

**THE PEARL WITHIN**  
**DISCOVERING THE RICHES**  
**OF THE UNDERWORLD**

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*Are we more vitally conscious than an Egyptian 3000 years B.C. was? Are we? Probably we are less. Our conscious range is wide, but shallow as a sheet of paper. We have no depth to our consciousness.*

— D. H. Lawrence in *Apocalypse* (1931)

*Tis the times plague, When madmen lead the blind.*

— William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act IV

*It is as if you were a whole small universe inside, while externally you are simply a unit. . . as if each individual were a little universe, a little microcosm in the macrocosm. But as if inside he were a macrocosm too, and contained many microcosms. . . You see, infinite greatness and infinite smallness are infinitely true, and it is quite possible that we contain whole peoples in our souls, worlds where we can be as infinitely great as we are infinitely small externally—so great that the history of the redemption of a whole nation or of a whole universe might take place within us.<sup>1</sup>*

— C. G. Jung, *Visions Seminars*



## The Sky *IS* Falling

**R**ECENTLY I had a dream and I take dreams seriously. I saw a young orphan girl, dressed in rags, standing alone. A woman approached showing contempt for the orphan, and then spat at her. As I awoke, I suddenly realized that I was this girl's guardian. I heard her voice asking, "Who will speak for me?"

How do I speak for an orphan?

I can imagine being treated with contempt, receiving no respect, and having no parents or support of any kind. I am tender, innocent, and yet shunned, even attacked.

I remember a quote from an inscription on a stone: "I am an orphan, alone. . . In woods and mountains I roam, but I am hidden in the innermost soul of man."<sup>2</sup>

There have been times when I have felt that alone, wondering how I would survive in this universe, feeling a solitary place deep inside, unknown and unrecognized by those around me, and probably unwelcome.

I remember one such time, on a strange journey to Maui in 1989. My life was in chaos, my marriage of 17 years was ending, and one day I suddenly felt I was being urged to go to Maui, a place I'd never been or really even thought about. This meant a trip of 6000 miles at a time when I could not afford it. Why?

No matter how much I reasoned, the urge was insistent. Just go. So I made the trip, and on my first night on the Hawaiian island, as I was setting up my tent at dusk in a remote area, I spotted a dark young man watching me from behind a tree. He was the only other person there. He finally walked toward me, and when I said hello as he approached, he ignored me and walked right past, into the woods.

Initially I had felt scared being in a strange and alien environment with no plan or purpose. A traumatic childhood camping experience made camping feel very unsafe. But now I faced an apparent new threat. Who was this young man, and why was he acting so strangely, and worse... what did he want with me? I wondered where he had gone, and then I noticed him watching me from behind another tree.

I panicked, and once my tent was set up, I raced back to my car and drove off leaving him and the tent. The feeling was one of overwhelming aloneness, with nowhere to turn and no one to help me.

I felt like an orphan.

I sat on a cliff overlooking the sun going down. I had never been anywhere like this, and I'm sure there were many romantic couples enjoying the sunset on Maui that night. But I was so scared and alone. Where could I go? What could I do? I could feel that young man waiting back by my tent in the darkness. I was prepared to spend my ten days on Maui inside that car.

I had not felt such fear since I was a child. I cried and pleaded, "Why am I here? I don't even know why I've come here, and what am I going to do?"

But there was an answer, perhaps from the same inner place that first led me to undertake such a puzzling journey, and I unexpectedly found myself saying, "I don't know why I've come 6000

miles to be here all alone, and this man may be waiting at my campsite to murder me. If I have come this far without even knowing why, in order to be killed, then let me do it well.”

I felt a powerful calmness inside me, replacing the panic, and I drove back to the darkened empty parking lot. As I hiked to my tent, I thought I would probably not sleep that night, but in fact I went right to sleep and did not wake till morning.

It is in hanging out in such empty and rocky places of the soul that the orphan can be found. Sitting at the bedside of a dying loved one, faced with the inevitability of their leaving and all the jumbled feelings of fear, anger, grief, sadness and confusion, if we pause and listen, accepting what is, we may be surprised to find ourselves in a deeper place within. Perhaps this is the mythical and spiritual underworld.

