

Volume XII Number 2

*The* METAPHYSICAL  
TIMES

*are here!*



*Places of Power*

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## Top to Bottom

- Parathanon - Athens, Greece
- Bermuda Triangle - Atlantic Ocean
- Gibraltar
- Cenotes, Cancune
- Machu Piccu
- The Human Mind
- Sphinx and Great Pyramid



# TIMES

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# Places of Power

**METAPHYSICAL TIMES**

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## **EDITORIAL**

DAVID S. WARREN      Powerful Places      page 4

## **ARTICLES**

TARKA WILCOX PhD      The Earth      page 6  
GEORGIA E. WARREN      Water Power      page 8  
DAVEY WEATHERCOCK      Entering a Powerful Place      page 11  
SUE RYN BURNS      The Green Lady's Garden      page 12  
CECIL GISCOMBE, KEVIN LAMANTAIN, ISABELLE WEST LASALLE,  
JOE STALEY, ZHAO WEIYA, MADELINE WELLS  
Siskiyou County Journal      page 16  
DAVID ROLLOW      Montségur      page 26  
FRANKLIN CRAWFORD      The Brook      page 30  
GABRIEL ORGREASE      A Note from Gabriel Orgrease      page 34  
PETER WETHERBEE      The Texture of Music      page 42  
GEORGIA E. WARREN      The Universe and Our Hands      page 47

## **FICTION**

PETER FORTUNATO      Or Nothing Like That At All      page 22  
DAVID S. WARREN      The Stone at the Old Same-Place      page 36  
FRANKLIN CRAWFORD      "My name is TV Ed, and I'm an  
Ancient Astronaut"      page 40

## **REVIEW**

JOSIAH BOOKNOODLE      Collector's Luck in France      page 14

## **POETRY**

CHRIS MacCORMICK      Prairie Lake      page 35  
MARY GILLILAND      Wake Me      page 35

## **CARTOONS**

MARK FINN

## **COVER**

Salmon Creek Falls –Ludlowville, NY



# Places of Power: An Introduction



## Powerful Places

by David S. Warren, Editor

Here is a map showing supposed lines of force, or connection, or power transmission, or something simply mysterious called “Ley Lines”. When they intersect, Ley Lines are said to create places with a special power - typically the habitat of Bigfoot or powerful spirit beings, the landing place of aliens, or serving as portals through which one communicates with other worlds or other states of being. Spiritual centers, sacred places, and locations of political power.

There is no universal agreement about what these lines are, or that they exist at all, but there is common agreement that some places seem to have a strong, if difficult to define, power. It would be in a place of some natural, or supernatural, power that you would want to have your religious architecture, your center of government, your home, your oracle, or your casino.

Unless that place is already inhabited by a devil, a dragon, or a monster.

My guess is that many Ley cartographers start from places such as the Bermuda Triangle, Jerusalem, and Gibraltar, etcetera, then draw their lines from place-to-place. When I look at the version of the Ley line map we present here, I notice that the Bermuda Triangle is a big intersection, as is Tijuana, and I see a very busy one in northern British Columbia; but

most of all, I notice that there is a major conjunction of these lines RIGHT OVER MY HEAD. So learning what this is all about has a special urgency for me.

But this is not about me. This is a large scale map we show here, and the precise place indicated may as well be where the father of all Mormons was said to have found the one-ton book of Mormon on gold tablets, or Connecticut Hill just south of here where stranger things may have happened, and how about Seneca Falls? There is no denying that central New York, the passage west between the Catskills and the Adirondacks, has earned its name as the “Burned-Over District,” for the waves of spiritual enthusiasm and earth-scorching events that have swept through the area over the centuries.

**In the end, or at least at THIS point, there is no denying that places have some kind of power for us; this most of us know from our own most profound experiences.**

That is why, for this issue of the Metaphysical Times, we have asked our writers for offerings with places of power, power spots, or related notions as the theme, in whatever sense they might give to those terms. In response some have written about places, others have been driven to abstraction, metaphor, satire, or distraction.

But to begin on solid ground, we asked **Tarka Wilcox**, whose PhD is in plate-tectonics and structural geology, to comment on whether there is any scientific basis for the notion that places have some kind of power.

You will find his answer in this issue of *The Metaphysical Times*.

In response to our request for something relating to Bigfoot country in Northern California, Berkley **Professor Cecil Giscomb** and four of his writing group made a visit to the vicinity of **Mt. Shasta**, and they all together reported on their perceptions of the place. We were affected and we weren't even there.

From **Peter Fortunato**, we have a story also set in the sacred precincts of **Shasta**, where a visiting guru decreed a stately tree-house.

Our contributor **Peter Wetherbee**, is a musician and sound-engineer who commonly writes about music synethetically, as a wine-taster describes wines ... as if wine had overtones, and music had color. Music isn't an object, it is something that happens at the cross-roads of time and space, but Wetherbee, who has a poetic license, takes the notion further into metaphor ... saying that there is a place of power in music. Dig in.

If you have no fear of hauntings in places of horror, read **David Rollow's** essay on **Montségur**, the site of the worst single Christian-on-Christian massacre in history, and considering that the current ruins are built on the ruins of a previous fortification or castle, which was in turn built on a previous ruin, it was probably the site many previous horrible events.

If you plan to visit France, possibly avoiding **Montségur**, then go ahead and read **Professor Booknoodle's** recommendation of a vintage book about traveling in France.

Or just amble through the magazine, reading

**Georgia's** ramble about the power of water places, and maybe skip with her to the back of the magazine and the twilight zone of a psychic fair at which you will encounter the most unusual visitor. Or proceed to read **Davey Weathercock's** cheeky piece about the little Yellow People of the Fingerlakes uplands. If you don't believe in them, then maybe you should read my own alternative memoir involving them, and the *Stone at the Old Same-Place*. We stand by old Davey.

Speaking of special stones, old time Ithaca mason **Gabriel Orgrease**, sent us a Saturday morning note in which he recalls what happened back on the day he was asked by a man with a pendulum to fool with Mother Nature by splitting a stone against the grain.

**Franklin Crawford** would never fool Mother Nature, having been born with access to a lively swamp now under pavement, but he has supplied the old map; and in a second appearance here, Franklin offers us a story told by one "TV Ed", who claims to be an ancient astronaut.

And the Green Lady herself appears in **Sue Ryn's** garden, as it has come through the seasons.

Have you been to **Delos**? Better get there quick before it dissolves. If the placeness of a place is no more, is there still a place? Quick, then once more, read the relevant poem by **Mary Gilliland**. But don't expect poetry to give direct answers.

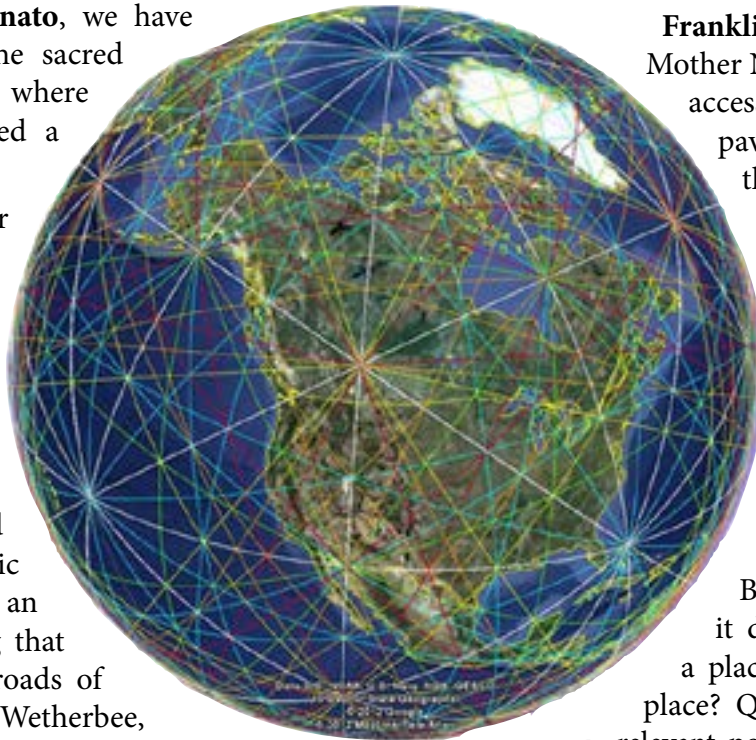
See here Chris **McCormack's** poem, make of it what you will and don't expect us or him to explain, as it seems clear to us and Chris that the dream knows what it means, and says what it means.

For mostly visual learners, we have a series of **Mark Finn's** Fish-Eye cartoons, which will keep the children entertained, while also confronting the existential questions that arise when you are a fish on a desert island with only a tree to talk to.

The theme for the next issue of the *Metaphysical Times*

after this one is *Inspiration*.

As for what comes after THAT, we are still waiting for inspiration.





# Places of Power: The Earth

Dear Tarka Wilcox the tectonic geologist :

**Question:** I would like to know what notions you as a nano-physical Geologist or maybe psycho-physical geologist, or cage-free geologist, would like to say about global geological forces on any level or scale, evidenced in any way other than earth tremors ... whether they be related to tectonic plates or not. *Are some places powerful to a truly spooky extent .... only because they are so godly beautiful? Or What?*

David S. Warren  
Editor Metaphysical Times

**Reply:** Have you ever seen a small chunk of pure sodium metal burn, shriek, and tear itself apart when dropped into water? The energy release during the extremely rapid oxidation is impressive. It's not the same as the earth, but in some ways it's analogous - earth is burning (slowly), and tearing itself apart constantly - as a result of trying to cool off. Earth is essentially a mote of boiling star-dust, and to anyone or anything other than humans and other earth-dwellers, I'd imagine, little more than a back-water planet at the outer edge of just another galaxy. Earth's primordial heat (from the stage of heavy bombardment by asteroids and planetoids early in it's history) is sustained by combinations of tidal heating and radioactive decay... mostly the latter. While air is usually considered a great insulator (and our air, as the result of dramati-

cally increasing concentrations of Carbon Dioxide and Methane released by human activity, is becoming a better insulator than it has been for a long, long time), it's still not very effective at trapping that primordial heat at a long time scale. Our magnetosphere is helping to slow the cooling a bit, in that it traps our atmosphere inside a sort of bubble or magnetic cage, diverting solar winds around the planet like a boat's wake.

In any case, the inside of the earth is cooling (but the atmosphere

is warming very rapidly right now), and eventually the heat will

escape - plates will

freeze and mountains will stop

moving, eventually all will grind

to a halt - in a few billion years.

In the meantime however, the pot

is still boiling, and some areas of the

surface are hotter than others, mostly because the

mantle is hotter in some places than others. There isn't any magic or

reason to where these hotspots are - they move through time and switch on and off on occasion. That being said, while they are active, they

are truly foci of immense energies - Yellowstone, Hawaii, Iceland, and the great African

Rift Valley. In these places, we see the earths open sores - scabbing over when they can only

to erupt and ooze when the energy trapped just below the surface has to escape. Comparing the

cradle of human-kind to an oozing sore might not be pleasant, but if you recognize that we



have spread out and dug-in like a bad case of chiggers all over the skin of the planet, these few raw spots seem more acceptable - at least more so than the scars we create on purpose.

I guess you can tell I don't think much of our society's behavior towards our mother. We're spoiled, and rude, and downright mean sometimes. Before we tasted power, before the advent of efforts to control ever increasing amounts of energy, we were more dependent on Earth to care for us, and to provide safe haven. If we were to ever return to an attitude of appreciation, of reverence, we might huddle our towns around the natural outpourings of heat to only feed off of the energy provided there, and focus less on spreading over and scorching the soft skin of the planet.

To answer your question about places that are truly spooky - I believe that if you feel it, then it is true. I've been moved to tears before in one or two places where I felt so connected and so accepted by the earth that I was humbled and happy to have the chance to feel that way...

***but I doubt that I could ever  
recover those feelings were I to  
ever find those spots again and  
stand exactly where I stood -***

I don't think it's necessarily a place that holds that kind of power - these flashes of living energy are momentary and fleeting, but powerful and real and wonderful.

Anyway - that's just off the top of my head sitting here in the basement of the Moscone Convention Center in San Francisco. I'm at-

tending AGU (along with twenty-five thousand other folks), which you will see a lot about in the news this week, to play my role as another tiny cog in the scientific machine. The machine is one that I'm becoming convinced is only occasionally connected to the larger human experience, and I'd like to try to get a better picture of the larger experience from some other angles at some point.

~T



Tarka Wilcox, Ph.D.  
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# **WATER POWER**

**Taughannock Falls, Ulysses, NY**



*Rambling Along the Metaphysical Path*

by Georgia E. Warren

*Publisher, Metaphysical Times*

## Water Power

In the last edition of the Metaphysical Times the theme was "Magic." I went on about the Magic of Water and what water meant for life on Earth. Well, sometimes I get stuck on something and can't really stop thinking about it. We decided that the theme this time would be "Power Places." But all I really want to do is still obsess about how important water is.

***To start with water is Power,  
but water is not a Place.  
Water makes places.***

When the earth heaves up and breaks, the water hunts down the breaks and builds a stream, or a river, or crashes down other breaks and makes a waterfall or great lakes. If the earth breaks and drifts far apart water fills even the largest spaces and creates oceans, or seas. Water sources can change deep underground and great rivers turn back into streams and trickles or dry up all together.

It seems that humans can't resist following water. I am sure that it didn't take primitive peoples long to know how much easier it is to get from one place to another perched on a floating log and then a hollowed out log, and then finally a boat.

If you get tired going down the river, you pull to the side and stop. If there is a waterfall too steep or rapids too rough, you pull to the side and stop. Build a hut and eventually it becomes a community.

Waterways make travel easier. Trade routes develop. A waterway meeting another waterway, a road crossing a river, a river meeting an ocean, an ocean meeting a continent. Cities, towns, and villages spring up at these crossings. Commerce soon becomes a by-product of population: London, Paris, Rome, Moscow, New York City.

Man-made waterways created new opportunities for growth around the world. There was a time when the only way to send cargo from the east coast of the United States to the west coast by water was all the way around South America. To go from New York City to Buffalo, New York, it took boats and wagons and more boats. The Panama Canal and the Erie Canal changed travel and commerce in our country. The Suez Canal has influenced trade, peace and wars.

***Waterfalls are  
the waterways  
"stop signs."***

Waterfalls could be the early settlers' greatest source of water power. They are where the traveller, the adventurer, and the merchant get out of the boat and move by foot or cart. It just feels so darn good around all that rushing water, you might loose your ambition and build your home. Ocean waves, waterfalls and water's cousin, lightning, just make you feel so relaxed.



***"Its the  
ions  
Georgia,  
I can feel  
the ions."***

That's at least what my mother said years ago about waterfalls and lightning. I thought it was too much time with my father's books on Feng-Shui.

But it's true: the most powerful form of negative ions shows up in the air after a thunder-storm; next is in the air around a waterfall. The waterfalls and thunderstorms add an extra electron to oxygen, by which they purify air, increase serotonin, and increase energy. WebMD reported that Columbia University studies of people with winter and chronic depression show that negative ion generators relieve

depression as much as antidepressants. "The best part is that there are relatively no side effects."

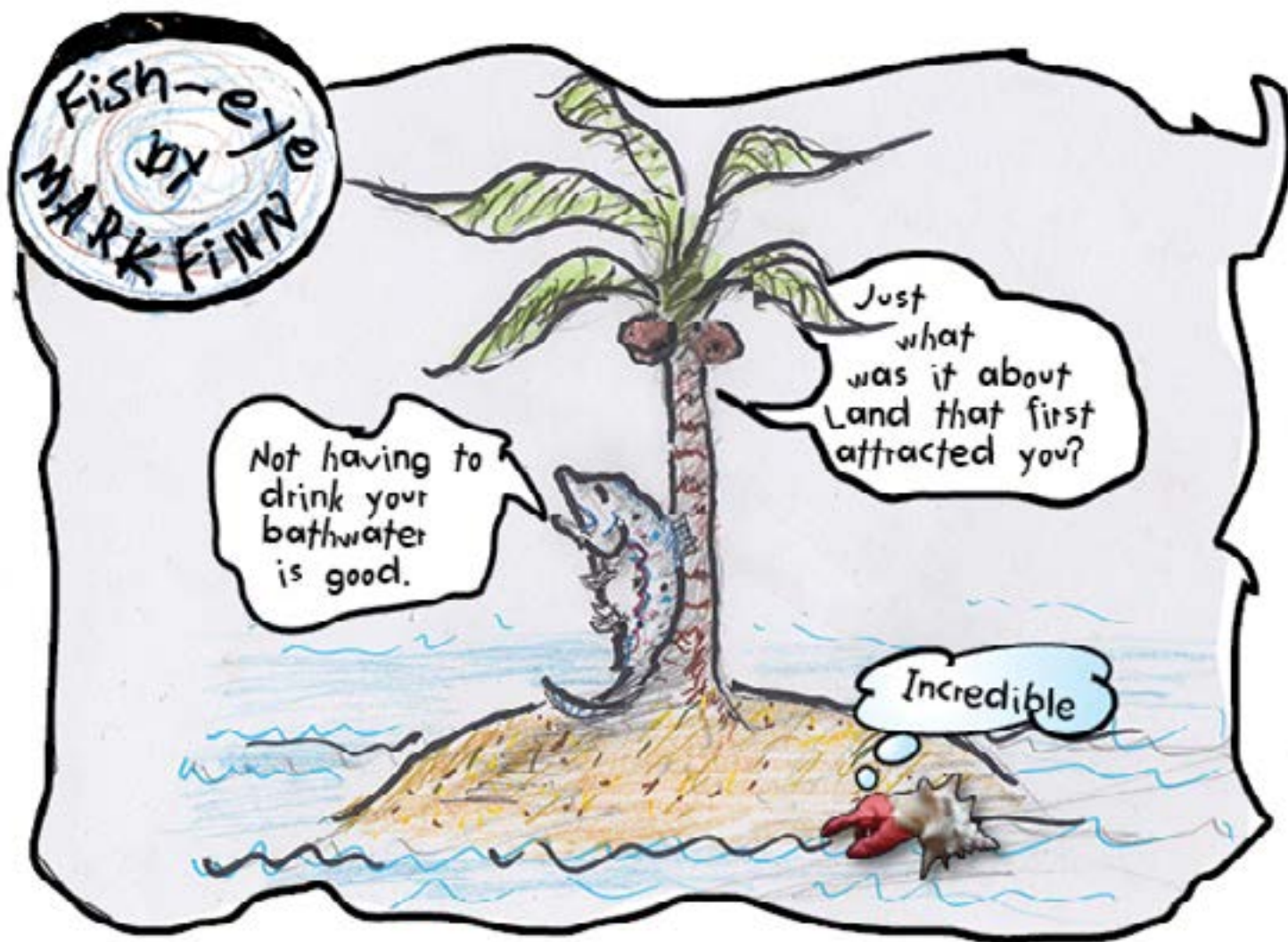
My mother was of course correct. Go to a waterfall to regenerate your mind, emotions, and spirit. There are wonderful waterfalls in this world and most are surrounded by resorts. Vacationers flock to hotels around waterfalls from Alaska to Zimbabwe.

