning.

V. BECOMING A MYSTERY

Early in her life Dante had told Erato that she would become a mystery. "Erato," he had said, when she was only nine years old, "Erato, you will be a mystery to people."

"Will I, uncle? What is a mystery?"

At that time she did not understand him and she did not know exactly the meaning which her uncle Dileusis intended in the word *Musterion*, that old Greek word which he had used at that time, savouring it like crushed rock salt turning and softened in his mouth.

As the life of Musa unfolded, the particular necessary events and elements for the making of her *Musterion* self occurred. The events occurred in seemingly natural ways for they had to take a natural course, now that the old site itself and the formal initiations had been disbanded. The stitches of her natural initiation were taken, inserted, woven as warp and weft of fibre, skin, intestine, nerve, bone and voice. Most particularly, her voice. These events became herself, made herself "Musa Erato Dileusis" in her exquisitely gracious embodiment of the particular Mystery which she was destined to become.

Life is not random. We are offered the chance to become a Mystery and some of us take the chance. The act of becoming a Mystery is the only decently independent action worth taking.



VI. SUNG BEAUTY

It is a beautiful thing to see a man or a woman become the Mystery for which she was intended. It fills her, widens her eyes, opens her to an ever-continuous flowing vitality. Imperishable and recurring life is established.

The most felicitous moment is when the location of the woman's being shifts from the single point of lonely self-reverence to the fluent multiple point when she allows herself to become the fluency of all beings. From fixity to flux. Lyrical. At this moment she becomes a voice of all those creatures who are becoming, she can figure the poetic structures of nature and add up all the numbers and notes and scales and see what they come to. It is such a nice feeling that the original bird inscribed on the rocks walls of Persephone's deep well can come alive and sing freely in her throat now and the snakes inscribed in the rocks find their place in her fingers. It's a tingly kind of thing. Girls love it.

These things certain philosophers speak about, but all that concerns us now is the moment at the table between Musa Erato and Dante Dioniso when, in each others' eyes, the ancient tree shuddered and Erato became, or rather should I say, recognised herself in her true place in the great chain of being.

VII. DEATH AND THE ORCHARD

I should tell you this lest, when we get to the next bit, you become a little muddled by what is going on and who is who.

In Dante's orchard there are nine trees. Fig, lemon, apricot, almond, pomegranate, quince (the earliest form of apple), olive, pear and a secret fruit. In every generation these trees are allocated to the Dileusis cousins. They bear for them, they care for them. Mostly Dante does the hard work. The cousins have names. They have pet names, but the girls have serious names also. The Dileusis girls in each generation are named after the nine Muses. I don't know why. Some old grandma's whim probably. Erato is one of the muses. If you do not know exactly what the Muses do, you must ask your mother. They have nice names and they look after important things like music and dancing, poetry, history, comedy, tragedy and the geometry of the stars.³ Their mother's name is Memory – *Mnemosyne* – Memmy for short. Nice name. Maybe I will tell you more after I tell you about the orchard. There are nine trees in the orchard. I told you that. These are the oldest trees in the world. Dante Dioniso grew them a long time ago from the first seeds. "In the first days. In the first days. In the very first days..." He carried them from Inanna's garden in Sumeria.

Sometimes, at family dinners, especially during autumn harvest, the whole pack of Dileusis girls quarrel over who is to get which tree for the next season. They can swap around you see. You don't have custody of the same tree all your life. Some say that they are tired of shelling almonds or they say that they fancy apricots this year. Terpsichore is fond of making quince upside down cakes. She has trouble giving up the quince to the other girls. Euterpe is content with the fig and usually tries to arrange a swap if the fig goes to someone else. No one minds that because everyone loves Utie's fig jam. You should try her fig jam. Erato is very fond of the almonds. Really that is her tree, she loves the blossoms fluttering on the hillside in season; she loves shelling and collecting kernels in hessian bags, spreading, stripping, peeling and cracking. Most of all she loves the bite of strong white teeth on the kernel of the nut. The almond is good to soak. Seven in a cup of water is good medicine.

In any case after a blazing row at the big table in Dante's orchard, the fruit trees are reallocated for another year or so. There is a good reason for this change around.