Quiet, solitary, and fragile, the voice of the orphan soul within each of us can be heard. Sometimes it sounds like silence. Something had responded to my plea, calmed my panic, and filled me with the willingness to accept my fate. Was that *me* or someone else in me?

I suspect there may be many others in this world who have had similar inner experiences, though we tend not to speak of them.

Since our modern science and our more “factual” worldview came on the scene and made belief in God or any higher Powers a much more challenging proposition, we have all in some sense become more like orphans without that hidden Support. We are certainly less secure than our ancestors. We can still choose to believe as they did, but somehow it feels like we are further out on the precipice.

And the contempt and the spitting—what of that?

At the same time that we experience a greater estrangement from our universe, we appear to have become more skeptical, less trusting of faith. Innocence is now mocked as naïve, and someone who believes in a hidden Intelligence should “know better,” or at least have a good reason.

This certainly does not apply to all of us, but it does seem to describe the ambience of our post-modern world.

Is innocence under attack? Children are deprived of their naïveté at an earlier age by parents and mass media. We say we must do so to protect them because their purity of heart makes them vulnerable to exploitation. Even the phrase “purity of heart” will evoke cynical smirks and discomfort in some.

It is very likely that the same attitude —held even by ourselves—prevails toward our own guilelessness, those places within each of us which are unknowing and open, curious and vulnerable. Did we get to where we are because the world turned harsher, making defense and protection more necessary, or has the world become more dangerous because we have stopped valuing innocence and protecting its right to exist?

Who is this orphan? Perhaps she reflects for us the abandoned and lost state of our own soul—the interior ambiguous world of dream, fantasy and imagination—which no longer fits into the objective literal universe of technology and concrete facts.

This orphan is also a symbol of a necessary stage of growing up and into the individual each of us truly is:



*... the experience referred to by the image of the orphan is a part of individuation [becoming the person you truly and really are]. The experience of being abandoned, of losing the support of all parental figures and sources of external security—these all belong to the image of the orphan. It's a necessary experience, because you cannot discover the inner source of security upon which your existence rests until you have been deprived of all external supports.<sup>3</sup>*

And if the orphan is something that is “hidden in the innermost soul of man [and woman],” then how are we to find it, and why should we want to?

I have chosen to offer my best effort to give her a voice, and in doing so, to try to find answers to these questions. I have found that sometimes her voice (or maybe it's just mine) is tinged with anger at the way things are. Please forgive the harshness.

## The Lost Soul

*... and you tell me over and over and over and over again my friend,  
ah, you don't believe we're on the eve of destruction.<sup>4</sup>*

Our other task is to bring ourselves to face the situation we are in. By abandoning and rejecting the value of our soul—our interior and its messages—we have been cut off from our intrinsic guidance. This loss of such a vital and traditional source of correction for our excess and errors is putting us in an increasingly precarious position.

There are signs in several growing trends that we are headed in an alarming direction. Whether we look at increasing anxiety, depression, and gastrointestinal distress in individuals; declining standards in education, social behavior and institutions, and loss of respect for life and each other; deteriorating quality of air, water, nutritional content of food, and destruction of the environment; spreading of weapons of mass destruction into the hands of fanatical individuals and groups seeking to “make a statement;” increasing violence, in particular at younger and younger ages; mushrooming numbers of prescriptions for behavior-altering drugs, especially for the young—there are plenty of signs that we are reaching a critical moment.

After the crisis of nuclear proliferation of the 1980's, when we thought humanity had to choose between a path of survival or else self-destruction, we find ourselves still facing that choice. It was not the weapons, it was us. Giving up the weapons has only confronted us with the human motives that created all those weapons in the first place. Why are we doing what we do? What hope is to be found in continuing along the path we are following?

We are like a man in the midst of a heart attack, gasping for air, brought to his knees by the pain, all the while insisting that he is fine and there is no need to go to the hospital.

A man crippled and in denial, and an innocent orphan being rejected while having much to offer—perhaps we have something precious to learn from these images. What does the man need to do if he is to have a chance of surviving? What do we need to do if we are to recognize the orphan and hear her voice? What is she able to feel that perhaps we have lost touch with?