Rushing water makes negative ions. Think about the rain: a hot summer's day and a rain storm pops up. You feel better. It is not only the cooling. The rain creates negative ions, you breathe them in and the body and mind begins to just feel better. You get home from a stressful day at work and take a shower. You really weren't that dirty. It just made you feel better. Rushing water makes the same relaxing negative ions

whether it is from that beautiful waterfall on the cover of our magazine, from the Taughannock Falls at the beginning of my article, or the pulsing spray of your shower.

*So, you don't live near a waterfall, or an ocean, and the lake outside your apartment is so polluted that you cannot stand the smell when your window is open. A few minutes ago you made a banana smoothie and the bottom of the blender fell off. It was your last banana.*

***Go dance in the rain.***





# Places of Power: Connecticut Hill

## *Entering a Powerful Place*

by Davey Weathercock

Connecticut Hill, about the wildest part of Tompkins County, has some reputation as a portal between worlds, a landing spot for space aliens, and the habitat of Bigfoot. I don't know about all of that, but I have hunted, prospected, and skied for years on that hill, and I don't get how people manage to come across Aliens and Bigfeet there, and not even notice the numerous Littlefeet: the small yellowish natives who retreated to the Gorges when the pre-Iroquois Algonquians arrived, and left the gorges for the hills when the Iroquois took over.

They called themselves the "Boegae" or people of the Chanterelle: the mushroom with which they identify, partly one supposes because their skin shade is sometimes so close to that of the mushroom, though that may result from their diet of Chanterelles. I also hunt the Chanterelles, which the Boegae often get to just before I arrive, or, if the mushrooms aren't ready, they cover them with leaves until they are more substantial. Otherwise, I see very little of the Bogae.

Not everybody can find deep springs with a witching wand, much less feel the god-power of a place coming up through their feet; I know I can't. For me, it takes a lot of application just to find the places where the Chanterelles mushrooms grow, and after guessing about that, I have had to work hard to see them when they are in right in front of me. They are the spirits of the place; much more aware of everything around them than I am, and though they

are not obviously capable of movement, they have evolved to become practically invisible when strange consciousness intrudes. .

I work methodically to counter this elusiveness. First of all, I use a sweeping gaze as I walk along.

I look for the color of apricots. At certain seasons the apricot will be a confusing mould on the leaves.

Do not be fooled;

If you see some, keep sweeping. Bend your way toward it but keep looking around.

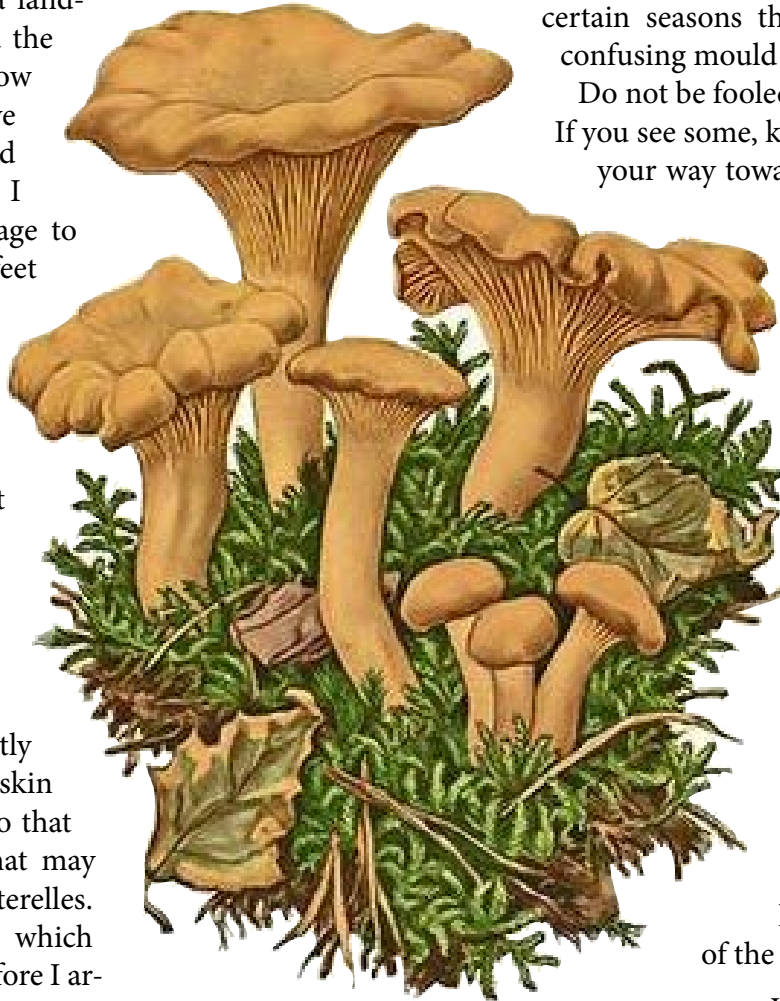
***If you find one, do not pick it.***

Just be there, then. For a while. Eat a ham sandwich, if you have one. Something like that. Be casual.

If you are lucky and not mistaken, the other Chanterelles will eventually show themselves, like little yellow people, having lost their fear of the stranger.

When you no longer know how long it has been that you have been sitting, standing, or squatting there, then it has been long enough.

***You may now gather the mushrooms.  
But, out of respect,  
leave the first one you saw.***



# The Green Lady's Garden

by Sue-Ryn Burns

I have only lived here on this Island for about 30 years, though my husband was born and raised here. There are areas I am still unfamiliar with, but I have a lot of miles on the roads and paths in and around Wellesley Island State Park, and the Nature Center within its boundaries. I go there in all seasons, mostly on foot, but I have also enjoyed the park's winter beauty on cross country skis and snowshoes. I go there for exercise and fresh air, but mostly to soothe and feed my soul. Walking amidst old-growth trees and ancient rocks too big for the last glacier to move puts things in a better perspective.

I've had many magical experiences there and enjoyed sharing space with all manner of creatures, from Bald Eagles and Deer, to Muskrats, Otters, and Mice. Since I started working with wildlife rehabilitation it has radically affected the amount of time I have for walking the woods and fields, but the quality has intensified. Of late the voice of nature has become an occasional conversation that I will try and interpret here.

I was moving quickly at the end of a pleasant hike and somehow thoughts about hungry wildlife entered my mind. The summer drought of 2016 affected the Oaks and Hickories, which produced hardly any nuts for the wildlings who rely on them for food. Someone had written in his weekly column about not helping a Squirrel he saw swimming; I recalled how many road-dead I'd been seeing – knowing they had been searching for food. A woman phoned me about squirrels "breaking into her house & they'd never had that problem before".

*The Green Lady said,  
"People need to help care for  
the rest of my children,  
I feed theirs every day".*

There are currently seven adult Grey Squirrels coming to my bird feeders daily, including a few who are

black. Typically we get two and they don't show up until mid-winter when their stash runs out or is frozen under. I know one is a young female I released across the road a year ago. She later moved to some woods down the road and I have seen her well-traveled trail to our house. Two seem to come from the tree line on the other side of the yard. I'm uncertain where the other four come from but they seem to head towards the ridge when alarmed. There are also two resident red squirrels who spend less time at the feeders, but they have plenty of pine and spruce cones to dine upon. We call it the Squirrel Circus. While I'm fairly certain you can't train squirrels, they do seem to understand that a tap on the

window means the dog is coming out and it's time to vanish. Chasing is part territorial defense, part play, and also part of their mating ritual later in the season. A diet that consists only of black oil sunflower seeds is not healthy for Squirrels and can lead to bone disease. Because of the added feeding in my yard I have





started mixing 1 part chicken scratch grains (a mix of cracked corn, wheat, and oats) with 2 parts bird-seed and it seems to be working. Most of the food disappears by day's end and what's left is eaten by Rabbits at night. Adding the scratch mix has helped stretch the bird feeding budget.

After a late summer walk down into the family camp, a bouquet of beautifully shaped, leathery oak leaves to press in hand, the Green Lady was in my heart again. I'd noticed some picture-perfect apples on a tree at a summer place and stopped to pick a couple to see how they tasted. Wild grapes seemed prolific, and jelly making entered my thoughts. I contemplated trying to find a phone number for the owners and asking permission to pick some of the fruit.

***Then she reminded me  
about the animals.  
I can get more,  
they can not.***

Maybe I'll wait 'til next year and ask them in person, if there is a big crop. Foragers know, in a lean year you take less, maybe not even the seventh in a series. Going back to look many days later, I discovered the fruit was all gone and there were signs of wildlife all around that tree.

A friend was bemoaning the Milkweed that was trying to take over a perennial bed. Knowing it was a key food for Monarch butterflies, she let it stay. I recalled the joy of picking a mature stem that was dry and ready to free its seeds, and dancing around a field with my "magic wand", letting the wind carry the seed away with my wishes. I hope the next owners of that field were blessed with butterflies. One summer I pretty much erased a burn scar by applying milkweed sap to that scar on every daily walk. I encouraged my friend to wait for the seeds and lovingly plant them where she'd like them to grow. The blossoms have a delightful fragrance and I try to get them to grow where the breeze will carry

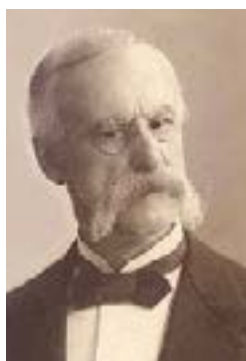
their scents to us. I have done this with many "weeds" and been rewarded with a bountiful harvest of healing herbage or seed-heads to feed the wild ones. A Canadian bird rehabber friend harvests the seed heads in paper bags, separates the dried seeds to plant and puts out the fluff the following spring for birds to use in their nests. I'm sure the green lady would approve.

A buck passed through our yard in broad daylight recently. We had seen him up the road one night after dark. He had about five points on each antler, so he's seen a few winters. I'm wondering if he's the one who kept nipping of the tops of beans and peas all summer. He hops the fence regularly and seems to know where to dig off the snow to find the greens he's after, including what was left of the collards and kale. I am also wondering if he's still sleeping between our house and my brother's place next door, reasonably safe from predators who don't come that close to human dwellings. A friend who lives in town had a doe who slept cuddled against her pump house all one winter. We have seen and been called to rescue animals seeming to rest "spread eagle" on black-top for warmth on early spring mornings. Even a little warmth and food is appreciated in a cold season.

Most of these interactions and accidental experiences are a result of just showing up. Making time to be out in nature is the only way one gets to engage emotionally with all the beauty and wisdom that surrounds us. The more opportunities we create for our hearts to open to nature, the more we will come to understand.

A recent trip to a favorite trail showed many others visitors' tracks frozen from a previous warmer day. The winds were high and tree tops were rattling as Delilah the dog and I made our way along; she with her nose to the trail and the winds, and me with my eyes scanning for birds and watching my steps. As we were crossing the parking lot to leave, some other hikers showed up. They were dressed for ice and wind. We greeted each other appreciating the radiantly sunny day, a gift after many gray ones in a row. I could tell, even though they were strangers, they were there to enjoy some time in the Green Lady's Winter Garden.

## Professor Booknoodle on Books : Past and Future - Real and Unreal.



Professor Booknoodle, Phud

### Collector's Luck in France

by Alice Van Leer Carrick  
*1924 Antique Collecting and Touring  
in French Cities and Countryside, Vintage Book*

Alice Van Leer Carrick loved antiques, and loved, perhaps even more, the search for these objects that brought pleasure to her heart. The search took her into a sort of tour of the boulevards and back streets of cities and towns, and the humble lanes of rural villages. All of this she describes with genial warmth, even mentioning specific shops wherein she either bargained or made discoveries. There is no lack of descriptive passages concerning the wonderful people she met on her quest, and the book has some exquisite photographs of a few such personages, as well as beautiful photographs of picturesque architecture - castles, chateaus, towns, and villages. And of course, among the infinite variety of objects she had her favorites ... glass, silhouettes, dainty drawings, silver and porcelain, and certain types of old paper.

It is a marvelous afternoon off, reading this book. One wishes one had accompanied Alice on her collecting jaunts.

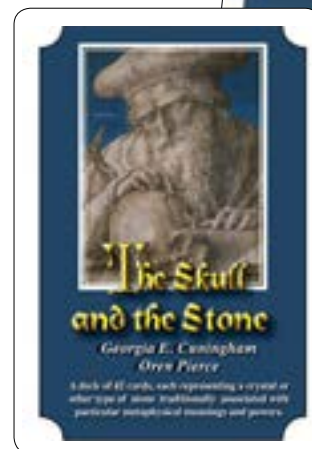
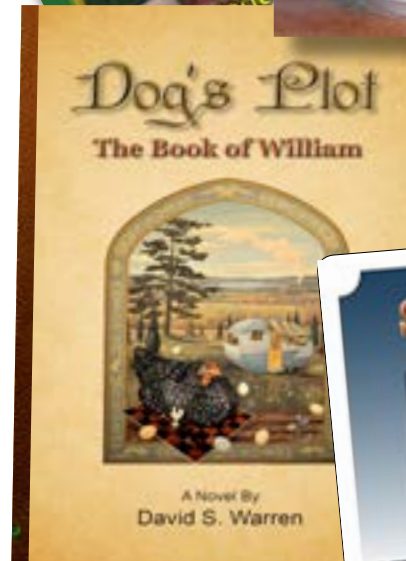
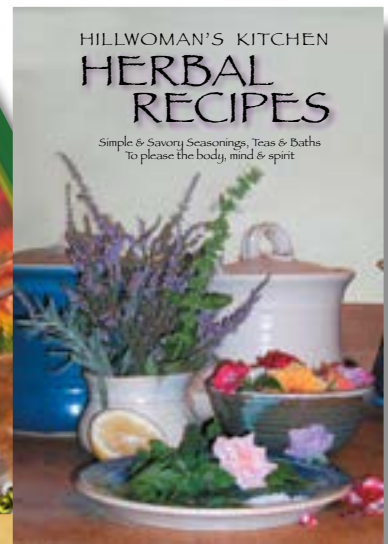
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# Places of Power: Mt. Shasta

## SISKIYOU COUNTY JOURNAL



Personnel/ Travelers: Cecil Giscombe (oldest, SW Ohio, Ithaca, British Columbia), Kevin LaMantain (Lagos, Bakersfield), Isabelle West LaSalle (Olympic Peninsula, New Orleans, Sacramento), Joe Staley (SW Ohio, the highway), Zhao Weiya (Sichuan, Fulbright Program), Madeline Wells (youngest, Seattle M.S.A.).





# SISKIYOU COUNTY JOURNAL

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Starting point: University of California, Berkeley, 11 November 2016.

In the fall of 2016 our prose writing workshop (“Traveling, Thinking, Writing”) read books by Eddy Harris, Linda Grant Niemann, and Robert Michael Pyle. Pyle’s book is called *Where Bigfoot Walks* and one weekend in early November we endeavored to go out walking in one of the places where Bigfoot is reputed to walk, Siskiyou County in northern California. We drove north for five hours—in a rented van—from Berkeley.

Friends owned a piece of land in unincorporated Cecilville, on the South Fork of the Salmon River and we arrived after dark in the rain and set up our tents by flashlight. We were unsure that we were in the “right” place until one of us found a pizza delivery receipt bearing the name of one of the owners. The second day we hiked up past the snow line to Hidden Lake and later, upon our descent, traveled to eat and drink and mingle at the Emporium, a bar and sandwich shop in Callahan, California. On the third day we returned to Berkeley.