I was telling you about death. Or, if I wasn't before, it's time I did. In the orchard there is a deep well, it goes down a very long way into the limestone of Dioniso Dileusis' country. The well is cut square with narrow steps down. There is water enough for the trees and vines, deep down in what they call the Maiden's Well. As everyone knows, some way down there is a natural incision, an aperture in the limestone wall and through this their aunt, Persephone, on occasion, appears. Now remember this – Aunt Persephone ascending the hewn stone steps, by a secret way in a dark night, her shoulder brushing inscriptions, carved figures: ring dove, vulturic bird, rampant snakes; she comes to the orchard, reaching for a fruit. Each time she takes a fruit in her hand, sinking her teeth and tongue in juice, kernel or glistening red jewelled fruit pomegranate, a Dileusis dies, or so it would seem. The girl who takes care of that fruit that year is the one most likely to suffer. She may not die forever, usually she fades away and comes back to life again when spring returns. That is to say, when Aunt Persephone gets over her moods. Everyone knows what fruits Persephone likes best. They want to lessen their chance of getting bitten. They put all the seeds in a big pot and one by one draw them out. The luck of the draw. Dr Asclepio says that Aunt Persephone suffers from epileptic fits. He means you can never be sure what she'll grab as she is blacking out.

The choice of Mystery includes a choice of death. For Erato Musa her deaths came upon her through unpleasant ways. Poisoning of her nerves, black spider bites, betrayal, insidious envy. Who knows; but somehow by the means of these deaths the specific Mystery occurred and the slow becoming of love was durably established in her being, as it had to be because at an early age a god came to her, probably veiled in a dream, for propriety's sake, and thus he announced his intent with a dark turn of wings. His intent became her intent and with a dedicated persistence she accomplished the entwined mysteries of love and death. Dr Asclepio said this was nonsense, Erato was hallucinating the wings, she was poisoned by eating too many almonds (*Prunus amygdalus*), the toxins built up in her own amygdala, she lost control of her emotions. Asclepio is probably right, but so is Persephone. Anyhow, so as not to spoil the story, I would like you to remember that Musa Erato, on this particular evening, is still sitting at Dante Dioniso's table. She ate the fish, she drank a little wine, she licked on a lemon, she called on her ancestral mothers, Melete, with the fine attention to practice, Mnemosyne with the strong memory, and Aoede, who knows all songs and musical scales of the seething natural world. And soon Erato became a singer of the most beautiful bitter-sweet poetry and she learned to cure people whose hearts were broken.

So too, by one way or another all the nine Dileusis girls became their Mystery. It matured within them, changing colour along the spectrum of age, event by event, colour by colour, just as original Dionisos himself became, by dismemberment, his own green mystery and Orphee, by music and loss, his silvery his. Boys can do it and so too can Dileusis girls.

The secret of a life lived is this. That we become the Mystery into which we are born.

VIII. INTERLUDE: A DARK TURN OF EROS WING

All this that I tell you is only glimpsed in a mirror in a house with no lights. It is impossible to know what happened on that night between the woman and the unseen being, on the night when he caught the glance of her eye and she the glancing blow of his pythonic face when she should not have seen, should not have known who, in fact, this lover was.

She saw umber shadow, brilliant arrangement. And he saw, in the turn of her Cro Magnon face, the carved rock wall, the ochre slash, the figures, bird, snake, vulture, horns, the descent



of Eleusis, intestines, the cord let down, the music, the fall, the fruit arranged on the winnowing fan, the smoothly carved bone, the seed from the beginning of time burning in the pit of her body, her hair deranged, stained with dark water, her eyes like two leopards. She cried suddenly and quietly, “The pain, the pain it is to be seen, to become visible.”

Having seen these events, or rather having seen all that this glimpse leads to, and about that I cannot speak, she in herself knew Eleusis and she became it exactly. What he saw in her on that night, she became. What she found in herself that night, she became.

What your eye sees at certain moments, you become that. What your eye finds at certain times, you create that. Always the question. That? Did I find that or did I create it? God knows; nothing on earth would have happened if Eros had remained asleep and unseen, all would still be obscure if she had never seen the eyes of the one who binds the molecules of the world together.

It is, I admit, something of a puzzle. The important thing is not to forget it. The important thing is to consolidate. If you do not do that, then it becomes a hallucination; and old Asclepio turns out to have won again.

IX. EGGS OF THE DOVE

Dante, in his nest in the rock of enduring time, hatched words for these things, the slipping shedding of all skins and the arrival of his cousin upon the factual solidity of her mystery.

It began, he said, in a simple manner, a feeling likened to the handling of a dark fig in the hollow of her heart, succulent liquid flowing between her breasts, her throat on fire and the fig fruiting, a purple fragrance on her lips and tongue forming the language of the poetics of being.