*I think that it will take a fundamental moment of remorse—and this is absolutely essential to the death-rebirth experience—a long moment of remorse, a sustained weeping and grief. It will*

*be a grief of the masculine for the feminine; of men for women; of adults for what has happened to children; of the West for what has happened to every other part of the world; of Judeo-Christianity for pagans and indigenous peoples; of Christians for Jews; of whites for people of color; of the wealthy for the poor; of human beings for animals and all other forms of life. It will take a fundamental metanoia, a self-overcoming, a radical sacrifice to make this transition.<sup>5</sup>*

The orphan wants to be heard now inside of each of us. We need to listen, to turn back toward the empty and innocent place which we have abandoned. It is my hope that if articulated at the right moment, the Mystery which the orphan represents can reach us through our numbing, denial and escapism, and awaken us once again to the realization of who and what each of us really is, beneath the roles we play.



Will you join me? Take a chance? Throughout this book you will see a stop sign at points where we recommend that you stop, put down the book, and take the time to reflect upon and write about the questions being raised. Ask yourself the questions, and listen.

Some who read this book will see it as dark and depressing. Yet it is an expression of hope. For years our situation has haunted me, and led me to struggle with despair, anger and pessimism. In truth, I feel little hope and believe we must prepare for the coming times with great concern. Yet there is some part of me that will not be extinguished and will not give up. I have no radiant vision to share of our joyous deliverance. Instead, I feel this writing is a cry which I must let out before I leave this earth rather than taking it with me into the silent Unknown. May it make some small difference in the lives of those who hear it, though how, I cannot picture.

This book is not a recipe for self-realization. The encounter with one's True Nature is not under one's control, nor is it usually a very pleasant experience. The angelic choirs, if there be any, come much later. This book is more a lifeline, to be clutched when there seems nothing to hold onto. Few people will read these ideas and choose to pursue them voluntarily. You will be called, and the price of refusing the call is often death itself, spiritually if not literally. When that time comes, may this writing serve to preserve you and help you to consent to the necessity (fate) presented to you by the Mystery That lives in your own soul.

We must stop what we are doing.

**STOP!!**

We must honestly face our desperate situation and admit our confusion and lack of direction. And then like the many wise people who have somehow been inspired by new direction and guidance from a sacred Source, we must listen.

Be still, and listen.

# Introduction

**T**HERE was once a young man, a son of royalty, who was destined to rule his native land with his brother. Before he could be deemed ready for that responsibility, he was given a mission by his royal parents to go down to Egypt, a foreign land, and to rescue the Pearl which was guarded by the dangerous serpent.

After making his way to the alien country, he thought it would be wise to lay low, disguised as one of their own, to eat their food and cultivate their habits, while scouting the situation regarding the Pearl and the serpent.

Unfortunately he did such a good job that he forgot his original identity, his parents and his mission. He “fell asleep.” In this state of having adapted to his environment our hero was very much an “orphan,” dispossessed (deprived, bereaved, disinherited, lost).

His parents were aware of his situation, and they decided to send him a letter. This letter—able to magically transform itself into an eagle (the mail was very slow in those days)—flew to his room, whereupon he awoke and read it:

*From thy father the King of Kings, and from thy mother, mistress of the East, and from thy brother, our next in rank, unto thee, our son in Egypt, greeting. Awake and rise up out of thy sleep, and perceive the words of our letter.*

*Remember that thou art a king's son: behold whom thou hast served in bondage. Be mindful of the Pearl, for whose sake thou hast departed into Egypt.*

*Remember thy robe of glory, recall thy splendid mantle, that thou mayest put them on and deck thyself with them and thy name be read in the book of the heroes and thou become with thy brother, our deputy, heir in our kingdom.*

And so he awakened to his true but forgotten identity, rescued the Pearl, and returned to his original home.

This book begins with this story (an ancient Gnostic hymn from the beginning of our era) because in a profound way, this is *our* story. So many of us have come from forgotten origins, on a mission we no longer recall, and we now find ourselves lost, disconnected from our Real roots and alienated from our True Nature.

We are outcasts from earlier times when human beings felt they belonged, and that they were observed and protected by divine Powers. If you or I seek to recover our True Nature, beneath the layers of family history and cultural conditioning, and to find our Way back to our real native land from which we have wandered, we must leave our present “home”—our familiar roles and

routines—and undertake the risky journey to the hidden lower regions, because our road Home passes through the underworld.