At the Emporium we met various people and engaged in a number of conversations. It was the weekend following the national election of 2016 and Berkeley’s county, Alameda, had voted overwhelmingly for Hillary Clinton; most Siskiyou County voters had cast ballots for Donald Trump. But politics was kept on the back burner, as it were, and we talked about the terrain, the numerous dogs present, travel by horseback to remote places, our families, and Bigfoot. One man, Nick, let us know that he had in fact had an encounter with Bigfoot. His report, published

originally on the Bigfoot Research Organization website is excerpted below.

We had hoped and intended to contact members of the Karuk Tribe but those connections did not materialize. In the Karuk dictionary (<http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~karuk/karuk-dictionary.php?lx=ara&ge=&sd=&lxGroup-id=4215&audio=&exact-match=&index-position=526>) is this entry: “**maruk’áraar / maruk’arara-** • N • uphill person, giant, ‘bigfoot,’ ‘sasquatch’; *Literally:* ‘uphill person.’ ” Our interest continues.

Many Northwest Native groups have stories involving Bigfoot, the Sasquatch, Dzonoqua, Omah, etc.

**Clayton Mack**—who died in 1993—is author of the memoirs *Bella Coola Man* and *Grizzlies and White Guys*. Both books are well known in British Columbia, his native province. He was a member of the Nuxalk Nation and a famous guide. In *Grizzlies and White Guys* he recalls meeting a Sasquatch while in the employ of an American hunter:

*"I look at his face and his chest. The shape of his face is different than a human being face. Hair over face. Eyes were like us but small. Ears small too. Nose just like us, little bit flatter that's all. Head kind of looks small compared to body. Looks friendly doesn't look like he's mad or has anything against us. Didn't snort or make a sound like a grizzly bear. On the middle of his chest, looked to me like a line of no hair, hair split apart little bit in the middle. Skin is black where that hair split apart. It was a male I think. I can't, no way am I able to shoot him. I had a big gun too..."*

*After we see it, we just leave it. That Sasquatch went in the woods, went in the big timber. He took off fast. Looked like he used his hands when he took off first, like a hundred-yard runner, looks like it. Pulling himself up with his arms, with his hands first, looks like. He never made a sound. Just moved off into the heavy timber like a fast moving shadow."*

I’ve spent a fair amount of time in northern B.C.--last

bike trip there (starting in Oregon) was 2013--but the closest I've come to Bigfoot has been in southern Washington (camping/ hiking in the Gifford Pinchot 20 years ago) and on another cycling trip along the Salmon and Klamath Rivers here in California in 2011. Closest? I "believe" in nothing except that sometimes there's something about the woods. Bigfoot is just interesting.

*"In Salishan mythology, Seatco are large, hairy wild men of the forest. There are two different kinds of Seatco that appear in folklore: powerful but comparatively benign forest spirits sometimes referred to as Night People (similar to the Sasquatch of the Halkomelem tribes,) and fearsome, malevolent man-eaters sometimes referred to as [Stick Indians](#). The two beings are often confused in folklore and anthropology alike, because it is believed to antagonize these spirits to call them by their Salish names in public, so general terms like Seatco (which just means 'spirit') Night People, and Stick Indians are much more commonly used by Northwest Native Americans."*

(<http://www.native-languages.org/morelegends/seatco.htm>)

Grover Krantz (1931-2002), professor of anthropology at Washington State University, was one of the scientists interested in the possibility of Bigfoot. He studied at U.C. Berkeley and earned a B.A. in 1955 and an M. A. in 1958. He went on to earn a doctorate at the University of Minnesota. In the early 1960s he worked at Berkeley's Hearst Museum of Anthropology and in 1970 donated to the museum his plaster casts of enormous footprints that had been found in the snow in Bossburg, Washington. The casts were last exhibited in 2008 and at a Gallery Talk at the museum (reported by the Berkleyan, [http://www.berkeley.edu/news/berkeleyan/2008/02/27\\_bigfoot.shtml](http://www.berkeley.edu/news/berkeleyan/2008/02/27_bigfoot.shtml))

Berkeley philosophy professor Sherrilyn Roush "noted that scientists once refused to credit the claims of lay people who reported seeing meteorites falling from the sky. Drawing the analogy to the numerous eyewitness accounts of Bigfoot, many of them from Native Americans, she suggested scientists have been unduly dismissive of 'marginal science.'"

## Siskiyou County Haikai

(by the personnel listed above)

Ms. Zhao kept track of the seen animals. Skunks, deer, foxes. Poet said, *Their eyes flash once in car headlights and are gone*. Dark road was banked for driving. Five people breathed in the van over some Coast Range shoulder—Zhao's black bangs, three bearded boys, LaSalle's brown hair pulled back severely from her face and stuffed into her Glacier hat. Poet said, *Their deaths are not elegant*. At the Callahan store someone said to find Bigfoot up in Happy Camp, with the Karuks. Marukáaraar's the word up there—"literally, uphill person." Poet said, *They have the faces of no-one*.

Tick-tock the clock is deafening and evokes the anxiety of the rain that soon will follow. Staley finds the pizza box that verifies the rain will fall on us in the right country. In Cecilville, Zhao and LaSalle pitch their tent and Staley's tent is already set. The voice said, *in that country the animals have the faces of people*, and there is eagerness and anxiety of our talk with "N" and Jensen, before we even know we will meet them.

November rubbed her back against our campsite, stretching out her leafy arms to hide us from the morning sun. Rain pooled in pockets of mud, heaving a dampness up from the stew of rotting leaves and earth. Weiya said in the meadow there are horses, and so we hurried with carrots purchased *before we even knew we would meet them*. Two mangy horses, one white, the other brown, eating the grass—the beautiful uncut hair of graves—waited for us in the island of sun. My fingers slowly unfurled in the warmth and on my flat palm I offered a baby carrot.





Leaving statue horses who'd learned to graze, we ourselves grazed upward, exchanging muddied earth for snowy patches that steamed with elevated atmosphere. The sign lay fallen. We were somewhere unmarked. Upward one mile, five-thousand-two-hundred-and-eighty-feet, lay something hidden. If we could find it, and could we make it? Skeptical clamberers were scoffed at. *Pick up, for God's sake. When we call you back to the lake.* There was a child waiting, its tiny feet submerged in frigid water alongside brindled furs and a mountain family. They smiled and graciously burned our celluloid, twice, before we lost our trail upon the descent.

Five-thousand-two-hundred-and-eighty feet above sea level, we woke up late to quiet blankets enveloping the city. *It fills with alabaster wool / the wrinkles of the road.* Ice spidering across the windowpane, delicate webs staining glass opaque. "Snowpocalypse 2016." News tickers flashing red; we stayed inside. Curiosity and pleading yellow lab eyes drew us out, borrowing scarves and robust brown boots to sink step by step into the heaping drifts of cotton candy. Jeep groaning in protest at the pillowing piles beneath its feet. Emerging into stony orange, a spiral of massive sunset slabs smothered in blinding white.

*One must have a mind of winter/ To regard the frost and the boughs/ Of the pine-trees crusted with snow.* The first snow greeted Nankai University yesterday, my host university in Tianjin, northern part of China, clothed the whole campus with a white layer. Seldom in the south of China could people see snow and they will be overexcited for snow, making snowman, snowball fighting, etc. In Chinese tradition, a timely snow promises a good harvest. Two months later, Chinese New Year, with a sea of red colors and possibly the greatest migration of people in the world for family reunions, will arrive.

Cited: Margaret Atwood, William Bright and Susan Gehr, Emily Dickinson, Guided by Voices, Wallace Stevens, Walt Whitman.

Except from Nick's posted story on the Bigfoot Research Organization website ([http://www.bfro.net/GDB/state\\_listing.asp?state=CA](http://www.bfro.net/GDB/state_listing.asp?state=CA)):

YEAR: 2012/ SEASON: Fall/ MONTH: September/  
DATE: 9/23/12

STATE: [California](#)/ COUNTY: [Alpine County](#)

*...I continued left into the grove and found a 25 foot tree placed upside down next to another tree well over 50 feet high. The base was about 18" and had been snapped not sawed. Some branches had interwoven into this tree just like the little blind I first discovered on the groves edge. I'd guess the elevation was 8,500 feet, as the top of the hill was 10,000 and our camp was at the base of about 7,000. I now had an increasingly strong feeling of being watched again at this point.*

*As I left the second blind/upside-down tree working my way up and to the left I saw the silhouette of a bipedal primate about 8 feet tall standing still looking at me. It was perpendicular to me, faced up hill in almost a runners stance, and looking over its right shoulder, at me, slightly with its wide muscular torso turned to me. It's brow was extremely pronounced, its forehead was small with the back of it's head slightly pointed. His head (assuming a male as it did not have breasts,) was proportionatly small in relation to it's body. It's arms were extremely long, hairy, lean yet muscular, It's hands had very long palms and long fingers that curled back with a thumb that curled forward forming a backward capital "C" type shape. It then sprinted up the hill and vanished behind the trees faster than a deer bolts into a dead run from a standstill. It was on the left edge of the grove with a clearing behind it. This all happened in a second or two. I went to the place I saw it (60 yards) and found no footprints as the ground had at least a foot of pine needles that cushioned footprints and would spring back up when you walked. I used a tree that was close by gauge it's height. It was of dark color but not sure if dark brown or black as it was shady in the grove with sunlight behind it in the clearing.*

*I was in a state of kind of shock and almost not believing what I saw but knowing I did and simply just amazed. Because of this when I got home, later that week I decided to consult a hypnotist. I had never seen one but figured since they help witnesses recall a crime and descriptions of accounts that happen quickly or under stress it would probably help me confirm what I saw. The hypnosis confirmed my sighting.*

An e-mail from Nick:

*Greetings Cecil,*

*It was great meeting you and your students this weekend in Callahan. I hope you gathered some more eye witness accounts in the area. If there is any writings of the research gathering I'd love to read it and share it with Coach Jensen. Also he has a photo album of footprints, scat, and a handprint that I'm sure he'd show you if you return to the area. He also has two plaster castings he took of footprints.*

...

*In closing, I am attaching an illustration I found painted by Paul Smith on the Southern Oregon Bigfoot website. This painting is, what most accurately illustrates the one I saw in Alpine County. The arms though should be longer and the palms should be longer (rectangular shaped instead of square) with longer fingers and thumb.*

*Best,  
Nick*

Arguably the most important word in Robert Michael Pyle's title, *Where Bigfoot Walks*, is "Where." A moment from Pyle's account of his foray through northern California, through territory quite close to the place where we camped at the edge of Cecilville:

*I was not looking for tracks but rather for the spoor of the beast on the breath of the night: a sense of the place that spawned this particular case of mass delusion or rich encounter. At the moment I didn't particularly care which it was.*

From Zhao Weiya's final essay, "From Mr. Stick and to a Fusion of Horizon":

*I met Mr. Stick during my hiking to Hidden Lake in Cecilville, in northern California. He was a crooked stick, seemingly not a good choice as a walking stick. But it was a falling-in-love-at-the-first-sight choice and he proved to be greatly helpful to me, mentally and physically....*

*I still carried a deep impression of the death of my maternal grandma, who died when I was a middle school student and of the terrible scene of her body in the cupboard and the stretcher of the crematory coming into the furnace room and back with nothing and the horrifying wail of my aunt, with which I frequently woke up in the middle of the nights right after her death, with great pains.... My aunts had tried to make her mouth close but failed and when my younger brother arrived and mourned her death, everyone there noticed later her mouth was fully closed. This had been an unbelievable thing to me for a long time, when pondering over the whole thing currently, I believe that was the last radiance of her life, fragile yet resistant. The funeral, in our local tradition, had lasted several days, with the mourning music repeated endlessly.*

*So I was shocked when Isabelle asked me to hum the Chinese mourning music, to lament Mr. Stick who finally sacrificed his life to our campfire. I was rather reluctant but tried to hide it since it was hard for me to find a solid reason to refuse her request. I struggled for several seconds, passing unnoticed. To tell her it is not appropriate to do so in Chinese tradition? But I am in the U.S. now. To tell her I fear that it will incur bad luck? But this seems groundless. Courageously and hesitantly, I opened my mouth and finished the music in an abrupt and uneasy way. Then, in order to get rid of all these terrible feelings, I turned to Isabelle, asking her about the American version. "Amazing Grace is the name," she began and then readily went ahead. I was lost in the two words "Amazing Grace"...*

*The camping with my teacher and classmates in Cecilville last month is another antidote, especially humming the mourning songs around the campfire.*



And “amazing” and “grace,” the two words in the American version and Isabelle’s readiness to sing the song made death smoother in my mind. Besides, it is clear to me that death is inevitable even when I avoid talking about it and possibly the best way out of the haunting thing is to live in a delighted and meaningful way everyday. What’s more, I sensed I was physically and mentally stronger after the hiking to Hidden Lake since I made it, out of my expectation and with the support of my teacher and classmates, as well as Mr. Stick.

END

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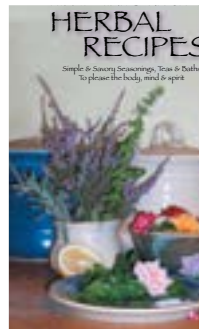
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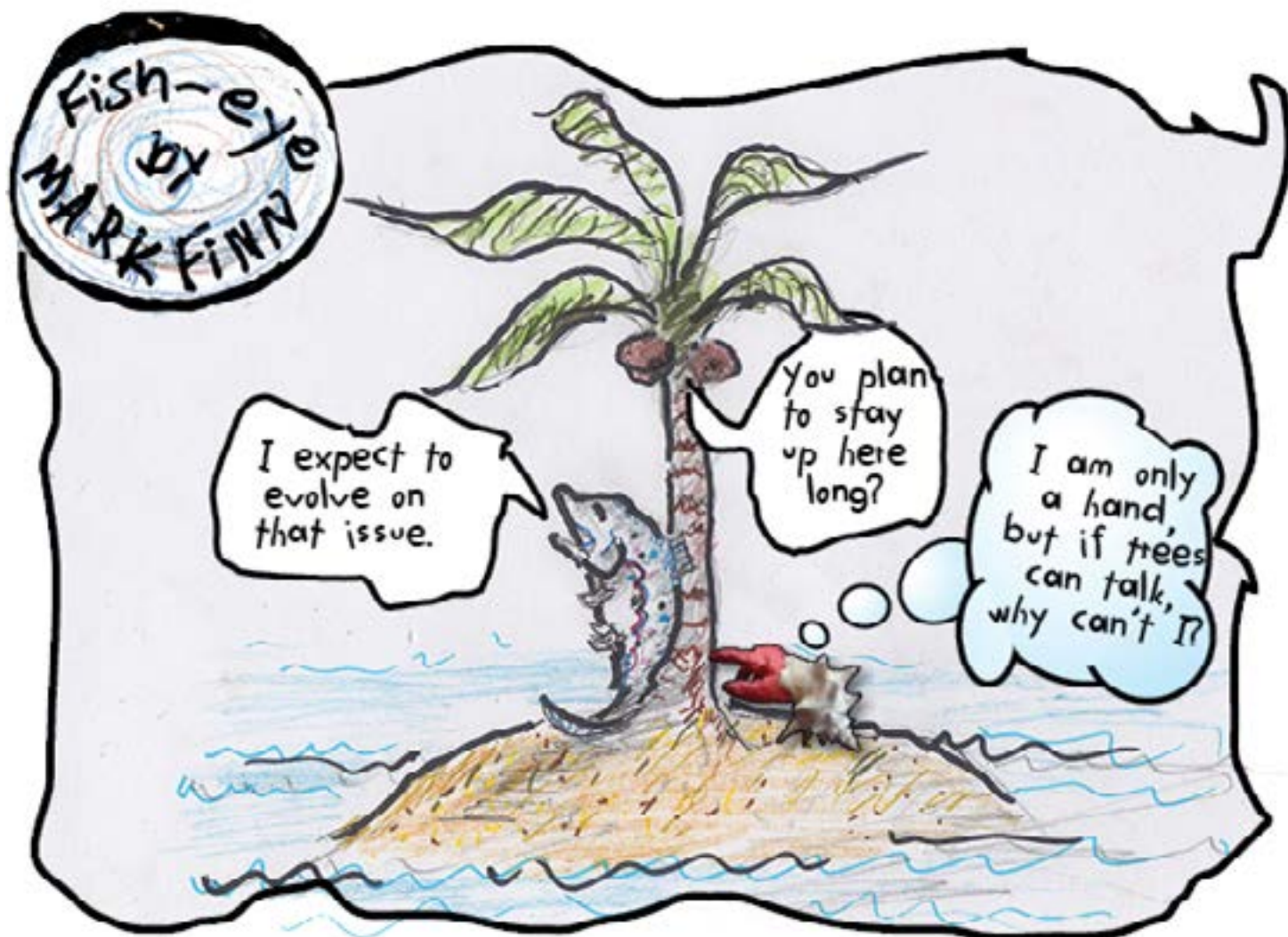
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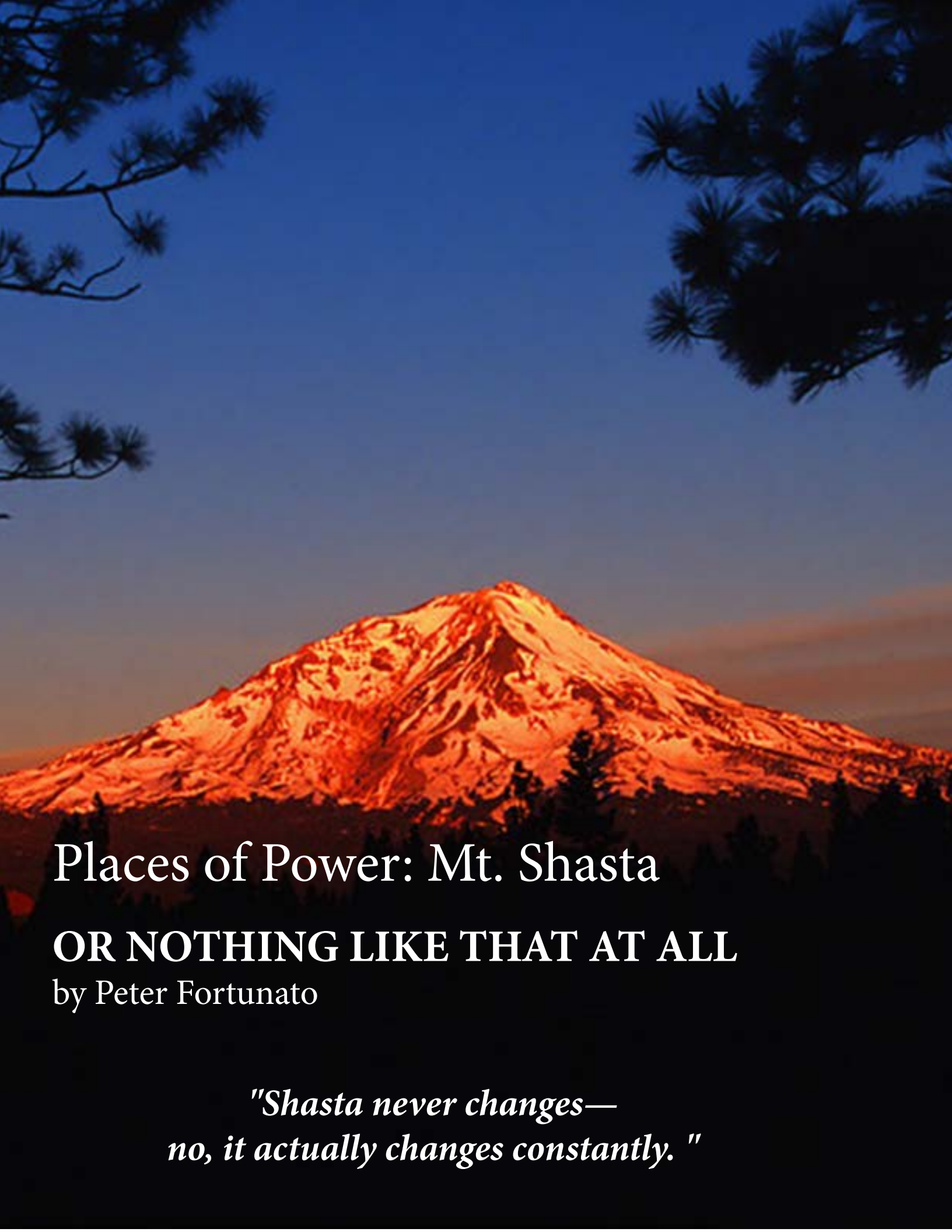
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Places of Power: Mt. Shasta  
**OR NOTHING LIKE THAT AT ALL**  
by Peter Fortunato