Now it is time for dinner. After all, a Mystery is simply this: to give delicious form to the movement of love, sustainment to the becoming of love, the gravid powers of enduring love, despite the spider bite, the poison and pestilence in the city above. A girl who once had her tongue torn out and became silenced is now music and a truth speaking. Erato Musa Dileusis added to herself graceful ingredients and the keen faculties of a contemporary woman. She holds a distinct presence in the alleyway where she lives. She holds the unbroken line which comes down from the beginning of all things. She will carry it always, until Persephone comes again to the orchard. And gives her rest.

Dante lives in another time and keeps his nest. It is the safest place in the world. A little place, diminutive, hidden in the cleft of a wall beneath an old lemon tree, a place where imagination rests and hatches again day after day.

NOTES

- 1 On Eleusis, see C. Kerényi (1991), *Eleusis: Archetypal image of mother and daughter*, Princeton University Press, Princeton; and C. Kerényi (1976), *Dionysis: Archetypal image of indestructible life*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- 2 These song lyrics are from “I Drink” by Mary Gauthier, on *Mercy Now*. Album details available at www.marygauthier.com.
- 3 The Muses are attributed with the custodianship of specific functions in ancient Greek arts and sciences: for example, Calliope – epic poetry; Clio – history; Erato – lyric or love poetry, divine songs; Euterpe – breath instruments, flutes; Melpomene – tragedy; Polyhymnia – acting, music, dance; Terpsichore – lyric poetry, dance; Thalia – comedy; Urania – astronomy.

Someone to Carry the Fire

by Irma Sheppard

Judas

Yeshua challenges us:

Who is ready to declare his perfection within?

My every heartbeat beats toward Him,

but His eyes blaze so—I cannot meet them.
His hand on my arm, He draws me aside to hear
alone the mysteries of which He is Master.

Prophets must have kindled my infant fingertips,
for, despite dreams of the others stoning me, I burn
to please Him. *Judas*, His voice presses into me,

*you will surpass them all—
you will hand over this form that clothes Me.
But you will grieve to your marrow.*

Then, light-hearted, He points me
to a radiant veil in the heavens—
See, how your star outdistances the rest.

I taste the silence, the wild behind His eyes,
surrender to this blessedness—
I am taken up.

Yeshua

Only Judas stepped forward
when I asked who among them
was capable of knowing Me,
and even he could not look
square into My eyes.

So I took him under a veil,
turned the key
and Myself acted
through him, had him speak
to the elders,

who arranged
for the chief priests
to arrive at Gethsemane.
I who made him kiss
my cheek.

Dear beloved Judas,
the veil dissolved,
left then in horror
of what he'd been made to do.
It could not be helped.

Despite My own trials then,
I knew how the youngsters
tormented him, how he cast
the silver from his hand.
His every breath scorched,

he staggered as the wind howled
into his heart. Home nowhere,
he found his only refuge—
to swing
from a hollow branch

alone,
under the hissing stars—
this My mercy for his good service.
Afterward, his name a rose
upon My tongue,

I kept him with Me—
his everlasting Reward.
Someone had to carry the fire.

Judas' Niece

I remember still the shame they flung at us
afterward, throwing stones at our house, slop
on our doorstep, calling us vermin to our faces.
On the second day, Father kept us from the well,
said we had to leave our lifelong home.

I think Mary really knew—she came, talked
in hushed tones with Father in the back room.
Afterward he said the Magdalene couldn't do much,
so opposed by the remaining eleven, jealous still
of secrets Yeshua had told her in close communion.

I was only seven then, Judas' favorite niece.
I remember how, the day before Passover, he came,
called me to his knee, his grave tone strange.
Always remember, he said to me, holding my face
between his hands, his eyes sober yet shining
in a way I'd never seen before—*always remember*
to honor our beloved Yeshua, no matter what happens.
His hands gave my shoulders a hard little shake.

Promise me! Something snaked in my belly,
but I whispered my promise. The news

reached us some days later. Horror
shredded my heart—Yeshua crucified!
My uncle's betrayal! *It wasn't for the silver,*
Father told us. *He threw that away. One day*
perhaps you'll understand—a hard task

to prove his love. My dear uncle gone,
gone from me—they said he would rot in hell.
But Mary assured us, the night we left the village,
Do not despair. God loves our Judas and what he has done.
From village to farther village we fled, and again

the hot words followed us like evil bees. Even so
I felt the stern hand of Judas upon me, a command
to keep his secret. At last, a hamlet in the mountains
where Mother could keep her pots on the hearth.
Father took out parchments and ink, began to write.