You won't find this underworld journey in any travel brochure, and directions are sometimes obscure, but the way our world is heading, it is fast becoming one of our only options.

What is the "underworld?" It implies deep, down and inner. The *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* tells us:

*In the cosmography of peoples all over the world, a region under the ground, to which the entrance on the surface exists somewhere, and in which live the souls of the dead. . . To reach the underworld one must cross a river in a boat guided by a spectral ferryman; at any rate, a guide is needed, the. . . conductor of souls.<sup>6</sup>*

The theme of the descent to the underworld occurs throughout the world as well:

*The motif of numerous stories occurring in the mythology and folklore of every people in the world, ancient and contemporary. . . Invariably the descent is made to rescue someone either abducted to the land of the dead, or rightfully dead; to find the answer to a question or discover a secret from the ruler of the [under]world; to ask a favor, or to seize some treasure.<sup>7</sup>*

Once the honored home of venerated ancestors and heroes, the modern worldview derived from our Judeo-Christian roots has equated the underworld with "hell" and a place of suffering, punishment and torture. This leaves us with no desirable place to descend to anymore. Our journey here is not to hell, though there are times one wonders. It is to the interior lower space of hidden treasures, mysterious secrets and renewal.

Translated psychologically: the underworld—once imagined to be the residence of the souls of the dead and to be ruled by a forbidding god—is the "place" (deep, dark and inner) where we imagine that our own "dead" thoughts, memories that have passed on or been prematurely buried, are contained. A collective attitude of reverence like most cultures have always had would appreciate whatever value these interred memories may hold, and facilitate the willingness to descend, if required to in the course of rescue or recovery, or to "find the answer" or "discover a secret," or to "seize some treasure."

This would be the domain of the *shaman* as healer or visionary, and also the metaphorical goal of most psychotherapy or psychoanalysis.

But psychologically, once Christianity re-cast the underworld as the Hell of damned souls and the Devil, stories of heroic rescues and recoveries of hidden treasures ceased, and our collective attitude made the underworld a place to be avoided, containing nothing but trouble. And if you imagine it to be that way, then everything that emerges from that place within will take on the appearance of a danger and a threat. We need to remember the underworld has largely not been seen in that light, and to be willing to find out for ourselves just what is down there.

So when a "complex" of buried memories and feelings presents itself in the form of anxiety, depression or obsessive-compulsive behavior, or even disturbing dreams, what will be your attitude toward this messenger from your underworld? Do you banish it back to the silence and barricade the door, or do you pause long enough to engage in an encounter, and consider you may be being offered a treasure or even renewal?

Why should you care about the underworld? Because it is in you and around you all the time. This book is about change. Change means death for the old, birth of the new. To understand more about the internal dynamics of change means that you can more skillfully navigate the crises, dilemmas and problems of your life. Disturbing symptoms of breakdown are not necessarily always to be fought with “treatment” but are often natural elements of change. When you treat the symptom you may very well be resisting necessary transformation.

We have placed all our eggs in the basket of materialism, technology and the “factual” outer world of the senses. In doing so, as we historically repudiated superstition and myth and most of religion in favor of reason and science, we have made an orphan of our inner selves, cast off as useless and shunned as an embarrassment.

It is such a stretch from our “modern” understanding to a time when people once treated the hidden realms inside themselves with respect, and believed helpful influences arose from within. Now that we have lost our bearings, we largely fear our inner depths, and when something erupts we rarely pause long enough to experience a real encounter with whatever lives in there. Ours is now a world of symptoms and medications.

Perhaps we have erred or lost our balance.

This book offers the orphan a voice, so that the lost and abandoned soul within you and me can be heard. And it reminds each of us that we are like the young man in the story, having become so involved in the trappings and distractions of modern times that we have forgotten who we really are (our True Nature, as the Buddhists like to call It) and desperately need a reminder, a “letter” from Home.