*"Shasta never changes—  
no, it actually changes constantly. "*



## OR NOTHING LIKE THAT AT ALL

by Peter Fortunato

I'm originally from Kansas, and that's why the name has stuck. A guy I met when I first hitchhiked to the Mountain started calling me that, and I liked it, and so on Shasta I became Kansas for keeps. That was my first time up there, 1976. I came down from the Mountain when Rinpoche arrived in the Bay Area, and there I made some new friends and we all stayed in the same house with him in the hills near Orinda. A lovely, friendly little town in those days—I wonder what it's like now?

Shasta never changes—no, it actually changes constantly. When I went back, there was a completely different set of people camping in the Rocks. Eventually, I would meet my wife Tara up there, and that's quite a story in itself. But what I mean is that its frequencies are always changing, the Sympathetic Waves, as my friend Doggy used to call them. It's like they come up through the soles of your feet—or maybe it's more like breathing or bathing, just being in those vibrations. I think the Mountain is like a big receiver for them, or else their generator. Okay. Enough of the New Age sounding stuff.

Back then, when we first met the Renegade Rinpoche, we all stopped smoking pot and taking LSD because he asked us to, but the Rinpoche really liked alcohol, which we thought was cool, and so we drank “Shiva's Regal” with him. He said, “Don't be stupid when you're drunk. Basic, basic.” I still use that expression with my students: Basic, basic. If you don't have the basics you can't really get very far.

He had us build a tree house, a tree house, up in the branches of a giant oak. Its first limbs were so far off the ground that we had to construct a scaffolding just to haul materials up into the arms—that's what he called the branches, and the way he said it sounded like “aums,” and soon enough we were all saying “aums,” and would crack up on our break times while we drank cold hibiscus tea in the oak tree's shade. After a while, he would smile and jut his chin toward

the sky and whisper “Om,” and we knew it was time to get back to work. A lot of it was hard work, on hot days, and a lot of the time we didn't know what we were doing, figuring it out as we went along, like nailing the frame together on the ground and then finding it wouldn't fit on the tree, and then banging the two-by-fours apart and starting over—bang. There wasn't a plan—actually, there were various plans, but they kept changing because Rinpoche wanted the house one way and then another. Thinking back all those years ago, I'm not sure if remember what we actually built, or the various versions that at one time or another we thought we were constructing.

He must have been around 60 years old then, but he's always seemed ageless, and he never talks very much about his past. We know he lost everything when the Chinese overran Tibet: his family, his monastery, his entire country. I always wondered if that was why, when he came to the West, he seemed a little mad—I don't mean angry, but slightly crazy, like some of the yogis in the old stories who don't give a shit what other people think. I liked it that he wore jeans and sandals and Western style, long-tailed plaid shirts with pearl snap buttons—untucked!—so that his chubby belly looked like it was going to burst free. When he laughed, you saw his beautiful, strong, white teeth. When he took off his straw cowboy hat to mop his head, you saw his cool crew-cut.

As his students worked together, we became better and better carpenters, banging our thumbs less and less often. We built a free standing stairway on wheels so that when we were done, the Master would be able to get up there easily. Of course, we called it “Stairway to Heaven”—in those days we were as irreverent as we liked and he condoned it, and surely that was one reason why so many hippy-trippy types gathered around him. The Renegade Rinpoche. Finally, we finished the tree house, or at least it was as done as we could do it with our meager skills. (But it must be said here that one of us, Luke Lebatte, went on to become an architect, and that it was Luke who eventually designed the temple in France.) There was copper roofing on two spires, pagoda-like, cut and bent and coaxed into shape by many hands and shined and coated with spe-

cial stuff so that when the sun was on it, the scene truly was fantastical.

But this is real, we used to say at such moments. This was made with love for the Master. I still sometimes spring a few tears when I see it in my mind's eye.

Finally, the day came when Rinpoche was to climb up into it. We had glass in the windows and hand sewn curtains, and on the floor a beautiful Persian carpet. The main room was detailed with trim work carved from the tree limbs that we'd had to lop in order to nestle the building into the aums. Selena Vourette led him by the hand up the stairway; for the occasion he was wearing a silk, saffron-colored robe, holding the hem high enough so that he wouldn't step on it, and I remember he had on a pair of turquoise blue running shoes that I'd bought for him in Berkeley. It's too bad we don't have any pictures, but people didn't take pictures of every single moment in their lives back then, and anyway, if you were there, you'll never forget it. He looked like he was floating up into a fairytale castle.

When he went into the sitting room, we were clumped together behind him, trying to see it through his eyes. He appraised every detail, nodding and smiling. But he didn't sit down on the gorgeous chair that Luke had fashioned from peeled limbs and studded with crystals I had brought with me from Shasta; spars of clear quartz arranged around the chair's backrest like sunrays. Rinpoche smiled and made a little bow to everybody, and then he turned around and Selena took his hand and he went back down, and as far as I know he never went up into the tree house again.

I don't know what became of it. The people on whose land it was always hoped he would come back to it someday. Maybe it's still there; I've often thought how far out it would be if you were a kid and happened to find it out in the hills in the middle of nowhere. Anybody would have wanted to stay there: kids or hippies or homeless. But not the Master. He went back to France shortly thereafter. I went back to Shasta.

To say I was disillusioned is not accurate. But I was confused. A wise man from the East had had his fun with us—and we had had our fun with him, too, and none of it drug induced, although there were those nights carousing with Shiva's Regal and on the mornings after having to meditate with big headaches. He said such experiences would help us to learn about the traditional prohibition against alcohol, whether or not we ever took formal Precepts. Don't act stupid. Basic, basic.

Then he'd gone and left us on our own.

We hadn't built him a gompa like the students of some other masters, or a retreat center, or an entire university like the Trungpa people did. There were several Americans who went to France with Rinpoche at that time, but there were also quite a few who thought they'd gotten all he had to teach them. People have many different ideas about Dharma practice, and to be sure, your particular Dharma—your way, your truth, your practice, whatever you call it—really is up to you. This means you have to live the karma you create. One way to test whether or not you're a true practitioner is to look at the things in your life, not only your sense of satisfaction, but also how you manage the obstacles that arise for you. Everybody has obstacles at some time or another, and they can be useful to your practice—that is, if you have the basics.

I ran into Selena not long ago and she told me that it was soon after they went back to France that things began to change. The serious people—there was always a circle of them, pressing as close to the Master as possible, and if you ask me, missing a lot of the humor—they got very serious, but Selena said in general the people who stayed in the community all started to grow. Some folks learned Tibetan and got advanced academic degrees so that they could do translations of important texts. Some students eventually became certified as lamas, that is, as teachers in Rinpoche's lineage. Many people worked on building the temple.

As I said, I went back to the Mountain to think



things over. The Mountain was home, and I needed her, like I needed the Milky Way streaming over my bed at night when I slept in the open. I didn't ever believe he was fraud like a few people said, or that he was a lunatic, or a cult leader looking for converts to support his trip. Having to abandon that glorious tree house, which we thought was more than a whim or folly (as such useless but decorative creations are sometimes called) and the memory of the work and money we all put into it, and afterwards having no claims on it, and Carrie and Arnold deciding that no one should be in it unless Rinpoche came back and told us exactly what to do—hell, that was a hard lesson in nonattachment. I really do wish I had a photograph, or some pictures of us while we were building it. We were all so happy. Our house in the sky with its shining spires, and inside a gorgeous Persian carpet Carrie had brought with her all the way from Tehran, and sitting on that, Luke's handmade throne sparkling with my crystals, but empty of Rinpoche.

When I went back to live in the Rocks I was using a little backpacking tent most of the time, about two years, sleeping under the stars whenever the weather permitted. I wasn't exactly solitary, but I lived alone and practiced solo. Well, sometimes, I didn't really do any formal practices at all, but simply tried to feel my way forward. Once, while following a deer that kept looking at me over its shoulder, I twisted my ankle so badly that I thought it was broken. Instead of getting to a doctor, I made a splint from some branches and eventually it healed. That was something—though maybe just another form of youthful folly. Maybe it turned out okay because of where I was at the time: a place of power like Mount Shasta can help you in all sorts of ways, and it's why seekers are drawn to such locales. Still, the energy can be overwhelming, and it magnifies your obscurations as well as your capacities.

Why hadn't he wanted the tree house after all the effort we put into it? I thought about the Tibetan teacher Marpa who made his disciple Milarepa build and then destroy a stone tower many times over in

order to prove himself a worthy student—was our karma so negative that it needed to be expiated by the rejection of our gift, and never a word of explanation? Was it all a form of collective madness?

Living on the Mountain during those years, I used to dream about UFO's quite often, and after one of those dreams I scared myself wondering if Rinpoche might be from another planet, and if in fact I was lucky to have escaped him. I've always wanted to be meet the Space Brothers, hoping they might teach me to help the people of Earth, and I've seen quite a few unidentifiable flying objects—a lot of folks on Shasta have. And there have been stranger things, things that are more important to me: like when I knew by watching the stars that he'd returned, and that Tara, who had never even heard of him, needed to come with me to the Bay Area and meet him. The first ride we hitched took us practically to Rinpoche's door.

***Basic, basic.***

***Rocks, bones, stars, sky.***

***Having the View, recognizing  
your own Real Nature.***

***Bang, and the Universe blinks on.***

***Bang, and everything changes.***

***Or nothing like that at all.***



Peter Fortunato, MFA, CHT, is a poet, painter and hypnotherapist. His website is [www.peterfortunato.wordpress.com](http://www.peterfortunato.wordpress.com). He is at work on a collection of linked stories, three of which have now appeared in *Metaphysical Times*.

*After a year in France we made our way home to America in a last wide sweep back through Provence, to say goodbye to friends there and to visit a few places we had missed. Our journey now had a destination, recommended to us as a center of some kind of special concentration of energy or a sacred place like the mountain near Pisa that Ezra Pound called Tai Shan:*

# Montségur







# Montségur

by David Rollow

At this site on top of a rocky outcropping a castle once stood that was the main stronghold of the Cathars, the heretics who were systematically wiped out in the Albigensian Crusade. At the time, I knew nothing about the Cathars. I went to Montsegur because a friend put it on the map for me.

The Albigensian Crusade began in 1209 and lasted officially until 1229. The fall of Montsegur, in 1244, was the end of the Cathars. The rounded rocky hill or “pogue” on which the castle ruins stand is steep-sided and resisted repeated sieges until attackers built a trebuchet on the eastern slope of the mountain. With their catapult the attackers were able to break through the barbican or gate in the outer wall and then to lay siege to the interior of the fortress. After its fall, the crusaders lit a giant bonfire at the base of the pogue and the believers reportedly jumped willingly into the flames.

It was a cruel crusade, the only one ever directed against Christians and the only one to take place in Europe. It was directed by the extremely

cold-blooded Arnold Amaury, who, asked at the siege of Beziers how to tell Cathars from ordinary Christians, said “Kill them all; God will sort them out.” 20,000 people died.

What is now the southwest corner of France was once Occitan, and at some point as you head west the current revival of the langue d’oc causes the road signs to change into that form of French, which has something in common with Catalan. The French language has two main strands, the langue d’oc and the langue d’oil. In the langue d’oil, they say “oui,” and in the langue d’oc, “si,” which one encounters today in Provence as an expression of disagreement, “but yes.” The region was once the home of some of the greatest figures of the age of the troubadours. The courts of some barons, such as Roger of Foix and Raymond of Toulouse, were home to both the troubadour cult of adultery and the Cathar faith, favored by the Barons’ wives. The region still has more in common with the Pyrenees and Catalonia than with France and without the Crusade might never have become a

part of France. Thus the Crusade can be said to have had two purposes, one to extirpate a heresy on the European continent that was a serious challenge to the authority of the church hierarchy, and the other to defeat a powerful faction of barons who challenged the French monarchy.

The eradication of the Cathars was so complete that very little is known of their beliefs with any certainty, but it would seem that they held a form of Manichean or Gnostic heresy, a dualism. Almost the only thing one can be sure of is that they had some connection to Manicheanism, believing the world to be the creation of a demiurge, not of God. Scholars suggest that this dualism originates in the obvious difference between the God of the Old Testament and the New—but which is the demiurge? This view has a natural tendency to lead in one of two directions, but unfortunately it is impossible to say which fork the Cathars took, unless they took both. One fork is toward the belief that the world of the senses, the creation of the demiurge, is evil; the other toward the belief that sensuality should be liberated from doctrinal restraints. Inquisitors accused the Cathars of obscene practices such as kissing cat's asses (supposedly a pun on "Cathar"), unrestrained orgies, and incest. The eastern branch, which may survive today in Bosnia as the Bogomils, or "friends of God," was known to some as the bougres, from which our word "bugger" derives; to some of their opponents their rejection of marriage meant they were homosexuals. If the corporeality of Christ is denied, perhaps the reality of the body in general is denied, as well; if so, what the body does is either the cause of all impurity or a matter of indifference.

Gnosticism is another word for this dualism, and gnosis refers to the knowledge of the initiated compared to the pistis of mere believers. There is solid evidence that the Cathars were divided into two such groups, and those known as the "Perfect" were the recipients of an initiation known as the consolamentum. The Perfect were also known as the Pure. But beyond that, all is pretty much speculation

and Inquisition propaganda. The Perfect are sometimes called the priests of Cathar faith, but their seeming rejection of the church hierarchy makes this improbable. They are more likely just initiates into the final mysteries of the faith, which have been forgotten.