I am eighty-one now, and all this I clearly remember.



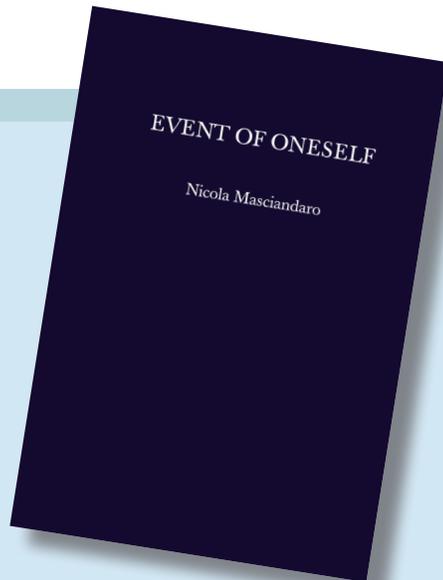
BOOK SAMPLING



“EVENT OF ONESELF”
by Nicola Masciandaro

Following are several pages of this publication for viewing.
Event of Oneself is available for purchase at **Amazon Books**.
(An easy-access link to **Amazon** is provided on page 37).

Enjoy!



Event of oneself, ongoing primordial,
Without way or opening, a very hard fall.

In the beginning, beginning's very middle,
See my blinding opening, your pure white hole.

Summoned by something making answering its call,
Walking an opening where stepping is trail.

Stumbling perfectly, on stumbling, the way a ball,
Deep surface, no opening, feels, cannot, its roll.

Will these clauses, uncluding, speak being's wheel,
Our anarchic opening, foundation beyond frail?

Or are they, caught underneath, wax to empty seal,
Signs only of opening, of depths unreal?

Event of oneself, so perversely actual,
Queerest opening, a sparrow through the hall.

No joy possesses me in having this or that.
Vacuums on vacuums is the world of this and that.

A something so real that densest stone is a dream.
Just saying this brings real relief from this and that.

The moon was lovely all night long in the window,
But now dawn calls us outward, into this and that.

Will there be time, within time, for our secret need?
Where is the space, within space, for this and for that?

Nothing anyone says ever captures the sense,
The abysmal actuality of this and that.

And no words paint with more wisdom and wonder
Than pointing, the pure deixis of this and that.

Ask Nicola what he means, so that we might know,
And be happy again in hearing this and that.

Nameless desire, new epic longing for home,
Hurts my heart to think it, embers every bone.

Is there a way to sing, to speak so deep within,
Beneath it, out from under oceanic stone?

Where is the impasse, mountain, or immortal foe?
Where is the impossible *it* to face alone?

One foot there and one foot here, I walk all moments
Within it, across the chasm where I am thrown.

Light quilts the jagged, self-cutting city, healing,
Wholing it, sewing wounds for which we will atone.

So many portals, fractals. Each face a monster
And hero hunting it down a hole all its own.

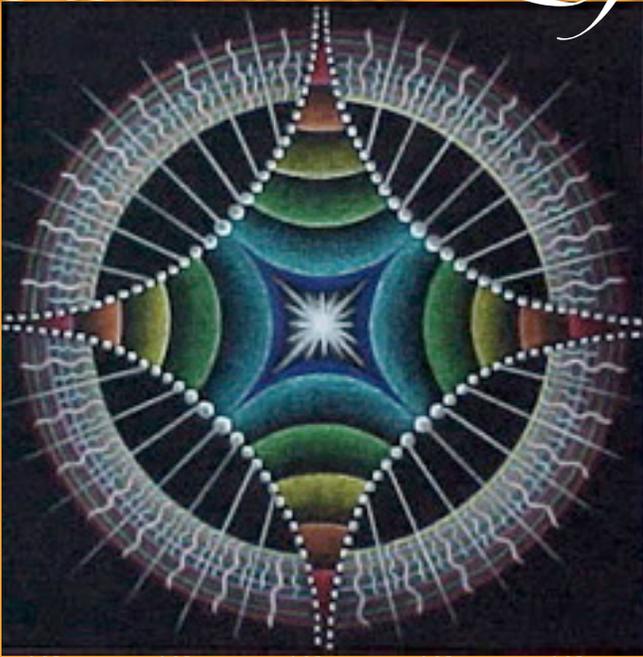
Nicola girds himself in flesh and words and thoughts
About it, ready for what will be always known.

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Armelle Lefebvre



> Featured art is by Armelle Lefebvre, a Baba-lover and multi-media artist.



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