Finally, **THE PEARL WITHIN** asks us to consider what such a Pearl could be, a precious treasure to be found concealed within our dreams, fantasies, symptoms and other mysterious inner promptings. Our worldly troubles arise from only one place—the inside, within our human minds or souls. All plans, ideals, suicide bombings, cruelties and misunderstandings originate there. In addition, all hope, rescue, healing or rebirth come forth from the same place.

This book is passionate. Times are reaching a critical stage, many people needlessly suffer, and there is so little understanding or even concern for this inner source. How can that be? I cannot stand by any longer without ardently proclaiming my faith—not in this God or that religion—but in the soul of humankind.

I hope that as we shine light on some of the features of our inner terrain that you will be encouraged to begin your own exploration, or to go deeper yet toward the riches within your own soul.

## Dark Times

We are living in dark times.

Fear is in the air. The cold wind blows, carrying on it the echoes of howling wolves. Are they getting louder?

We are like primitive natives as an unexpected eclipse of the sun begins. The brilliant light of reason dims. The reassurance of our technological marvels is no match for the encroaching shadows.

No matter how far we seem to advance, fear is primal, from the Stone Age.

Some proclaim the end of the world. Or the end of an age.

Optimists sing a different tune, though hollower by the minute.

Others await messengers from outer space to bring peace and our rescue.

Our leaders refuse even to acknowledge what many of us increasingly feel. They don't want to be "negative." People vote for optimism, not reality.



## S.O.S. Save Our Souls

The Universal Signal for Distress (Morse code)<sup>8</sup>

Is it possible to talk about the sense of foreboding, our concerns and fears, without succumbing to pessimism or depressed passivity?

If we *can* find a basis upon which to address the turmoil and decaying values perceptible all around us, and our feelings about it, is there a *point* to such discussion?

Is it possible to *do* anything to reverse the accelerating trend, or is it instead a matter of searching for the right response to the inevitable?

In tribal communities going back to the earliest of human times, when a member of the tribe became ill, the *shaman* or native "witch doctor" would "journey" in trance to the dream place where he or she would engage in a struggle with the spirit of the sickness in order to rescue the soul of the one afflicted. If successful, the patient recovered. If not, the healer herself could be negatively affected.

If the community as a whole was in trouble, because of disease, poor crops or hostile neighbors, the tribal leader or visionary would consult omens and dreams to divine guidance.

This was the only avenue they felt was open to them, and it sustained the survival of the tribe and its members through many crises, according to tradition.

Now it is our turn. But we have lost our faith in such intangible solutions and our respect for those still gifted with vision. We sit in the growing darkness but cannot recognize the candles within our reach.

Our need is not to "fix" things, because they cannot be fixed.

Our need is to *see*—to see into ourselves and our souls, just as the healers and visionaries have done for thousands of years.

But if we are to be able to do this, to follow the path of insight trod by those before us, we need a new perspective. The old tribal gods are seemingly absent, and the *shaman* or medicine man/woman is no longer respected or even recognized.

*I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope  
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love  
For love would be love for the wrong thing; there is yet faith  
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.  
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:  
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.*

*In order to arrive at what you do not know  
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.  
In order to possess what you do not possess  
You must go by the way of dispossession.  
In order to arrive at what you are not  
You must go through the way in which you are not.*

*And what you do not know is the only thing you know  
And what you own is what you do not own  
And where you are is where you are not.<sup>9</sup>*

In my own dark time, when it seemed all external support was failing, I was left with only one apparent option: let go and fall, down into the darkness, surrender, without hope or faith.

After a lifetime of trying to make relationships “work” I was faced with the fact that all my relating had been an avoidance of a deep dark void in my heart, which felt as old as I was. I had been addicted to being in relationship, and had either done everything possible to make them last, or to find a replacement. Just being alone with myself was not an option. Yet with the last loss, I could see how I had been unsuccessfully avoiding this emptiness inside, and I chose instead to stop my addictive behavior and to voluntarily go wherever that choice to be alone took me.

It led to two years of darkness, pain and grief. Did I know why those feelings were there, or what they meant? Not at all. I just went with them. Now I would say they were probably part of my earliest childhood and the imperfect mothering I had experienced.

I was depressed, but I was not “ill.” I did not suffer from a “disease.” Why wouldn’t I be depressed? Depression is a natural part of life and the up-and-coming treatment is electro-shock. What does it say about us and our society that we treat depression this way?