What the Latin Church feared and opposed is clear. The Dominican opponents of the Cathars suspected them of challenging the authority of the whole priestly hierarchy, of denying the efficacy of sacraments, and of denying the corporality of Christ. Whatever the truth about the Cathars, they grew up in the tolerant climate of southern France's nobility, so they were suspected of licentiousness.

Ezra Pound visited the castle site on his 1911 fantasy-drenched walking tour of Provence but didn't climb the mountain until he returned years later, when he professed to see that the castle was a sun temple. Others have noted the same thing. The ruins on the site today are of a fortress built long after the Cathars were driven out, the third built on the site, and its fortunate alignment with sunrise has nothing to do with any cult of sun worship or with the Cathars. But it is undeniably a place of power.

The site certainly does look unassailable from below. As you start up the path to the castle, you seem to be climbing a sheer rock face. From some angles the pogue looks like other mountains but from its base it looks like one large, shoulderless boulder. Along my way up the path, I saw many little offerings, crosses, and crystals of amber and amethyst left on the climb by New-Age pilgrims. The revival of the Occitan language seems to have been accompanied by a revival of Catharism, although beliefs are now clearly up to the individual imagination. Freedom to make them up is presumably part of the appeal.

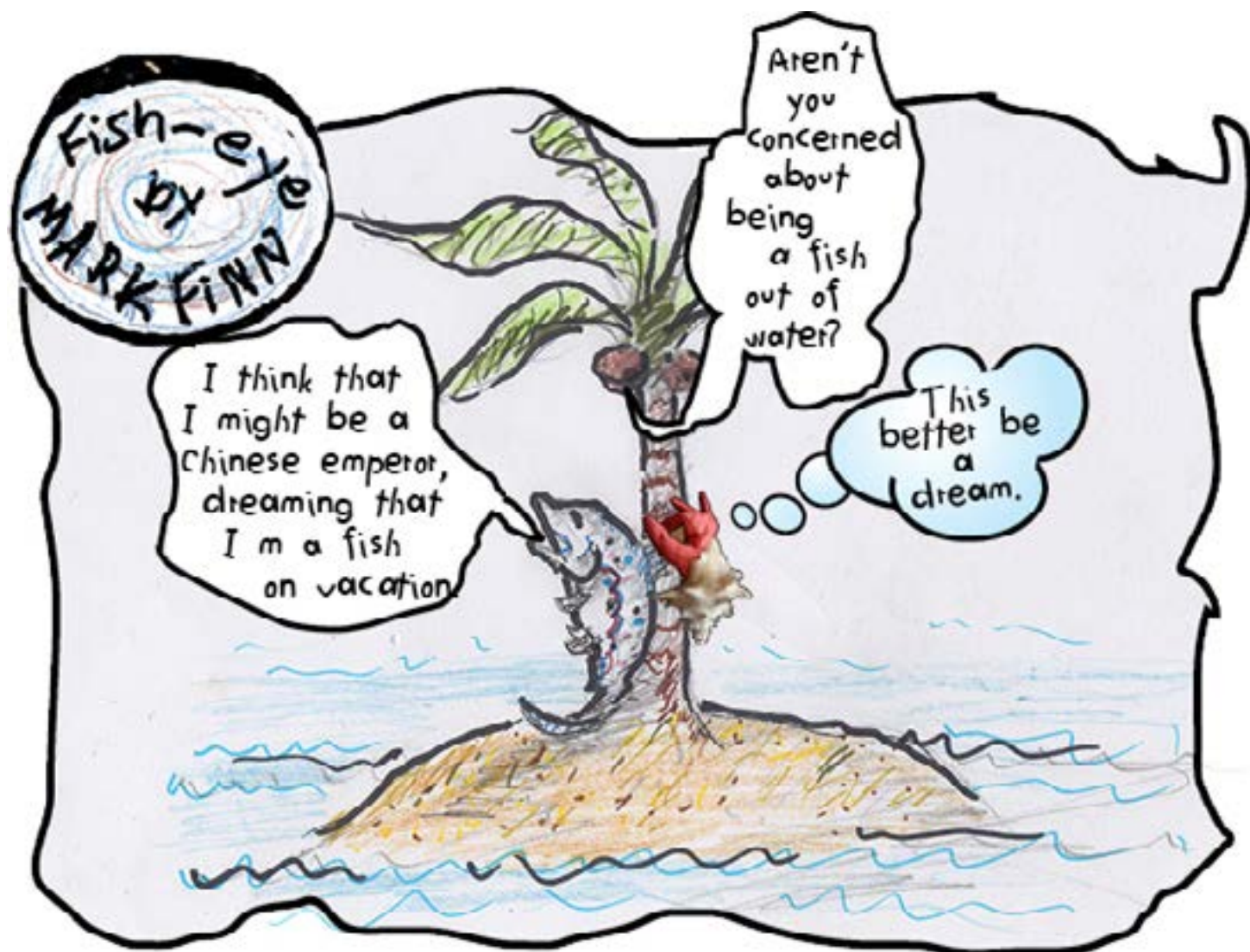
It was a hot, brilliantly clear day in May, already summer in this part of the world. The trail zigzags slowly to the summit and there one looks down into the ruins, which in spite of modern origins look medieval. There is a dungeon at the lowest level, and the windows are all archer's slits in three-



foot thick stone walls. The castle has no roof; holes for roofbeams can be seen in the walls. The castle stretches in a pair of long trapezoids, bending slightly at the joint. Looking down on it, you can easily believe that the “segur” part of its name stands for a vault in which the Cathars stored their bullion, but probably the name really indicates that the castle was thought to be a safe place of refuge for Cathar believers. Inside the castle walls at the last siege, 200 Cathar believers held out as long as they could.

We stayed that night in a campground associated with the site. There was one hippie attendant in the tickethouse, with a long beard that descended over his chest to a substantial belly. What language

he spoke we didn't learn, but he sold us tickets and we found a place to pitch our tent for the night on a sloping piece of ground among tall pines. By the time we set up camp the gatekeeper was gone and we were the only people in the place. The night we spent there was one of the eeriest of my life. I slept little because all night long the trees overhead resounded with the hoots of owls who resented our presence. By the small hours, I was convinced that the hoots were really the cries of the souls of the Cathar dead, who had never been freed from the site of the bonfire where they had died.





# Place of Power: The Brook

by Franklin Crawford



The most powerful place I've ever known isn't there any more except between my ears.

It was a flat swampy wetland with a brook flowing through it that once fed a shallow lake that Mom said she had skated on in long ago winter times. I imagined Mom skating in a mental newsreel, black and white and shaky; not a memory of my own at all but of something else I never knew but wish I did.

The lake had since been drained and filled so I only knew the leftovers that my older brother and his gang introduced me to. We just called it "The Brook" and it was the best thing I ever really did know.

It had distinct sections, one of which was an impenetrable marsh full of cottonwoods and hummocks surrounded by dark stinky muck the dog loved to explore. Not me.

My part of the brook was hemmed in on three sides by the lesser wonders of humankind: train tracks, a coal yard, auto places and a bar; there were other parts, but that

was my stomping ground. The stream was formed by two branches that flowed into it and ran a poor man's mile to the saltwater docks. The northeast branch gave my elementary school its name, Brook Avenue. That was always upstream and you'd have to be a serious scout to bushwhack that far and the road leading to the accessible part ran through a rough neighborhood I was smart to avoid.

The other branch seemed to come from a small pond not far north of the train tracks, a miniature lake once known for having bass, trout and pike; swans floated on it. There was a pretty split level house with a stone chimney beside the pond that I dream about now and then and the dream always starts real nice and quickly gets menacing and I have to stop it.

I only saw one pike in that pond and the size of it scared me. Swans were scary, too. They could grab a boy's foot and drag him under and drown him, I was told. I never trusted any kind of swan.

But in my brook there were colorful carp in a still water ditch perpendicular to the brook. They were big too and not scary at all. Some were a deep orange red, others more lemony red and some were calico clowns with black and red and white spots.

The only water birds were ducks and one time there was a scovie duck that me and my friends captured. He must've escaped from somebody's pen. He was very tame and lived at my house for a few months until a neighbor's dog killed it. I cried for days about that. His name was Waddles and he followed me around and liked to be carried, laying his long neck over my shoulder to be stroked.

We lived on the south shore of a Long Island hamlet and the brook emptied into a brackish inlet where a lot of people docked their boats. You could trap killifish there but I didn't care for fishing after I saw how painful it was for the fish. That was during a very poignant time in my childhood and it seemed to me everything was in some kind of pain, even trees, even the sky some days looked like a painting of pain. My brother without his glasses looked in pain. Mom always looked wistful, like something was pulling her away and Dad some times exploded in outbursts that pained all of us. My sister didn't seem so much in pain as at pains to do whatever it was she intended to do with herself which I found out was to get away from all the pain. It gave her a stern expression and a desire to save souls in the Congo and a commitment to painfully long rides in the green Rambler with plastic covered seats that belonged to Aunt Meada and Uncle Will. They were meek people, dry and dull as virtue and in a patient kind of sour pain all the way to the First Baptist Church of Babylon and back.

A line from a **Stephen Foster** song kept looping inside my head then:

*All the world is sad and weary*

Everywhere I roam.

Dammit to school! All it ever did was take me away from my dog and the brook.

I was only a kid, less than ten years old. Other songs bothered me too and I wish the stupid radio wasn't playing all the time growing up I might've been spared wondering about things like what answers the wind had to offer to questions I never would've thought up myself as in what sea did magic dragons puff alongside of? Dad said that was a fruitcake song about dope. I couldn't reconcile fruitcake with dragons. I'd find out about dope soon enough, though.

I spent an awful lot of time trying to not think about these things and to simply enjoy my dog and the brook. It worked

a magic on me like nothing since except, maybe ... Well. It doesn't matter. I can say now that I was in love with that brook and I always will be and I still miss my dog.

Time is not distance, I've learned.

Shit. I'm talking about a very brief period. The really bad things hadn't even happened yet -- not to me, anyway. I just had forebodings, premonitions, shivers. Bad things had happened to my Dad, sure. The war messed him up all kinds of ways but I thought heroes didn't get sad so if there was sadness or terror in the house I figured it was because I didn't know the answers. Which were in the wind. Which is a goddamned lie.

That has nothing to do with the brook. The brook was, as I read in a Golden Guide "teeming with life."

It was a squared-off area of maybe five acres bordered by the train tracks and a trestle to the north and Main Street to the south. The brook disappeared under Main Street and came out into the brackish waters behind the Ebb Tide Lounge and the backs of Main Street stores smelling sickly sweet like sewage. Did I tell you that already? So I did.

A man caught me emptying a killifish from a trap into the inlet. He was younger than my dad so he didn't frighten me. Plus he was one of those clean, new-looking people who were moving into places by the water. I didn't like his Alligator shirt and shiny creased pants. He wanted to know what the hell I "thought" I was doing.

"I think I'm letting them go," I said.

"What gives you the right to do that?"

"They are stuck."

"You stay the hell off my property. I catch you again I'll throw you in the water."

Rules were simpler back then. I didn't threaten to report him for child abuse like some smart ass might do nowadays. But it was news to me that someone could own any part of the water.

From then on I made sure the coast was clear before I freed any more killifish.

See? I just wanted to tell you a simple story about the most powerful place I ever knew but it's so powerful I can hardly begin to tell you before it starts moving through me and rising all around in every direction and recollections bob to the surface like from a wreck. Come to think of it, that's what the whole thing was: A wreck. I came into the wreck when it was listing heavily to starboard, but still upright. Then I watched it go down the rest of the way. Most of the natural good in this world was long gone before any of us



moderns came to be anyway. You can argue the logic of that with me and you might win but it wouldn't mean that what you were right. Logic isn't always truth.

Also: Thinking of the brook I see the eye of a hurricane. It was just as deceiving.

>>><<<

One way to enter the brook was from Lake Avenue, named for the lake that mom skated on that wasn't there. A high anchor fence surrounded the place but it was old and rusted and falling down and I flattened it some more.

Or you could come sliding down the railroad embankment just beyond the coal yard and the freight shunt. Or you could cut into one of two sides from Union Boulevard next to the brand new Elbow Room Tavern with its ample parking that buried a quarter acre of wetland that included: Snakes, three kinds of turtles, frogs, salamanders, muskrats, possums, coons, regular rats, field mice, dragon flies, dobson flies, crickets, grasshoppers, red winged blackbirds, bluebirds, crows, hawks, starlings, carps, shiners, eels, oaks, willows, poplars, birches and swamp maples and every form of pond life you can look up and see for yourself in the Little Golden Guide to Pond Life. All so some asshole swingers with mullets and wide lapels could get sloshed and play pool. The stamp of Eden lay ruined beneath that parking lot and when I think about how much stuff is under parking lots and shit-hole places everywhere I about want to explode. Of course it's not fair to hate all of humanity because of what happened to the brook. But it's a start in that direction. More recent atrocities should get you the rest of the way.

And I'm not even counting the microscopic brook things that are gone forever, or the golden grasses that Alabama Carl rolled around in one afternoon as happy as a sharecropper's son ever would be. That's another story for sure.

Even so. I'm describing how a power place came to shape my cast of mind. Fate's what happens to all of us; destiny's what happened to me. It's clear now that the two converged in the brook. I'm glad I had a dog with me. I'm glad that dog was the noble resilient mutt we nicknamed The Beef. Amen. That dog did not fear fate until the very end (lord forgive me) he didn't give a steaming crap about destiny so long as it involved exploring a doomed wetland with a boy who didn't, wouldn't and still doesn't know any better. That and the promise of some chow back home when day is done and The Beef was solid. I wonder if it is still that way anywhere. Maybe it is. Maybe it ain't. But that brook is preserved in my skull like a goddamned national treasure. Like a bug in amber. I wrote some doggerel about about that.

*The pointless point that we pursue*

*The fly encased in amber knew*

*One wrong move*

*And I'm stuck in goo*

*There but for the grace of god*

*Go you.*

Another way in: The really swampy side of the brook that hadn't been drained, from behind the Goodyear tire place. It meant maybe catching crap from one of the grease monkeys working there but it led you to the hard-to-reach side of the carp and painted turtle ditch. Why people give a shit about a kid and his dog going into a brook I don't understand but you could bust in past those idiots and their barrels of oil and stacks of tires and car guts and keep going till the lug nut drilling stopped feeling personal. The sound penetrated every part of the brook but traffic sounds and trains and planes overhead didn't matter at all inside the brook. The brook was an insular, self-contained world and I might as well been deaf when I was in there.

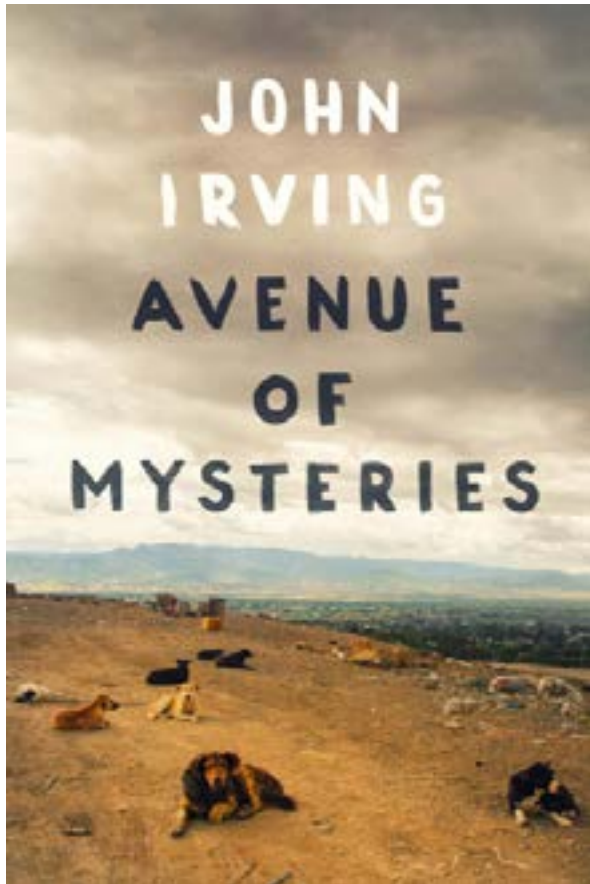
From the Lake Ave dead end the path opened wide and narrowed fast at a bend where the ground got sandy like beach sand only the pebbles were bigger and the tall fluffy marsh reeds sashayed and blackbird cavorted in the sumacs overhead with the dog crashing into the reeds and muck excited as hell after I don't know what. He'd thrash around and smash ahead of me and then circle around till we got to the brook itself with its sandbanks and stunted willows and the enormous cluster of yellow and purple flag iris near the trestle and it was all you could want and more than you could take if there weren't any big kids or freaks in there to break the spell.

I wasn't supposed to go to the brook alone. If Mom saw me going out the door she'd tell me to not play in the brook. I'd say okay sure we're just going up the street and that was that. If it weren't for us coming back so stinking muddy nothing much would ever have been said. She was an excellent housekeeper and wet dogs and dirty boys are enemies of order. It was the bums and railroad workers who camped and drank there my father was most worried about. He said they kidnapped little boys and sure enough they could be scary but the dog kept them off me the few times I ever ran into them. What Dad was really worried about was me getting buggered by one of them. That such was a possibility didn't occur to me until I was a grown man and the brook was nothing but piles of dirty fill.

END OF EXCERPT

# Avenue of Mysteries

by John Irving



In *Avenue of Mysteries*, Juan Diego—a fourteen-year-old boy, who was born and grew up in Mexico—has a thirteen-year-old sister. Her name is Lupe, and she thinks she sees what's coming—specifically, her own future and her brother's. Lupe is a mind reader; she doesn't know what everyone is thinking, but she knows what most people are thinking. Regarding what has happened, as opposed to what will, Lupe is usually right about the past; without your telling her, she knows all the worst things that have happened to you.

Lupe doesn't know the future as accurately. But consider what a terrible burden it is, if you believe you know the future—especially your own future, or, even worse, the future of someone you love. What might a thirteen-year-old girl be driven to do, if she thought she could change the future?

As an older man, Juan Diego will take a trip to the Philippines, but what travels with him are his dreams and memories; he is most alive in his childhood and early adolescence in Mexico. As we grow older—most of all, in what we remember and what we dream—we live in the past. Sometimes, we live more vividly in the past than in the present.

*Avenue of Mysteries* is the story of what happens to Juan Diego in the Philippines, where what happened to him in the past—in Mexico—collides with his future. -

**John Irving** returns to the themes that established him as one of our most admired and beloved authors in this absorbing novel of fate and memory.



SIMON & SCHUSTER

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- See more at: <http://books.simonandschuster.com/Avenue-of-Mysteries/John-Irving/9781451664164#sthash.X05JoKRm.dpuf>



# A Note from Gabriel Orgrease

In the 70's I was known in Tompkins County as someone that had an interest to play with stones and this fellow wanted to find a particular boulder to set on some property in **Ellis Hollow** at the northeast quadrant at the corner of **Turkey Hill Road and Ellis Hollow Road**. He explained there was a confluence of ley lines in the area and that it was full of power. He wanted to place a boulder at the intersection to make it even more powerful a meditation space. This was, as I recall, to be called something like **The Temple of Light**.

**One boulder did not seem like so much of a problem. I volunteered to help him gratis.**

So, we went up to the gravel pit in Brooktondale, this was way before it went off-limits corporate. Lots of boulders for easy picking. Used to be we could go up there and shoot beer cans with my stepfather and his pistols. **But this time around my new friend pulled out a crystal of quartz on a chain as we wandered around from one boulder to another. It was cool and reminded me of a water dowser my grandfather had once hired.** The guy dangled his crystal around. Eventually we found this humungous boulder that he and his crystal liked.



***My first thought was how I would get it into the bed of the truck.***

But it got worse, he wanted a portion of it split off. We had a bit of a tussle over that. I explained to him that there was a bedding plane to the igneous boulder (likely granite) and that I could split it off in one direction, but not in any other. **His pendulum requested otherwise.** One needs to work with the spirit of the stone and here we had two stones arguing with each other. A little bitty one the guy could carry in his pocket, and a large one that could get me a hernia to move it around without equipment.

Eventually we settled down and I split the stone in the manner that the stone wanted to be split. I imagine the crystal was unhappy on the trip over the hill. When we got to where the boulder was to be placed the crystal was dangled around a bit more until all the ley line power clicked into place.

***I went home.***

## PRAIRIE LAKE

We would drive the buggy where  
apart from the wheel tracks  
we'd left last week  
there was no trace of anyone  
the land was so very flat  
in all directions  
we must unknowingly have crossed  
one horizon after another

we might have been  
let down from an angel chariot  
for all the time  
that distance seemed to take  
your summons uplifted me  
when the horse had its head  
the prairie just rolled back  
as steady as knitting

and in that pleasure  
the body takes when it is  
inured to hunger  
and the fierce desires  
in the renewed  
appearance of tranquility  
in each moved moment  
we rehearsed our satisfaction

over and over so that  
later I would find myself  
repeating it even in my sleep  
where there could be no expectation  
of sharing it with you  
how your call abides  
that invited me  
to look from that grassy shore

across a blind eye of water  
with the ducks returning as  
soon as our carriage-sounds stop  
in a line that flattens as the surface  
approaches beneath it  
only to spill apart  
and splash into several gratitudes  
at the last moment

Chris MacCormick

## Wake Me

In the treeless light of Delos  
mullein flowers burn round  
and the stone lions  
have waited so long  
some have lost their smiles,  
others their heads.

In Eleusinian bus exhaust  
rain beads like wax  
drops along a candle  
toward the smashed ruins.

In Samaria the temples  
are not slabs of stone.  
Water cold as fire  
channels the gorge.

In the neglect at Dodona  
Persephone has burned  
to a shade thinner than sorrow  
and fled to the caverns  
leaving a painted turtle  
to stare down the lizards.

**Mary Gilliland**

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The Stone  
at the End  
of the World  
is the Place





## The Stone at the Old Same-Place

by David S. Warren

The Old Same-Place, as we called it when we lived there in the seventies, was a nineteenth-century farm house next to a small, unmowed cemetery under tall White Pines as old as the stones where Black-cap Raspberries thrived in a couple of patches. Wild Morning Glory vines hooded the tomb stones and climbed the old pines to their first branches twenty or thirty feet above the ground. The old Pines had grown so large that their sprawling roots tilted the vine-hooded tombstones so that they seemed to be running away

One morning I was poking into the cemetery with my dog Kasha to check on some ripening BlackCap berries in which Kasha had no interest, she lay down in patch of Morning Glory vines near a stone I had never noticed before. It was mostly obscured by the vines but the thing was bigger than a bowling ball and glowing red.

I bent to it and parted the vines, opening what looked an eye an eye with a deep fire in it. Was that a reflection of the sun and were those clouds I saw swirling in the stone? Suddenly I didn't know where I was, whether I was within or without, nor, for that matter, who I was.

I heard a roaring in my ears, or was it nothing?  
The sound of me being sucked through that eye to the center of being or nothingness? Help!

It could be that my dog Kasha heard the roar too, or maybe my stunned face alarmed her; because she began barking, which freed me from the spell of unwilling concentration, and was able to turn away and rest my eyes on the grey slate tombstones around me.

When I looked back ever so glancingly at the stone, it no longer seemed to be actually glowing. But almost.

I blinked the vines back over the stone for the time being, but because of that disturbing first experience, (when I had not been taking drugs and wasn't totally unhinged), I continued to be fascinated by the stone and returned to it often, opening the vine-lids considerably. The stone was very polished, translucent, and

globular for a natural occurring stone .. and yet it was not a perfect globe; having a few swells and dimples like a moon, and a semi-flat area like a base, seat ... or a screen.

The obvious first explanation for such an almost perfectly rounded stone of that size appearing where it did, is that it was made to sit on top of those towers you see for marble globes in gardens and cemeteries, but there was no pedestal stone in this cemetery, and that stone was not perfect enough to have been made for that purpose.

Some people would want to hear no more before assuring me that this was a celestial arrival from an alien planet, a sort of cyst set to erupt with spore beings that will take over your body and turn you into a mushroom farm. Or maybe it was an eye camera sent by other aliens. Or, along slightly more likely lines, maybe it was the reminiscent heart of a nearly burnt-out meteor.

I don't know about aliens, but I knew that a meteor makes a deep crater when it hits, and so would not come popping up in a cemetery.

I had made it through an introductory geology course and understood that years and years ago, before this millennium, before dogs and the horse-faced humans even, back when snow had fallen for so long without stopping that the weight of it on top of itself packed it into a mile thick sheet of ice, and it kept on snowing, and then it snowed some more, pushing that ice down over the face of the world, moving, grinding and gouging its way over and through the mountains. You know the story.

I supposed that stone to be part of some Adirondack or Laurntian mountain, broken off by the great glacier, over which it moved as on ball bearings, until the rough bolder had become so nearly perfect.

Perhaps it would have gotten to be more perfect if that ice age had not ended, and an age of global warming begun. The glaciers melted, dropped their stone loads, and began a slow retreat, leaving a lake of which the Great Lakes are remaining puddles.

In recent years, Paleontologists have discovered the fossil remains of giant beavers, quite like those of today, except they were big as Bears.

But to this day the existences of a primitive people in association with them has pretty much escaped notice even by people who just like the idea. It would be easy enough even for a scientist or a hunter not to notice one of the “Yellow” People, as they have been called because of the chameleon quality of their skin, which seems to become mottled with the colors of their immediate surroundings ranging from puddle water blue to Aspen leaf yellow, and, even if they were always totally yellow as Chanterelle Mushrooms, you might not notice one of the Yellow People, because they themselves are seldom as large as a groundhog .

They live in burrows and Beaver lodges, and they wear boots made out of Dog feet. I do not ask you to believe in the little Yellow People as they have been called, or to believe everything just because I say it; this the stone told me:

Years and Ages and Epochs ago people lived along the lakes where the glacier stopped and spent long winters telling history. Their ancestors, they knew had come from the south and driven out the Algonquians but the Algonquians themselves had vanquished or eliminated tribes before them, but nothing was known about the little yellow people who had stopped the glacier and lived with the great big Beavers.

Until one day a boy whose name I do not know .... call him Bearfoot ... was on a bird hunt when he crossed a Bear track and diverted to follow it. It may be that he was of the Bear Clan himself and merely wanted to have some significant contact with Brother Bear, which would give him bragging rights in the Long House, or maybe he was from the Wolf Clan and wanted only to say he had snuck up on the Bear, kicked it in the buttocks, and gotten away. Or maybe he only meant to do everything except actually kick the Bear in the butt, then go home and say he did.

Meanwhile back at the story, Bearfoot, lost the track in a swamp, and had entirely lost his way as well, but still carrying a string of three Grouse over his shoulder, he came to a flat-topped, rounded stone in a mossy forest and, laying his string of birds beside it, sat on the stone to rest and eat his lunch. He pulled his feet up under him and looked up inside his head for just moment and then he heard a voice which came from nowhere and traveled up his back. Or maybe it came from the stone; it was not

a stoney voice or even a gravelly one, it had a deep watery quality The voice said,

“Do you want to hear a story?”

Bearfoot’s mouth dropped open, but no words came out.

After a moment measureless to the boy, the voice from somewhere repeated. “Do you want to hear a story?”

The voice was undeniable, not in his head, more like in his body and not all that easy to interpret, but he knew for sure that he did want to hear a story, so

“Yes”, he said.

“Then stand off me and give me your birds,” the stone said.

Bearfoot sprang to his feet and lay the string of



Grouse upon it.

At that there was a sort of rumble like a cave clearing it’s throat and the boy stood as still as a tree told, about the world when it was a fire and then of an age when it was ice, then of an age when mountains were pushed up and when they were ground down and scattered around, much as we have told it here; except that it took a long long time in the stone version, which included much grumbling and rumbling as of mountains moving over each other.

At last that day the voice said that there was no time for more of the story right then, but that it would continue the story if the boy returned the next day bringing more birds as gifts.

So the boy hunted quickly the next day and brought more birds to the stone, for which it told the boy of the small, yellow people who had originally lived in the great chasm before they filled with water, and then retreated to the gorges until one called "Old Man" wandered away from them and, mating with a woman from the sky, started a new race which, because they didn't know where they had come from, cannibalized the yellow people until they themselves were all but one eaten by ravening bears out of the north. In the time it took to tell that much, another day had nearly passed.

On the third day the stone told the boy of his own people, descended from the one survivor of the people who were eaten by bears and from a woman of the West who brought corn, squash and plums. Then it told him the stories of all the clans and the clan animals, until another day had passed.

The boy was supposed to be hunting birds, but each day he had been bringing fewer and fewer to the long house, saying that he had already killed most of the birds near the village and so had to spend all his time getting to where the birds were and then back again. The clan mother didn't believe this story, so she had two scouts follow the boy. They saw the boy in conversation with the rumbling stone.

The boy was confronted with this information and he confessed it was true, so then the scouts, the clan mothers, and several of the warriors carrying gifts of corn, plums, and Duck eggs accompanied the boy to the place of the stone.

The stone trembled and, through Bearfoot began a story about how in the beginning were the Dogs,



or rather, One Great Dog, before there were people, cats, or birds.

It is a long story, never reaching the present, even back then, on and on, with only him to translate from the stone, until Bearfoot the boy became an old man with a cracking voice.

And so old Bearfoot taught the stories to another boy who years later passed them on to another, and so it went on through generations, often to tellers who memorized the stories but could not really hear the stone.

Petitioners who presented the largest gifts to the Story Telling Stone often hoped to hurry the stone through its stories and past the present into an account of the future, but every time, well before it got to the future, the story would start all over at the be-



ginning, before Dog even, when the world was just fire and ice.

The rest is history, and you know the story: the big white people came to the area and were soon at war with each other and the natives. During the war of American revolution, George Washington's soldiers chopped down the Iroquois orchards and burnt the villages.

With no one there to hear its stories, it was silent. The humus built up by the years of food, fish, and game offerings made such a rich rooting place around the stone that billows of moss soon surged up its sides, cover it to the very top. Eventually an oak took hold in the moss, grew up, and locked the stone in its roots.

leaning, rooted out by gnarling pines. Myrtle and persistent morning glory vines clambered over much of graveyard and completely hid the forgotten storytelling stone.



# Places of Power: Fiction

## "My name is TV Ed, and I'm an Ancient Astronaut"



For a brief period after Al Gore had grown a shame beard, some Ancient Astronauts set-up a breeding program in Ithaxacopetl. Here is some evidence of their activities. Note the faded AA beside the alleged "Monster Head" which is really an ancient tattoo found on wine sacks recently re-discovered in China and originally produced on TV Ed's home planet.

by Franklin Crawford

Before Alcoholic Anonymous, or AA, there were Ancient Astronauts, the first-ever AAs. I met some of them when I was drinking spiked Mother's Milk in a far away Power Place called The Womb and later, after getting deported, at the Friday night Mensa meeting in Halifax.

They were a fast-talking fun-loving crowd but none too clever given they chose Earth as a crash pad. That was their big mistake and a dead give-away that these so-called Ancient Astronauts were on the interstellar lam and just looking for a new place to party.

### **How this relates to Power Places in a moment.**

First, let's consider Mars.

Mars was inhabited by these Ancient Astronauts, right? And they drank a lot, see? On Mars, Happy Hour was one hour longer than a 60 Minutes segment in Braille. That's because on Mars there are twenty-five hours a day. But don't get excited: The place is a giant detox center now. You really wanna dry-out? Go to Mars.

### **Lissen:**

I'm about to tell you something I didn't learn from TV Ed, a former radio and telecommunications repairman with whom my father happened to be on the same frequency. That frequency peaked in the Ebb Tide Tap Room where Dad first encountered TV Ed and learned that the stranded Martian had lost his Earth-family owing to an affinity for cheap suds and speed-rack gin. More importantly to Dad, who was ever on the lookout for promising start-ups, Mr. Ed was getting evicted from his storefront TV and Radio Repair Shop as well.

The opportunity to cash in on an Extra-Terrestrial misfortune proved greater than my father's distrust of foreigners and he invited TV Ed with all his toys tools and gadgets to stay in his carpentry shop for a nominal sum that was never paid in full because TV Ed drank like dad and alcohol costs money.

On Mars, alcohol was free There, it was Oxygen that cost you.

Rarely beyond arm's reach of a beer and a bottle of popskull, the skinny Martian in the soiled tee shirt artillery green utility pants and Pall Mall pasted on his bloody lower lip, this TV Ed, plied his mysterious craft

behind a wall of radio and TV units that belonged to some former customers, also from Mars, who were anxious to have their items returned as they used them for guiding other Ancient Astronauts to refueling stations on Earth also known as Power Bars. This put a lot of pressure on TV Ed and he did not sleep in peace on the cot beneath the taxidermied sailfish that grandpa Houndstooth caught from a charter boat off the coast of Fort Lauderdale.

It was serendipitous that I should be introduced to Ancient Astronauts personally by TV Ed, who on a bitter February night in 1974 crouched inside a gutted Magnavox cabinet and directed my attention to any number of little phosphorescent jellyfish coursing a fevered circuit along an invisible arc between rabbit ear antennae up, up, up an insulated wire across the asbestos ceiling then leaping from a broken fixture onto the sailfish bill presently crawling inside the lacquered trophy where they conspired against TV Ed's efforts to overcome economic insecurity.

I'm a visual learner so I felt cheated to not see these bright beings and complained. An expert in TV repair should, I thought, produce a vivid picture of the proceedings. TV Ed dismissed my lack of vision in severe tones saying that given the quantity of fruit bats and Jujubes clogging my eye sockets it was surprising I saw anything at all. This insult shocked me so much I immediately reported it to Dad and Dad said "why that phony sonofabitch has got the DTs." I'd never heard of the DTs but it sounded like TV Ed had a lot of them, too many to contain inside himself, so they took to trafficking around Dad's shop in riots of day glow color.

TV Ed did not last as long as lodgers in need of safe tuck ought to. He outlived maybe three countless Earthling binges before getting the boot. I mean Dad literally kicked his ass right the hell off the property and into the streets. Ancient Astronauts from Mars, at least in our atmosphere, are possessed of no special powers except that of thirst.

**All of which is to say that TV Ed  
did not tell me the following:**

## **The Earth is a giant Power Station!**

This I learned from the very thing that would make TV Ed's life a misery, namely, Internet Television.