After the grief came a prolonged period that felt like more depression and terror. It was very much like a tour of the underworld. I learned to be with myself, to nurture and love myself.

That unsought-for journey to that dark inner place led ultimately to a great treasure—a sense of solidity, peace, and contentment. Enriched by this trying experience, I came to find that others had made a similar pilgrimage, and had left maps or clues for those of us who followed later.

Now as things appear to be deteriorating and insight or guidance is nowhere to be found, I feel compelled to try to articulate a way out, or perhaps better, a way *in*. I am as much at a loss as anyone, and as fearful, when searching for answers to our situation. But I do have a strong sense that a way out will not be found by logic and problem-solving, nor by denial, and that our way *through* lies in turning ourselves around and returning to those places within us we have rejected as obsolete.

This is a book about the hidden and rejected world inside each of us—the realm of dreams, unconscious motive and fantasy—out of which can come the nourishment we so hunger for. It describes

the landmarks of a necessary yet perilous journey we humans must make if we are to survive and offers encouragement to the traveler: “Be not afraid of the universe.” Be not afraid of the Mystery.

*In a dark time, the eye begins to see,  
I meet my shadow in the deepening shade;  
I hear my echo in the echoing wood —  
A lord of nature weeping to a tree.  
I live between the heron and the wren,  
Beasts of the hill and serpents of the den.*

*What’s madness but nobility of soul  
At odds with circumstance? The day’s on fire!  
I know the purity of pure despair,  
My shadow pinned against a sweating wall.  
That place among the rocks—is it a cave,  
Or winding path? The edge is what I have.*

*A steady storm of correspondences!  
A night flowing with birds, a ragged moon,  
And in broad day the midnight come again!  
A man goes far to find out what he is — Death of the self in a long, tearless night,  
All natural shapes blazing unnatural light.*

*Dark, dark my light, and darker my desire.  
My soul, like some heat-maddened summer fly,  
Keeps buzzing at the sill. Which I is I?  
A fallen man, I climb out of my fear.  
The mind enters itself, and God the mind,  
And one is One, free in the tearing wind.<sup>10</sup>*

This really is a plea, because I dread the world my daughter and all the children are apparently going to live in. It is not meant to depress, except in the true sense of the word, to take you down beneath the surface world. Myth and tradition throughout the world tell of the journey of the hero to the underworld, to the land of the dead and place of the ancestors, in order to redeem the suffering of the people.

We have lost the myths and traditions, but the underworld is still there.

And now it is necessary for this expedition to the underworld to be undertaken by each one of us who is called. This book is a call, and some may hear it and respond. The rest of us are counting on that, whether we are aware of it or not.

*The dread and resistance which every natural human being experiences when it comes to delving too deeply into himself, is, at bottom, the fear of the journey to Hades.<sup>11</sup>*

With no compelling myths to show us, we are left with the only vital area of modern thought that has addressed these realms: psychology, specifically that field known as “depth psychology.”



## What Is This Book About?

Not intended to be a rejection of religion, this book tries to maneuver around the inert and elderly institutions still functioning, to appeal to the soul within each of you, whether you call it a Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Taoist or agnostic soul. Our exploration should only serve to deepen whatever spiritual ideas are contained in any religion, not to replace them. This is no threat to cherished religious ideals, only perhaps to those who claim religious authority.

To preview what you are getting into if you continue: this book is not meant to be a textbook of psychology or a dry collection of philosophy. It contains elements of both, but it tries rather to bring its ideas to life, to make them relevant to your life. Perhaps you've never read a book on psychology before, or maybe you have gone through many.

We are attempting here to cross the wide river dividing academia and the intellectual codes of the experts from the more down-to-earth and immediate world you and I inhabit, because it is just that world that is in such danger now.

There is no expertise here, no school of thought to follow. This is more in the spirit of experiment. There is an underworld which can be found, penetrated and explored, and it opens its door inside of each of us. No need to believe me or anyone else, only to be curious (and maybe desperate) enough to find out for yourself. Try to avoid the narrow labels we are all used to, the ways we cage and control much bigger mysteries.