But just to finish off what I learned from TV Ed: There is no life as we know it on Mars because most Martians

drank themselves to death. Apparently, unlimited access to free drugs and alcohol is what makes their planet so red. Survivors, armed with the gift of desperation, made it to Earth and that's why AA membership numbers are up these days. They got here in lunar nodules housed in empty bottles. And that's why, to this day, rockets are shaped like bottles and vice versa.

More vital to our national security is this post-truth: **The Earth is a big fat EverReady battery.** You betcha. You can tell by lining up the pyramidal Power Places on Earth using chaos software and something as simple as a 1950s Zenith TV screen such as TV Ed used to contact his hallucinations.

***Bust my afterlife if the Ley Lines connecting these Power Places don't form a lattice work — a veridical Geodetic Matrix! Upon close inspection, it's easy to see where humans got the idea for making chicken wire.***

Wait! There's more: Each of these sites on our planet are occupied by — YOU GUESSED IT!

## **Gender Neutral Toilets.**

Further, they are handicapped accessible if you happen to be an Ancient Disabled Astronaut (ADA) with scuba training.

Isn't that a pip? I mean, how do you like them apples?

Almost as importantly, these Geodetic comfort stations (the biggest heads are underneath Hong Kong, Moscow and Midtown Manhattan, respectively) are covered with 1970s-style petroglyphs.

Where do you think you can find one that is not submerged? (Cue didgeridoo bubbling):

Right here! In Ithaxacopetl where, as I write, Ancient Astronauts are zipping around in hybrid cars desperate for a bottle of port and a portal for to get their batteries juiced on a Sunday night.

**To say we've come a long way is to utter something even more meaningless than everything you've read up until now and if you have you'll know that the only true Power Place anywhere on Earth is between your ears so duck and cover accordingly.**  
>>><<<

Franklin Crawford is a recovering Martian living in a fancy pants refrigerator box somewhere near Shit's Creek, NY. He is a standing member of the Ithaca Order of Ancient Astronauts. Lucky Powerball numbers: 4, 9, 18, 29. You pick the rest. Favorite Fortune Cookie Saying he's never read: Sparkle Suckers, This is Life





# Places of Power: the texture of Music

## The Texture of Music

by Peter Wetherbee

As a musician, audio engineer, and listener, I would like to define beauty in sound. What is it that makes something sound good? What is my favorite kind of music? If there could possibly be such a defining measuring stick, how would one quantify the magnitude of a given piece of art or music, the depth of beauty, or the absolute weight of meaning in the artistic gesture or statement?

I would like to call this magical sweet spot the location of power in music.

Where to start the map? I like music that's slow; too fast and there is a kind of cheap adrenaline element which is easy to fake. I like soul music with feeling; pushing the boundaries between pain and pleasure, sweet and nasty, and never giving too much overt attention to technical elements or even thought. If it's consciously preoccupied with technique, then it will lack the profound commitment and conviction of the intuitive, the power of the duende, the transcendent edge of higher powers guiding the artistic act. Virtuosity is a wonderful thing (don't get me wrong -- some of the DIY excitement in the 1980s created a cult of mediocrity that really sucked) as long as it doesn't come at the expense of soulful expression.

The best music also has to have a pocket. in terms of location as power, let's say the latitude and longitude if it was a geographical metaphor.

It doesn't matter if it's a raw funk groove, a meditative sitar improvisation, an organ fugue, or a majestic horn solo; it's got to swing, or it don't mean nothin' -- and rigidity or stiffness is the kiss of death. Finally, it has to have an integral, textural, \*complexity\* which engages the ear in and of itself. This timbral element ideally evokes the sense that something is "smooth," "raw," "juicy," "fat," "warm," or any number of vague but pleasing abstractions; hopefully it's not "harsh," "brittle," "sterile," or anything else that doesn't soothe the earhole. The sweet guitar tones of BB King, the sound of a perfectly balanced string section in an orchestra, the rasp of an old blues singer's voice, and the timbre of Tuvan throat-singers or the overblowing of a sufi flute [see kudsi erguner, cmp records or peter gabriel "so"] are all examples of profoundly textural sounds. Textural sounds resonate in our aesthetic receptors in ways that can be likened to the appreciation of tactile sensations, like touching velvet, glass, granite, or a peach. Tone, timbre, and texture are elusive elements found in varying degrees in any sound.

There are two common technical definitions for "texture" in music. The first has to do with compositional ideas



of arrangement, density, intervals between notes, and choices in instrumentation. Scholars of European music refer to the differences in texture between, say, the Baroque and Romantic eras. There is a wonderful overview on the history of Western music called *Listen*, which is written by **Joseph Kerman**. I highly recommend the “second brief edition” (1992), from which the following description is taken:

*Texture is the term used to refer to the blend of the various sounds and melodic lines occurring simultaneously in a piece of music. The word is adopted from textiles, where it refers to the weave of various threads -- loose or tight, even or mixed. A cloth such as tweed for instance, leaves different threads clearly visible. In fine silk, the weave is so tight and smooth that the individual constituent thread are hard to detect.*

Some ideas of texture in composition are related to ideas about space in a piece of music as well (the space between threads in the fabric analogy, perhaps representing the notes in a chord or amounts of silence between consecutive notes, for example). The different kinds of threads in a fabric will each have their own respective textures as well, as exhibited by the difference between wool yarn and cotton string, a rope made of nylon or one of hemp, or the mesh of a window screen as opposed to that of a spider web.

Dig the tactile changes in each of these examples when they are wetted with water or oil; the common use of the term “wet” in recording studio jargon refers to the application of reverberation or delay effects to a “dry” (untreated) sound.

We are now in the location of power.

Typically the use of these spatial reverberant effects gives a sound a natural ambiance within the sound field. Moisture in the air in the sky -- water in space -- refracts the white light of the sun into a rainbow if the conditions are right. The second widely-accepted definition of texture has to do with the presence of overtones, which **Kerman** introduces in the following way:

*The timbre or quality of sound, also called tone ‘color,’ depends on the amount and proportion of the overtones. In a flute, the air column vibrates strongly along its total length and not much in halves or quarters, so there are few overtones. Violin strings, on the other hand, vibrate simultaneously in many subsegments, so that violin sound is rich in overtones. This is what accounts for the relatively thin, “white” tone color of the flute and the warm, rich tone color of the violin.*

This statement touches on a lot of ideas, including the notion that sound can have a “color,” which can be related to the amount of overtone elements in a sound. White light is the result of all colors of light appearing in simultaneous and equal amounts.

The analogue to white light in sound, “white noise,” is, likewise, the presence of all frequency bands across the audible spectrum in equal amounts. From the shrillest squeak of a mouse to the lowest rumblings of a subway through layers of concrete, with every frequency between, white noise sounds like a full-spectrum hiss/hum. It might be best represented in nature by a perfectly balanced combination of roaring surf, crashing thunder, buzzing rain forest dusk, and howling wind: pure noise.

Kudzu Erguner and “noise” components of wooden flute/ney sounds respectively are variations on fairly broadband noise, serving a textural purpose similar to the presence of harmonics in the violin tone by adding something to fatten up the pure sound of the instrument with harmonic overtones which work to generate texture.

The sound of an acoustic guitar can be very rich and warm, especially if the right voicings of chords are played and allowed to ring freely and sustain. The textural qualities of note clusters, or even just double-stops, generate overtones which lend to the timbral quality of each note. If an open string is stuck hard, and allowed to vibrate for a few moments, the overtones (typically the octave, then the fifth, then the fourth, etc.) will ring.

Brushing a finger lightly down a string of my viola (or violin, ‘cello, etc.) from bridge to nut, while bowing the string lightly, generates a series of “overtone” notes. This is the same series of harmonic overtones, unfettered, in the case of a stringed instrument, by the “corrective” influences of just intonation. It is the amount of these overtones, blended with the pure root tone of each note, that is a primary contributor to the characteristic timbre of a given instrument. In this case, timbre is synonymous with texture, which is sometimes referred to as the color of a tone.

Because there are defined spectra of human capability to hear and see, it is possible to create a direct mathematical relationship between the frequencies of sound and light. Most often, references to the color of a sound are abstract and subjective, and don’t serve to get us any closer to defining or quantifying texture. This by no means is

to say that color is not important or a very real way to talk about sound, however [*Machlin, The Enjoyment of Music*: p.34-35]:

*...an idea may come to a composer's mind clothed in a definite instrumental color, for which none other will do. In essence the composer is motivated by the same principle that makes the painter choose now oils, now water colors or etching. The nature of the thing to be said demands one medium rather than another...tone color is not something that is grafted on to the musical conception; it is part and parcel of the idea, as inseparable from it as are its harmony and rhythm. Timbre is more than an element of sensuous charm that is added to a work; it is one of the shaping forces in music.*

Ask anyone what timbre is and they'll tell you it's how something sounds. The timbre/texture of a note is technically defined by the amounts of partials, or overtones, characteristically generated by the particular instrument, but this knowledge does little to satisfy the intuitive sense that there exists such a thing as textural richness. **Robert Erickson**, in *Sound Structures in Music* (1975) discusses sound in abstract ways that suggest subconscious perceptions: "fused ensemble timbres," "sound masses," "rustle noise," and "spectral glide."

**Pierre Schaeffer's *Traité des objets musicaux* (1968)** attempted to justify musique concrète's way of dealing with sound, early 20th century, by suggesting a system of analysis for timbre. Borrowing from biology and physics, Schaeffer creates criteria which are fun and descriptive: "[a given sound] might have a 'reiterating' dynamic, a 'resonant' grain, and a 'mechanical' allure. The class of the same might have a 'knotty' mass, a crescendo dynamic profile, a 'matte' grain, and one of three fluctuating allures."

Some of these terms suggest terms used in other media such as visual art, film, writing, and especially photography. Degrees of graininess, matte versus glossy finishes of paper, contrast, brightness, and the relative strengths of black & white versus color photography are all useful signifiers in discussing sound. Pure white light, furthermore, could be referred to as "noise" in photography or any visual art (and black could be silence, or the absence of any light/noise) in a meaningful way which might bring insight (especially for those of us focused on soundwaves) into the minds of painters and photographers. It is also worth noting that when, in visual art, one describes "the tone of a color," it is on an intuitive level the same idea as describing "the color of a tone" in music.

If white light is useful in defining broad band white noise, then what does each constituent color sound like? The familiar sounds of **Jimi Hendrix'** wah-wah guitar, the sweeping squirts and bleeps of acid house, the effect achieved by slowly closing a door in a well-sealed house on a raging storm outside, and someone whispering "wow" are all examples of relatively narrow-band sweeps through the broad band noise spectrum. These sweeps through the spectrum, emphasizing different colors as they pass through different wavelength frequencies, suggest a direct relationship between the spectra of sound and light. Arguably a lot of this noise/light business operates at sub- or post-conscious levels, which might indicate that the closer we get to definitions of texture the farther we get from words and intellect.

Will you join me in this location of power?

Another twist on the idea of sonic colors and textures, however, is the idea that sound waves travel in time and are never static, or frozen in time like a painting. An official-sounding definition of "timbre" by the **American Standards Association (1960)** (p.19) gives us another dry perspective which nevertheless accounts for the reality that timbre exists only in fleeting moments because most sounds evolve, convolve, and mutate as they travel through the stages of their envelopes. The ASA says timbre is "*the term covering all ways that two sounds of the same pitch, loudness, and apparent duration may differ...Even the sounds of musical instruments, with their various attack transients, the variations within the 'held' portions of notes, and their many decay characteristics, present a bewildering array of disparate acoustic events.*" Just when we felt like we might be getting a handle on defining timbre and/or texture, the flowing, ever-changing nature of soundwaves becomes a new sonic can of worms, the opening of which brings us just about back to zero (or infinity, depending on your definition of the 4th dimension, but that's another story).

Our power space becomes more abstract.

The **ASA's** acknowledgment of the "*bewildering array*," however, speaks to us in reality's terms and reminds us that we are not talking about static sound images. Perhaps this is a good time to update our photography metaphor to that of moving pictures. Breaking the exposure of movement and light onto film into a certain number of frames per second gives us both the "snapshot" views of momentary timbres and a sense of the way that sounds evolve and flow.

This is our location of power. To acknowledge these parameters and find equitable peace is to understand

power.

This is not to say, however, that the relationship between tone color and color tone (in music and art, respectively) has any less meaning in terms of texture and other abstract ideas such as hot and cold. Warmth in colors is used to describe music in classical music critiques and new-agey babblings alike. the book *Listen* again comes to the rescue with a generalized description of 19th century Romantic-era orchestrations as containing “something of the same freedom and virtuosity with which painters mix actual colors on a palette. The clear, narrowly defined sonorities of the Classical era were replaced by iridescent shades of blended orchestra sound.” Later, we are treated to the proto-fractal analogy of impressionist painting in comparing Debussy to Mahler’s contrapuntal sharpness: “Debussy’s orchestra is more often a single delicately pulsing totality to which individual instruments contribute momentary gleams of color. One thinks of an impressionist picture, in which small, discrete areas of color, visible close up, merge into indescribable color fields as the viewer stands back and take in.” Impressionism arguably brings a sense of evolution of sound in time to the two-dimensional canvas. This idea of looking at things closely and from afar also suggests some of the ideas of microcosmic representations in FRACTALS.

German new age sound color theorist **Peter Michael Hamel** refers to awareness of harmonic spectra as a key to spiritual awareness, lumping the music of many cultures into similar terminology: “*The mythical, melodic music of India, the heterophonic music of Indonesia, the modal music of Arabia and the Middle Ages, as well as the rhythmic drum music of Africa -- is all tone-color music to the extent that it makes the harmonic series audible.*” We find ideas about timbre/texture overlapping here: on the one hand, overtone content defines timbre; on the other, melodic contour and harmonic density define compositional texture. The result in both cases is something that is often discussed in terms of color, and as it pertains to moods, or atmospheres, both camps are generally in the same ballpark.

In **Campbell’s** *The Musician’s Guide To Acoustics* (p. 149), Bismarck’s 1974 collation of possible pairs of terms which could be used to describe timbre include a spectrum of defining adjectives created in an attempt to further our ability to discuss texture in universally-understood terms. It is interesting to note that these criteria scales could also be as useful in describing three-dimensional art forms such as sculpture and architecture, exposing the relationship between texture and spatial qualities. The overlap between these two defining criteria of Ambient will be explored in more depth below, but bears noting in contemplating the following pairs of descriptive qualities:

fine coarse  
reserved obtrusive  
dark bright  
dull sharp  
soft hard  
smooth rough  
broad narrow  
wide tight  
clean dirty  
solid hollow  
compact scattered  
open closed

These words can be applied to musical instruments as well as the sounds of waterfalls, traffic, busy offices, and voices. By way of example in examining the flowing complexities of sounds, compare the two following comments on technique in playing the piano. Campbell breaks down the idea of transients -- as found in the sharp attack stage of a piano’s sonic signature -- in an interesting way. Again we see how significant a factor the first milliseconds of an instrument’s envelope’s attack re in defining its characteristics of texture and bite:

*“...the nature of the attack is an important feature of an instrument’s characteristic sound. This is obvious, of course, in an instrument like the harp or piano, whose sound contains no steady state at all; the shape of the amplitude envelope has a strong effect on the perceived tone quality. A striking illustration of this is provided by playing a tape-recording of piano music backwards (Taylor 1966). The instrument is transformed into a leaky old harmonium, although only the order of presentation of the sounds has changed. The concept of timbre is frequently extended to include such time-varying aspects of the sound.”*

**Aaron Copland** (p. 69), in discussing the compositional sensitivities of various composers to the possibilities of piano interpretations in performance, also takes into account the fact that there are clearly defined attack and sustain elements in the envelope of this well-known instrument.

Referring to Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Debussy, Ravel and Scriabin, **Copland** describes a shared understanding of the instrument: “*All of them took full cognizance of the fact that the piano is, on one side of its nature, a collection of sympathetically vibrating strings, producing a sensuous and velvety or brilliant and brittle conglomeration of tones, which are capable of immediate extinction through release of the damper pedal.*”

We have already touched on the resonant and textural qualities of an acoustic guitar. Let us please appreciate this location of power ;)



Upon electrification, the overtones of a guitar are enhanced in direct relation to amount of gain and saturation of the signal. Tubes and transformers are where the magic happens. With enough saturated gain, feedback can serve as a generator of resonance (an amp sends a loud signal back to the guitar, which excites the resonant tones, which are then amplified and fed back to the guitar...). If an electric guitar is amplified and the circuitry of the amp “clips” or distorts (as most guitar amps these days are designed to do easily), the resulting distortion is typically rich in overtones, accentuating the natural tendency of a resonating string to subdivide vibrations up the harmonic series.

By the 1960s, **Jimi Hendrix** and other guitarists had pioneered new guitar textures in the process of overdriving and eliciting distortion from their amplifiers. Randall Smith of Mesa/Boogie -- in Petaluma, north of San Francisco -- started his company by hot-rodding stock Fender amplifiers with extra gain stages to overdrive the amps easily. Pursuing the perfect tone in the days before pedal boards.