Is it about meditation? Yes, but it's not a book about meditation. And what *is* meditation, anyway? Is it about psychology? Yes, but not as an abstract study of brain waves and pathologies. It is psychology as the study of the soul. And what in the world is "soul?" Start scraping away those preconceptions.

In the end, if there is any one aim to this writing, it is the hope that you will come to recognize that there lives inside of you something or someone who is not under your control, whom you did not put there, and who can provide you with companionship and inspiration on your way.

This probably needs repeating: there is someone or something inside of you who knows how to do whatever it is that is being asked of you by our time. It is not up to you, nor probably are you even capable, to solve our current dilemma with reason, the only tool our civilization has faith in. To hope to encounter this inner Companion requires a leap of faith, at the very least of curiosity.

The foundation of this presentation is the Gnostic "Hymn of the Pearl." The Gnostics were people who lived around the time of Christ, and who had their own particular slant on spirituality. Their ideas, while interesting, are not explored here.<sup>12</sup>

The "Hymn of the Pearl" serves as a vehicle for our discussion, because its theme of leaving home, a mission, forgetting, awakening, a test, and returning seems to convey a fantasy that resonates in the soul. It is as if each of us has a place deep within that has some recognition of these themes, a dim sense of memory. The journey that takes place in the Hymn may be in some way our own individual journey. And the story contained in the "Hymn of the Pearl" is a hopeful one.

We can awaken from our sleep. We can remember what we came here for. In doing so, we can return to our true Home, from which we have been wandering for so, so long.

But a great deal is being asked of you in order to do so. It is easy to dismiss or overlook the hidden depths in such familiar words as “soul” and “fantasy,” or the deeper nuances of any situation for that matter. For most of us, it will necessitate a *reversal* of the usual way of thinking. These concepts refer more to what we experience as emptiness, voids, and the spaces between the things we call real. It is not our habit to penetrate the surface, and the acceptance of the superficial face as reality has been conditioned into us thoroughly.

Likewise, how challenging is it for our intellects to consider the possibility of the presence simultaneously of two opposing elements? Or that events in our world may not always be the result of cause-and-effect? It takes patience and persistence—as well as courage—to hang out in the void, to endure paradox, to suspend judgment.

Even more to the point: it would take a major reversal for most of us even to admit that we are in the midst of a crisis at all! Somehow we are able to be faced with horrible acts every single day that indicate an epidemic of what can only be called insanity, and the lack of any kind of meaningful response or coherent reason for what is happening. “There’s something happening here. What it is ain’t exactly clear.”<sup>13</sup>

Can you admit, or at least concede the possibility that we are in a major crisis, together?

In Plato’s story about the cave, the prisoners are chained inside since childhood with their faces permanently turned away from the entrance and their heads unable to turn. Everything they experience as their reality consists of the shadows cast on the cave wall in front of them. They have named the shadow characters and believe sounds they hear in the echoing cave come from those shadows.

Then what would happen if one of them could be released from his chains, and could turn toward the entrance and the light?

*And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his head round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive someone saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision, — what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them, — will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?*<sup>14</sup>

## The Hymn of the Pearl

When I was a little child and dwelt in the kingdom of my Father's house, and delighted in the wealth and splendour of those who raised me, my parents sent me forth from the East, our homeland, with provisions for the journey. From the riches of our treasure house they tied me a burden: great it was, yet light, so that I might carry it alone.

They took off from me the robe of glory which in their love they had made for me, and my purple mantle that was woven to conform exactly to my figure, and made a covenant with me, and wrote it in my heart that I might not forget it: "When thou goest down into Egypt and bringest the One Pearl which lies in the middle of the sea which is encircled by the snorting serpent, thou shalt put on again thy robe of glory and thy mantle over it and with thy brother our next in rank be heir in our kingdom."

I left the East and took my way downwards, accompanied by two royal envoys, since the way was dangerous and hard and I was young for such a journey.

I went down into Egypt and my companions parted from me. I went straightaway to the serpent and settled down close by his inn until he should slumber and sleep so that I might take the Pearl from him.

Since I was one and kept to myself, I was a stranger to my fellow dwellers in the inn. . . I clothed myself in their garments, lest they suspect me as one coming from without to take the Pearl and arouse the serpent against me.

But through some cause they marked that I was not their countryman and they ingratiated themselves with me, and mixed me [drink] with their cunning, and gave me to taste of their meat; and I forgot that I was a king's son and served their king. I forgot the Pearl for which my parents had sent me. Through the heaviness of their nourishment I sank into deep slumber.

All this befell me, my parents marked, and they were grieved for Me. . . And they wrote a letter to me, and each of the great ones signed it with his name.

"From thy father the King of Kings, and from thy mother, mistress of the East, and from thy brother, our next in rank, unto thee, our son in Egypt, greeting. Awake and rise up out of thy sleep, and perceive the words of our letter.

"Remember that thou art a king's son: behold whom thou hast served in bondage. Be mindful of the Pearl, for whose sake thou hast departed into Egypt.

"Remember thy robe of glory, recall thy splendid mantle, that thou mayest put them on and deck thyself with them and thy name be read in the book of the heroes and thou become with thy brother, our deputy, heir in our kingdom."

Like a messenger was the letter . . . It rose up in the form of an eagle, the king of all winged fowl, and flew until it alighted beside me and became wholly speech.

At its voice and sound I awoke and arose from my sleep, took it up, kissed it, broke its seal, and read. Just as was written on my heart were the words of my letter to read. I remembered that I was a son of kings, and that my freeborn soul desired its own kind.

I remembered the Pearl for which I had been sent down into Egypt, and I began to enchant the terrible and snorting serpent. I charmed it to sleep by naming over it my Father's name, the name of our next in rank, and that of my mother, the queen of the East. I seized the Pearl, and turned to repair home to my Father. Their filthy and impure garment I put off, and left it behind in their land, and directed my way that I might come to the light of our homeland, the East.

My letter which had awakened me I found before me on my way; and as it had awakened me with its voice, so it guided me with its light that shone before me; with its voice it encouraged my fear, and with its love it drew me on.

(Then, as he approached his homeland his parents sent out to him his robe of glory and his mantle.)

And with its regal movements it pours itself wholly out to me, and from the hands of its bringers hastens that I may take it; and me too my love urged on to run towards it and to receive it. And I stretched towards it and took it and decked myself with the beauty of its colors.

And I cast the royal mantle about my entire self. Clothed therein, I ascended to the gate of salutation and adoration. I bowed my head and adored the splendour of my Father who had sent it to me, whose commands I had fulfilled as he too had done what he promised.... He received me joyfully, and I was with him in his kingdom, and all his servants praised him with organ voice, that he had promised that I should journey to the court of the King of kings and having brought my Pearl should appear together with him.

## Notes

- 1 C. G. Jung, *The Visions Seminars*, (Zurich: Spring Publications, 1976), vol. 1, p. 59.
- 2 C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963), p. 227.
- 3 Edward Edinger, *The Mysterium Lectures* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1995) p. 34.
- 4 P.F. Sloan, "Eve of Destruction" (1965).
- 5 Richard Tarnas, "The Great Initiation."
- 6 *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1972) p. 1149-1150.
- 7 *ibid.*
- 8 "SOS is the commonly used description for the international Morse code distress signal... From the beginning, the SOS distress signal has actually consisted of a continuous sequence of three-dits/three-dahs/three-dits, all run together without letter spacing. In International Morse Code, three dits form the letter S, and three dahs make the letter O, so 'SOS' became an easy way to remember the correct order of the dits and dashes... In popular usage, SOS became associated with phrases such as 'Save Our Ship' and 'Save Our Souls'." (Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sos>)
- 9 T. S. Eliot, Excerpt from "East Coker", from "The Four Quartets" (1940).
- 10 Theodore Roethke, "In a Dark Time" from *Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke*(New York: Doubleday (1961).
- 11 C. G. Jung, *Psychology And Alchemy* ,The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, vol. 12 (CW12),(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968) , par. 439.
- 12 See Jonas, *Gnostic Religion*. Also *The Gnostic Gospels*.
- 13 Buffalo Springfield, "For What It's Worth", lyrics by Stephen Stills.
- 14 Plato, "Republic" (Paul Shorey, trans.) in *Plato: The Collected Dialogues* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961) pp. 747-748.