As the rest of the world was enjoying the ultra-efficient, light-weight, low heat-emitting, and low-distortion characteristics of newfangled solid state transistor technology, a cult developed around the “obsolete” tube circuits which needed heavy power transformers and metal chassis, ran hot and inefficient, and distorted beautifully. Tube amp distortion is a religion to many; guitarists constantly search for the holy grail of sweet, liquid, singing, sustaining, juicy tone, and every year new developments are made in this endless search. Ever since the 1960s, transistorized simulations of tube characteristics, iconically emulated by **Tom Scholz’ Rockman** a decade ago [the sound of ZZ Top’s MTV reign], SansAmp pedals, and, in this new millennium, digital emulations of tube circuitry [which as of printing is completely bereft of dynamic connection as with tube amp -- ha making fun “*friends don’t let friends play modeling amps*” ;) ]. Variations on the classic old tube circuit designs appear.

The current cutting edge in simulations is a called “*physical modeling*,” and employs digital technologies to replicate the waveform characteristics of the classic tube amps. Theories and biases (as chauvinist as those of Hog riders against rice burners, or Macintosh proponents versus PC users) about the relative merits of tube vs. transistor distortion have been thrown around for decades: the “even order” harmonics of tubes are supposed to be sweeter and more musical than the “odd” harmonics generated by solid state distortion; the “soft

clip” of tubes is smoother than the jagged crap-out of a transistor circuit pushed too hard, etc..... Whatever.

The interesting thing about guitar tone obsessives, however, is that amidst the bombast, high-watt amplification, and hard rock stylings and postures, the ways that “good” tone is described is exactly the same as stuffy classical music critics judge the tone of a concert violinist. Words like singing, glassy, rich, and sweet are all used to describe what is, technically, the same phenomenon: a richness of overtone content.

And so we find ourselves contemplating the actual space. The location of power.



peter wetherbee makes records, plays a lot of instruments, reads and writes a lot, and performs with mama rabwa, a funk and blues band which features virtuoso musicians from west africa. currently he and his cat larry are particularly interested in protest music, bc the world just got much more absurd. check out this song:

[https://soundcloud.com/user164786057/ayotzinapa-master-92815 /////](https://soundcloud.com/user164786057/ayotzinapa-master-92815/////)

and this:

<https://www.facebook.com/peter.wetherbee/videos/vb.603330962/10154103820445963/?type=3&theater>  
[peter\\_wetherbee@yahoo.com](mailto:peter_wetherbee@yahoo.com)

# The Universe and our hands

by Georgia E. Warren

Some stories are true stories, some are fiction. This is my true story and most of it happened in Cobleskill, NY, although a piece of it occurred at Beardslee Castle in Little Falls, NY. I had a booth at both of these and this lady DID sit down with me and we really had these discussions. I am going to tell you her story as I experienced it.

***"Hello, do you have time for me to have a reading."***

I looked up from my table at a psychic fair in Cobleskill to say, "Sure, have a seat." As I did I was looking up at one of the tallest women I had ever seen. When she sat down, it was more like she folded up into the seat. Her hands were in the pockets of her beige trench coat. She wore very dark sunglasses and her ill fitting wig covered an obvious bald head. I asked her why she stopped by my table and if she had specific questions that we could talk about during our hand reading.

She replied, *"I heard you talking at dinner last night and I decided to come here for a reading. I must admit, at first, I was going to talk to Mr. Cole but he was booked up, so I came over to see you. Don't get me wrong, I liked what you were saying, but you talked as if you were skeptical about extraterrestrial life and he was strongly defending the idea that there were intelligent alien life forms already here."*

I was perplexed about her answer. Dennis Cole, Bob the Book Guy, and I had a discussion about space aliens during dinner, but the restaurant was closed to the public and only the psychic fair participants were there, plus two waitresses and the chef/cook. The waitresses were not tall at all and the chef was a man, I would have noticed this lady, if she were in the room close enough to hear us.

"I didn't see you in the restaurant last night." I said.

She said, *"I heard you."*

I let the subject drop. I was new at this show and even though it was busy, I had not been and I wanted to do a reading. I was trying to get into any shows I could. I needed money for my car; it was showing its age and cost as much as a car payment a month

in repairs. I needed the car to do the shows and the shows to keep the car.

"Okay, so let me see your hands and we'll get started." She took her hands out of her pockets and they were just beautiful. She had long, slender hands and fingers. "You have what we call 'air hands,' or creative hands, if you are not doing something creative in your life, you will not feel fulfilled, and if you are you should try to keep that creative aspect all your life."



I always look carefully at the back of my client's hands, sometimes the backs will tell me as much as the palms. Strangely, her hands had a golden tone to them. I looked up at her face and even with most of it covered by the sunglasses, what did show was the same metallic gold color.

Her hands trembled and she began to speak, "That's why I came here, I am so unhappy. I came to this place taking a job that pays well, I left my home and my family so they would have a better life. I didn't think I would be here doing statistics for this many years. I am so lonely. That's why I came to your show. I am so lonely. I miss my children and my home. They haven't come back for me yet. I keep sending reports, I'm not getting any replies. I want to go home."

"Well," I said, "let's take a look at the palms while we talk. We can see what your hands say, first though, could you take your sunglasses off, it's hard for me to talk to someone without looking at them." She took off the sunglasses off slowly and as if it pained her to do so. Her large almond shaped eyes had irises and pupils of almost the same shade of black. Her eyebrows were drawn on in eyebrow pencil. When she smiled I noticed she had no canine teeth, (and she did smile a couple of times during our reading).

I continued, "I am skeptical about most of the psychic modalities, even my own. I will tell you what your hands say, but reading palms and hands is something I learned and you will need to interpret for yourself whether it fits your life or not."

Her palms as well as the shape of her hands were fitting a creative personality type. I told her that she had a well developed mound of Venus. Her mind and life line melted into one another which meant that she was what I have always called a "heart person."

I looked at the rest of her dominate hand (the strongest of a person's hands usually the one with which you write, draw or play sports), then both of her hands. All of the lines on both hands either started or ended well below the mound of Pluto (the bump on your hand at the bottom where your hand and wrist join). I said,

"Oh wow, according to your hands you sure have amazing Psychic Potential. Some readers would say: 'You are in this world but not of it.'"

*"Oh, that's what I'm trying to tell you, but I have kept my secret for so long, it is hard to say. I am not from your planet. I want to go home. Please, I just need to talk to somebody, I heard you and Dennis Cole, last night talking to the man across from you who sells books. You two said that if you met someone from another planet and they wanted you to keep it a secret you would. The book selling man said that he didn't think he could, that it was too important for humanity to know we were here and that there was intelligent life on other planets."*

I noticed my client had no accent or dialect. From what she said to me next, that would be expected. According to her narrative she had been right here in the middle of New York State for more than five decades.

*"We came here in your year of 1954. For a while my boss and the rest of the crew checked out what was happening on your planet. They knew from seismic activity that there were atomic bombs dropped in the 1940s and that there had continued to be testing on stronger and stronger bombs. We had to make sure that your scientists were not going to find the next step of mass destruction that would not only wipe out your planet but set a chain of events that could move the delicate balance of the entire universe on a destructive course. Once they did their study they set an office up for me in a house in an isolated area near here. They set up a fund for me that would grow and give me living expenses. My pay check at home*

*would go to my family. It was a lot. I couldn't say no."*

Given my financial circumstances at the time, I could understand how she felt. I looked back at her hands, trying to see something in the lines there that would give her comfort.

### **I couldn't see anything in the lines of her hands that showed her "going home."**

When she began to talk again she said. *"I can read most Earth languages and have subscriptions to major newspapers and scientific magazines. As soon as you all caught up to computers I started following the news that way. I easily hacked into the scientific community workplaces. I kept writing my reports. I kept sending them off to my bosses. They told me not to expect answers, they didn't want Earthlings to intercept messages coming across space. It wouldn't raise suspicions that I was sending messages out, suspicions would only come on incoming messages. It is very frustrating. I don't know if they are listening. I don't know if something happened and they never even made it back home. I just don't know."*

I had to ask her a few questions: "How long did it take you to get to Earth? You said you've been here since 1954, you must have been an adult then, you don't look all that old, are you very old?"

She answered me: *"We got from our star system to yours in a matter of a few Earth days. The Solar system is a bit of a mess and we had to slow way down. It took almost a month to steer around hunks of debris in your system. You people are so egotistical, you think you are the only ones. Intelligent life just isn't so very rare. Your people started out on the planet right next to Earth and ended up blowing it into millions of pieces after you had sent prisoners to this one to start colonizing. Looking at your history, I don't even want to think what they did here for thousands of years to degrade themselves and then start building back up."*

*Yes, I came here in 1954, your time. I am old by your way of reckoning time and age. We live many years longer than Humans. I don't like Humans much at all. People in grocery stores make fun of me. I wear these dark glasses because they make fun of my eyes. I keep my hands in my pockets in stores unless I am taking objects off shelves. I don't smile because my teeth look strange to Humans."*



I wanted to know if her people were perhaps our ancestors. There were so many similarities, even in the lines of her hand. Were they the original inhuman Humans. She did not know.

It was Sunday and the show was closing at six o'clock. By the time we finished talking the other participants were starting to pack up. She gave me her e-mail and I gave her mine.

For a few years she would write me, not often, but often enough to let me know she was still there. After around four years I was doing a show in Beardslee Castle, I saw her come in. This time she had a blond wig covering her bald head and a white trench coat instead of the brown one she wore before. Nobody had contacted her from home yet, she paid me for a reading, even though she only stayed a few minutes and then she walked away.

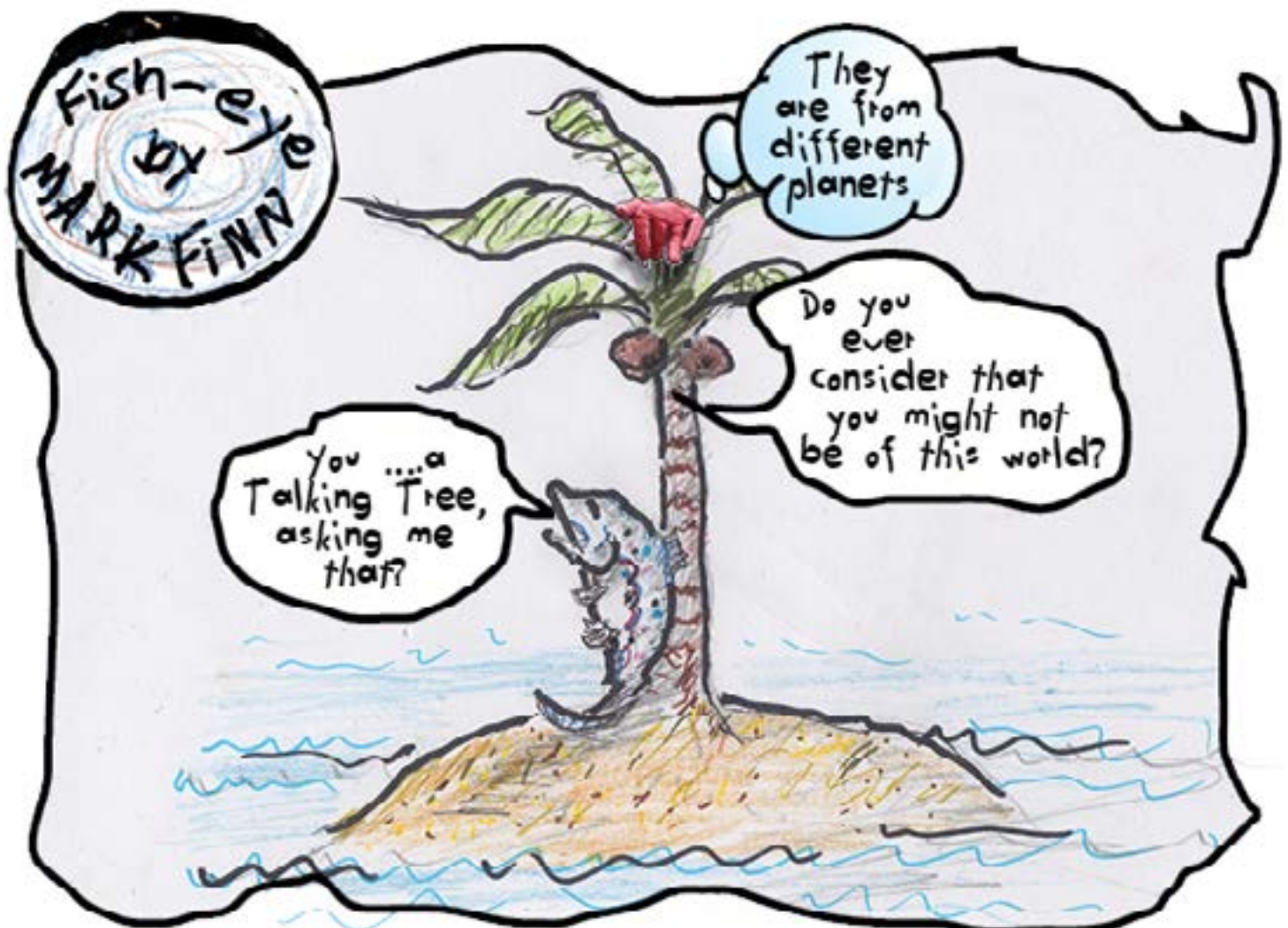
**I have no idea if this lady was a space alien.**

I have read about Marfan syndrome. Many of her physical traits fit into the symptoms of Marfan, long arms, hands and legs, tall and thin, crowded teeth. "Marfan syndrome is a genetic disorder that affects the body's connective tissue. Connective tissue holds all the body's cells, organs and tissue together. It also plays an important role in helping the body grow and develop properly."\*

The golden color could have make up, the eyes could have been contact lenses. Was one of our waitresses a friend and told her about the dinner conversation?

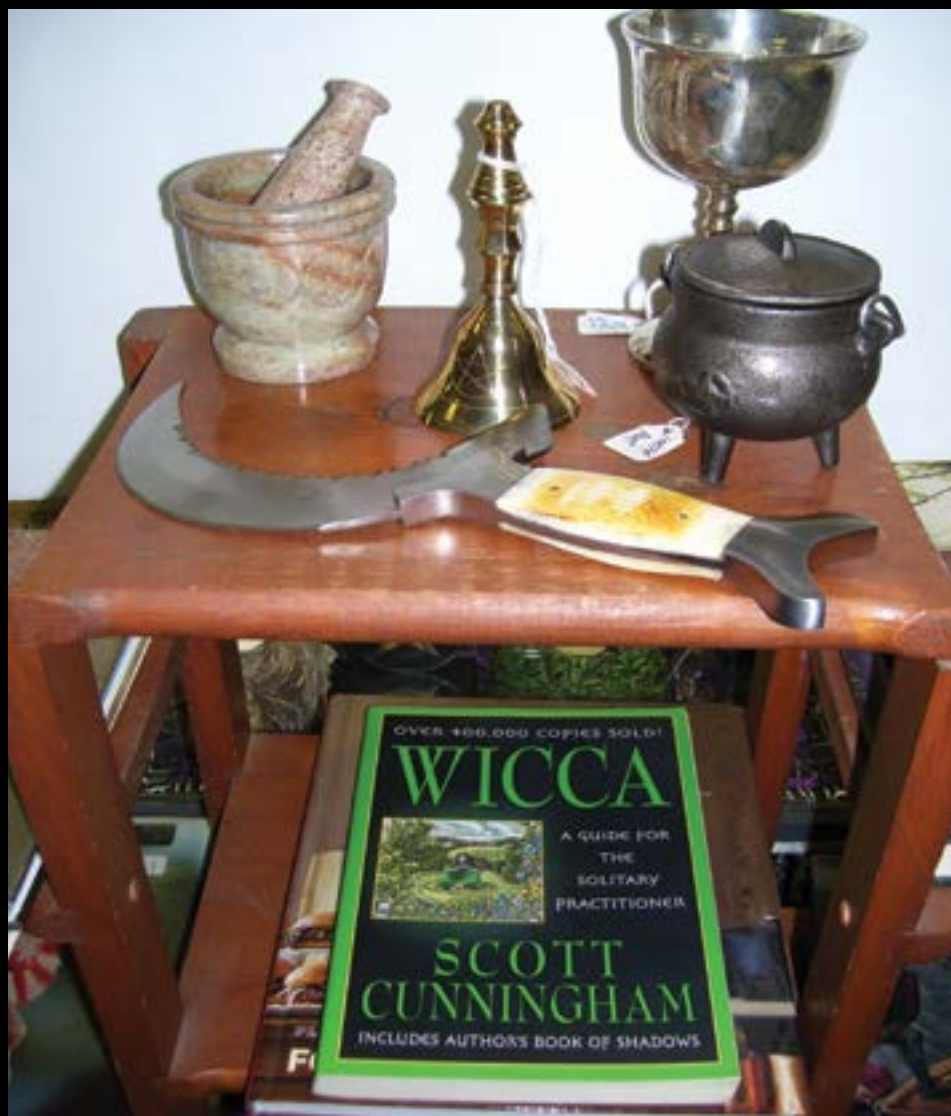
I have not heard from her for years now. I tried e-mailing after the Beardslee show and all of the e-mails came back to me "unknown."

**Whether she was a space alien  
or just alienated, humans  
did not show her the kindness  
and friendship she deserved.**



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